**American Musicological Society Capital Chapter**

**Fall Meeting**

**Saturday, October 15, 2011**

**George Washington University**

**Program**

9:30 Coffee and Tea

**Session I:** 19th-Century Women Musicians and Composers

10:00 a.m. Bonny H. Miller (Bethesda, MD): “Only Half a Huckster: The Logierian

System and Nineteenth-Century Women Musicians”

10:35 a.m. Caitlin Miller (Library of Congress/ The Catholic University of

America): “Killing Him Softly (or Fiercely) with Her Song: The Loreley as Subject or Object in Two Musical Settings of Heine’s Poem”

11:10-11:25 a.m. Break

**Session II:** Refining Labels, Re-shaping Discourse

11:25 a.m. Laurie McManus (Shenandoah University): “Brahms in the Priesthood

of Art?”

12:10 p.m. Katherine Walker (Cornell University): “Leopold Mozart, the Rationalist? Humanism and Good Taste in Eighteenth-Century Performance Practice”

**Lunch**

**Session III:** 20th-Century Music

2:00 p.m. Olga Haldey (University of Maryland, College Park): “Reading the Master: Segei Slonimsky’s *Master i Margarita* As an Interpretation of Its Source”

2:35 p.m. Natalie Zelensky (Washington, D.C.): “Performing *a la Russe:* Gypsy Romances, Russian Folk Music, and the Russian Exiles in 1920s New York”

3:10 p.m. Lars Helgert (Georgetown University): “Lukas Foss’s *American Landscapes* (for Guitar and Chamber Orchestra) as an Expression of the Immigrant Experience”

4:00 p.m. **Business Meeting**

**Bonny H. Miller (Bethesda, MD): “Only Half a Huckster: The Logierian System and Nineteenth-Century Women Musicians”**

The years 1809-1811 produced the remarkable crop of male composers who shaped the Romantic era during the first half of the nineteenth century: Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt. A less familiar configuration is the striking constellation of gifted women born in the decade from 1811 to 1821 who became esteemed professional musicians and composers. Clara Wieck Schumann, Pauline Viardot, and Jenny Lind were the most famous performers of the group, but others who conducted versatile professional careers as musicians and composers included British organists Anne Mounsey Bartholomew, Elizabeth Mounsey, and Elizabeth Stirling Bridge; British composer and teacher Clara Macirone; and American composer and author Augusta Browne Garrett. These female musicians participated throughout long professional careers as performers, instructors, church organists, composers, music journalists, and authors.

Common to several of these women was training during their formative years in the pedagogy method introduced by John Bernard Logier in 1816 in Ireland, and subsequently in England, Germany, North America, and abroad. Logier’s system elicited high praise and vehement opposition as a war of words flew back and forth in the press and pamphlets for the next decade. Wieck Schumann, Mounsey Bartholomew, and Browne Garrett are known to have studied using the Logierian system during early childhood. As Browne described Logier in 1845, “In truth he has been to music what Sir Isaac Newton was to astronomy, a disseminator of light on subjects which before were shrouded in mystery.”

Logier’s curriculum was built solidly on tradition, but added innovations such as group teaching and public demonstrations of applied harmonic exercises. Girls outside of musical families usually received lessons with more emphasis on piano performance as an attractive “accomplishment” than mastery of theory and harmony, but a significant benefit for female students of the Logierian method was systematic schooling in theory, figured bass, and voice leading. This valuable knowledge entrenched early in life provided a foundation on which to build lifelong composition and improvisation skills for girls with a gift and passion for music. Logier may have been half a huckster, and he was certainly a relentless self-promoter, but he was no imposter as an innovative educator in his approach to the keyboard. His system empowered talented girls through invaluable harmonic training and performance experience that led toward fruitful professional lives in music.

**Caitlin Miller (Library of Congress/ The Catholic University of America) “Killing Him Softly (or Fiercely) with Her Song: The Loreley as Subject or Object in Two Musical Settings of Heine’s Poem”**

German poetry is filled with imagery that reflects the gendered power relationships of 19th-century Germany, especially those images that categorize men as active spectators and women as objects of male desire. One especially rich example is Heinrich Heine’s famous ballad relating the Lorelei legend, which was set to music by both Clara Schumann and Franz Liszt. The fact that a composer’s gender can affect his or her setting of a text raises the possibility that Schumann's setting reveals her personal female reaction to the notion of the objectification of women.  Despite her subservience to her husband and self-deprecating attitude toward her own compositions, Schumann overcame many obstacles in her life as she achieved a successful career and managed her home life. These experiences may have prompted her to react to Heine's Lorelei from a uniquely feminine perspective, and I contend that by allowing Lorelei to appropriate her own song Schumann’s setting demonstrates that a woman can speak with her own voice.

Applying the principles of "male gaze" theory, I analyze both Schumann’s and Liszt’s settings in order to determine contrasts in the manner in which each composer treats Lorelei as subject or object.  I also suggest that Schumann’s setting allows for the possibility that Lorelei herself is the narrator of the poem.  The Lorelei theme or "song" in each version is particularly powerful in the way it allows the listener to view the woman. Schumann's setting forces the listener to focus on Lorelei's actions while Liszt's setting allows the listener to gaze upon the beauty of *The Lorelei*.  This paper presents a new viewpoint of two 19th-century composers' songs and shows how each composer emphasizes or de-emphasizes the male gaze upon the woman.

**Laurie McManus (Shenandoah University): “Brahms in the Priesthood of Art?”**

During his lifetime, Brahms garnered a variety of critiques relating him to a priest of music—in both positive and negative formulations. In a general sense this quasi-religious trope expressed devotion to one’s art, renunciation of worldly pleasures for a life of study. Drawing on the model of Schumann’s “Neue Bahnen,” music critics contributed to a rhetorical muddle, encompassing terms such as “messiah” and “prophet” as well as discussions of morality, purity, and asceticism. Both supporters and detractors applied this language broadly to Brahms and his music, rather than in relation to specific pieces or genres; indeed, the phenomenon seems to have been prompted by many factors: musical characteristics such as tonal counterpoint and traditional techniques including fugue and canon, Brahms’s work in early music as both performer and editor, and the association of early music with sacred themes and instrumental music with purity. While many critics characterized these qualities as positive, others devalued them as too chaste or ascetic to the point of being inexpressive and ineffective. Building occasionally into character defamation, some attacks produced implications of impotence and inhumanity, implications that some critics, such as Richard Wagner, recognized and encouraged.

The applications of this trope, both positive and negative, indicate a central element of the critical strife in German musical aesthetics and in Brahms reception more specifically. Although many studies of Brahms emphasize his role in a conflict between progress and tradition, when analyzed from the perspective of this trope, competing valuations of musical purity come to the foreground. Fully understanding the negative aspect of this reception also requires contextualizing “purity” in relation to Wagnerian notions of sensuality. In terms of the quasi-religious rhetoric, Schumann’s “Neue Bahnen” has always been a point of investigation, but such analyses, from Brahms’s time onwards, have often focused on how the article influenced the criticism of individual works, or on whether Brahms fulfilled Schumann’s “prophecy.” Furthermore, a broader approach to the discourse of purity and the so-called priesthood of art helps expand on studies of art-religion in this period and demonstrates the effects on Brahms reception of the general nineteenth-century trend to conflate biography and artistic evaluation.

**Katherine Walker (Cornell University): “Leopold Mozart, the Rationalist? Humanism and Good Taste in Eighteenth-Century Performance Practice”**

When Piero Melograni described Leopold Mozart as “an Enlightenment man, rational and concrete,” he articulated the near consensus view of the elder Mozart’s ideological and aesthetic beliefs. This characterization has proven efficacious (as Leopold, “the rationalist” is set in frequent counterpoint to Wolfgang, “the genius”), but it is not sufficient. For although Leopold frequently hailed his rationalist contemporaries, aspects of his own worldview conflict with the so-called “doctrine of reason” and thus call for a more nuanced characterization of his beliefs. Foremost among these conflicting aspects is Leopold’s Catholic faith.

A perceived tension between the provinces of reason and faith undergirded the intellectual climate of the Enlightenment**.** Although not all rationalists subscribed to the rigorous secularism promoted by Voltaire and the philosophes, Christian rationalists—in Germany as elsewhere—were nevertheless obliged to reconcile these conflicting ideologies. They did so in ways that, when taken into account, reframe the supposedly monolithic secular Enlightenment as a pluralistic web of ideologies, which informed and were informed by their advocates’ religious beliefs. Leopold’s investment in negotiating reason and faith distances him from prominent rationalist thinkers with whom he is traditionally associated, while pointing to an alternative influence: the humanist neoclassicism that formed the core of his decade-long Jesuit education. For founding Jesuit educators, and in the spirit of humanism, Greco-Roman classicism provided the foundation for an educational system that would meld the intellectual and aesthetic, on the one hand, to the ethical and religious, on the other, thus producing men of reason, wisdom, faith, and moral uprightness. These were the central compass points of the Jesuits’ humanistic ideal, an ideal that reflects Leopold’s worldview better than any other label.

As this essay argues, humanism is also a facet of Leopold’s aesthetic ideology and should inform our reading of his *Versuch* and, perhaps to some extent, eighteenth-century performance practice, in general. If Leopold, the rationalist, is expressed in his appeal to dogma and rules, Leopold, the humanist, resides foremost in his ideal of good taste. This essay examines four central aspects of Leopold’s aesthetic ideal of taste that emerge from his personal and professional writings—moderation, clarity, propriety, and expression—locating them within a (predominately Ciceronean) humanist framework that promotes reason beyond rules—reason born of wisdom and experience and fitted to navigate uncertain situations that may defy a predetermined ideal. Taste, itself frequently associated with dogma and rules, is here revealed as a counterpoint to them and a keystone to Leopold’s humanistic shade of rationalism.

**Olga Haldey (University of Maryland, College Park): “Reading the Master: Segei Slonimsky’s *Master i Margarita* As an Interpretation of Its Source”**

Arguably, writing an opera based on Mikhail Bulgakov’s semi-forbidden novel *Master i Margarita* in 1972 Leningrad may not have been the wisest career move Sergei Slonimsky ever made. One of the most notorious musical victims of Soviet censorship, Slonimsky’s three-act chamber opera shared the fate of its parent novel, a masterpiece of “magical realism,” by waiting seventeen years for a premiere and nineteen years for a publication of its score. Briefly and triumphantly resurrected at the height of *perestroika*, the opera then perplexingly lapsed into obscurity. It still awaits its first commercial recording and its first full-length performance in the West, where despite a certain notoriety enjoyed by his uncle Nicholas, the music of Sergei Slonimsky (b. 1932), and particularly his rich and varied operatic output is still virtually unknown. This paper therefore is designed to serve as much as an introduction to one unjustly neglected work as a beginning of a much-delayed scholarly conversation about Slonimsky’s operas as a whole.

Based on the composer’s memoirs, existing Russian-language scholarship, and this author’s own study of the score and personal recollections of the opera’s rehearsals and premiere, the paper offers a discussion of Slonimsky’s *Master i Margarita*, viewed primarily as a philosophical engagement with Bulgakov’s text. Specifically, it outlines the composer’s dialog with the operatic genre, history, and tradition; his use of leit-themes and leit-timbres for both characterization and commentary, and the built-in elements of poly-stylistics, theatrical absurdity and camp that make Slonimsky’s *Master* both a dream and a headache for a stage director. The paper particularly focuses on the composer’s sophisticated treatment of the intricately complex temporal polyphony of the source novel, in which the action takes place simultaneously in Stalin’s Moscow, Pontius Pilate’s Jerusalem, and the undefinable “eternity” in-between. It shows how Slonimsky’s delicate, yet expert handling of the opera’s time flow both highlights the essence of Bulgakov’s cult masterpiece for its admirers (clearly, Slonimsky’s target audience) and weaves in the composer’s own distinct contrapuntal line – his own personal reading of every Russian’s favorite *Master*.

**Natalie Zelensky (Washington, D.C.): “Performing *a la Russe:* Gypsy Romances, Russian Folk Music, and the Russian Exiles in 1920s New York”**

After the Bolshevik Revolution, approximately two million people fled Russia, 6,000 of which immigrated to New York City. Despite the fact that this group made a significant impact on New York’s social, art, and cultural scenes, the Russian exiles in New York have been largely overlooked by scholars. The popular music of this group, in particular, has never been studied and presents a topic ripe for exploring the function of music within a diaspora of political exiles. Based on archival findings, concert reviews and announcements, and extant recordings, this paper looks at the music culture surrounding the Russian émigré community in New York, which was concentrated in Harlem throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Beyond simply documenting a little-known tradition, this paper explores how the Russians in New York used music as a space for performing a particular form of Russian Self and, in turn, using this performance as a strategy for coping with exile. Interpreting this music within a theoretical framework of nostalgia, I thus explore the music’s function within the interstitial space of a diaspora. An assessment of two of the most prevalent musical genres performed by the émigrés in New York, Russian gypsy and folk songs, shows that this music served as a forum for dealing with exile due to its musical qualities, associations with the lost Russian homeland, and room for the construction of an exotic and exaggerated Russian Self.

Finally, I compare émigré constructions of Russianness with those prevalent in American popular culture of the period, specifically within the realm of sheet music. As a medium ripe for gauging “the public discourse about reality” (Williams 1996: 7), sheet music presents an important clue regarding American views of Russians at a time when a new group of immigrants—the “aristocratic” Russian exiles—infiltrated New York’s ethnic scene. A comparison between American and émigré representations of Russianness shows a surprising overlap in stereotypes and an attractive exoticism associated with this construct. Ultimately, an analysis of Russian and American depictions of Russianness through venues of popular music production in New York reveals the Russian Other to be an advantageous construct, rather than a liability, in the xenophobic atmosphere of 1920s America.

**Lars Helgert (Georgetown University): “Lukas Foss’s *American Landscapes* (for Guitar and Chamber Orchestra) as an Expression of the Immigrant Experience”**

German-born Lukas Foss (1922-2009) made the United States his adopted homeland after he and his family fled the Nazis in 1933. Foss's affection for his new country was evident in his use of Americana in several works throughout the course of his long career, such as *The Prairie*, *Three American Pieces*, and the *American Cantata*. This affection, however, was tempered by the circumstances of his departure from Germany, the desire to retain his European roots, and the alienation that he felt as a foreigner in the United States. These competing impulses are expressed in *American Landscapes* (1989), Foss's little-studied guitar concerto. The work's Americana is manifested most obviously in the use of American folksongs such as "The Wayfaring Stranger" and "Cotton-Eyed Joe," but the manner in which Foss treats these tunes, with subversion of the original metrical schemes and tonalities, portrays his disconnect from American society. Moreover, the texts associated with these tunes, though they are used instrumentally in the concerto, can be related to this conflict and to the circumstances of Foss's life. The affection/alienation dichotomy is also reflected in the work's instrumentation, where a Jew's harp and a guitar (the latter is itself a metaphor for both American folk and European classical traditions) appear alongside standard chamber orchestra instruments, some of which are used in unusual ways. Formal elements likewise play a role, in which standard European schemes such as rondo compete with indeterminate elements whose source is the American avant-garde. Finally, the work concludes with a polytonal treatment of "America the Beautiful." By using this technique, Foss makes direct references to America while obscuring literal and sentimental meanings. Foss's reputation as an experimental composer who has used a diverse array of compositional procedures is well known, but this examination of *American Landscapes* suggests a motive for Foss's compositional eclecticism that has not been previously considered: his personal experience as an immigrant American.