One last point about why this book is worthy of your attention. Ferrara is not only a systematic and thorough thinker, who manages to masterfully navigate complex literatures; he also writes brilliantly: both qualities will be necessary if we are to defend democracy effectively. Following the author, one might say that good reasons alone will not suffice to transform the readers' viewpoints—they must also move the imagination. *The Democratic Horizon* demonstrates, with intellectual ingenuity and rhetorical panache, how to achieve this goal.

Notes

1. All citations are from the book under review, unless otherwise stated.
2. See Alessandro Ferrara, *Reflective Authenticity: Rethinking the Project of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1998); Alessandro Ferrara, *Justice and Judgment: The Rise and the Prospect of the Judgment Model in Contemporary Political Philosophy* (London: Sage, 1999); Alessandro Ferrara, *The Force of the Example: Explorations in the Paradigm of Judgment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
3. David Runciman, *The Confidence Trap: A History of Democracy in Crisis from World War I to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
4. David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2013), 5.

Rousseau among the Moderns: Music, Aesthetics, Politics, by Julia Simon.University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013, x + 240 pp.

Reviewed by: Alexandra Cook, *University of Hong Kong, Department of Philosophy, Hong Kong*
DOI: 10.1177/0090591715627436

In 1742 Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) presented a system of musical notation to the Académie royale des sciences of Paris; the originality of his system was questioned, with Rousseau claiming the examiners did not understand what he had proposed. Be that as it may, Rousseau had made his entrance onto the Parisian, and thereby, the European musical scene. He authored over two hundred articles on music for Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* and later transformed these articles into a *Dictionnaire de musique* that appeared in November 1767.

In these works, Rousseau argues that melody, not harmony, is the fundamental aspect of music and that Italian music is superior to French because it allows emotions to be expressed free from constraint. These views placed him in opposition to one of the fathers of modern music theory, namely the French composer and theorist Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764); their dispute contributed directly to the querelle des bouffons. Moreover, Rousseau was not only a writer on music (Simon denies he was a music theorist, p. 4), he was also a composer, who applied his views in *The Village Soothsayer* (1752), an opera that is still performed today.

Simon asks how Rousseau's musical writings and practice relate to the *Social Contract*, folk music, modern aesthetics, and even jazz. This project is faithful to Rousseau's claim in his second autobiographical work, *Dialogues: Rousseau Judge of Jean-Jacques*, that his works form one whole (*Œuvres complètes* vol. I [Paris, 1959], 930). She stresses that hers is not an attempt to examine Rousseau's ideas in context, but rather a move "away from the terms, definitions and debates of the eighteenth century [which] enables connections to be forged between the musical concerns as aesthetic arguments and the broader debates in philosophy" (p. 4). The major exception to this approach is chapter 3, in which Simon dissects the debates between Rousseau and Rameau on the relative importance of harmony and melody.

The work under review begins with a critique of Jacques Derrida's interpretation in *OfGrammatology* (1974) of Rousseau's posthumous *Essay on the origin of languages in which melody and musical imitation are discussed*, originally intended to form part of the *Discourse on the origins of inequality among men* (1754). The need for an excursus on Derrida could be questioned since we will probably be reading Rousseau long after we stop reading Derrida; however, this detour yields important insights into the author's approach to her subject. For example, Simon takes issue with Derrida's claim that music "'paints' the passions," possibly an unreferenced allusion to Rousseau's comment that music "paints *everything* . . . it seems to put the eye in the ear" (emphasis added; "Imitation," *Dictionnaire de musique, OC*, vol. V [1995]: 860–61; all translations mine unless otherwise indicated). Simon counters that "music and painting are *distinctly different* in . . . the ways in which they engage the imagination for Rousseau" (emphasis added; p. 12). Yet if music can paint *everything*, why should it not be able to paint the passions? Simon assures the reader she will take up this issue "in the following chapters," although she does not indicate where. In chapter 1 Simon touches briefly on this issue and in chapter 5 analyzes the distinctions between the effects of music and painting in Rousseau's article "Imitation" (p. 163ff.), but fails to identify it by name anywhere in the book. These might seem to be minor points, but they matter.

Simon devotes chapter 1 to Rousseau's way of constituting community through music: here she is on strong ground, arguing for the significance of performance—interpretation and improvisation, in particular—in Rousseau's understanding of how music brings people together in a "moi commun" in which individual contributions are possible. Simon stresses the role of accent and rhythm in arousing the passions, but her speculation (prefaced by an "[i] f") that music has an ethical charge requires stronger justification (p. 38). Surprisingly, she does not marshal Rousseau's views in support of her position: "There has never been found a more effective way to implant the principles of *morality and love and virtue* in the human mind" (emphasis added; "Musique," *OC* V, 921) than through music. Rousseau notes, however, that since the ancients it has been known that music can excite violence, citing one "Erric," King of Denmark, who became so worked up "by a more modern *Music*" that he killed his best servants (*OC* V, 921–22)! These reflections show that Rousseau was aware of music's ability to sway listeners to either good or evil, a viewpoint that is very important to the following chapter.

Chapter 2 explicates Simon's notion of "singing democracy," already advanced in earlier published work that is not found in the bibliography, although it is mentioned in the acknowledgements. Simon's hypothesis that the political association can be forged through music is indeed a fruitful one since Rousseau's readers are often puzzled about how this association might be cemented. But Simon takes this bonding a step further: music offers "a model for democratic community" (p. 74). So is the *Social Contract* democratic and if so, in what ways? Simon sidesteps this contentious issue, noting in passing Rousseau's statement that democracy is a government only for a people of gods: "And yet the thrust of the work . . . encourage[s] and challenge[s] us to strive toward democracy" (p. 48).

Simon deploys Rousseau's views on the relative absolute in instrument tuning to suggest that the general will, that is, the good of all, is no absolute, but can shift across time and context. Performing together using the accessible, simplified notation system of Rousseau undoubtedly promotes recognition of other sentient beings, emotional sharing and social bonding as Simon argues. Yet it cannot be denied that totalitarian regimes promote group think precisely through such musical means. Hence to leap from constituting community through emotive music to democracy is challenging. One thinks of the "Horst Wessel Lied"; singers of this Nazi song may have improvised when singing it together, but that did not make them either ethical or democratic.

Simon proffers Rousseau's concept of "melodic unity" as another musical device with democratic implications, enabling "individual voices" to "be respected and heard . . . while at the same time, the community as a whole

would speak with a single voice" (p. 74). On this view, democracy functions like an ensemble of musicians, each playing his or her part, while at the same time producing a performance together. However, an orchestra or even an ensemble usually has a conductor or a leader, a role that needs to be addressed here. At best, collective performance of, and exposure to, certain sorts of emotive music might contribute to a democratic political culture, but music alone cannot secure this outcome; nor is it a sine qua non for democracy.

In its lack of harmony, its reliance on melody, and its expression of emotion, folk music, the topic of chapter 4, embodies key principles of Rousseau's music theory. Folk music also has close connections with the anthropological arguments of the *Discourse on the origins of inequality* and with Rousseau's deployment of non-*European* music in the polemics against Rameau. Key evidence for this chapter is Rousseau's use of the Swiss cowherd's song *ranz des vaches* in "Musique" (*Dictionnaire de musique*), to illustrate emotive effects of music that are completely independent of its properties *qua* music. Rousseau includes this song on plate "N" of the *Dictionnaire* with Chinese, Persian, and Native American songs to show the "diverse accents of [these] peoples." Simon argues that according to eighteenth-century genetic logic, "typology of cultures," and "Rousseau's understanding of cultural development that he builds from Montesquieu" (p. 123), the *ranz des vaches* is "primitive" music, which is why Rousseau grouped it with Chinese, Persian, and Native American music.

This argument is strained, to say the least. First, as Simon acknowledges, in *Spirit of the laws* Montesquieu classified political regimes, attributing their differences to climatic and other physical influences. His method is therefore called climatic *determinism*, effectively the opposite of a theory of "cultural development." It should also be noted that Montesquieu devotes considerable attention to the Chinese and Ottoman Empires, which comprehended many cultures and languages within their boundaries. Since Rousseau argues that sung music depends on the accent and rhythm of language, these pluralistic states did not have one musical culture that could neatly fit into Montesquieu's regime typology.

Second, the thesis that Rousseau grouped Swiss, Chinese, Persian, and Native American songs together on account of their common *primitivism* flies in the face of his argument in the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750) that Chinese sophistication, devotion to learning and fine manners caused China's capitulation to a *more primitive* warrior culture in the seventeenth century. He cites the Chinese and the Arabs as the most learned "foreign peoples" ("Caractères de musique," *OC* V, 686). Surely, Rousseau did not view the Persians as "primitive" either.

Furthermore, Rousseau believes that Chinese, like ancient Greek, displays the superior property of uniting the singing and speaking voice ("Voix," *OC* V, 1149). It is therefore questionable whether "primitive" accurately describes song in a language that ideally unites speaking and singing. Perhaps Rousseau did see something "primitive" or uncorrupted in the music of these cultures, but that would have to be explored in much greater depth than is done here. Another possibility is that Rousseau considered Chinese, Persian, Native American, *and* Swiss music "exotic" at a time when this term was often applied to Switzerland.

In her portrayal in chapter 5 of Rousseau as aesthetically "modern" (vs. authors who consider him anti-modern), Simon writes of "Rousseau's modernity" that it is "clearly in some sense a product of the emergence of a certain scientific modernity" yet there are no citations to the scholarship on Rousseau's work in chemistry and botany that could have demonstrated his debt to "a certain scientific modernity" (e.g., a special issue of the journal, *Corpus* [1999] devoted to Rousseau's chemistry, B. Bernardi and B. Bensaude-Vincent, eds., *Rousseau et les sciences* [2003] and A. Cook, "Rousseau and the Languages of Music and Botany," *SVEC* [2004]: 08). Instead, Simon invokes Ernst Cassirer's esteemed, if dated, portrayal of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century science, noting the replacement of Cartesian rationalism with empiricism, skepticism and "open-ended modes of thought" (pp. 148–49). Such general remarks fail to elucidate the complex relationships among science, nature, music, and aesthetics in Rousseau's thought.

In chemistry and botany Rousseau adopted state-of-the-art techniques and concepts, showing himself to be wholly on the side of the moderns. Attention to Rousseau's scientific interests illuminates the role of "le dessin" [the design] (not merely "design," p. 154) in Rousseau's reflections on how music operates. Rousseau gives "le dessin" great weight as the analogue in painting to melody in music. This term's English connotations include form, plan, design, outline, and drawing. Simon adopts a better translation of "le dessin" when she refers to form as the organizing principle both of colors in painting and of sounds in music (p. 154).

Form serves as an organizing principle in botany according to the natural method that Rousseau adopted; scents and colors are secondary qualities that like sounds in music count for little on their own. It should be noted that this privileging of form in botany is closely connected with the early-modern epistemological distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Simon claims that form "distinguishes the work of art from science" and that "a dynamically conceived nature" becomes "the model for art." It would be nice

to see a sustained, well-integrated discussion of these ideas, which are not developed further.

In short, this book offers stimulating insights into how Rousseau's musical writings can inform our understanding of his political thought and his relationship to modern aesthetics but it fails to offer convincing arguments at key junctures. This is due partly to under-exploitation of both primary and secondary literature. Translations of terms such as *le dessin* and *pitié* require more careful handling; translating *pitié* literally as "pity" implies condescension and misses its more egalitarian meaning as empathy. Simon is at her best when extolling the power of music to unite people in communicative association (p. 171).