Because music is unable to communicate its meaning as directly as words, it has always relied upon thought to help convey its meaning. Nineteenth-century musical thought therefore comes in two interrelated forms: (1) as literature about music ('music-*in*-thought'), such as music history, philosophy, or theology; and (2) as music itself (music-*as*-thought) written for soloists, instruments, and voices in secular or sacred contexts like the concert hall or church. This chapter traces their complex metaphysical interrelationship by using Romantic philosophical and theological concepts of musical meaning to probe understandings of created natural order, from the sound of nature to birdsong, and from the music of man to the music of God. The Great Chain of Musical Being provides a foil for gauging the resilience of the Romantic period's theological commitment to an incarnational Christianity straining under the influence of secularization.

absolute music, birdsong, Great Chain of Being, hymn, Kunstreligion, music-as-thought, music-in-thought, musicology, plainchant, programme music

Chapter 27~~.~~

Music

Bennett Zon

~~1.~~ Preface

If, as Walter Pater suggests, all arts aspire to the condition of music, the way Romantics conceived their artistic world was hierarchical. Yet paradoxically, Pater considered everything to be relative: 'Modern thought', he claims, 'is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the "relative" spirit in place of the "absolute." . . . To the modern spirit nothing is, or can be rightly known, except relatively and under conditions.' Pater's paradox is born of an age undergoing scientific transformation, when earlier philosophical certitudes clashed with the latest experimental evidence. 'The philosophical conception of the relative', he opines, 'has been developed in modern times through the influence of the sciences of observation' (Pater 1895, 65). If anything typifies the battle between the fixed nature of hierarchy and the unfixed nature of Romantic relativity, it is the 'Great Chain of Being'—the traditional idea of an ascending scale of development linking 'all forms of creation in a finely graduated hierarchical series' (Stocking 1987, 11). As such, the Great Chain of Being became a highly contested philosophical locus for Romantic debates over the relative and absolute—over subjectivity and objectivity; creationism

and evolution; religion and science; and importantly, music and Christian thought.

As an established part of Romantic thinking, the Great Chain of Musical Being therefore provides a suitable structure for locating, disentangling, and problematizing the main threads of debate in the period. The structure of this ~~essay~~ chapter facilitates this by replicating the ascending model of the Great Chain of Music Being, beginning with a brief introduction to music and nineteenth-century thought, followed by three sections corresponding to sequentially higher levels on the Chain, from sound itself to birds; from birds to man; and from man to God. The essay ends with a rumination on *Kunstreligion* (art as religion) and its implications for re-evaluating the Great Chain of Musical Being in the context of nineteenth-century Christian thought.

2. Introduction: Music and Nineteenth-Century Thought

Because music is unable to communicate its meaning as directly as words, it has always relied upon thought to help convey its meaning. In the nineteenth-century musical thought generally revolved around approaches to music not dissimilar to those used today—one starting from an examination of particular musical compositions (like theory and analysis today); another, focusing on music's broadly historical and geo-cultural contexts (musicology and

ethnomusicology); and yet another on the idea of music as a conceptual abstraction (music aesthetics, philosophy, and theology). The literature of musical thought exists principally because musical thought is also embedded or inscribed in the creative work of the time—in compositions. Extending the ideas of Mark Evan Bonds (2006), therefore, we can legitimately refer to musical compositions as 'music-*as*-thought', and the literature arising from their existence, 'music-*in*-thought'.

Like music today, nineteenth-century 'music-*as*-thought' comes in countless genres and uses—compositions were written for different occasions, ensembles, and individuals: for soloists, instruments, choirs, or any combination of these; for secular events or sacred functions; as concert music or music for a particular liturgy. As liturgical music, compositions have always had clearly defined purpose to support—and thereby deepen—the meaning of liturgical action; their meaning is bound up with the theological meaning of the action they serve. The socio-cultural purpose of concert music is also clear—as entertainment, commodity, aesthetic improvement, secular ceremony, and so on. But the actual meaning of concert music—especially purely instrumental music—is sometimes elusive in a way that its liturgical counterpart's is not. Further complicating our understanding of liturgical 'music-*as*-thought' is the fact that liturgical music was sometimes (and still is) put to use for secular events, while secular music was sometimes appropriated

for use in church. The fluid interchange of sacred and secular identities is emblemized no less by substantial compositions like Brahms's *German Requiem* (1865–68), an adamantly humanist, non-liturgical requiem based on Lutheran biblical translations (Brahms once remarked that he would have preferred the title *A Human Requiem*), than by a more modest yet universally loved Christmas carol like 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing', written by Charles Wesley in 1739 and set to music by Mendelssohn to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Gutenberg printing press.

A symptom of music's sacred/secular identity problem is the all-consuming debate about the musical meaning of instrumental concert music. Simplistically caricatured, concert music was deemed to be either programmatic, in which case (according to Liszt and his followers) it supplied a programme conveying extra-musical information like a discernible story or picture—the music, in other words, was relative to the programme; or, filtered through German Idealism (Kant, Schopenhauer, Hegel, and Wackenroder amongst others), concert music was considered absolute, pure, and entirely bereft of extra-musical meaning. If programmatic, musical meaning lay in the programme in much the way the meaning of liturgical music derived from the action of worship; if absolute, musical meaning remained resolutely ineffable. Programme music also derived its form from the form of the narrative it told; absolute music came with a pre-conceived structure inherited from classical

symphonic compositions, and often without any text to pin its meaning down.
As Carl Dahlhaus (1991 [1978]~~1991~~, 3) writes, 'the debate owed its origins to
early nineteenth-century German philosophy and poetry which created its
pathos—the association of music "detached" from text, program, or function
with the expression or notion of the absolute'.

The debate petered out when Berthold Hoeckner (2002) spoke for
many musicologists who found that nineteenth-century programmatic music—
supposedly based on the form of its narrative—used compositional structures
and principles based on elements of absolute symphonic music; and absolute
music, conversely, wavered in its allegiance towards sonata form—*the* pre-
determined, spiritually iconic form of absolute music. This highlights the fact
that some nineteenth-century 'music-*in*-thought' (programmaticists) viewed
programme music, arguably, like natural theology, probing its object's
structure to determine how the immanence of its programme expressed the
grandeur of its design; and others (absolutists) viewed absolute music like
revealed theology, examining music to determine how it directly reflects the
sublime ineffability of its transcendent source. Somewhere, however, in
between these ideologically polar opposites is the genuinely sliding scale in
which Romantic compositions are never fully one thing or another; they are
neither programmatic nor absolute, neither secular nor sacred, but a

compositionally resistant mixture of mutually opposed forces attempting to signal particular meanings through sound, and music through thought.

3. Nature and the Great Chain of Musical Being

Because the Romantic debate over the meaning of instrumental concert music was so all-encompassing, it gives the perhaps erroneous impression that all nineteenth-century 'music-*as*-thought' was created by man (because presumably only humans really think). In the nineteenth century there were (and still are today) other types of 'music-*as*-thought', which despite their ostensible lack of human contingency, were considered music because they were designed by a thinking Creator God. These include the myriad musical sounds of nature—the rustling of leaves, a babbling brook, or birdsong—and like programme music they tell the story of their design. Because of their rudimentary nature they occupy the lowest place in the sonic order of the world, as the bottom rung of a Great Chain of Musical Being seamlessly connecting music to nature, nature to man, and man to God.

The Great Chain of Being occupied pride of place in the Romantic imagination, as Lovejoy's seminal account (1960 [1936] 1960) attests. A well-established developmental trope reaching back to Aristotle, the Great Chain conventionally links nature to man and man to an apogee in God. Until the eighteenth century, God had always enjoyed pride of place atop the Great

Chain, but by the middle part of the eighteenth century, when proto-evolutionary models began vying for prominence, a competitor chain arose in which God was brazenly usurped by Enlightenment man. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Great Chain of Being was enshrined in both scientific *and* theological thought. Evidence of their interchange is abundant in nineteenth-century intellectual culture, not least in the way musical 'music-*in*-thought' responded to its world by infusing the lowest forms of 'music-*as*-thought' with the most divine properties of design. At the bottom of the Great Chain of Musical Being is sound, but sound is only sound when perceived through the agency of man, so despite the fact that God created it, sound represents a paradoxically contingent ontology. A telling example of this is found in American natural theologian John Bascom's *Natural Theology* (1880, 83). Characteristically for his time Bascom conceives God as an 'Infinite Mind', a—*The*—thinker, yet the sound He creates is sound created by the sensation of sound in the workings of the body's ear. 'Sound is not the air', he claims, 'but in the ear that hears'; moreover, 'the atmosphere is the medium of sound . . . Its density determines the presence and quality of all sounds. On it floats the melody of waves, the song of birds, the human voice.' (Bascom 1880, 117–18). According to Bascom, this gives the distinct yet mistaken impression that sound is created by man, but in fact sound is created *for* man because God is not above, but in, nature (Bascom 1880, 121). For any self-

respecting natural theologian, the mechanism—or contrivance, as William

Paley calls it—of the ear proves it, because the ear was perfectly designed to

perceive, and perception (through the mind) perfectly designed to respond. For

Paley (1854 [1802]~~1854~~, 26), 'It is only by the display of contrivance, that the

existence, the agency, the wisdom of the Deity, *could* be testified to his

rational creatures. This is the scale by which we ascend to all the knowledge

of our Creator which we possess, so far as it depends upon the phenomena, or

the works of nature.' For Bascom (1880, 83), 'The physical organism

mediates in two ways between matter and mind; first, by carrying inwards

impression made by matter, and, secondly, by bearing outward impulses due

to mind. In both of these directions the endowments of man are of a supreme

order.'

If, as Bascom would have us believe, God is in nature and sound

effectively in the mind, then as 'music-*as*-thought' animal sounds should

present a less difficult proposition in the Great Chain of Musical Being than

sound itself, because according to nineteenth-century zoology animals are

born with what might be called phantom thought, or instinct. In this sense

animal sounds, like birdsong, begin to approximate music in its more

conventional understanding as organized sound. Like man, songbirds occupy a

liminal position in the two nineteenth-century Great Chains of Musical Being,

where in theology, nature and God, or in science, nature and man, meet.

Birdsong's liminality was a common theological trope from the time of the
Middle Ages. According to Elizabeth Eva Leach (2007, 65), in the late Middle
Ages, 'The natural world reflects the Idea present in the mind of God at the
Creation itself . . . the creations of nature, such as the song of birds, are both
less praiseworthy than song made through human artifice because they are
irrational, and *more* praiseworthy because they are closer to the mind of God.'
'Birdsong', furthermore, 'can symbolize a singing that is close to the fact of
God's creation, that is natural' (Leach 2007, 53). Without perhaps realizing it,
Leach intuitively hones in on a cognitive dissonance in natural theology which
would persist well into the nineteenth century and beyond, namely the
intractable problem of identifying where exactly in the infinitesimally
seamless Great Chain of Being God imbues creatures with creativity beyond
mere physical reproduction—when sound becomes genuinely musical and no
longer purely natural; when sound ceases to rely upon the mind of God alone
for its design, but harnesses dynamically intrinsic creative and ultimately
artistic forces. Self-proclaimed Romantic anti-hero Immanuel Kant (2007
[1952] 2007, 73) captures this moment perfectly when he declares birdsong is
not art; it is nature, and greater than music itself: 'Nature [is] subject to no
constraint of artificial rules . . . Even a bird's song, which we can reduce to no
musical rule, seems to have more freedom in it, and thus to be richer for taste,

than the human voice singing in accordance with all the rules that the art of music prescribes.'

While according to Kant, nature may have freed birdsong from the strictures of art, songbirds themselves remained fixed in a teleological project which differentiated strata of the Great Chain of Being. Scottish Evangelist and orni-theologist Henry Drummond (1851–97) adapts this model to a scientific principle called the unity of type:

> By Unity of Type is meant that fundamental agreement in structure which we see in organic beings of the same class . . . According to this law every living thing that comes into the world is compelled to stamp upon its offspring the image of itself. The dog, according to its type, produces a dog; the bird a bird . . . As the Bird-Life builds up a bird, the image of itself, so the Christ-Life builds up a Christ, the image of Himself, in the inward nature of man. When a man becomes a Christian the natural process is this: The Living Christ enters into his soul. Development begins. The quickening Life seizes upon the soul, assimilates surrounding elements, and begins to fashion it. According to the great Law of Conformity to Type this fashioning takes a specific form. (Drummond 1896, 293–94)

Unity of type is significant when delineated against strata in the Great Chain of Musical Being because it Christologizes a creature not limited by the fixed nature of its developmental position. Birds, therefore, like man, have the capacity to transcend the limitations of their physical being through the liberating nature of music.

4. Man and the Great Chain of Musical Being

The transcendence of birds—and animals—is predictably and repeatedly analogized in the literature of nineteenth-century Christian religion, in books like W. E. Evans's *The Songs of the Birds; or, Analogies of Animal and Spiritual Life* (1845), covering at least as many characteristics as there are myriad types of familiar and unfamiliar birds at home and abroad: the skylark behaves 'Like spirit pure / Ascending to its rest' (Evans 1845, 48); the linnet 'sits in faith of things as yet unseen' (Evans, 1845, 77). While taxonomically diverse, however, these characteristics are invariably bound together by one important unifying factor—the Bible.

Scripture governs the analogical index of human music as well, especially when nineteenth-century 'music-*in*-thought' uses the Bible to trace the history of musical origins in the 'Infinite Mind' of God. Music historian George Hogarth starts by defining music as 'a gift of the Author of Nature to the whole human race. Its existence and influence are to be traced in the

records of every people from the earliest ages, and are perceptible, at the present time, in every quarter of the globe. It is a part of the benevolent order of Providence, that we are capable of receiving from the objects around us, pleasures independent of the immediate purposes for which they have been created' (Hogarth 1835, 1). But there is more to Hogarth's Palean infusion than meets the eye (or ear). Designed to be received, music is also received to be designed specifically by man: 'The history of Music', Hogarth opines 'is coeval with the history of our species' (Hogarth 1835, 3). In pre-Darwinian times our species begins with Creation, in 4004 BC, as calculated in Bishop Ussher's famously precise genealogical back-timing; thus Hogarth's contemporary, William Stafford reiterates Padre Martini's expectedly creationist belief 'that Adam was instructed by his Creator in every art and science, and that a knowledge of music was of course included—a knowledge which Adam employed in praising and adoring the Supreme Being' (Stafford 1830, 12).

Scripture introduces another dimension to the complex theological geometry which is the nineteenth-century Great Chain of Musical Being—revealed theology—and with it a co-operation between revealed and natural constructions of musical meaning. Music first appears in the Bible not as 'music-*as*-thought' (composition) but as man's (Jubal's) technologically developed musical instruments of lyre and pipe (Genesis 4:21), conveniently

supplying Palean music historians with abundant, scripturally endorsed contrivances, literally instruments of music which prove the existence of God. The good Palean William Gardiner adopts this approach in *The Music of Nature* (1832). Many of the musical compositions he includes are scripturally derivative, and some of his footnotes even specify the divine origins of creatures like birds (Gardiner 1832, 228). More significantly, Gardiner begins with 'the faculties of the [human] ear' and more or less ends with an extended examination of musical instruments, clearly locating music history within the developmental continuum and creative composition of man from natural to biblically -revealed theological perspectives.

As Gardiner's work suggests, the combination of natural and revealed theologies burgeons in certain musical forms, especially the hymn, perhaps the most formally concentrated mixture of natural and revealed theologies in nineteenth-century 'music-*as*-thought'. Danish pastor, author, poet, philosopher, historian, teacher, and politician N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872) encapsulates this when he maintains that 'sound is the life of the Word and tone is the power of sound which reveals the Spirit' (Sermon [Christmas Day 1822], cited in Thodberg and Thyssen 1983, 166). Like all hymns, nineteenth-century hymns express Christian thought in as many forms as the people who sing them, but one characteristic emerges from the confusing tangle of theological influences. Reflecting the influence of German philosophical

Idealism (the individual represents the whole)—itself fertilized by contemporary evolutionary paradigms (the individual recapitulates the species)—nineteenth-century hymns commonly function in an intentionally recapitulatory manner; that is, in individual microcosm they are purposefully designed to embody the theological macrocosm of God. Perhaps expectedly, therefore, Tractarian hymn writer John Mason Neale claims that 'Church hymns must be the life-expression of all hearts' (Neale 1862, xvii). John Richard Watson glosses Neale, contending that

> In saying this, Neale was pointing to a sense in which hymns
> should be concerned with the life of the heart, using the heart as
> a metonymy for the whole person, spiritual, emotional,
> physical, the feeling and thinking human being. He was
> concerned, too, with all hearts, with something that can be
> shared by all humanity . . . For hymns are not Christian
> Dogmatics, or Systematic Theology, but the expression of all
> the varieties of human religious experience. (Watson 1999, 4)

Nineteenth-century hymns fulfil this purpose not only textually but musically, characteristically recapitulating within individual textual symbolisms the dimensionally totalizing force of musical metaphor; thus, hymn music does not merely *represent* its words (as programme music might represent its narrative), but through music *presénts* (displays) and *présents* (embodies) the

Word as absolute music displays and embodies the Ideal, the Infinite Mind, the transcendent God in as many words.

Recapitulation inflects other genres in the Great Chain of Musical Being, not simply by incarnating in sound meaning expressed in words (historically, a musical commonplace), but by intentionally uniting textual immanence (words, programme) and musical transcendence (the Word, the Absolute) through Romantic concepts of divine simplicity. For Tübingen Catholic theologian Franz Anton Staudenmaier, divine simplicity explains how the immanent humanity of Christ recapitulates the immutable, transcendent unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Hinze 2001). More broadly, 'The world is God's idea of the world brought into being, and the perfection of the original world consisted in the fact, that it absolutely corresponded to the Divine idea' (~~Franz Anton~~ Staudenmaier, *Die Lehre von der Idee*, cited in Formby 1849, xi). If according to Staudenmaier, therefore, the created world recapitulates God's idea of the world in the same way Christ recapitulates the Trinity, then conceivably any form of music has the capacity to expresses divine simplicity. Indeed, the recapitulatory~~ionary~~ nature of divine simplicity may help explain the complex interpretation of Christ-centred Trinitarianism espoused, for example, by Richard Wagner, who (as theologian Richard Bell has shown) was influenced by his readings of August Freidrich Gfrörer, himself an ordained Lutheran and (much to Wagner's

annoyance) convert to Catholicism: 'For Wagner the most complete human being is Jesus Christ who bears the most perfect image of God' (Bell 2013, 157). In sketches for the proposed five-act drama *Jesus of Nazareth* (composed between 1848 and 1849), Wagner's Jesus seems to confirm this: 'God is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost: for the father begetteth the son throughout all ages, and the son begetteth again the father of the son to all eternity: this is Life and Love, this is the Holy Spirit'. And later: 'But God is the father and the son, begetting himself anew forever; in the father was the son, and in the son is the father, as, then, we are members of one body which is God, whose breath is everlasting Love, so do we never die; like as the body, which is God, never dieth, because it is the father and the son, i.e. the constant manifestment of eternal Love itself' (cited in Bell 2013, 249).

An admittedly less illustrious, yet equally strong devotee of divine simplicity, is Henry Formby, plainchant apologist, ordained Anglican, and like Gfrörer a convert to Catholicism. Openly influenced by Staudenmaier, Formby believes that plainchant is not merely 'music-*as*-thought', but 'music-*as*-Music', 'Jesus-*as*-Christ', and 'Christ-*as*-God'. In *The Plain Chant, The Image and Symbol of the Humanity of our Divine Redeemer and the Blessed Mary* (1848, 9), chant is 'designed by our Divine Redeemer to pourtray ([sic]), in a perceptible and intelligible manner, the attributes and characteristics of the human nature, which He took to Himself from His blessed Mother, and

this in the manner of an abiding manifestation of Himself in the Church'. Moreover, 'Song is gifted with the inherent capability of being a manifestation of our blessed Lord's humanity', (Formby 1848, 10), with 'the mysterious power of symbolising the Man–God, and manifesting Him in a sacramental but intelligible manner to all who hear, and in an especial degree, to those who sing'. (Formby 1848, 13).

5. God and the Great Chain of Musical Being

Formby's theological anthropology of plainchant represents a fulcrum in the Great Chain of Musical Being, because it marks the position where music maintains a perfectly balanced combination of human and divine properties. That perfect balance begins to erode outside the explicitly Christian Church, however, as 'music-*in*-thought' seeks to transcendentalize concert 'music-*as*-thought' into pure thought alone. Indeed, the paradox of nineteenth-century Christian musical thought is its genuinely theological commitment to incarnational Christianity under the auspices of an aggressive transcendental absolutism. At the turn of the eighteenth into the nineteenth centuries it is the symphony which becomes the conceptual 'ball'—batted, kicked, and thrown around the metaphysical arena. With the help of Romantic recapitulationism, philosopher Daniel Schubart, for example, writes of the symphony that 'It is not the mere din of voices . . . it is a musical whole whose parts, like

emanations of spirit, form a whole again' (Christian Friederich Daniel

Schubart, *Leben und Gesinnungen* [Stuttgart, 1791], cited in Dahlhaus 1991

[1978] 1991, 10). By the 1870s the paradigm of musical absolutism had

migrated to Beethoven's string quartets: 'the idea that music is a revelation of

the absolute, specifically because it "dissolves" itself from the sensual, and

finally even from the affective sphere' (Dahlhaus 1991 [1978] 1991). That

absolute music is 'spiritual' in the broadest sense was never in doubt, but its

Christian theological credentials became attenuated in absolute music's

determination to be emancipated or redeemed from the created world itself—

to seek its own 'absolute-ion', to coin a word.

Some nineteenth-century writers (usually advocates of programme

music) deem absolute music to be a lower developmental form because of its

seemingly unformed linguistic properties. If, as Darwin proposed, language

follows music, then surely absolute music must be more primitive; if,

conversely, as Herbert Spencer proposed, music follows language, then

absolute music must be music at its developmental apogee. What unites these

antithetical positions is their methodological obligation to de-represent and de-

materialize music as music—effectively to summon birdsong, for example,

without—or suppressing—the spiritually sullying reminder of the bird's

creation and presence. Musicologist Daniel Chua writes of absolute music: the

'lack of representation became the ineffable intimations of the noumenal self'

(Chua 2011, 154), but even this astute observation fails to capture the explicitly Christian lacuna at the aesthetic core of theologically unspecified musical absolutism. Of musical Romanticism more generally, Chua remarks: 'The God of Schlegel is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, despite its claim to be one, for Schlegel's god is merely a regulative principle in the will to systematise and poeticise the entire cosmos—the project of Romanticism' (Chua 1999, 172). Indeed, the God of musical absolutism is often resolutely Music, not the God of overtly Christian theological formation, and yet Music comes in many forms allied to Christian belief—feeling, infinitude, sublimity, transcendence, and so on. Because music can speak without words, Schleiermacher, for example, hails it as an exemplar of religious *Gefühl* (feeling)—itself uniting these diverse attributes. Gunter Scholtz describes *Gefühl* as

> the form in which the individual becomes immediately aware of, possesses, and knows herself—as an individual unity of reason and nature. Feeling, in other words, is a relation to oneself, 'immediate self-consciousness', in Schleiermacher's words. It is a form of cognition, but without concepts and without separating the subject and object of cognition. (Gunter Scholtz, 'Schleiermacher', in Sorgner and Fürbeth 2010, 51)

In Schleiermacher's words, the composer's 'greatest triumph, it is true, is when he bids adieu to language altogether and embodies, in this endlessly changing wealth of tonal sequences and harmonies, all the tremors of life that can pass through the soul' (Friedrich Schleiermacher, cited in Scholtz, 'Schleiermacher', in Sorgner and Fürbeth 2010, 55).

What this reveals is the simple, indisputable fact that despite the transcendental aspirations of absolute music, the Great Chain of Musical Being hits a glass ceiling at incarnational Christianity. Although in the aesthetic mobility of the time, programme music can become absolute and secular music sacred, absolute music can never become absolutely Christian. This paradox raises questions about the role music played in defining and expressing the nature of Romantic Christianity: does nineteenth-century 'music-*as-Christian*-thought' differ from 'music-*as*-thought'; is 'music-*as-Christian*-thought' always theologically sacred even if it is culturally secular; and why does music spiritually conceptualized as absolute, singularly resist explicitly incarnational Christian theology? First, 'music-*as-Christian*-thought' and 'music-*as*-thought' become indistinguishable in the general dissolution of dichotomous boundaries associated with *Kunstreligion*—the belief that music is divine (Kramer 2005, iii)—whether that music is texted or untexted, immanent or transcendent, secular or sacred, programme or absolute, expressed through natural or revealed theologies. Referring to Wackenroder's

concept of instrumental music, Kevin Regan (2008, 67) calls this dynamic status 'meaning-without-meaning'; Vladimir Jankélévitch (2003, 11), 'meaningful and meaningless'. Secondly, in its most universalizing manifestations 'music-*in*-Christian-thought' considers *all* music 'music-*as*-Christian*-thought', from the lowest to the highest forms of the Great Chain of Musical Being, from sound itself to its most transcendental manifestation. And lastly and most importantly, 'music-*in*-Christian-thought' aspires to the condition of 'music-*as*-Christian-thought' to such an extent that it empties itself of Christianity to fill itself with the totality which it represents; in other words, like music—when transformed into music—Christian thought becomes meaningful and meaningless, meaning-without-meaning.

6. Conclusion: *Kunstreligion* and the Great Chain of Musical Being

When Christian thought becomes meaningful and meaningless, the Great Chain of Musical Being ceases to be a Chain, and what previously illustrated a two-dimensional ladder teleologically ascending from nature to man and man to God, is transformed into a three-dimensional orb—a world, *The* world—in which Nature and Man, Man and God, are inextricably inter-related as a transcendental expression of unity within diversity; as Isaiah Berlin defines it, 'unity and multiplicity' (Berlin 2000, 18). Substitute music for man in Oken's

theological proclamation, and you have the essence of *Kunstreligion*: 'Man [music] is the creation in which God fully becomes an object to himself. Man [music] is God represented *by* God. God is a man [music] representing God in self-consciousness . . . Man [music] is God wholly manifested, *der ganz erschienene Gott*' (Lovejoy 1960 [1936] 1960, 320). But as the Great Chain of Musical Being reveals, *Kunstreligion* alone does not and cannot explain the divine within the totality of God's creation, because by its very nature art is created by man; in other words, only when nature recapitulates art does art recapitulate God. As much as nineteenth-century Christian thought sought to naturalize art by anthropologizing God, however, the fact remains that the ineffable nature of music defied Christian deification because 'music-*in*-thought' constructed 'music-*as*-thought' not in God's *image*, nor in Christ's *image*, but in man's own 'imago humani'. Nineteenth-century 'music-*as*-thought' may have been divine but it represented man, and not in the form of an incarnated Christ, but in the abstraction of the human imagination—where music became thought and thought became music; where in the Great Chain of Musical Being the relative became absolute, the secular became sacred, the programmatic absolute, the immanent transcendent, and the unity diversity; where 'music-*as*-thought' became 'thought-*as*-music', and 'music-*in*-thought' 'thought-*in*-music'.

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