**Spring 2003 Program**

**Program**

10:00 Rathai Anandanadesan, George Washington University: "The Women's
String Symphony Orchestra of Baltimore (1936-1940): A Multi-layered
Partnership"

10:30 Katherine McDonough, Johns Hopkins University: "An Analysis of
Jean-Baptiste Leclerc's Musical Philosophy"

11:00 Mary Simonson, University of Virginia: "Reinterpreting Female Body
and 'Voice' in Auber's La Muette de Portici"

11:30 Business Meeting, including the Lowens vote and the Chapter
elections

12:15 to 1:15 - Lunch

1:30 - Treasurers exhibit, The Performing Arts Reading Room, Madison
Building, Room 113

2:15 - Robynn Stillwell, Georgetown University, "Donkey Serenade:
Abject Expression and Adolescent Girls' Voices in Recent Cinema"

2:45 - Blake Wilson, Dickinson College, "A New Witness to Musical
Events in Laurentian Florence: the Correspondence of Ambrogio Angeni,
ca. 1487-92"

3:15 - Deborah Lawrence, "The Spanish Vihuela Prints as Commonplace
Books"

**Abstracts**

**Rathai Anandanadesan, George Washington University:
The Women's String Symphony Orchestra of Baltimore (1936-1940):
A Multi-layered Partnership**
On December 14th, 1936, The Sun reviewed the first concert of the Women's String Symphony Orchestra (WSO). The "ladies" debuted in front of "a sizable and kindly disposed audience" at the Museum of Art, playing works by C. P. E. Bach, Glazounov, Frescobaldi, Ravel, and Tchaikovsky. Unlike the city's most prominent orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, which performed old favorites, the WSO didn't depend on ticket sales. It was maintained instead by a stock of elite patrons, most of whom supported the group throughout its four-year tenure.

In this paper I discuss the WSO as a community orchestra. By evaluating the positions of its players and supporters in the local musical environment, and by discussing its affiliations with institutions such as the Peabody Conservatory, I show how these partnerships facilitated professional goals for aspiring artists and engendered a sense of civic pride and commitment among its patrons. By examining concert programs, I also address the significance of the group's repertoire and concert design in helping to broaden musical taste. In doing so, I demonstrate how the WSO was an important forum for local women musicians and composers, not only to showcase their talent, but to win respect.

**Katherine McDonough, Johns Hopkins University:
An Analysis of Jean-Baptiste Leclerc's Musical Philosophy**
This paper is a study of Leclerc's Essai sur la propagation de la musique en France, sa conservation, et ses rapports avec le gouvernement, based on a first edition published in 1796 found in the Library of Congress. Leclerc's proposal to the Revolutionary Convention endeavors to establish a systematic plan for the composition and distribution of certain "French National" music. Leclerc denies that music without words, including unspeakably corrupt theatrical pieces, has positive articulated meanings for its audience; he asserts that songs with words clearly define the strict moral code of the Republic, to educate the French people in this new musical style, and to regulate all output of music so that it corresponds to governmental policy. The basis for this revolutionary idea rests in Leclerc's belief in the connection between Republican morality and musical study and performance. An analysis of Leclerc's reasoning concludes that Leclerc's position is a prime example of the strain that was placed on musicians of the Revolutionary period in France-composers such as Mehul, Le Sueur, and Gossec-to conform to governmental standards.

**Mary Simonson, University of Virginia:
Reinterpreting Female Body and "Voice" in Auber's La Muette de Portici**
Long neglected by opera scholarship, Auber's 1828 opera La Muette de Portici has recently reemerged as a focal point for examinations of issues such as voice, vocality, body, and gesture in opera. While the resultant analyses have generated useful, nuanced readings of the opera and Fenella's character, they have simultaneously tended to distort Fenella and Elvire, positioning them as static representations of "body" and "voice," respectively.

I believe La Muette invites an alternate, more flexible reading. Examination of music, dance, staging, and performance in the two scenes in which Fenella and Elvire interact opens space to understand the women as sites in which body and voice come together, both within and across characters, rather than as incongruous poles of body and voice. Exploration of these scenes makes clear the extent to which both women necessarily possess bodies and voices, and engage in a dialogue that is simultaneously vocal and physical. Reframing the relationship that evolves between Fenella and Elvire as one that acknowledges, and indeed, is dependent on their similarities and shared qualities as well as those that contrast allows us to understand Fenella, Elvire, and female opera characters more generally as powerful, complete women.

**Robynn Stillwell, "Donkey Serenade: Abject Expression and Adolescent Girls' Voices in Recent Cinema"**
While the adolescent male "rite of passage" film has long been a staple of cinema internationally, it was only in the 1990s that a body, however small, of female rite of passage films has emerged. Whereas the male schema is frequently based on physical journeys and the loss of innocence, the female version is usually about an internal journey (often enforced through physical confinement) and the revelation of self. Key in these films is the suppression of the girls' self-expression and their (re)gaining of their voices, both literal and metaphorical. The abjection of the girls' voices results in displacement, and the presence or absence of music bears importantly on the narrative and the understanding of vocality and selfhood. Four films demonstrate different displacement/resolution strategies. In The Craft, verbal expression summons magic but unbalances the natural order; the non-verbal action-finale strikes many female viewers as a disturbingly "male" resolution. In A Little Princess, Sara's voice is suppressed in the diegesis but emerges multivalently in the underscore. In Heavenly Creatures, Pauline and Juliet's voices pass through the intermediary of their "saint" Mario Lanza, invoking a homosocial triangle that both expresses and suppresses their feelings about themselves and one another. And in The Virgin Suicides, the imprisoned Lisbon girls use popular recordings as coded communication with the boys on the "outside", but the film's unusually layered, and distinctly gendered, authorial voices put expression and meaning in flux.

**Blake Wilson, "A New Witness to Musical Events in Laurentian Florence: the Correspondence of Ambrogio Angeni, ca. 1487-92"**
This paper will present new evidence concerning Florentine musical life in the late 1480s. In the family archives of the da Filicaia family in the Florentine Badia, there survives a group of letters written by various correspondents to the young Antonio da Filicaia, the member of an old and wealthy patrician family who was away on family business in northern Europe for extended periods of time during the 1480s and 1490s. Among these letters are those of Ambrogio Angeni (Antonio's side of the correspondence does not survive), who reported on, among other things, musical matters in Florence. The letters make frequent and intimate reference to Isaac (whom they call 'Arrigo'), and reveal a surprising involvement with Lorenzo de' Medici's private musical circles, including commissioning and obtaining copies of works from Isaac and other named individuals, works that Ambrogio then sent to Antonio. The letters are full of musical references: to new compositions, works by Isaac, preparation for Carnival, aesthetic judgments (of Isaac's 'La battaglia' in particular) and technical discussions, Lorenzo's patronage, and a very active local composer previously unknown to musicologists. These letters were just transcribed during a visit to Florence in January, during which time I was also able to discover something about the identities of both Ambrogio and Antonio. This paper will present a summary of the new information contained in these letters, and preliminary observations on their significance to music history and historians

**Deborah Lawrence, "The Spanish Vihuela Prints as Commonplace Books"**
The Spanish vihuela prints of the sixteenth century have been studied as sources of Spanish repertoire, as documents providing insights into tuning and performance practice, and, to some extent, as pedagogical works. Despite this attention, these books remain somewhat mysterious owing in part to the careful organization of these collections into what appear to be didactic units. This paper will argue that the ordering of these collections was to make them commonplace books for learning music and, as such, they represent an approach to teaching music that falls in the continuum of humanist education.

A commonplace book was a notebook into which students of Latin recorded exceptional quotes to be learned and used in their own writing, and both manuscript and printed versions were organized by category to provide easy access to particular topics. In fact, the arrangement of the material afforded the student a means of conquering it, or "framing authority." The organization and content of the vihuelists' collections is very much like that of commonplace books and suggests that they could be used in similar fashion. Indeed, the Spanish theorist Tom\*s de Sancta Maria advocated that students should use musical themes learned from the masters, such as those appearing in the vihuela prints, in creating their own works. Jack Sage has argued that these prints represent a neo-Aristotelian concept of utter pragmatism, and their didactic organization of representative works by the best composers of the day is just one aspect of that practicality.