

Introduction

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A Concept with an Imperative, but no Content

In current scholarship and everyday discourse, heroism is a sensitive, ambiguous topic. On the one hand – and primarily on the eastern side of the Atlantic Ocean – heroes and heroines have become dubious in light of the ubiquity of the heroic jargon of various twentieth-century dictatorships. As a consequence, hero-worshipping has only subliminally survived in niches of European societies: TV shows praise everyday heroes and heroines who rescue cats from roofs,¹ pop bands label themselves heroes,² intellectuals proclaim the post-heroic era,³ and computer games and epic films feature heroic figures.⁴

On the other hand – and on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean – it is undisputed that heroes and heroines, living, dead and fictional, have always played a significant role in human societies, especially as moral and political role models. Moreover, there are also recent trends in medicine and psychology, that draw on past heroic discourses in order to propagate heroic capacities in the present. Labelling their activities as ‘heroism science’⁵ to be investigated in the framework of blog posts, publications and biennial conferences,⁶ these agents claim that every individual is supposed to possess heroic capacities, which serve as universal means for self-engineering and personal success, and as a world-healing remedy.

What are these heroic capacities and qualities that stimulate individuals to call other individuals heroic? It is essential to the concept of the heroic that what is considered heroic varies greatly depending on the speakers and the contexts in which they use the term. When speakers use the terms ‘hero’, ‘heroine’, or ‘heroic’, they are not referring to a particular, intersubjectively consistent set of qualities, but are

¹ Ute Frevert, ‘Vom heroischen Menschen zum “Helden des Alltags”’, *Merkur*, 63 (2009), 803–12.

² ‘Helden’ and ‘Wir sind Helden’ are names of German bands active in 1980–83 and 2000–2012, respectively.

³ Herfried Münkler, ‘Die postheroische Gesellschaft und ihre jüngste Herausforderung’, *Der Wandel des Krieges: Von der Symmetrie zur Asymmetrie* (Weilerswist, 2006), pp. 310–54.

⁴ For instance, the *Harry Potter* film series from 2001 to 2011 and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy from 2001 to 2003.

⁵ ‘The Hero Network’, *Research on Influence, Social Networks and Ethics* <<https://rise2research.wordpress.com/home/hero-network/>> [accessed 11 February 2022].

⁶ The Conferences on Heroism were held at Murdoch University in 2016, the University of Richmond in 2018 and the University of Limerick in 2021. See <<https://scholarship.richmond.edu/heroism-science-conference>> [accessed 11 April 2019] and <<https://rise2research.wordpress.com/heroism-science-conference/>> [accessed 11 February 2022].

primarily articulating their admiration for the specific behaviours and qualities of those individuals to whom they refer. That is, by calling individuals or their behaviour heroic, they upgrade them and, simultaneously, create, through purely linguistic means, the phenomenon to which they refer with the label 'heroic'. Additionally, attributing such high values to selected characteristics (by means of the label 'heroic'), the speakers implicitly suggest or even demand that the heroes or heroines' examples be followed. In this way, individuals who have been labelled heroes and heroines function as paradigms for moral imperatives in society.

This peculiarity at the heart of the term 'heroic' manifests itself in the fact that people have attributed the label 'heroic' to diverse qualities and activities throughout history. One of the most vivid and drastic examples is the diverse heroic narratives relating to 9/11. In American discourse, the firefighters of 9/11 are considered paradigmatic, tragically failing heroes and heroines (many more firefighters died than the number of people they were able to rescue from the collapsing Twin Towers). By contrast, in the radicalized Islamist camp, the hijackers are considered the real heroes. Similarly, from the American perspective, Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning are spies; from the perspective of international investigative journalism, they are heroes/ines. Thus, modifying Walter Laqueur's dictum, we can cynically declare that 'one man's hero is another man's terrorist'.⁷ Yet, what does all this have to do with music?

Studying the Heroic in Music – in the Past and Today

The heroic has been omnipresent in music-making throughout history. To give just a few examples: medieval *chansons de gestes* told stories about heroic deeds and actions. With the development of opera at the close of the sixteenth century, heroes such as Orpheus were not just sung about but set on stages to define themselves in song. In the nineteenth century, the increasing dramatization of instrumental music enabled symphonic genres too to be understood as conveying heroic narratives of triumph and struggle. The titles of Beethoven's Third Symphony 'Eroica', Strauss and Dvořák's symphonic poems *Heldenleben* op. 40 and *Heldenlied* op. 111, respectively, refer to heroic ideas, feelings, and both concrete and fictional heroic persons.

Not surprisingly, the heroic has also influenced the discourse about music and musical technical terms throughout history. In the Renaissance, classical heroes were central to musical thought and were frequently cited in philosophical treatises and conduct literature to exemplify music's powerful effects.⁸ In eighteenth-century Italy, the prominent role of the heroic in the musical thinking of the time was paradoxically accentuated by the creation of the hybrid genre of the *tragicomedia*

⁷ Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Toronto, 1987), p. 302.

⁸ For examples see: Richard Wistreich, 'Of Mars I Sing: Monteverdi Voicing Virility', in Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (eds), *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 67–93, at pp. 78–80; Katherine Butler, 'Changing Attitudes Towards Classical Mythology and their Impact on Notions of the Powers of Music in Early Modern England', *Music and Letters*, 97 (2016), 42–60; and Butler's chapter in this volume.

eroico-pastorale.⁹ In eighteenth-century England, Italian operas could be referred to as 'heroic opera' in printed librettos.¹⁰ Central *dramatis personae* in Richard Wagner's (heroic) music dramas – except for the *Flying Dutchman* – are regularly represented by the voice type that has come to be known as the *Heldentenor* (heroic tenor).

Just as the heroic in music has been a recurring theme across the centuries, so too has musicological research been continuously devoted to the connections between heroism, the heroic, and music. Despite the striking diversity among the numerous studies on 'music and heroism', several common topics for exploring the relationship between music and the heroic are nevertheless apparent. One approach focuses on characterizing 'heroic style', stretching from Ernst Bücken's 1924 monograph on the heroic style in opera from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, to recent studies such as Marco Bizzarini's comparison of the characteristics of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century pastoral and heroic styles, or Nicholas Mathew's analysis of Haydn's 'heroic style'.¹¹ A second approach identifies types of heroes portrayed in musical genres. Examples include Wendy Heller on the Enlightenment hero in Metastasian opera and Simon Williams's analysis of different hero-types in Wagner's operas.¹² In the framework of the third approach, Scott Burnham and Rainer Bayreuther investigate how the heroic narratives manifest themselves in instrumental music. Burnham's monograph points to parallels between the *bildungsroman* and the Kantian subject, on the one hand, and the heroic symphonic dramaturgy in the 'Eroica' Symphony, on the other.¹³ Bayreuther's article reveals the compositional strategies that Strauss employed to portray the image of a failing, pathological hero in his symphonic poem *Ein Heldenleben*.¹⁴ A fourth approach considers how heroic ideas and attitudes were articulated via the performance modes of virtuosos. Dana Gooley and

⁹ Arnold Jacobshagen, 'Dramma eroicomico, Opera buffa und Opera semiseria', in Herbert Schneider and Reinhard Wiesend (eds), *Die Oper im 18. Jahrhundert*, Handbuch der musikalischen Gattungen, 12 (Laaber, 2001), pp. 84–92.

¹⁰ For example, Charles-Simon Favart, *La bella Arsene, An Heroic Opera, in Three Acts* (London, 1798); Giovan Gualberto Bottarelli, *Leucippus: An Heroic Pastoral. Set to Music* (1764).

¹¹ Ernst Bücken, *Der heroische Stil in der Oper* (Leipzig, 1924); Marco Bizzarini, "'The Humble" and "Sublime" Genres, the Pastoral and Heroic Styles: Rhetorical Metamorphoses in Benedetto Marcello's Cantatas', in Michael Talbot (ed.), *Aspects of the Secular Cantata in Late Baroque Italy* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 177–202. Complementing Bizzarini's analysis: Beate Kutschke, *Gemengelage: Moralisch-ethischer Wandel im europäischen Musiktheater um 1700: Paris, Hamburg, London* (Hildesheim; Zürich; New York, 2016), pp. 143–58; Nicholas Mathew, 'Heroic Haydn, the Occasional Work and "Modern" Political Music', *Eighteenth-Century Music*, 4 (2007), 7–25.

¹² Wendy Heller, 'Reforming Achilles: Gender, Opera seria and the Rhetoric of the Enlightened Hero', *Early Music*, 26 (1998), 562–81; Simon Williams, *Wagner and the Romantic Hero* (Cambridge, 2004). These hero-types are introduced in Chapter One. See also Jeffrey L. Buller, 'The Messianic Hero in Wagner's Ring', *The Opera Quarterly* 13 (1996), 21–38.

¹³ Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton, 1995).

¹⁴ Rainer Bayreuther, 'Der Held des "Heldenleben"', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 62 (2005), 286–302, at p. 298.

Maiko Kawabata showed how Liszt and Paganini's performance styles were heavily influenced by military, bellicose heroism.¹⁵

First and foremost, however, the heroic on the operatic stage has been the focus of musicological research. Both male and female operatic protagonists and the dramas they enact are conventionally discussed in the language of heroes and heroines.¹⁶ The alignment between heroic characters and singers' voice types form another line of enquiry. Rossini and his contemporaries, for example, have been a focus for discourse on heroic music for the juxtapositions of female singers (*musicos*) performing male heroic roles and the implications for the performance of heroic masculinity.¹⁷ Last but not least, there are numerous studies that traced ideas of heroism in rather unexpected or unconventional musical phenomena such as the 'essence of music's meaning' for pop musicians, the Chilean nineteenth-century composer Pedro Césari, American country music during World War II, Finnish popular music, the Chinese dissident composer Wang Xilin, computer music, and masculinity in heavy metal music.¹⁸

¹⁵ Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge, 2004); Maiko Kawabata, 'Virtuoso Codes of Violin Performance: Power, Military Heroism, and Gender (1789–1830)', *19th-Century Music*, 28 (2004), 89–107.

¹⁶ In addition to the examples by Bücken, Williams, Heller, and Buller already cited (see nn. 11 and 12), see also Wendy Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley, 2003); Klaus Hortschansky, (ed.), *Opernheld und Opernheldin im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 1991); Melanie Unseld, 'When Heroes Sigh: Sentimental Heroism in Opera Culture Around 1800', in Carolin Hauck, Monika Mommertz et al. (eds), *Tracing the Heroic Through Gender* (Baden-Baden, 2018), pp. 157–76, among others.

¹⁷ Parkorn Wangpaiboonkit, 'Rethinking Operatic Masculinity: Nicola Tacchinardi's Aria Substitutions and the Heroic Archetype in Early Nineteenth-Century Italy', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 32 (2020), 1–26; Naomi André, 'Taming Women's Voices: From Hero to Pageboy', in *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Bloomington; Indianapolis, 2006), pp. 103–28; Heather Hadlock, 'On the Cusp between the Past and the Future: The Mezzo-Soprano Romeo of Bellini's *I Capuleti*', *Opera Quarterly*, 17 (2001), 399–422; Heather Hadlock, 'Women Playing Men in Italian Opera, 1810–1835', in Jane A. Bernstein (ed.), *Women's Voices Across Musical Worlds* (Boston, 2004), pp. 285–307; Anke Charton, '"I canti esaltino il suo valore": Gendering the Operatic Sound of the Heroic', in Carolin Hauck, Monika Mommertz et al. (eds), *Tracing the Heroic Through Gender* (Baden-Baden, 2018), pp. 9–24.

¹⁸ Marko Aho, *Iskelmäkuninkaan tuho: Suomi-iskelmän sortuvat tähdet ja myyttinen sankaruus* ('The falling star: The collapsing idols of Finnish popular music and mythical heroism') (Helsinki, 2003); Klaus Neumann-Braun '"...computer music is cool!": Theoretical implications of ambivalences in contemporary trends in music reception', *Le Savant à l'épreuve du populaire/Musiques électroniques*, 3 (2004), 99–107; William K. McNeil and Louis B. Hatchett, '"There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere." The Story Behind its Success', in Charles K. Wolfe and James E. Akenson (eds), *Country Music Goes to War* (Lexington, 2005), pp. 33–42; Yingchun Qi, 'Written in the Desolation and Heroism of History: Evolution from Wang Xilin's Symphony no. 3 to Symphony no. 4', *Yinyue yanjiu/Music Research*, 6 (2010), 98–101; Wiebke Kartheus, 'The "Other" as Projection Screen: Authenticating Heroic Masculinity in War-Themed Heavy Metal Music Videos', *Metal Music Studies*, 1 (2015), 319–40; Isabel Céspedes Corrotea, 'Pedro

Within these heterogeneous approaches to music and heroism, the diverse, moral-ethical value systems and the political ideas in which heroic music participates in different cultural and socio-political contexts have received less attention. This is all the more regrettable because music has always contributed to the moral and political impact of heroic figures and ideas on society, not only by referring to them through titles and programmes, but also in the context of heroic ceremonies and hero-worshipping. Lully's music for the court ceremonies of Louis XIV as well as Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' are paradigmatic of this. The 'Ode to Joy' has not only served as the anthem of the European Union since 1985,¹⁹ but it was also performed during the celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall at Christmas 1989, two months after the historical event.²⁰ Music achieved these moral and political functions by stimulating strong emotional responses, namely heroic emotions, moods, and attitudes. As one individual's hero might be considered a terrorist from the perspective of another individual,²¹ music can serve as a means to heroize past events of diverse political *couleurs*. Therefore, the 'Ode to Joy' also served as a musical gift at Hitler's birthday in 1937²² and, from 1974 to 1979, as the national anthem of the newly founded, but never officially recognized, South African state of Rhodesia (the successor state of the British colony of Southern Rhodesia that, from 1965 to 1979, was deeply dominated by the apartheid policies of the white ruling class after the state's declaration of independence).

The essays in this volume fill the gap regarding music's role in political and moral culture. They do not merely begin the process of constructing a chronological narrative of the musical heroic from medieval times to the present day. Rather, through a combination of musical analysis and socio-cultural contextualisation, the volume focuses specifically on how music might itself contribute to these changing political or ethical constructions of the heroic through time. Furthermore, the collection aims not only to develop musicological understanding, but also to speak to the historians, sociologists, and psychologists who have acknowledged the persistent esteem of heroic deeds and the discourse on them as a decisive factor for the shaping of political ideologies and moral-ethical identities²³ – even of seemingly post-heroic

Césari: Compositor de héroes y gestas', in Nelson Niño (ed.), *Lecturas interdisciplinarias en torno a la música* (Valparaíso, 2016), pp. 159–92; David Rowell, *Wherever the Sound Takes You: Heroics and Heartbreak in Music Making* (Chicago, 2019).

¹⁹ Stefan Zotti, 'Identität und Integration', in Helmut Wohnout and Andreas Pacher (eds), *Sapientia, Temperantia, Fortitudo, Iustitia: Festschrift für Wolfgang Johannes Bandion* (Vienna, 2020), pp. 102–16, at p. 103.

²⁰ David B. Dennis, *Beethoven in German Politics 1870–1989* (New Haven; London, 1996), p. 198.

²¹ See n. 7.

²² Esteban Buch, *Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History*, trans. Richard Miller (London; Chicago, 2003), p. 205.

²³ For the role of heroism in Nazi and Soviet propaganda and politics see for instance: Victor Klemperer, *Language of the Third Reich: LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii. A Philologists Notebook*, trans. Martin Brady (London; New York, 2000; orig. 1957); David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (New York, 1993); Ilya Zemtsov, *Encyclopedia of Soviet Life* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1991), pp. 149–153. For the role of heroism in the context of surviving and fighting the Holocaust, see for instance: André Stein, *Quiet*

Western societies²⁴ – but whose work has thus far neglected the role of music in these processes.

Firstly, the volume explores not only the employment and instrumentalization of heroic music in diverse political contexts but also the role of this heroic music in actively shaping the virtues and morals of each period. Secondly, the focus of each chapter is the musical means through which heroic emotions, moods, and attitudes were constructed. Each chapter in this volume, therefore, focuses on compositions as communicative and expressive means. In brief, the premise of the volume is that music functions as a sign system in which each culture's notion of the heroic can be encoded.

Heroic Music Through Time

The Heroic in Music reconstructs for the first time some of the key moments of the socio-political history of the heroic in western music from the Middle Ages to the twenty-first century. From eleventh-century saints' offices on Christian martyr-heroes and heroines to the instrumentalization of monumental-heroic symphonic music in twentieth-century dictatorships, and from heroic court music in Baroque absolutist politics to contemporary pop and avant-garde music after 9/11, the volume spreads beyond the well-established horizon of the heroic in symphonic and operatic music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather, *The Heroic in Music* demonstrates that throughout music history, a striking variety of genres have served to articulate political and ethical heroic ideals including medieval chant, lieder, popular songs, madrigals, string quartets, dance music, cantatas, oratorios, as well as the operas and orchestral genres that have been the focus of the majority of previous studies. Not surprisingly, these genres have served to convey heterogeneous heroic models and varied moral and political positions. Yet there are also some recurring issues or aspects of the heroic throughout the chapters, revolving around values and virtues; state and gender politics; nationalism and militarism; spirituality and religion; and topical analysis and music semiotics.

The twelve essays are grouped into three parts. Part I – 'The Configuration of Heroic Music as a Tool for Shaping Moral and Political Identity' – focuses on the early development of heroic topoi before the consolidation of a repertory of heroic musical elements and the formulation of a heroic style in the narrow sense in the nineteenth century. Spanning the musical cultures of France, Germany, England, and Italy, this section reconstructs the various musical strategies employed by

Heroes: True Stories of the Rescue of Jews by Christians in Nazi-Occupied Holland (New York, 1988). For the role of everyday heroism in current North American society, see for instance: Colleen Sell, *A Cup of Comfort Courage: Stories That Celebrate Everyday Heroism, Strength, and Triumph* (Avon, 2004).

²⁴ Since the 1970s two distinguished discourses on post-heroism have developed. First, on post-heroic warfare, see Edward N. Luttwak, 'Toward Post-Heroic Warfare', *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (1995), 109–22, and Sibylle Scheipers, (ed.), *Heroism and the Changing Character of War Toward Post-Heroic Warfare?* (Basingstoke, 2014). Second, on post-heroic leadership and entrepreneurship, see for instance: Tony White, *Doctor's Handbook: Managing your Role beyond Clinical Medicine* (Oxford, 2010).

composers of medieval chant, Renaissance madrigals, and Baroque operas, cantatas, or oratorios when engaging with heroic ideas. The personal moral and political values exemplified in this heroic music span both the hegemony of Christian martyrdom-oriented morality and the secular ideas of heroic virtues and behaviour for both genders.

The section begins with Roman Hankeln exploring the parallels between Christian saints and classical heroes, and how the language of war and heroism is applied to martyrs and articulated musically in medieval *historiae* chants. Turning to secular genres, Katherine Butler explores music's uneasy relationship with masculine heroic virtues in sixteenth-century English thought, with music often regarded as a threat to masculinity and strength. Nevertheless, she shows that composers experimented with a range of onomatopoeic, textural, harmonic, and motivic means to communicate concepts of the heroic and its antithesis. The theme of heroic virtue continues as Berthold Over's chapter turns to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italian opera, but is now broadened to compare the contrasting musical realization of the virtues of heroes and heroines. Finally, Jonathan Rhodes Lee returns to the religious hero with his exploration of heroic types in Handel's oratorios. Lee shows how, at a time when the traditional operatic hero was in crisis on the English stage, new modes of Christian heroism emerged that emphasized unerring virtue in the face of suffering and provided moral lessons for audiences of both genders.

In Part II, 'Music, its Ethics and Politics – Beyond "Beethoven Hero,"' the chapters expand the previously narrow focus on Beethoven's heroic middle period and the cult of the virtuoso in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music. With studies concerning the musical cultures of France, Hungary, Germany, and Austria, this section demonstrates the wide spectrum of heroic positions – national, ethnic, revolutionary, bourgeois, and spiritual – that filtered not only into 'classical' large-scale heroic symphonies and virtuoso solo concerts but also into chamber music (especially the string quartet) and vernacular dance music.

Larry Zbikowski's chapter draws on the preceding section in that it highlights that Beethoven's heroic style (of the middle period) cannot be considered an isolated phenomenon despite its uniqueness. On the contrary, the design principles of his style are the effect of a long-lasting musical culture and an elaborated tradition of using musical signs and sign systems that were modified in relation to the changing concepts of the heroic. Using compositions by Lully, Marais, and (of course) Beethoven as examples, Zbikowski argues that heroisms in music are based on the capacity of listeners to associate certain dynamics in music (such as running arpeggios, brisk rhythms, and simplified harmonies of military music) with heroic behaviours (such as the quality to take quick and decisive action), i.e. to create analogies between the two phenomena. The sign systems consolidated through repetitive practice provide the framework that supports the analogies.

Olga Sánchez-Kisielewska draws the reader's attention to variants of heroic ideas that emerge around 1800 in the course of the Enlightenment's critique of religion and in early Romanticism. Partially standing in the Christian tradition, these types of heroism serve as alternative models for coming to terms with death and the after-life. Sánchez-Kisielewska illustrates how such types of heroes are characterized by

passivity, endurance, and resignation, qualities that are articulated in music through Beethoven's late string quartets and his specific use of tonal centres.

Csilla Pethő-Vernet and Beate Kutschke focus on political variants of heroism and their interplay with and impact on political events. Pethő-Vernet reconstructs the influence of selected genres of Hungarian folk music – *verbunkos* and *csárdás* pieces – on virtuoso and other classical music of the nineteenth century such as Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies in the context of the idealization of a Hungarian folk spirit. The latter was conceived as heroic because of the courageous resistance and fight by Hungarians against the Habsburg oppression in the first half of the nineteenth century. Beate Kutschke relates the music-hermeneutical publications in the decades around 1900 that are marked by discussion of the heroizations of music to the nationalist-patriotic emphasis on hero-worshipping in Germany and Austria between 1870 and the early 1930s. Using Mahler's Second Symphony as an example, she shows that the heroizations in the music-hermeneutic narratives were also backed up by contemporary compositions that stimulated associations with heroic modes of action and character traits.

The main theme in Part III – 'Heroic Music and its Moralities in Dictatorships and Post-Heroic Democracies' – is the forced heroization of music in twentieth-century totalitarian regimes and its consequences for heroic thinking and musical styles thereafter. Its first two chapters reconstruct the striking efforts of the National Socialist and communist dictatorships in Germany and the Soviet Union – in alliance as well as in conflict with composers and writers on music living in these systems – to make music, and heroic music in particular, propagate the authoritarian regimes' moral-political imperatives.

With her study of musical culture in the Third Reich, Juliane Riepe continues the reconstruction of heroic ideas and discourses in the German-speaking world. She analyses the socio-cultural mechanisms and rhetorical strategies by means of which Handel was stylized as a heroic German composer in the National Socialist discourse on music. In doing so, she points to the argumentative manoeuvres that had to be made in hiding the fact that the contents of Handel's oratorios were more philo-Semitic than anti-Semitic at heart and that Handel could hardly be considered a German composer anyway since he had spent almost two-thirds of his life in England. In his chapter on classical music during the Stalin era in the 1930s and 1940s, Nathan Seinen shows how domestic ideological factors – the risk of composers falling out of favour with the Soviet leadership, especially for vocal works – and foreign political events – first and foremost the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler's Germany – encouraged composers to embrace the model of the Russian 'epic' symphony as an alternative to Beethoven's heroic style and to further develop the monumentality of the symphony.

The last two chapters show how recent rock-folk and avant-garde musicians in North America and Europe feature new heroic models that reveal revived confidence in the idea of the heroic. The heroic figures they promote epitomize the moral imperative to provide help to others, even if the heroic agents themselves have only the ordinary skills of the average individual. Dietrich Helms finds this type of 'normal hero' promulgated in the songs of Bruce Springsteen – in particular in his album *The Rising*, which was released ten months after the attacks of 9/11. In

the album, the ‘normal heroes’ who distinguish themselves by simply doing what they have to do, ‘wearin’ the cross of [their] calling’, are embodied by the New York firemen who entered the burning World Trade Center and often perished there. Judith Lochhead similarly points out that the concept of the empathic everyday hero/ine has experienced increasing acceptance and popularity especially in recent decades in Europe and North America. She sees this heroic model exemplified in Kaija Saariaho’s *Émilie Suite* of 2011, which musically stages the story of Émilie du Châtelet and, in so doing, reclaims the eighteenth-century scientist and philosopher for listeners in the twenty-first century.

Despite the volume’s chronological breadth, it makes no claims to be exhaustive in terms of the musical genres, media, or geographies that it includes. Instead, this survey intends to highlight the extent of the mutual influence of the heroic and music throughout history and to inspire future work on expanding and developing the cultural and historical discourse on the heroic in music. Scott Burnham’s Afterword reflects both on what this volume achieves and the numerous directions still remaining for future research.

