

Special Issue

Music and the Written Word

Message from the Guest Editor

Words and song have long been thought to spring from the same expressive impulse. In *Disgrace*, JM Coetzee writes that "the origins of speech lie in song, and the origins of song in the need to fill out with sound the overlarge and rather empty human soul". But what happens when the spoken word becomes text? To what extent can written language behave as though it were a type of music—or music act as a language? This Special Issue will explore the many ways in which music and literature may be linked: music as a theme and a motif in fiction; rhetorical links between music and language in literary texts; the musician as author and the author as musician. Some questions which might be addressed include:

- What is the nature of the challenge faced by a composer setting a literary text to music, and what makes a song succeed?
- What is lost, and what is found, when a literary work is transformed into an opera?
- Can instrumental music tell a story, or move beyond mimesis of extra-musical sounds to convey abstract ideas?
- What are the limits of writing about music? How can words convey music's effect and its affect?

Guest Editor

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