

Minors, Helen Julia (ed.) (2013). *Music, Text and Translation*. London: Bloomsbury (Bloomsbury Advances in Translation), xviii + pp. 223, £80 (HB), £24,99 (PB), £25,99 (PDF eBook). ISBN: 978-1-4411-7308-9 (hardback), 978-1472576545 (paperback edition, 2014).

This collective volume edited by Helen Julia Minors is a fine example of the aim set for the Bloomsbury Advances in Translation collection, meant as a platform both for advanced research in the field and for its growing interdisciplinary nature. It brings together the study of music and translation, a cultural and artistic encounter which has only recently started to attract attention within academic research, despite the pervasive influence of these two fundamental areas of human experience in the development of societies and of the obvious interface between them. Indeed, translation “plays a variety of roles in the arts, particularly within a musical context” – the editor rightly claims in her introduction (1). Today, modern technological advances have made music-making “a constant movement of translation, remediation, transgression, creative betrayal and reinvention,” as Michael Chanan states in his thought-provoking preface (xiv).

Researchers within Translation Studies have recently started to evince an increasing interest in the relationship between music and translation. Several conferences focusing on it took place in Europe in 2014; specific entries have already been included in reference works in the field (Bosseaux 2011 and Mateo 2012); and two important monographic volumes have been published: Gorrée (2005), studying the vocal translation of songs from a semiotic approach; and Susam-Sarajeva’s edition of the special issue of *The Translator* (2008), which illustrates the interdisciplinary nature, complexity and research potential of the topic. This new collection edited by Minors “speaks to Susam-Sarajeva’s excellent volume [...]; however, it ensures to include some new, and perhaps surprising, voices on these issues,” as the editor herself expresses (4). And it certainly does so, by not only focusing on the wide variety of transferences between music and translation and acknowledging the cultural context, but also by bringing in the visual arts (painting, drawing, architecture or performance space).

In their respective introductory sections, Chanan and Minors (xii-xiv; 1-6) enunciate the key issues underlying the studies in the volume, which concern the complex relations between music, language and translation, and raise some challenging questions forming the critical basis for the research in the book. Among the questions, summed up by Minors, we can quote: “How is music affected by text translation? And, how does music influence the translation of the text it sets? How is the sense of the text and music transferred in the translation process? In what way can music translate the sense of text and other art forms?” (1).

These and other matters are explored from the three areas of translation defined by Roman Jakobson: intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic – the latter being the standpoint taken by a considerable number of chapters which focus on the transference across different arts and/or artistic methods. Besides, the book deals with cultural, historical, artistic, ethnological, political and economic issues that help us understand how translation works in musical contexts. In order to do so, it brings together research from various areas and disciplines, such as Translation Studies (and audiovisual translation), Cultural Studies, Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Film Studies, Composition and Creative Writing; and contributors from a range of backgrounds who reinforce the interdisciplinarity of the volume: TS academics, professional translators, surtitle and subtitle authors, film and music critics, musicologists, composers and artists, a documentary film maker and a poet. The volume will therefore be of interest to readers from all these backgrounds and disciplines.

After Minors's introduction, the book is divided into two parts, aiming at a twofold balance: on the one hand, by combining theoretical and case studies (on different translation processes and musical genres) and, on the other, by delving into the question of whether music can translate (and how) as well as into the impact musical elements may themselves have on a textual translation process. Thus, Part one, deals with 'Translating Text to Music,' and is itself divided into two sections: 'Opera' and 'Song;' Part two, 'Cultural and Intersemiotic Translation,' focuses more on transferences across media, cultures and senses, and is also subdivided: into 'Musical Translation' and 'Transference and Adaptation of Sense.'

Lucile Desblache's chapter opens the section on opera in Part one. She interestingly observes how, while opera is more and more a tool of globalisation – strongly relying on transnational co-productions, i.e. collaborative ventures between theatres from different countries which are marketed globally – at the same time, these contemporary productions promote "multilingual, multicultural, and multimodal values and products, introducing world audiences to a wide range of languages and cultures" (12). Multilingualism and transdisciplinarity are key issues in opera today, together with accessibility, since, though the repertoire is still largely a thing of the past, opera houses resort to the latest technological instruments in order to attract new audiences.

The next three chapters, two-four, deal with surtitling, a translation mode which was first introduced in the opera context; all three are contributions from professional surtitle authors, who approach their studies from slightly different perspectives. Judi Palmer analyses all important aspects of the surtitling process from the production point of view. Starting with a historical overview of surtitle technology, she then focuses on key features of the process: the collaborative cast and task, the prerequisites for the ideal surtitle author, the ways of reducing the inevitable distraction surtitles

entail, the differences between surtitles and subtitles, the great challenge posed by the need to retain the qualities of the original libretto while reflecting the production on stage, format aspects, and the role of the surtitler during the actual performance. Palmer ends with a challenging question about the impact surtitling may have had on new avant-garde styles of production and how this relates to (or contradicts) its initial aim.

Jacqueline Page's chapter is a good complement to the previous one, for it focuses on translation decisions in a particular case study, tracing the creation of opera surtitles from commission to production, and comparing the translation choices made for surtitling to those for sung translation of one and the same opera. Page analyses the factors which make surtitling a type of constrained translation, relating to the musical content, the language content, audience impact, the technical conventions of surtitling, and the production. Both contributors i.e. Palmer and Page, insist on the multisemiotic nature of opera and how it impacts on translation decisions. Audience's understanding also occupies an important place in Page's self-reflective chapter as well as in her own work: "As a surtitle author, I often reflect upon what I would expect as an audience member" (46).

Kenneth Chalmers's chapter nicely rounds off this section on opera translation, reflecting on "how translation can assist or obstruct understanding" and providing examples of opera translation over the centuries, "to assess how they convey meaning to the audience" (49). He has some interesting reflections on what actually constitutes the *understanding* of the vocal text, on how the musical and the poetic structure of an opera impact on translation-surtitling decisions, and on issues which are specific to surtitling: for instance, in terms of audience reception, to what extent "hearing prompts reading" so that the text on the screen is "scanned for confirmation" rather than "actually 'read'" (52); in terms of production, how surtitling for staged vs concert performances implies a different attitude towards 'neutrality' in translation decisions.

The three chapters in section two of Part one turn to songs. In Chapter five, the late Professor Peter Newmark reflects on the ways in which meaning is generated and propagated in Art Song (or *Lied*), a musical type which can be considered "as a genre in continual translation" (60), involving the translation of poetic language, of word-music relations, of musical style, or of cultural associations because of the different performance contexts. He resorts to intersemiotic translation to explain the process of song setting, in which an inverted form of intersemiotic relations takes place: something is transferred from text to music and viceversa. Translation, therefore, is not restricted to the textual level, and it acquires multiple dimensions when word-music relations are involved, since these have consequences on the creation of meaning: "The partnership in word-music relations brings new meaning which neither alone can hold, convey or generate" (67).

Chapter six, by Peter Low, is presented as a case study of word-music relations and translation, for which the author has wisely chosen works by Benjamin Britten, because of this composer's care in his selection of words and texts for his music, and his insistence that they should be understood by audiences. Britten's vocal music "raises many practical issues about translating" (78) and Low focuses on the different kinds of translation that best serve musical texts, emphasising that the choices should respond to the needs of the end user (singer or audience?), the purpose and context of the target text and the characteristics of each musical text. He thus distinguishes between translations to sing, to speak, to read (each with different sub-types), 'study translations' for performers, and surtitling, all of which are undoubtedly more effective options than an 'all-purpose translation.'

The section is closed with Charlotte Bosseaux's analysis of the dubbing of Marilyn Monroe's voice – in dialogues and songs – into French, which is the object of chapter seven, showing how voice choices in dubbing can change the way audiences perceive foreign actors/actresses, and therefore their characters, in translation. Bosseaux proposes a multimodal analysis of the aural and visual elements in an audio-visual product, insisting on the need for intersemiotic translation, i.e. going beyond verbal elements and considering actors' performances, body language and voice. The latter, in particular, should receive more attention in film translation research and professional practice, as her analysis confirms its powerful impact on characterisation.

Part two develops the concept of intersemiotic translation, presenting transferences between art forms and cultures. The chapters in the first section, eight-eleven, focus on shifts and inspiration between music, texts and the visual arts. Jeff Hilson discusses homophonic (or phonetic) translation, a mode of poetry translation, not widely accepted, in which a poetic source text is translated into another language not for its sense but for its sound. Hilson analyses some examples from a poetic perspective, in order to illustrate the effects of homophonic translation, whose 'task' "is not to look *through* language as a transparent medium, but to look *at* it" (96). The author has some interesting reflections about musicality in poetry and about the roles of language and 'meaning' in homophonic translation, which, being governed by phonetic coincidence between the languages involved, releases multiple interpretations and might therefore be seen "as a violent expulsion of unrecoverable meaning" (101).

Helen Julia Minors contributes a chapter examining how composer Eric Satie transferred the sense of visual art (some sketches of Parisian culture) into a musical-verbal work. Minors addresses some contentious issues related to musical translation, such as the fact that "there is no single agreed *sense* to music" (108) and the intangible nature of artistic translation – or transference between the arts. The latter inevitably implies changes as it does not only transfer content but also medium, processes and sensory

perception. This type of intersemiotic translation – or ‘transmedialisation,’ a term used by Minors here and which recurs in some studies in the volume – cannot therefore seek the same content in the images, texts or music involved; rather, it seeks the transmutation of sense and process, becoming a really creative force.

Moving a step further in the transference between the arts, John Cage’s oeuvre, uniquely marked by the close relationship between, and constant movement across, art forms, is discussed by Alan Stones in chapter ten, with reference to selected examples illustrating how the composer borrowed and intersemiotically translated ideas and techniques between music, text and the visual arts throughout his creative life. Thus, he developed a type of musical notation which was closer to visual art than to the traditional musical score; he integrated writing into his creative process, seeing his texts as musical activities; and close attention to visual forms and spatial and temporal considerations became integral to his work. Cage is therefore an outstanding example of intersemiotic translation – or rather merging – between the arts.

Closing the section, Debbie Moss continues the thread of the two previous chapters, now focusing on the work of two different artists, the sculptor Anish Kapoor and the composer Arvo Pärt, in order to exemplify the process through which a piece of visual art and a musical composition may speak to each other. Moss discusses difficult questions raised by Pärt’s work about the relationship between sculpture and music in general – such as the problem posed by the abstract nature of both media and the audio-visual contrast between them – and explores how interart transfer is still possible despite these obstacles. This is shown in the way Pärt successfully distilled his musical composition from a receptive and a creative perspective, directly responding to his own experience of Kapoor’s installation.

The last section, examining how sense is transferred or adapted across cultures, languages, genres and media, is opened with Klaus Kaindl’s study of the translation of Edith Piaf’s songs into German (chapter twelve). Kaindl addresses key issues related to the translation of popular songs, aiming at “a reassessment of the transformational character of each act of translation” (151), by considering not just the textual strategies but also the sociological dimension and the semiotic complexity of these texts. Piaf provides a good case study to show how interlingual translation may imply the adaptation of (musical) genres: her *Chanson réaliste* was actually domesticated in Germany through the translations made for Mireille Mathieu, following the conventions of the German *Schlager*. Kaindl compares Mathieu’s German rendition of Piaf’s songs to that of Ina Deter – who gave the French singer back her realism – consistently basing his assessment not just on the textual decisions taken for the different translations but also on an analysis of the visuals and musical style of the performances.

Chapter thirteen introduces a change in perspective, for Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg analyses the translation and transcription of non-European music from an ethnomusicologist's point of view, addressing the challenges, ethic problems and methodological risks involved. Although the author states that she employs the term 'translation' broadly, the different uses the term is given throughout the chapter (verbal translation, transposing, transcription, interpretation, description or paraphrasing) are slightly confusing for the reader. The author states that finding the right analytical model, being aware of local practices and acknowledging the varying concepts of music in diverse contexts – since they are by no means universal – are key to an understanding of how musical and oral phenomena move across musical languages and cultures.

Mark Shuttleworth also insists on the need to understand musical practices when dealing with music-related texts. In his chapter, fourteen, he looks at a recurrent feature of musical texts: metaphors, which he approaches from a translational point of view, analysing his own rendering of a musical monograph on the Hungarian composer Ligeti. He studies the factors affecting the translator's decision-making in relation to metaphors, the translation of which he places in the context of the whole text. Shuttleworth sees the greatest challenge in what he terms metaphorical terminology (in his classification of the metaphors in the text), since one major problem lies in working out the meaning of some items involved. His study is a fresh contribution to the investigation on metaphor and translation, much of which has so far centred on literary texts.

The last chapter in the volume, fifteen, focuses on the subtitling of music tv programmes for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. Mark Harrison shows how the specificity of both factors (the type of programme and the intended receiver) makes this type of subtitling a really challenging genre. He explores the content, methods and problems which subtitlers face in this particular context, such as much tighter working times than in other programmes, the copyright rules and regulations which surround the use of lyrics, or the specific needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences of music tv programmes. In this regard, he wonders whether the subtitles should convey not just the lyrics but also information about the music. His discussion includes an analysis of a real world situation which illustrates quality, reading speeds and genre differences in music subtitling.

The book ends with a useful and fairly comprehensive joint bibliography and a general index. All in all, this is a good and innovative contribution to the growing interest in music and translation, probably more comprehensive than previous monographs since it significantly extends the approach to intersemiotic translation and the visual arts, widening the perspectives of the study. The theoretical issues addressed and the case studies analysed, some of which present really interesting and illustrative examples, prove that there is still a lot to research in the 'marriage' between word and music in the context of translation.

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