

MUSICAL ADAPTATIONS OF “GOBLIN MARKET” IN  
THE NINETEENTH, TWENTIETH, AND  
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

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From the time of its first publication in 1862, “Goblin Market” was a hybrid work of art: in the first instance, Christina Rossetti’s poetic text was paired with her brother Dante Rossetti’s two illustrations; furthermore, as Lorraine Janzen Kooistra has demonstrated in her significant scholarship on Christina Rossetti and illustration, illustrated versions of “Goblin Market” have done much to interpret the poem and to bring it to a variety of audiences. Kooistra’s designation of this important poem as “cross-audience” is certainly accurate, but something that has been for the most part critically neglected is another artistic pairing of “Goblin Market” that has also reinterpreted the poem and brought it to new audiences – specifically, musical settings of Rossetti’s most important poem. While Kooistra’s book *Christina Rossetti and Illustration: A Publishing History* focuses on the verbal/visual inter-art context for Rossetti’s writing, the *Christina Rossetti in Music* project and website at the University of Ottawa seek to open up inquiry to another inter-art field of study: the intersection of text and music. As we shall see, beginning with Emanuel Aguilar’s *Goblin Market: Cantata* (1880), the artistic hybridity of text and music has been an important vehicle that has developed and communicated new interpretations of “Goblin Market.” Overall, musical settings of Rossetti’s poems have been an important and energizing aspect of the global dissemination of her poetry. Moreover, every musical setting is an interpretation of the poem, as will become evident in this survey of musical settings of “Goblin Market” from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. After careful attention to Rossetti’s collaboration with Aguilar and some other early musical settings, I will turn to some of the musical settings of “Goblin Market” that have followed in more recent years and consider the new contributions that these works have made to current understanding of this poem.

Musical settings are by their nature collaborative works in which a com-