**American Musicological Society–Capital Chapter**

**Spring 2015 Meeting**

**University of Maryland**

**April 11, 2015**

**Program**

**8:30** Coffee and Registration

**Session I: Lowens Award Nominees** (Chair: Bonny Miller)

**9:00 “**Beethoven’s Goethe Settings and Enlightenment Song,” Peter D’Elia (University of Virginia)

**9:30** “Brahms *Vier ernste Gesänge*: Romantic Commentary on Biblical Texts,” Kevin Frecker (Catholic University of America)

**10:00** “’What passing bells?’ Time and Memory in Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem,*” Robert Lintott (University of Maryland)

**10:30** Break and voting

**Session II: American and British Topics** (Chair: Patrick Warfield)

**11:00** “James William Davison: Monument in His Own Time, Monster in Ours,” Joseph Mann (Catholic University of America)

**11:30** “’Disarmed prejudice and put out the eyes of bigotry’: The Career of Kate Loder (1825–1904,)” Therese Ellsworth (Independent Scholar)

**12:00** “The Gendered Reception of American Women Modernists: Ruth Crawford, Johanna Beyer, Marion Bauer, and Jessie Baetz,” Tonia Passwater (City University of New York)

**12:30 Lunch**

**Session III: These Papers Have Nothing in Common – Or Do They?** (chair: Laurie McManus)

**2:30** “Birds, Vegetables, and Sharp Objects: An Investigation of Symbolism in Polyphonic Masses from a Sixteenth-Century Castle,” Alanna Ropchock (Case Western Reserve University)

**3:00** “Members of the Bach Family and the Published Church Cantatas of Georg Philipp Telemann,” Nicholas Taylor (University of Maryland)

**3:30** “Stretching the Ears of American Audiences: Contemporary Music Techniques in Mainstream Cinema,” Katherine Preston (College of William and Mary)

**4:00 Coffee break**

**4:15 Business Meeting**

**Abstracts**

**Beethoven’s Goethe Settings and Enlightenment Song**

Peter D’Elia

For over forty years, scholars have understood Ludwig van Beethoven as primarily a Classical and Enlightenment composer, driven by artistic ideals of balance, unity and clarity and by the intellectual premises of the universality of sociable human nature and the authority of reason. This interpretation leaves out as much as it reveals. Focusing on the continuity of formal aesthetics between Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s, Franz Joseph Haydn’s, and Beethoven’s music ignores their differences in affective content; believing in a Beethovenian heroism blinds interpreters to his musical expressions of social anxiety; and perceiving Beethoven as a champion of the Enlightenment implies a faith in reason that Beethoven and others of his generation had begun to lose.

As a genre whose eighteenth-century origins are closely tied to the ideals of the German-speaking Enlightenment, the Lied provides an entry point for revaluating Beethoven. In particular, his oft-neglected settings of the poetry of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, which have previously been written about as extensions of Enlightenment song, actually show Beethoven’s distance from the Enlightenment. Following Johann Gottfried Herder’s theory of humanity’s pre-social origins, Goethe’s poetry focuses on interior emotions that undergo change over the course of the poem. Beethoven’s Goethe settings “Kennst du das Land,” “Wonne der Wehmut,” and “Sehnsucht (Was zieht mir),” eschew the major precepts of Enlightenment song; they treat voice and accompaniment as equal partners, change affect quickly and often, and use non-strophic forms. In so doing, they respect the new aesthetic exemplified by Goethe’s poetry.

The Goethe settings reveal a new aspect of Beethoven through his work in a neglected genre. This Beethoven retreats inward, writes love songs, and is far from the public heroism of the symphonies or the balanced formalism of the Classical style. He is concerned above all with the emotions that convey restless love, longing, and a disaffection with reality. In these ways, Beethoven’s songs share a kinship with Schubert’s Romantic Lieder on the same texts. Unlike Schubert’s songs, however, they stop short of completing the transition to an imaginary realm, choosing instead to point toward the ideal while remaining within the bounds of the real.

**Brahms’s *Vier ernste Gesänge*: Romantic Commentary on Biblical Texts** Kevin Frecker

Brahms’s *Vier ernste Gesänge*, op. 121, one of the last works that the composer penned, was completed in 1896 within a year of his death. The theme of death features prominently in the first three songs, but since the fourth focuses on love and not death, scholars often have trouble finding coherence within the work. Two generally pessimistic opinions tend to emerge: 1) the optimistic ending does not fit with the pessimism of the first three songs, and 2) the fourth song represents a softening of the pessimistic blow that arrives in the central songs. An alternative viewpoint held by such scholars as Daniel Beller-McKenna sees the work as ultimately optimistic, a point with which I agree.

In my interpretation, motives in these songs highlight aspects of the biblical texts in Brahms’s *Vier ernste Gesänge* to shape this work into a Romantic celebration of love (Liebe) over vanity and death. To support this argument, I explicate the organizational and motivic parallels in the music of the first and fourth songs, demonstrate how the musical parallels of these songs reveal parallels in the texts, and show how these parallels contribute to the optimistic conclusion of the work.

I argue that Brahms uses a descending octave-leap gesture that appears in Songs 1 and 4 to highlight the meaning of the biblical texts. This gesture becomes closely associated with the concept of vanity in the text of Song 1 (from the book of Ecclesiastes), which is interconnected with death and with the unfulfilled *Sehnsucht* of human beings to escape this fate. The octave leap returns in Song 4 with greatest intensity in its first section, highlighting a text (from Chapter 13 of First Corinthians) that suggests that without love, anything a person does is worthless, i.e., is vanity. Love then becomes the only way in which a person’s actions can be raised above the worthlessness of vanity. The octave-leap gesture, transformed at the very end of Song 4, symbolizes the nature of love to transform this pessimistic view of life and death into a Romantic celebration of Liebe.

**“What passing bells?” Time and Memory in Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem***

Robert Lintott

On November 14, 1940 Germany launched a devastating nighttime air raid that crippled the British city of Coventry and flattened its cathedral. Many Britons saw the destruction of the building as symbolic of the destruction of innocence, and the cathedral site quickly became a center of public remembrance. Two decades later, in a continuation of this spirit, a new Coventry cathedral was built, abutting the carefully preserved ruins of its predecessor. The featured attraction at its consecration in May 1962 was the premiere of Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*, commissioned for the occasion. Fittingly, among major aspects of both structure and meaning in that composition are intertwined layers of time and memory. The centuries-old text of the Latin Requiem Mass and the World-War-I poetry of Wilfred Owen set by Britten serve to illuminate and comment upon these layers. Performing the piece in the architectural space of the newly consecrated cathedral—the profane made sacred—and next to the ruins of the old one—the sacred destroyed and thus made profane—heightens the commentary, and could have only enhanced the experience of commemoration for the listeners at the premiere.

Building on past research on music and memory, this paper examines how Britten used text, music, and space to weave layers of time and memory through his *War Requiem*. The inclusion of Owen’s poetry alongside the mass allows the composer to create a work that mirrors the physical space of the cathedral. At the same time, the poetry helps the work serve as a critique of the very concept of public memorialization. By juxtaposing Owen’s bitter, acerbic verses with the traditional text of the Mass, Britten engages in a modern equivalent of medieval troping: the newly inserted text provides a commentary on the original. I further argue that as much as it looks back, the work also looks forward: by evoking memories of war in a newly consecrated building meant to symbolize reconciliation, Britten crafts an opus that is as much a call for a peaceful future as it is an amelioratory salve for a destructive past.

**James William Davison: Monument in His Own Time, Monster in Ours**

Joseph Mann

James William Davison was the preeminent music critic of 19th-century England and a significant influence on the musical tastes of the nation , not only during his 50 years of critical activity (from 1835 until his death in 1885), but well into the first half of the 20th century. During his life, and for the first 50 years after his death, he was remembered fondly and respectfully by authors and scholars that discussed music in 19th-century England and the English perspective on the music of the age. Scholarship after 1960, however, has either completely ignored the important role Davison played in the development of English musical tastes in the 19th century, or has taken the position that Davison was a biased, musical monster who sought only to tear down the rising geniuses of Chopin, Schumann, and Wagner (among other significant musicians of the time). This perspective culminated in 1984 with what has unfortunately remained the most extensive work on Davison to date, Charles Reid’s *The Music Monster*. This paper will counter Reid’s perspective on Davison, by arguing that Davison was not atypically biased in the context of 19th-century music criticism and that he was a musical icon of his age in England and an integral part of the musical culture there, while also calling into question the accuracy and scholarly quality of Reid’s biography by pointing out his own prejudices against Davison.

**“Disarmed prejudice and put out the eyes of bigotry”:**

**The Career of Kate Loder (1825-1904)**

Therese Ellsworth

The Loder family of Bath produced a number of musicians, male and female, during the long nineteenth century. John D. (1788-1846) was one of the nation’s leading violinists. His son, Edward J. (1809-65) became a composer, most notably of English operas. Foremost among the women was John D.’s niece, Kate Loder. Her training at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) prepared her for a career as a piano soloist, teacher and composer.

When Loder made her Philharmonic Society debut in 1848, the *Times* critic declared her among the best pianists of the day, one whose formidable skills had “disarmed prejudice and put out the eyes of bigotry”. This vivid imagery referred to the bias against native talent at the time. Loder performed at the principal concert series in London and in the provinces until retiring from public appearances in 1854, not long after her marriage to Henry Thompson. Loder continued to compose and to teach not only piano but also harmony and composition. After graduation from the RAM, she became its first female professor of harmony.

An investigation of her output has uncovered approximately forty works. Apart from a student opera, they comprise instrumental and vocal pieces for one to four performers. Instrumental genres predominate, chiefly for the piano. Her well-crafted works reveal a composer who favored lyrical melodies and chromatic harmonies characteristic of the period, and displayed proficiency in the development of thematic material that earned her a reputation as one of England’s “best classical authors”.

Loder maintained a wide circle of distinguished colleagues. In spite of growing paralysis in her later years, she continued to participate in London’s musical life. She maintained relationships with resident musicians and renowned visiting foreign performers. Correspondence between Loder and Clara Schumann indicate the two enjoyed a longstanding personal and professional association.

This paper relies on recent research into the career and compositions of Kate Loder for a forthcoming volume from Boydell & Brewer, *The Loder Family: Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Bath*.

**The Gendered Reception of American Women Modernists: Ruth Crawford,**

**Johanna Beyer, Marion Bauer, and Jessie Baetz**

Tonia Passwater

The role of gender in the reception of American modernist music in the early twentieth century has been widely discussed. Catherine Parsons Smith’s influential essay, “A Distinguishing Virility” (1994), started a conversation about modernist music’s misogyny; it has been continued more recently by Ellie Hisama, Melissa de Graaf, and others. Although Smith’s argument that anti-woman sentiments of male modernists made it impossible for women to succeed in this milieu has been challenged, it is beyond dispute that the music of male and female modernist composers was received in different ways, sharply inflected by gender manner. Using newspaper reviews and materials from the Composers’ Forum-Laboratory concerts held in New York City from 1935-1940, this paper examines the reception of modernist compositions by women from 1929-1945, contextualizing it through concurrent popular writings.

During these years, America was experiencing an ideological shift from first-wave feminism back to the Victorianism of an earlier time, a transition largely provoked by the Depression. This transition altered views concerning acceptable roles for women. Through magazines, newspapers, and other popular writings, citizens were inundated with Victorianist, “back-to-the-home” propaganda. I trace the impact of these sorts of writings on the lives, careers, and music of women modernists, including Ruth Crawford, Johanna Beyer, Marion Bauer, and Jessie Baetz. I argue that ideological shifts during the Depression and the resultant “contesting ideologies of womanhood” had a stronger impact on reactions to modernist women than has been previously acknowledged.

**Birds, Vegetables, and Sharp Objects: An Investigation of Symbolism in Polyphonic Masses from a Sixteenth-Century Castle**

Alanna Ropchock

Between 1558 and 1560, Anthony von Isenburg-Büdingen had seven Mass Ordinary settings printed on-site at his castle, the Ronneburg, near Frankfurt. The seven masses were produced separately as single prints in choirbook format and encompass a variety of composers including Josquin, Senfl, Mouton, and Janequin. The only study to address Isenburg’s mass prints as a cohesive group was published in 1935, and even then an intriguing characteristic of the prints was overlooked: along with Isenburg’s coat of arms, an isolated agrarian object decorates the opening page of each mass. For instance, there is a cluster of grapes on the first page of Févin’s *Missa Mente tota,* a pod of snap peas on Mouton’s *Missa Quem dicunt homines*, and what appears to be a scythe on Janequin’s *Missa La Bataille*. Did Isenburg or his printer select these objects randomly, or are they somehow related to their respective masses, perhaps through symbolic relationships with the pre-existing melodic material?

In this paper, I explore possible symbolic relationships between the models of the seven Ronneburg masses and the corresponding images in the prints, considering these within the context of Lutheran thought and theology since Isenburg converted to Lutheranism decades before he printed the masses. For example, the waterfowl found on the first page of Josquin’s *Missa Pange lingua* could have an overtly Catholic meaning if they are interpreted as being pelicans, but would have a much different—and more Lutheran-friendly—meaning if read as being swans. The seven masses printed at the Ronneburg castle are an example of how Lutherans took an active interest in masses originally intended for Catholic liturgies. Moreover, these works demonstrate the potential for layered symbolism in Mass Ordinary settings well into the sixteenth century and outside of the Catholic context in which such symbolic works were originally composed.

**Members of the Bach Family and the Published Church Cantatas of**

**Georg Philipp Telemann**

Nicholas Taylor

Between 1725 and 1749 Georg Philipp Telemann published five annual cycles of church cantatas, which circulated widely throughout northern Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Manuscript copies of these pieces, correspondences, and printed libretti demonstrate that both Wilhelm Friedemann Bach and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach knew Telemann’s cantatas and performed many of them as part of their official duties as church musicians. Manuscript copies of cantatas from Telemann’s *Harmonischer Gottes-Dienst* (Hamburg, 1725­–26),now found at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, show that these pieces were performed during Wilhelm Friedemann Bach’s time in Halle. His brother Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach performed several works by Telemann while in Hamburg, and printed libretti demonstrate that these included cantatas from Telemann’s last published cycle: the so-called “Engel-Jahrgang” (Hermsdorf, 1748–49).

Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel selected individual cantatas by Telemann to perform (as opposed to performing a full cycle), and their decisions can tell us much about the practices and professional expectations of these church musicians. Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, for instance, composed his own works for the most important feast days and evidently turned to other composers’ works—such as Telemann’s printed cantatas—for more ordinary days. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach did this, too, and he also disregarded the original *de tempore* designations of Telemann’s cantatas, deciding to perform works on Sundays for which they were not intended. These documents also reveal the vast popularity and long-lasting appeal of Telemann’s church music, and confirm the assumptions of Johann Ernst Bach, who, in 1758, wrote that “one can barely find a Protestant church in Germany where Telemann’s cantata cycles are not performed.”

**Stretching the Ears of American Audiences: Contemporary Music Techniques in Mainstream Cinema**

Katherine Preston

Many Americans who are not supporters of contemporary art music have been exposed to modern compositional techniques through film scores. Both Aaron Copland and Frederick Sternfeld pointed out that 1940s audiences were more willing to accept modern sounds in cinema than in concert music, and today the use of dissonance, displaced metrical accents, and sudden dynamic changes is commonplace in science fiction and horror films. Recently, however, both newly composed and compilation soundtracks for mainstream films (such as *The Hours*, *Shutter Island*, *Ridicule*, and *A Beautiful Mind*) have increasingly incorporated extreme dissonance, sound for sound’s sake, serialism, melodic simultaneities, real-world sounds within the musical fabric, and minimalism. As a result, American viewers of such films (to use Ives’ expression) have had their ears stretched by watching films.