

American Musicological Society Capital Chapter
14 October 2017
Shenandoah University
Program

- 9:00 – 9:30 Registration and refreshments
- 9:30 – 10:30 Session 1: Salon to stage
- Bonny Miller: The Fair Transatlantic Sylph: Elise Peruzzi, née Eustaphiève
- Joanna Chang: ‘Tedious Elaboration?’: The Remarkable Case of Emanuel Moór and his Prelude Op. 71, No. 1
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break
- 10:45 – 12:15 Session 2: Opera and gender
- Ronit Seter: Beautiful without the Arrogance of Beauty: Kaija Saariaho’s *L’amour de loin* (2000)
- Jessica Grimmer: From *Femme Idéale* to *Femme Fatale*: Contexts for the Exotic Archetype in Nineteenth-Century French Opera
- Cary Peñate: From Wagner to the *Mulata*: a Dual Female Personality
- 12:15 – 2:00 Lunch
- 2:00 – 2:30 Business meeting
- 2:30 – 3:30 Session 3: Theory and perception
- Samuel Brannon: Sight, Sound, and Music Literacies during the Renaissance
- Rachel Short: Do They Know They Are Dancing? Diegetic Movement in Ballet

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3:30 – 3:45	Break
3:45 – 4:45	Session 4: Nationalism and politics Laura Youens: A Real-life Model for Verdi’s Duke of Mantua Matthew Franke: Appalachian Folk Song as a Symbol of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South
4:45	End of meeting

ABSTRACTS

The Fair Transatlantic Sylph: Elise Peruzzi, née Eustaphiève

Whether as a child, young adult, diplomat’s wife, or friend of Anglo-American expatriates residing in Florence, Miss Eliza Eustaphiève—later Madame Elise Peruzzi—prompted avid praise as a pianist. She has been remembered primarily as one of Chopin’s students, but this characterization offers only a partial truth. Connecting the dots from Europe to America and back reveals a story so unusual that it seems like three different lives.

Eliza was born in 1808 in London, the daughter of a Russian father and British mother, but she grew up in Boston. John Rowe Parker heaped acclamation on twelve-year-old Eliza in 1820 in his *Euterpeiad*, comparing her favorably to young Mozart. Composer Anthony Philip Heinrich pronounced her “the Fair Sylph of America” and “Muscovia’s pride,” in two dedications from *The Sylviad* (1825). In Paris, Eliza became part of Chopin’s inner circle in 1832/33, and, following her marriage to the ambassador from Tuscany, she was acclaimed as a performer in salon and charity concert events. The revolutions that convulsed Europe in 1848/49 obliged the Peruzzis to return to Florence, where Elise’s weekly salons were frequented by British and American literati. As a widow, she remained a respected member of patrician Florentine society until her death in 1892.

This paper explores aspects of Peruzzi’s musical life, including dedications of works to her by American and French composers; her keyboard repertoire; interactions with Chopin, Paganini, and Kalkbrenner; reception of her playing in Paris and Florence; and the performance venues considered appropriate for her social status.

‘Tedious Elaboration?’: The Remarkable Case of Emanuel Moór and his Prelude Op. 71, No. 1

“Strong musical ideas... but tediously elaborated,” remarked one *New York Times* critic about Emanuel Moór’s Prelude in D-flat, Op. 71, No. 1 in 1908. Regarding the performer, the critic added, “[Harold] Bauer could not make it continuously interesting.”

Both Bauer (1873-1951) and Hungarian composer Emanuel Moór (1863-1931) were at the height of their respective careers by 1908, and the combined forces of these two musicians could have broadened the reception of Moór’s works. Yet why did his music fail to sustain public currency in the early decades of the twentieth century? The composer had enjoyed the earlier support of no less than Brahms and Joachim, and figures such as Alfred Piatti, Pablo Casals, and Eugène Ysaÿe actively championed his works. Despite composing eight symphonies and an enormous repertoire of chamber works, Moór’s lyrical Romantic style was unable to withstand advances of musical modernism by his contemporaries.

This study of Moór’s Prelude and its failed reception contextualizes the aesthetic climate during the turn of the century, revealing the undercurrents and challenges of composers buffeting the waves of modernism. In the Prelude, vestiges of late-Romantic lyricism thread their way through thickets of chromatic harmonies, and occasional modernist chord progressions create patches of tonal instability amidst a diatonic landscape of D-flat major. While these characteristics place the work in the twentieth century, the critic’s issue of “tedium” expresses shifting tastes in the new era. This paper explores the critic’s perception in relation to Moor’s harmonic language, structure, and treatment of thematic material.

Beautiful without the Arrogance of Beauty: Kaija Saariaho’s *L’amour de loin* (2000)

This paper focuses on role of gender in Kaija Saariaho’s career, and how it shapes her opera *L’amour de loin* and its intentionally ambiguous ending. Women composers—Saariaho included in her early stages of her career—often strongly reject discussion as “women composers.” This resistance and the fear of gender essentialism considerably limit the volume of gender-themed writings about living women composers. That said, as McClary implied in her paper on Saariaho at AMS Louisville (2015), the policing of our musicological content poses a greater threat than essentialism. McClary further argued that it was our exalting of Absolute Music that bears no obvious “extra musical” traces, such as gender, that discouraged composers to pursue its expression, as is the case in early Saariaho.

Saariaho’s gradual retreat from Absolute Music towards theatrical works is tightly linked to a deeper exegesis of the ambiguous ending of the opera. The various directors of the opera’s different productions followed the explicit use of the word “ambiguous” by the librettist Amin Maalouf to explain the ending also dramaturgically, and not merely in

words; however, the last scene becomes less vague with a close look at Saariaho's setting of the final verses. Underneath the façade of the protagonist, who lost her love and wishes to become a nun, lies the tormented soul of a resigned woman whose God is not close, but far away, and who repeatedly conditions her love of God.

From *Femme Idéale* to *Femme Fatale*: Contexts for the Exotic Archetype in Nineteenth-Century French Opera

Chromatically meandering, even teasing, Carmen's *Seguidilla* proves fatally seductive for Don José, luring him to an obsession that overrides his expected decorum. Equally alluring, Dalila contrives to strip Samson of his powers and the Israelites of their prized warrior. The exotic *femmes fatales* plotting ruination of gentrified patriarchal society who occupied the nineteenth-century French opera stages contrast sharply with an eighteenth-century model populated by dutiful Western females and their estranged lovers overseen by ultimately merciful exotic male rules.

Disparities between these archetypes, most notably in treatment and expectation of the exotic and the female, appear particularly striking given the chronological proximity within French operatic tradition. Indeed, most literature depicts these models as mutually exclusive. Yet when conceptualized as a single tradition, a socio-political—rather than aesthetic—revolution provides the basis for this drastic shift from *femme idéale* to *femme fatale*.

To account for the nineteenth century's break with established plot archetypes, this study documents the socio-political backlash against female liberties following the French Revolution. A combination of primary-source historical accounts, political documents—most importantly the 1804 Code Napoléon—and secondary source commentary, alongside shifting symbolic representations of the French state, provide a narrative path between plot archetypes. The resulting history presents a continuous—though malleable—lineage of French exotic opera that responds to shifting socio-political and cultural fluctuations.

From Wagner to the *Mulata*: a Dual Female Personality

The parallels between opera and cinema have inspired film scholars such as Carolyn Abbate, David Schroeder, and Marcia Citron among others to draw connections between nineteenth-century staged works and twentieth-century films. Although these investigations have not always found direct influences of one medium on another, certain parallels have suggested deeply embedded cultural tropes within both cinematic and operatic practices. One particular theme that has permeated the two mediums has been the treatment of women characters dualistically, either as a “good,” motherly type or an “evil” prostitute and menace. Examples of such depictions can be found in Richard Wagner's operas as well as in Cuban zarzuelas and musical films featuring *mulata* characters. The

Madonna/Prostitute paradigm in Cuba, as manifested in the *mulata's* biracial character, permeates twentieth-century Latin American film and serves as an important foundation for many dramatic plots.

In this paper I explore the relationship between Wagner's theatrical and musical treatment of women in *Tannhäuser* (1845) and *Parsifal* (1882) with the figure of the *mulata* as portrayed in the Mexican-Cuban film *Maria la O* (1948), directed by Adolfo Bustamente. A close reading of the music and narrative of these works provides exceptional parallels among seemingly disparate cultures and eras. Specifically, I look at the Madonna/Prostitute syndrome as presented between different feminine archetypes. While the Wagner and Bustamente examples incorporate clearly misogynistic elements, they also enact forms of empowerment for their feminine characters, thereby complicating feminist interpretations of both works.

Sight, Sound, and Music Literacies during the Renaissance

How did individuals approach the act of reading musical notation during the Renaissance? This question is difficult to answer because it requires a redefinition of the verb "to read," given the difference between notions of alphabetic and musical texts. For centuries, literate readers have understood alphabetic texts silently without reference to sound. Musicologists such as Willi Apel, Stanley Boorman, and Anthony Newcomb have viewed musical texts instead as scripts for performance—symbolic mediators between the eyes, ears, and minds of composers and listeners—which are devoid of meaning outside sounded performance. Evidence suggests, however, that many musicians did derive meaning from musical notation without recourse to sound. Jessie Ann Owens and Cristle Collins Judd have considered this evidence with regard to the relationship between performance, composition, and notational format (score, partbook, tablature, etc.). Previous scholarship focuses on the ability of musical professionals to audiate (i.e., to mentally envision the sound of) advanced polyphonic compositions. In this paper, I explore the concept of non-performative musical literacies from the perspectives of non-professionals reading basic polyphonic compositions. Drawing from evidence of reader engagement in Renaissance music textbooks, I demonstrate strategies that readers may have employed to read polyphony silently. In light of this, I argue for a less restrictive conception of musical literacy during the Renaissance, restoring to musical notation a wider range of possible meanings and significations.

Do They Know They Are Dancing

Do the characters in a ballet know that they are dancing? In films, opera, and musical theatre, music that is created as part of the plot, music the characters know is happening, is called "diegetic music." I propose that a similar situation can occur in ballet

when, as part of the story being told, characters knowingly perform a dance. I call this previously unexplored condition “diegetic movement,” and in this paper investigate how it correlates with a ballet’s music. My examples are selections from Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins’ 1944 ballet *Fancy Free*, a story following three sailors on a one-night shore leave. The ballet’s narrative provides opportunities for diegetic movement as the sailors enter a bar, attempt to woo the women they meet, and end up brawling together, instances where shifting between movement styles furthers the dramatic flow.

My methodology classifies diegetic movement into three main types. Gestures (with blatant narrative function), Diegetic Dance (indicating dance steps), and Ballet (crossing into continual movement), and subcategories that explore whether dancing and music concur. A noteworthy example of Diegetic Dance happens in the tender duet when both music and dance depict the transitory nature of the romance. The couple’s knowledge that they are dancing together changes their movements, creating poignant meaning when combined with transient musical phrases. My investigation into these combinations of dance types and exploration of the dancers’ awareness that they are “dancing” offers a clearer understanding of how music and choreography together construct meaning and tell a story.

A Real-Life Model for Verdi’s Duke of Mantua

It was a struggle for Giuseppe Verdi to bring Victor Hugo’s drama *Le roi s’amuse* to the operatic stage. He must have known that he would have trouble with the censors, but he believed in the play’s powerful message and its dramatic possibilities. The king in Hugo’s controversial play was François I of France, and French censors shut it down after only one public performance. Italian censors were equally displeased with the first submission by Verdi’s librettist Francesco Maria Piave. Verdi’s correspondence reveals that he wanted an actual historical nobleman to replace the French king. A series of negotiations resulted in the opera we know and love. If one follows the trail of those negotiations, the person he chose and the reasons for his choice become obvious.

Appalachian Folk Song as a Symbol of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South

The question of America’s musical identity has provided fertile ground for generations of composers and scholars. Typically, discussions of this topic have focused on works that have stayed in the modern concert repertory and which generally complement contemporary American cultural values—such as Dvořák’s *Symphony from the New World* or Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*. But sometimes failures provide a window into the values of the past in a way that the successes cannot. This paper focuses on just such a revealing failure: a Jim-Crow-era attempt to fashion a school of American musical nationalism, rooted in the culture of white supremacy.

The composer in question is Lamar Stringfield (1897–1959), best remembered today as the founder of the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra, but better known as a composer during his lifetime. Following the example of John Powell (1882–1963), Stringfield attempted to fashion an American national music founded on the music that he believed was the truest representation of white America: the folksongs of Appalachia. His efforts included the collection of folk songs, the writing of a polemical book about American musical nationalism, and the composition of an Appalachian folk opera. Stringfield's failure to realize his dream, however, had little to do with American society's rejection of white nationalism, but rather with the low status of Appalachia within American culture: despite his efforts, critics consistently treated his music as inherently exotic rather than as a form of nationalism.