

A black and white portrait of Ernest Newman, a middle-aged man with a receding hairline, wearing a suit and tie. The portrait is the background of the book cover.

PAUL
WATT

Ernest Newman

A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

Ernest Newman

Music in Britain, 1600–2000

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Ernest Newman
A Critical Biography

Paul Watt

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Frontispiece Newman, c. 1908. Photographer unknown.
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‘Have you read about music in the newspapers and periodicals of the last thirty and more years—in the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Birmingham Post*, the *Observer*, the *Sunday Times*, and the great weeklies and monthlies? Or have you read all the good books on musical subjects published in England since the year 1895? If you have, you will know the work of Ernest Newman and will need no introduction to it. But you will know little or nothing of the man himself and his history; and ignorance of this kind is, I think, to be regretted and, if possible, removed.’

Eva Mary Grew, ‘Ernest Newman: English Music Critic’,
The Sackbut, November 1928, 113.

‘I should like to emphasize the fact that Mr Newman has exercised a dominating influence over musical taste in this country. His articles and books have been read assiduously by almost every intelligent amateur and professional musician for the past thirty years.’

Ralph Hill, *Challenges: A Series of Controversial Essays on Music*.
London: John Williams, 1943, 9.

‘Ernest Newman was perhaps the first writer truly to Europeanise our music and our humane responses to music. He quickened our antennae, opened doors for us.’

Neville Cardus, ‘Ernest Newman’, in *Fanfare for Ernest Newman*,
ed. Herbert van Thal. London: Arthur Baker, 1955, 29–37; 31.

‘So, when we have said that he [Newman] was a great scholar, a great writer, and a great wit, and admired his books, we have not done with him. He left one of the great tasks of his life undone; and this can still be done for him, if someone will study hard everything that he had to say, in his ephemeral essays as well as in his published works, and produce a much-needed book synthesizing his whole theory of musical aesthetics.’

Deryck Cooke, ‘Ernest Newman (1868–1959)’, *Tempo* 52 (Autumn 1959), 3.

To my parents, Heather and Laurence



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Preface and Acknowledgements

THE idea for this book presented itself in the early 1990s. I was a post-graduate student at Monash University writing a dissertation on Berlioz, which inevitably led me to Newman's essays on the composer. Shortly thereafter—on a visit to the Grub Street Bookstore in Brunswick, an inner suburb of Melbourne—I chanced upon Newman's 1895 biography of Gluck. I read the introduction while standing in one of the bookshop's narrow passages, and was transfixed: his introductory essay on the necessity for historical method in musical criticism intrigued me. I wondered why a British writer on music was taking up the cause for this kind of history so late in the century and why no one had made much of it in the literature I had read on the history of musicology. I knew then that I wanted to find out more about Newman and what made him tick. And so I set to work.

For access to archives relating to Ernest Newman I would like to thank staff at the following libraries and archives: Bodleian Library, Oxford; British Library, London; Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham; National Library of Scotland; Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin; Houghton Library and Isham Memorial Library, Harvard University; Irving S. Gilmore Music Library, Yale University; Juilliard School Library, New York; King's College Library, Cambridge; Rauner Special Collections, Dartmouth College; and Special Collections at the universities of Glasgow, Liverpool and Cambridge.

Thanks are due to Odin Dekkers at Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen who provided access to the personal research papers of various scholars in the Department of English Literature and Culture relating to the Dobell collection at the University of Oxford. Nigel Scaife kindly loaned his personal notes relating to the research he undertook on Newman for his 1994 doctoral dissertation.

Thanks to the University of Melbourne for permission to reproduce a part of the following article in chapter 8, 'Ernest Newman's *The Man Liszt* of 1934: reading its freethought agenda', *Context: A Journal of Music Research* 31 (2006): 193–205.

I am grateful to the universities of Glasgow, Oxford and Texas at Austin, and the National Library of Scotland, for permission to reproduce copyright material in their collections. I am deeply indebted to Mary Parkin, Vera Newman's niece and the executor of the Newman Estate, who has given permission to

reproduce all copyright material in this book. I am also grateful to Mary for generously sharing her memories of the Newmans and for providing most of the photographs reproduced in this book.

There are two collections relating to Newman that elude us. The first being the personal papers that were once in the stewardship of Walter Legge and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. It is believed this collection contains some of Newman's research notes and correspondence relating to his work on Richard Strauss and Hugo Wolf. If this collection comes to light it will provide us with valuable information on Newman's working life in the early 1900s when he was working on these composers' biographies. These papers might also contain valuable material relating to the role that Newman, Legge and Schwarzkopf played, collectively, in the promotion of Wolf's music in Britain and North America. The second archive is a set of letters from John M. Robertson to Newman that, at the time of writing, are understood to be in a private collection and not yet available to scholars. If and when this correspondence is made public, it will add depth to what we know about Newman's relationship with his most important mentor and friend.

I am grateful to the following organizations that provided funding for this research. The University of Sydney provided a full scholarship for my PhD (2004–2007) that examined Newman's intellectual life in the 1890s, and the university further funded a research trip to the UK in 2005 as well as the purchase of microfilms and photocopies. Monash University, where I now work, has been generous through grants and research leave. In 2008 I was awarded a European Travel Grant that enabled me to take up a visiting fellowship in the Institute of Musical Research at the School of Advanced Studies, University of London, and facilitated just over two months' research at the British Library. In 2011 I was awarded an Alfred A. Knopf and Blanche Knopf Fellowship to the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, where I read correspondence between the Knopfs and the Newmans relating to various business and personal matters. A grant from the Australian Research Council (2012–2015) enabled me to complete the book.

On a personal level I owe a great deal of thanks to friends and colleagues over many years for their help, advice and encouragement. This book would never have been written were it not for the unflagging support, over many years, of Kerry Murphy, Margaret Kartomi, Sandra McColl and Rachel Segal. Other friends and colleagues who have helped in many different ways include Michael Allis, Megan Burslem, Sarah Collins, Odin Dekkers, Katrina Dowling, Trevor Clarke, Rachel Cowgill, Mark Davis, Bronia Kornhauser, David Larkin, Caroline Murray, Derek B. Scott, Jennie Shaw and Peter Tregear. Thanks go to Megan Milan, Rohais Haughton, Catherine Lerner and Michael Middeke who have seen this book through to production.

Last, but by no means least, I thank my parents, Laurence Watt and Heather Watt, to whom this book is dedicated. They have nurtured my musical and scholarly aspirations from childhood and have supported my education in the many ways that have made this enterprise possible.

Chronology of Newman's Life and Works

- 1868 Born and named William Roberts on 30 November 1868 in Lancaster
- 1884 Begins five years of composition, including a 100-page draft for an opera-symphony based on Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound'
- 1885 Enters University College, Liverpool
- 1886 Leaves University College, Liverpool; makes the personal acquaintance of John M. Robertson
- 1889 Works as a bank clerk; debut as published author in the September issue of *National Reformer* writing under his pseudonym Ernest Newman; research on *Gluck and the Opera* underway
- 1890 Typescript of *Gluck and the Opera* finished but attempts to find a publisher are unsuccessful until 1895
- 1891 Writes his one and only article for *University College Magazine*, Liverpool, under his birth name, William Roberts
- 1893 Regular contributor to Robertson's newly founded *Free Review*
- 1894 Marries his first wife, Kate Eleanor Woollett, on 3 February; installed as President of the Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society
- 1895 Publication of *Gluck and the Opera* by Bertram Dobell; first article published in *Fortnightly Review*
- 1896 First articles published in *Truth Seeker*; work on *A Study of Wagner* begins around this time and is published in 1899
- 1897 Publication by the University Press, Watford, of *Pseudo-Philosophy at the end of the Nineteenth Century* under the pseudonym Hugh Mortimer Cecil, a pseudonym he was to use for some articles published in *University Magazine and Free Review*; first articles published in *Musician*
- 1898 First articles published in *Monthly Musical Record*; first essay published in *Fortnightly Review*
- 1899 Publication of *A Study of Wagner* by Bertram Dobell; writes programme notes for Granville Bantock's concerts at New Brighton; wins the Bankers' Institute prize for an essay, 'The literature of banking'; declines a commission to write a book on Edward FitzGerald
- 1900 First article in *Contemporary Review*
- 1904 Joins the staff of the Midland School of Music at the invitation of Granville Bantock; publication of *Wagner* in 'Music of the Masters' series

- 1905 Appointed music critic to the *Manchester Guardian*; publication of *Musical Studies*, comprising updated and previously published essays, each dedicated to friends and colleagues including John M. Robertson and Bertram Dobell
- 1906 Appointed music critic to the *Birmingham Daily Post*, a position he holds until 1919; publication of *Elgar*
- 1907 Publication of *Hugo Wolf*
- 1908 Publication of *Richard Strauss*
- 1914 Publication of *Wagner as Man and Artist*
- 1918 Death of Newman's first wife, Kate Eleanor Woolett. Joins the *Observer* in March until January 1920 when he begins work for the *Sunday Times*
- 1919 Publication of *A Musical Motley*, a collection of previously published essays; marries his second wife, Vera Hands
- 1920 Publication of *The Piano-Player and its Music*; joins the *Sunday Times*, a position he holds until 1958, a year before his death
- 1923 Publication of *Solo Singing*
- 1924 Guest editor, *New York Evening Post* (to 1925)
- 1925 Publication of *A Musical Critic's Holiday*, a reflective work on the problems of criticism; made an Honorary Associate of the Rationalist Press Association (the same award was made to Albert Einstein in 1934 and Sigmund Freud in 1938)
- 1927 Publication of *The Unconscious Beethoven*
- 1928 Publication of *What to Read on the Evolution of Music*
- 1931 Publication of *Fact and Fiction about Wagner*
- 1933 Beginning of the publication of *The Life of Richard Wagner*, 4 volumes, 1933, 1937, 1941, 1946; Cambridge University Press inaugurated its Music list in 1976 with a paperback edition
- 1934 Publication of *The Man Liszt: A Study of the Tragi-Comedy of a Soul Divided Against Itself* to severe critical reception
- 1940 Publication of *Wagner* (Novello edition)
- 1954 Publication of *More Opera Nights*
- 1958 Retires from the *Sunday Times* after 38 years; admitted to the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (Commander Class) by the President of the Federal Republic, Theodor Heuss
- 1959 Made a Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa* in the University of Exeter on 17 March; died on 7 July

Abbreviations

'Confessions'	Ernest Newman, 'Confessions of a musical critic' first published in fifteen instalments between 21 March and 16 June 1923 in <i>Cassell's Weekly</i> ; Reproduced in <i>Testament of Music</i> , ed. Herbert Van Thal (London: Putnam, 1962): 1–41
CR	<i>Contemporary Review</i>
Essays	<i>Essays Towards a Critical Method</i> by John M. Robertson (1889)
FoR	<i>Fortnightly Review</i>
FR	<i>Free Review</i>
Grove	<i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , ed. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001)
Knopf Papers	Alfred A. Knopf and Blanche W. Knopf Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin
MG	<i>Manchester Guardian</i>
MH	<i>Musical Herald</i>
ML	<i>Music & Letters</i>
MMR	<i>Monthly Musical Record</i>
MOMTR	<i>Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review</i>
MQ	<i>Musical Quarterly</i>
MR	<i>Music Review</i>
MS Farmer	Henry George Farmer Papers, University of Glasgow
MSS Dobell	Dobell Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford
MT	<i>Musical Times</i>
Mus	<i>Musician</i>
New Essays	<i>New Essays Towards a Critical Method</i> by John M. Robertson (1897)
NQMR	<i>New Quarterly Musical Review</i>
NR	<i>National Reformer</i>
NW	<i>New Witness</i>
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
Parker Papers	D.C. Parker Papers, National Library of Scotland
S	<i>Sackbut</i>
Sp	<i>Speaker</i>
SR	<i>Saturday Review</i>
ST	<i>Sunday Times</i>
TS	<i>Truth Seeker</i>
UMFR	<i>University Magazine and Free Review</i>

CHAPTER 1

Ernest Newman and the Challenge of Critical Biography

JEAN Sibelius once facetiously remarked that a monument had never been erected in honour of a music critic, implying that critics were irascible and unworthy hacks whose opinions were best ignored.¹ Yet a monument—of sorts—was erected for Ernest Newman. It was not of the bricks and mortar variety, but of the literary kind, a cleriheW:

Ernest Newman said
‘next week, Schumann’
But, when next week came
It was Wagner just the same.²

Monuments, of course, are not always accurate representations of their subject. Rodin’s controversial sculpture of Balzac, first displayed in 1898, is a case in point. Although Rodin believed the artwork accurately captured the writer’s persona, the critics and public, expecting a true likeness of Balzac, were let down.³ The same is true for what this cleriheW tells us about Newman. Its suggestion that Newman was preoccupied with Wagner is rather wide of the mark, as this book will show.

Although Newman’s work was at times dominated by writings on Wagner, it was not his sole focus. His essays and books spanned a wide spectrum of national literatures (novels, poetry and plays) and biographies (or biographical-style books) on composers including Gluck, Elgar, Strauss, Wolf, Beethoven and Liszt. He wrote extensively on rationalism and evolutionary theory, the reception of Russian and English music, and a host of other literary, social and musical topics. Underpinning most of Newman’s writings was a commitment to critical and historical method derived from British and European critics,

¹ Bengt de Törne, *Sibelius: A Close-Up* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1937): 27.

² The cleriheW is cited in ‘Editor’s choice’, *British Medical Journal* 299 (22 July 1989), n.p. A slightly different rendering of the cleriheW is given by John Steane in ‘English opera criticism between the wars 3: Newman of the “Sunday Times”’, *Opera* 33/6 (June 1982): 582–9. The author of the cleriheW is unknown, but is possibly Fritz Spiegel (1926–2003). Personal communication, Julian Rushton, 29 October 2014.

³ See Albert E. Elsen, *Rodin* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1967): 93–7.

historians and biographers, though such methods were not always faithfully applied.

This book explores the wide-ranging intellectual influences that affected Newman's life work as exemplified in a broad selection of essays and books that I think best represent his work as a music historian, critic and biographer. It is not a book about Newman the great Wagnerian (though his work on the composer occupies parts of chapters 3 and 7 and all of chapter 9). Nor is it a book that merely records his critical responses to particular composers on whom he wrote extensively, such as Berlioz. Rather, this critical biography is concerned with the motivations—intellectual, personal and economic—behind Newman's work. It examines the circumstances that gave rise to particular books and articles and the reasons for their creation. I show that a cast of European intellectual writers influenced Newman's work, although this influence is not always apparent. His pan-European breadth of knowledge about the methods of history, and his interest in critical theory, set Newman apart from many of his British contemporaries.

Biographers of any subject face the challenge of emphasis and this proved especially problematic for two of Newman's previous biographers, Henry Farmer and Vera Newman.⁴ Their biographies were highly selective and therefore unattractive propositions for publishers. Farmer's book, 'Ernest Newman as I saw him', only covered the 1880s and 1890s, the years of Newman's involvement with the freethought movement.⁵ By contrast, Vera Newman's *Ernest Newman: A Memoir by his Wife* concentrated on the time of their courtship and marriage (from around 1914), paying only perfunctory attention to the first forty or so years of her husband's life. Some background to the reasons why Farmer and Vera Newman were compelled to write these accounts, and the subsequent falling-out that came between them, helps position my biography and the slant I have chosen to give it.

Farmer completed his biography of Newman in the early 1960s. He had worked on the project on and off for over thirty years, and Newman had supplied him with material for it. Farmer's work was concerned with Newman's earliest works for the freethought press, including an analysis—albeit a particularly superficial one—of Newman's literary criticism. Moreover, Farmer's typescript was incomplete: it dealt only with Newman's life up to 1899, the year

⁴ Henry George Farmer, 'Ernest Newman as I saw him', unpublished typescript, MS Farmer 44. (Drafts and additions of this unpublished typescript are at MS Farmer 42, 43/7–8, and 43/9.) Vera Newman, *Ernest Newman: A Memoir by his Wife* (London: Putnam, 1963).

⁵ For more on Farmer's career see Israel J. Katz, *Henry George Farmer and the First International Congress of Arab Music (Cairo 1932)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

in which *A Study of Wagner* was published. Newman was then only thirty-one years old. His literary life had barely begun.

The publishers showed little interest in Farmer's hagiographical biography, and various editorial and commercial reasons were given for its rejection.⁶ Farmer had initially given his book the title 'Ernest Newman as a Rationalist' and was partly right in predicting that its lack of attention to music 'might militate against its selling success'.⁷ Roger Lubbock of Putnam's rejected the typescript on commercial grounds because it 'would overlap too far on to Mrs Newman's own book'.⁸ Publishers Barrie and Rockliff found the book 'addressed too limited an audience'⁹ and Constable and Co. supposed the manuscript better off with a music book publisher due to Newman's reputation as a writer on music.¹⁰

Like these publishers, Vera Newman was far from enthusiastic about Farmer's project. In March 1960 Farmer sent Vera a copy of his typescript which, at this point, was called 'Ernest Newman: Music Critic and Philosopher'.¹¹ Vera disliked it intensely for its coverage of Newman's connections with freethinkers such as Charles Bradlaugh and John M. Robertson. In her reply to Farmer she wrote of her displeasure at this angle: 'music and the arts and literature were his passion ... and religion and rationalism were comparatively unimportant, or at any rate they were during our life together'.¹²

The prospect of seeing Farmer's biography in print, with its emphasis on the freethinkers, horrified Vera and she wrote to her friend D.C. Parker about it:

I have now read Dr Farmer's book and I have not hidden from him the comments for which he asked, that I am very disappointed there are nine chapters in the book and the first six deal almost entirely with Ernest's very early years and his writings and lectures about atheism and freethought. This, as you can imagine, is not very agreeable to me. Farmer insists that this was a very important part of Ernest. I do not agree. Ernest's passion all his life was music, and since I first knew him forty years ago, freethought and writing about it, or even

⁶ MS Farmer 46/1–44 contains Farmer's correspondence with publishers.

⁷ Correspondence from Farmer to Hector Hawton, managing director of the Rationalist Press Association, 27 December 1962, MS Farmer 46/22.

⁸ Correspondence from Roger Lubbock, chairman of Putnam's, 18 September 1961, MS Farmer 46/28.

⁹ Correspondence from John M. Bunting to Farmer, 17 June 1963, MS Farmer 46/18.

¹⁰ Correspondence from Constable and Company Ltd, 28 January 1960, MS Farmer 46/14.

¹¹ Correspondence from Vera Newman to Farmer, 28 April 1960, MS Farmer 47/67.

¹² Correspondence from Vera Newman to Farmer, 28 April 1960, MS Farmer 47/67.

discussing it, had no more part in his life ... I can't say I shall be very sorry if no one wants to publish it.¹³

As relations with Farmer broke down irretrievably, Vera relayed her anxiety about the possible publication of Farmer's book to Parker writing that, 'Confidentially, and absolutely between ourselves, I hope nobody will publish it.'¹⁴ Vera then took matters into her own hands: three months later, in August 1960, she wrote to Parker outlining her plan for a book of her own but asked 'don't tell anyone'.¹⁵ Then, on noting that Farmer was still having trouble placing his typescript with a publisher she exclaimed 'three rousing cheers!'¹⁶

Vera's motivation for her own book was not only to rescue Newman from the taint of freethought but to repair his coloured reputation in musical circles. As Vera noted in her preface, 'I had often heard E.N. referred to as a "sour old cynic", often unkind and even cruel. I knew him better than anyone, and he was none of these things'.¹⁷ Drawing on letters and diaries, Vera wrote about Newman in his post-freethought years. She warmly recounted their life together, first in London, then in Tadworth, Surrey, and discussed the friendships they cultivated over the years with such well-known musicians as the conductor Serge Koussevitzky, the record producer Walter Legge and the soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, who was also Legge's wife. Vera detailed the workaday Newman in considerable depth including his writing habits, relations with publishers, and his views on the successes and failures of his work. She related minor domestic details such as her husband's love of cats, his indifference to children and sensitivity to noise, as well as his episodes of melancholy and depression. Together, these details paint an all-round, personal portrait of the man. By Vera's own admission, the book was not intended as a study of his works, but it is a useful source that identifies many people with whom he and Vera associated. A major frustration of Vera's memoir is its unclear chronology. But that was to be the least of the publisher's concerns.

When Vera finished writing the book in 1963, she posted the typescript to Roger Lubbock at Putman's, with whom she had been in contact; he then

¹³ Correspondence from Vera Newman to D.C. Parker, 6 May 1960. *Parker Papers* MS 22513.

¹⁴ Correspondence from Vera Newman to D.C. Parker, 26 May 1960. *Parker Papers* MS25513.

¹⁵ Correspondence from Vera Newman to D.C. Parker, 20 August 1960. *Parker Papers* MS25513.

¹⁶ Correspondence from Vera Newman to D.C. Parker, 20 August 1960. *Parker Papers* MS25513.

¹⁷ Vera Newman, *Ernest Newman: A Memoir*, v.

forwarded it to Knopf in New York, where it was met with a frosty reception by William A. Koshland, one of Knopf's editors:

I think Vera Newman's book is really pretty bad. Nothing in it is really good except the quotations from Ernest ... But chiefly, the record is just too trivial, and Vera hardly ever tells you enough about a person or an event to make the story interesting. On the other hand, there are endless descriptions of domestic household difficulties, illnesses and so forth. Someone simply did an atrociously bad job. I don't know what we can do with the book—certainly it isn't worth editing and setting up.¹⁸

The responsibility of delivering this bad news to Vera fell to Alfred Knopf who, along with his wife, Blanche, was a long-time friend of the Newmans. Knopf was blunt, writing to Vera on 16 April 1963 that: '[W]hat I think weakens the book is that it represents a blow-by-blow account of your life together. The result is—and I must be quite frank—an overwhelming amount of the trivial which tends to swamp the story'.¹⁹

Vera usually replied to letters promptly, but she took six weeks to calm herself to compose a measured reply to Alfred Knopf:

Your letter ... was rather like having a bucket of ice water thrown over me. ... I am disappointed that you find my literary efforts so bad, and if you can find the time to send me particulars of anything especially disgraceful I shall be only too happy to put it right, if possible. [D]ear Alfred, I shall be very sorry if you don't publish my book in America, but there is no compulsion on you to publish any book that you do not consider worthy, and I can assure you that it would make absolutely no difference to our personal relations after so many years of friendship.²⁰

Knopf was far from convinced that Vera's book was worthy of publication, but he reluctantly agreed to publish it in North America: what swayed him was a sense of duty, as he relayed to Koshland: 'the book presents a natural problem to us. In view of our ancient relationship with the Newmans, I feel that we must publish it, but the very nature of the work precludes, in our opinion, the possibility of any large sale over here'.²¹

¹⁸ Memo from William A. Koshland to Alfred A. Knopf, 8 April 1963. Knopf Papers, File 294.7.

¹⁹ Letter from Alfred A. Knopf to Vera Newman, 16 April 1963. Knopf Papers, File 294.7.

²⁰ Letter from Vera Newman to Alfred A. Knopf, 21 April 1963. Knopf Papers, File 294.7.

²¹ Memo from Alfred A. Knopf to William A. Koshland, 25 April, 1963. Knopf Papers, File 392.4.

The biographies by Farmer and Vera Newman provide an outline of Ernest Newman's life (and sometimes his works) from cradle to grave, but there are significant gaps. Both biographers were eager to promote and preserve a certain reputation in their subject, but the two books were problematic for their respective publishers. A larger and more complete biographical study has not been made since Vera's book was published, and a close and critical reading of Newman's work has also remained unexplored until now.²²

Context for a Critical Biography

The aim of this book is to examine the formation of—and influences on—Newman's intellectual life. I am concerned neither with writing a blow-by-blow account of Newman's daily affairs nor to comment upon everything he wrote, not least because there is considerable repetition and duplication in Newman's oeuvre, and appraising all the essays and books he wrote on a particular subject would be repetitive. As far as possible, Newman is placed in the context of other writers of the period to illustrate the literary and musical milieu in which he worked.

²² A number of studies cover only parts of Newman's work and career. See, for example, Sydney Grew, 'Mr Ernest Newman', *Edgbastonia* 31 (1 July 1911): 121–30; an unsigned article: 'Mr Ernest Newman', *MH*, 1 May 1912: 131–4; Eva Mary Grew, 'Ernest Newman, English music critic', *S*, November 1928: 113–21; Basil Maine, 'Personalities among music critics. IX. Ernest Newman', *MT*, 68/1007 (1 January 1927): 27–8; Sydney Grew, 'Ernest Newman: Twenty-five years of reading his writings', *British Musician*, July 1931: 154–6; August 1931: 167–8; September 1931: 192–7; October 1931: 208–10; November 1931: 232–4; July 1932: 151–5; Ralph Hill, 'On Wagner, Hanslick, and Mr Newman', *S*, October 1931: 18–24; Eva Mary Grew, 'Ernest Newman: His life and opinions', *British Musician*, January 1934: 4–6; February 1934: 36–8; March 1934: 54–6; April 1934: 86–8; May 1934: 108–10; June 1934: 126–8; July 1934: 153–4; August 1934: 176–8; September 1934: 203–5; October 1934: 230–1; November 1934: 248–52; December 1934: 275–7; William Blissett, 'Ernest Newman and English Wagnerism', *ML* 40/10 (1959): 311–23; Roger Hollinrake, 'Nietzsche, Wagner and Ernest Newman', *ML* 41/3 (1960): 245–55; Henry Raynor, 'Ernest Newman and the science of criticism', *MMR*, January–February 1960: 19–27; and Henry Farmer, 'Ernest Newman', *Freethinker*, 16 June 1961: 95–7. Dissertations on Newman (or that deal substantially with his work) are Siobhan McDonnell, 'Ernest Newman's philosophy of music criticism', MA thesis, McMaster University (1989); Ruth E. Easter, 'Music criticism: a study of the criteria and techniques of the journalistic critic, as seen in the critiques of G.B. Shaw, Ernest Newman, and Neville Cardus', MA thesis, State University College, Potsdam, New York (1972); Nigel Scaife, 'British music criticism in a new era: studies in critical thought, 1894–1954', DPhil thesis, University of Oxford (1994); and Paul Watt, 'The intellectual life of Ernest Newman in the 1890s', PhD thesis, University of Sydney (2009).

Since this is a critical biography, my focus is on Newman's work as a writer and therefore precludes a wider investigation of his other activities as a BBC broadcaster and work as a translator, editor and festival adjudicator. The book could be called a literary biography because of its emphasis on his relationship with his publishers and readers. His books and articles are, in my view, the most tangible expressions of his critical persona.²³ As in the case of any biographer, my choice of what to include in the book is inevitably personal, but the literature I have selected I consider best represents Newman's methods, most evident in his work on Gluck, Wagner, Beethoven and Liszt. Some of this literature may not be his best or his most popular work, but it illustrates a very wide intellectual compass. I have not dwelt much on Newman's work as an advocate for the performance of the music of composers such as Berlioz, Wolf and Sibelius. While important, it has been documented by previous writers.²⁴ In the case of Berlioz, Peter Heyworth's collection of Newman's Berlioz essays fills part of the gap.²⁵ Regarding Wolf, on whom Newman published four significant works—an article in the *Contemporary Review*, a monograph, an edition and liner notes for a landmark recording that sought to rehabilitate Wolf's works through the Gramophone Company—this literature is not first and foremost concerned with historical method to the same extent as his other work.²⁶ By founding the Sibelius Society in 1932 Newman helped raise

²³ Newman's career at the BBC is documented in Jennifer Doctor, *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922–1936: Shaping a Nation's Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). At the time of writing (April 2017) I am aware of other scholars looking at aspects of Newman's life and works, including a study of his rivalry with Edwin Evans (in the late 1910s into the 1920s), the role he played in the development of Dorothy Silk's operatic career, his interest in Schenkerian analysis and his influence on the career of Neville Cardus.

²⁴ In the case of Wolf, especially Walter Legge's association with Newman, see Ernest Newman, *Hugo Wolf* (with an introduction by Walter Legge) (New York: Dover, 1966); Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, *On and Off the Record: A Memoir of Walter Legge* (London: Faber and Faber, 1982); and Alan Sanders (ed.), *Walter Legge: Words and Music* (London: Duckworth, 1998). In 2012 Dover re-issued *Hugo Wolf* with a foreword by Roelof Oostwoud.

²⁵ Peter Heyworth, *Berlioz, Romantic and Classic: Writings by Ernest Newman* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1972).

²⁶ Ernest Newman, 'Hugo Wolf, CR, January 1904: 707–20; *Hugo Wolf* (London: Methuen & Co. Limited, 1907); Ernest Newman (ed.), *Fifty Songs by Hugo Wolf* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1909) and Hugo Wolf Society, *The Complete Edition, 1931–1938*, RLS 759. EMI: His Master's Voice 1981. Newman occasionally wrote on Wolf in other journals, for example, 'Hugo Wolf as a song-writer', *New Music Review and Church Music Review* 6/64 (1907): 234–7 and 6/65 (1907): 307–10.

an awareness of the composer in England, not least through the establishment of a newsletter.²⁷

Deciding what to include in this book has involved a certain amount of value judgement. For example, while Newman wrote a little on Russian music in the *Musical Times* from 1900 to 1920, his work on the same subject in the *New Witness* between 1915 and 1918 is, in my view, more compelling and interesting, not least because it illustrates fierce discussion at the time on nationalism and war-time music-making. Similarly, in some chapters I have drawn on Newman's work in the *Manchester Guardian* (in 1905 and 1906, and again in 1919–23) rather than the *Birmingham Daily Post* (in the years 1906–19), because his writing for his Manchester readers was, on balance, more insightful than the articles of largely local interest in Birmingham. I have devoted complete chapters to four of his books or book series: *Gluck and the Opera* (1895); *Pseudo-Philosophy at the end of the Nineteenth Century* (1897); *The Man Liszt* (1934); and his five books on Wagner. I see these books to be representative of Newman's critical abilities (or lack of them, in the case of *The Man Liszt*). Some of these chapters (e.g. chapter 4, on *Pseudo-Philosophy*) are snapshots of Newman's work at a particular time—1897—while other chapters (e.g. chapter 7, on essays in the *Sunday Times*) consider his work over a much larger time-scale. Other chapters (e.g. chapter 9, on his Wagner biographies) do both. I have not included much discussion of Newman's biographies of Elgar (1906) or Strauss (1908), because they wear their biographical method all too lightly in contrast to Newman's other biographies. Similarly, Newman's many books on opera appreciation and performance, as well as *The Piano-Player and its Music* (1920), are not considered because they fall outside the purview of my focus on his historical and biographical work.²⁸

I have not assumed that readers will be familiar with Newman's books and articles so I have described their contents, sometimes in depth, to explain their purpose and outline their scope. I have used direct quotation to give the reader

²⁷ The Sibelius Society *Newsletters* vols 1–6, c. 1932. For more on Newman's work on Sibelius see Peter Franklin, 'Sibelius in Britain', in Daniel M. Grimley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sibelius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 182–95 and Byron Adams, 'Thor's Hammer: Sibelius and British Music Critics', in Daniel M. Grimley (ed.), *Jean Sibelius and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011): 125–57. For more on Sibelius's reception in Britain see Philip Ross Bullock (ed. and trans.), *The Correspondence of Jean Sibelius and Rosa Newmarch, 1906–39* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2011).

²⁸ For Newman's contribution to the literature about the player-piano see Timothy D. Taylor, 'The commodification of music at the dawn of the era of "mechanical music"', *Ethnomusicology* 51/2 (2007): 281–305.

a feel for Newman's voice, style and personality. Much of his tone is lost when paraphrased.

Pinpointing Newman's intellectual influences is tricky. He only once disclosed specific influences, in the *Sunday Times* on 26 June 1932:

My own reading in criticism, in my first youth, was confined to writers like Sainte-Beuve, Hennequin, Taine, Brunetière, Lessing, Matthew Arnold, Leslie Stephen, Walter Pater, and so on, none of whom, of course, ever specialised in music. I studied music, and read histories of music and other books on the subject; but of musical journalism I knew next to nothing until I was foolish enough to become a musical journalist myself.²⁹

This list is problematic and misleading because of who Newman left off it. Newman was well acquainted with (and largely influenced by) the works of Charles Darwin, Auguste Comte and Henry Thomas Buckle, indicating that his intellectual range was much greater than he admitted, at least in this excerpt. And the list does not yet account for some of Newman's later intellectual interests, for example, books and essays by André Maurois, Guido Adler, Heinrich Schenker and Paul Bekker.

In this biography, I look upon all of Newman's prose—his books, essays and journalism—as criticism. While there are large tranches of banal reporting of musical news in many publications in the nineteenth century, journalism—the work of the reporter—can still be a vehicle through which intellectual ideas are disseminated. In the late nineteenth century especially, the terms 'essayist', 'man of letters', 'sage' and 'belletrist' were employed to describe the profession of a number of writers.³⁰ Labelling Newman a 'critic' is a pragmatic description

²⁹ Ernest Newman, 'Mr Bernard Shaw as Musical Critic', *ST*, 26 June 1932, 7. The only detailed study on any of these writers' influence on Newman is Paul Watt, 'Ernest Newman's draft of a Berlioz biography (1899) and its appropriation of Emile Hennequin's style theory', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 10/1 (2013): 151–68.

³⁰ For literature on the cultural identity of these labels see, for example, John Holloway, *The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument*, 2nd edn (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965); John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969); T.W. Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850–1930* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From 'The Spectator' to Post-Structuralism* (London and New York: Verso, 1996); Linda H. Peterson, 'Sage writing', in Herbert F. Tucker (ed.), *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999): 373–87; Denise Gigante (ed.), *The Great Age of the English Essay* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); and Paul Poplawski, *English Literature in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).