

**AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY CAPITAL CHAPTER
SPRING MEETING**

**SATURDAY 28 APRIL 2007
THE UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE**

PROGRAM

9:30 am Coffee and Tea

Session I: Context and Meaning in Sixteenth- and Eighteenth-Century Music

10:00 am Laura Youens (The George Washington University), "Nine Shepherds and the Virgin's Milk"

10:35 am Paul Michael Covey (The University of Maryland, College Park), "*Alessandro nell'Indie* and the Political Implications of Opera Seria"

Break

Session II: Musical Life in the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries

11:20 am Bonny H. Miller (Independent Scholar, Rockville, MD), "A Polite and Commercial Music: British Song Sheets in Eighteenth-Century Periodicals"

11:55 am Frank R. Latino (The University of Maryland, College Park), "The Giesecking Affair: America's Postwar Reception of a German Pianist"

Lunch

Session III: Lowens Award Papers

Chair: Anna Harwell Celenza (Georgetown University)

2:00 pm Kenneth Stilwell (The Catholic University of America), "Rameau and the 'Noble Savage': Interpreting Compositional Approaches to *Les Sauvages*"

2:35 pm Nisha Chadha (The George Washington University), "The Different Manifestations of Bhangra as a Reflection of Second Generation South Asian Culture in London and Washington, DC: A Cross-Cultural South Asian Diasporic Study"

3:10 pm Sarah Culpeper (The University of Virginia), " 'That Clear Flow of Sound': Themes of Vocal and Sexual Purity in Early Joan Baez Reception"

Voting for the Lowens Award

4:00 pm Business Meeting

ABSTRACTS
(in program order)

Laura Youens (The George Washington University), “Nine Shepherds and the Virgin’s Milk”

In 1570, Nicolas du Chemin published *Les meslanges de Maistre Pierre Certon*. A large collection comprising 96 works, it has been neglected because it is missing its quintus partbook. The loss of that partbook is crucial, because none of these works is for fewer than five voices, and most are unique. It is a true “meslange,” or miscellany, comprising parody chansons, French psalms, Noël’s, a lament, and various “Chansons Spirituelles.” Reconstructions of some of its works have been attempted, but only two of its chansons exist complete in concordant sources.

Certon dedicated this collection to Nicholas LeGendre, “Seigneur de ville-roy, et Prevost des marchans de la ville de Paris.” LeGendre owned a chateau near Corbeil where it is known that musical entertainments were staged. It is possible that two curious works found at the end of the bass partbook were intended for such occasions. Both are canons, but have been overlooked because of their presence in an otherwise incomplete set of books.

Each canon is titled *Le roy boyt* (The king drinks). In the first, Certon presents a Christmas morning scene with shepherds gathering to see the newborn Christ drinking his mother’s milk. It is for nine voices, one for each of the nine shepherds gathering around the manger to witness the tender scene. Its text begins “Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, to drink wine in this world, he drank more than three times of the milk of the Virgin pure. . . .” The second canon, to a text beginning “Sus, sus, chantres qui dormez” (Come on! come on! singers who sleep), is for a total of 13 voices, 12 of them canonic with a pedal note on D labeled “Sine fine dicentes.”

Layers and layers of symbolism lie beneath what can, at first (and second) examination, be regarded as ungainly occasional pieces. Certon is usually considered only for his exquisite secular chansons, and we tend to forget that he wrote sacred music. The orders of angels, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Last Supper, and the image of Maria Lactans are only the beginning of a complex of symbolic interactions in these two unusual works.

Paul Michael Covey (The University of Maryland, College Park), “Alessandro nell’Indie and the Political Implications of Opera Seria”

For obvious financial reasons, opera seria tended to glorify its noble patrons by implicitly associating royal or godly characters with particular figures. Reinhard Strohm, for example, suggests quite reasonably in his program notes for a 1986 recording (Capriccio 10193/96) that August the Strong, Elector of Saxony, saw himself in the character of Alexander the Great in J. A. Hasse’s *Cleofide* (1731) when this opera was produced at the Dresden court. Strohm’s assertion later in the same essay that the character of Porus in *Cleofide* represented, in August’s eyes, Czar Peter the Great of Russia is open to question. Peter was a military ally and even protector of August, not an opponent, however valiant. In the opera, Porus never becomes, properly speaking, an ally or protector of Alexander, but merely a vassal. The parallel is therefore historically tenuous.

Strohm presents this parallel not as any great discovery, but merely a charming bit of gossip. Whether it stands scrutiny or not, the idea that *Cleofide* was chosen for a political representation premeditated or perceived can facilitate an investigation of the general principle involved. *Cleofide*’s source text was Pietro Metastasio’s *Alessandro nell’Indie* (1729), a libretto that was set 38 times between 1729 and 1762, more than once per year. Since it was used so often, and since its protagonist, Alexander the Great, was a figure of significant symbolic potency, a detectable pattern of political association for *Alessandro nell’Indie*—or the lack of one—will prove valuable to the ongoing investigation of the social

function of opera seria. If the use of opera seria to political purpose was truly a matter of course, it seems likely that a highly popular libretto with strong moral implications (typical of the genre) would play a role in such a convention.

This paper examines three important settings of *Alessandro nell'Indie*: Georg Frideric Handel's *Poro* (1731), Hasse's *Alessandro nell'Indie* (1736; his second setting of the story, but more faithful to Metastasio's original text), and Johann Christian Bach's *Alessandro nell'Indie* (1762). I focus on scenes ii and iii of Act I in each opera, since these feature the entrance and first aria of Alexander himself, the historically pivotal character of the drama. An examination of two operatic scenes proves nothing, of course, and should not be accorded undue significance. But the texts and musical subtexts of these settings fail to reflect, and sometimes explicitly clash with, what appear to be desirable or at least safe viewpoints in the politically different milieus for which they were respectively produced. If politics played a significant role in operatic selection or realization, then given the freedom with which librettos were cut, amended, and otherwise altered from setting to setting, it seems that each of these *Alessandro nell'Indie* settings would fit more snugly into its intended context.

Bonny H. Miller (Independent Scholar, Rockville, MD), "A Polite and Commercial Music: British Song Sheets in Eighteenth-Century Periodicals"

The music published in the popular periodical press in Great Britain provides a notable, yet little explored, aspect of 18th-century British musical life at home. By 1800, more than 3000 songs, dances, hymns, and short instrumental pieces had been published in some 50 British household magazines for the general reader, magazines that were among the most influential miscellanies of the era. Among the most widely circulated were three leading periodicals—the *Gentleman's Magazine*, *London Magazine*, and *Universal Magazine*—containing more than 1000 songs and dances between 1737 and 1776.

The British were described in the 1760s by a prominent jurist as a "polite and commercial people." The "magazine music" of the era was definitely polite, but also decidedly commercial. The magazines served as a filter for the popular song repertoire, distilling from many thousands of printed song sheets a few dozen songs republished many times over the years in different periodicals. The repertory in the magazines provides a vivid first-hand catalog of popular music from the theaters and pleasure gardens for the amateur singer, flutist, violinist, or keyboardist at home.

The popular press presented a medium for music of various streams and traditions (e.g., theater, church, singing clubs, charity concerts) to enter the home, where the music could be performed for drawing room entertainments or for private performance and study. The periodicals contain, in order of frequency: 1) songs from the pleasure gardens; 2) songs from plays, operas in English, and other stage entertainments; 3) the latest dance tunes, usually with their instructions; 4) favorite glees and catches; 5) airs from oratorios; and 6) hymns. Although only half of the songs and very few dances are attributed, the known composers are overwhelmingly British, such as Thomas Arne and William Boyce, or foreigners, like Handel and his circle (John C. Smith, Willem Defesch), who adapted their songwriting to current British popular styles.

Ralph Vaughan-Williams wrote in a 1932 essay ("Shrubsole"), "We are told in the text-books that the eighteenth century was the nadir of English music. As a matter of fact it is from the eighteenth century that some of the strongest and most characteristic of our musical invention dates, albeit on a small scale, exemplified, perhaps, by a hymn-tune or a chant...." The songs chosen for multiple republication in the popular press bear examination as possible examples of such characteristic English "musical invention." Of particular interest is a core group of seven songs (e.g., "Too late for redress," "Jockey," "Birks of Endermay") that were published in all three leading periodicals. Musical examples from this core group illustrate specific traits, such as form, melodic contour, ornamentation, and Scottish snap, traits that contribute to a typically "British" song in the Eighteenth Century. The wide dissemination and non-specialist nature of these periodicals suggest that this song repertoire expresses a particularly British musical identity through elements of text, genre, source, and style.

Frank R. Latino (The University of Maryland, College Park), “The Giesecking Affair: America’s Postwar Reception of a German Pianist”

The eminent German pianist Walter Giesecking (1895-1956) remained in Germany during WWII, causing many Americans to label him a Nazi sympathizer. As a result, his planned return recital at Carnegie Hall on January 24, 1949—after an absence of nearly ten years—was met with strong protest. In response, the Justice Department, which claimed to have found new evidence against Giesecking that morning, ordered an investigation of his record, and immigration officials immediately took him into custody. He was offered a hearing but instead chose to cancel all of his U.S. engagements and return to Europe the next day. He did not appear in America for four more years.

Many U.S. citizens found the Justice Department’s resolution unwarranted because Giesecking had, in fact, already begun to perform again in all of Germany’s occupied zones in May 1945, the same month the Germans surrendered. Moreover, although he was blacklisted that fall, the U.S. Military Government in Germany unconditionally cleared him at the end of 1946. Indeed, there is no proof that Giesecking was ever a Nazi party member.

Numerous arguments both for and against Giesecking’s innocence were made in the course of what became a well-publicized affair, but these writings were usually biased and always incomplete. A thorough and objective look at the politics surrounding the pianist’s still controversial career is long overdue, and such is the purpose of this paper. By examining the political obstacles Giesecking encountered in America following WWII, we gain a clearer understanding of both the conflicted U.S. policy toward a German musician and the divided feelings of the American public on the subject of Germans with a questionable past. Finally, this paper sheds light on a largely forgotten phase in the life of one of the twentieth century’s most remarkable pianists.

Sources examined include previously classified records from the State Department, Justice Department, letters from the American Civil Liberties Union’s file on the matter, contemporary articles from newspapers and magazines, personal accounts, documents from Giesecking’s managers, the pianist’s memoir, and recent scholarship.

Kenneth Stilwell (The Catholic University of America), “Rameau and the ‘Noble Savage’: Interpreting Compositional Approaches to *Les Sauvages*”

In 1725, Jean-Phillippe Rameau witnessed an event that must have seemed bizarre and in glaring contrast to French social graces: visceral dances of war and peace performed by Native Americans in full ceremonial head-dress at the Théâtre-Italien in Paris. The result of this inspiring event, the harpsichord work *Les Sauvages* (1728), seems straightforward enough, yet an investigation and contextualization of this work in its various incarnations reveals a shrewd “compositional gambit” on the part of a fledgling opera composer whose status was precarious indeed.

In 1736, Rameau orchestrated *Les Sauvages*, transferring it to the climactic scene of his opéra-ballet *Les Indes galantes*. The premiere of the first two entrées in 1735 had met with scathing diatribes, and this paper suggests Rameau incorporated the 1728 harpsichord work precisely because the work’s recognizable and accessible nature would help counteract the criticisms. A comparison of the different versions of *Les Sauvages* shows even more: Rameau, eminently aware of the capriciousness of Parisian audiences, not only skillfully altered *Les Sauvages* from harpsichord to opera orchestra, but in the process he also managed to better reflect one of the underlying themes of the opera. Here the true nature of love is revealed in the absence of artifice and is embodied by the “noble savages” in a dance of innocence and peace. Rameau’s treatment of *Les Sauvages* helps shed light on the complexity of his characterization of the Native American within the dramatic context of the final scene of his opéra-ballet *Les Indes galantes*.

Nisha Chadha (The George Washington University), “The Different Manifestations of Bhangra as a Reflection of Second Generation South Asian Culture in London and Washington, DC: A Cross-Cultural South Asian Diasporic Study”

Bhangra is a lively, upbeat, energetic form of folk-based music involving dance that originated in the state of Punjab, a region common to both India and Pakistan. Over the past 50 years it has experienced much growth and variation, as it has expanded with immigrant populations to their host nations, where it has played a major role in shaping South Asian diasporas. Two major nations into which it has expanded and thrived are the United Kingdom and the United States. However, it manifests very distinctly in each of these countries. In this paper, I seek to examine the differences in the manifestations of bhangra as a reflection of Punjabi culture in South Asian communities in the United Kingdom versus the United States. My research is based on fieldwork I conducted in each nation’s capital city, London and Washington, DC. I focus specifically on second generation South Asians, on whom bhangra has had a particular influence, the new phenomenon of college team bhangra, bhangra and its dance form, and bhangra in the US, as these are all specific aspects of this art form which prior research has neglected to examine. My cross cultural analysis reveals that factors such as host nation qualities, diasporic size and make up, cultural sociodynamics, availability and perception of the music, different motivations to preserve the music, new musical influences, modernization, and evolution all contribute to and characterize bhangra's unique manifestations in each city.

Sarah Culpeper (The University of Virginia), “‘That Clear Flow of Sound’: Themes of Vocal and Sexual Purity in Early Joan Baez Reception”

In this paper, I discuss the reception of Joan Baez in the mainstream print media between 1960 and 1962, paying particular attention to the regularity with which critics used terms such as “pure,” “natural,” or “clear” to describe Baez’s young singing voice. These writings often reveal a network of associations whereby “pure” implies a positive evaluation of Baez’s gendered image—one of “pure” or “virginal” femininity—in addition to characterizing the sonic qualities of her voice.

Released in 1960, Baez’s self-titled debut album consists largely of Anglo-American ballads, a repertory for which folk revival enthusiasts favored a measured and “unself-conscious” performance style. Indeed, Baez’s interpretations on the album may sound static when compared to the vocal stylings of her female peers in competing genres (for example early 1960s mainstream pop, country, jazz or blues). However, Baez conforms to the static folk aesthetic all while shaping her selections with subtle variations in vocal timbre and dynamics. I analyze the ballad “Silver Dagger” and suggest that Baez’s interpretive nuances bring to light the text’s underlying theme of forbidden sexual encounters. That Baez inflects the song with an undercurrent of eroticism through her vocal interpretation makes the attempt to divide her “pure” voice from her “sexual” body particularly fraught. I suggest that Baez’s young voice was not “sexless,” but instead evoked for many critics an idealized pre-twentieth century conception of feminine sexuality; one that seemed “pure”—and perhaps less threatening—compared to the more extroverted presentations of female sexuality in early 1960s popular culture.