**Winter 2000 Program and Abstracts**

**PROGRAM**

9:30 coffee

10:00-11:30 Sessions 1 and 2

SESSION 1: Composers/Choices

1. Thomasin LaMay, "Madalena Casulana: my body knows unheard of songs"
2. Martha Fickett, "Beethoven's Sketches for his Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 26, in the Sketchbook Landsberg 7"
3. Cyrilla Barr, "From the Berkshire Hills to Capitol Hill: An Examination of the Coolidge Competitions with Reflections on the 'Also Rans'" Cyrilla Barr

SESSION 2: Varieties of American Music

1. John Ware, "Leopold Godowsky's Art of Transcription: A Brief Sampling"
2. Patrick Warfield, "'Could You Use Me?': The Gershwins and the Hollywood Musical's Dual Focus Narrative"
3. Robin Armstrong, "Out of Africa and Back to Africa: Rap Music at the End of the 20th Century" 11:30-12:00 business meeting

12:00-1:30 lunch

1:30-2:30 special session

1. Anthony Seeger and Kip Lornell, "Technology in Scholarly Publishing: The Smithsonian Folkways Model"

2:30 Session 3

SESSION 3: Performance as Text: Singing from Mozart to Rossini

1. Jose Bowen, "Performers Interpreting History: Finding 'Una voce poco fa'"
2. Steven Smolian, "Mozart as He was Sung"

**Abstracts**

**Thomasin LaMay, "Madalena Casulana: my body knows unheard of songs"**

I know truly, most Illustrious and Most Excellent lady, that these first fruits of mine cannot, because of their weakness, produce the effect that I would like, which would be, other than to give your Excellence some proof of my devotion, to show also to the world (in so much as is allowed me in this musical profession) the conceited error of men. They believe so strongly to be the masters of the high gifts of the intellect that, in their opinion, these gifts cannot likewise be shared by Women.

So pronounced Madalena Casulana in the dedication of her Primo libro de madrigali a quattro voci, published by Girolamo Scotto, Venice, in 1568. This is the first collection of music ever published by a woman, and her dedication was written to her apparent patron, Isabella de Medici Orsini, in a remarkable claim for female vocality. She was one of only a handful of early modern women who published in the madrigal repertoire--a venue especially noted for its texts about women (or, more appropriately, pieces of women) though not generally from their point of view, and a genre recognized also for its explicit erotic content. This paper wants to ask a fundamental "why?". Why did she "come into writing"2 when this offered little advantage for her singing career? Why did she seize the overwhelmingly male-privileged pen when this could only have complicated her life; for documents attest that she was an extraordinarily gifted singer and instrumentalist looked at as female, looked at as body performing, but to claim written discourse violated her culture's definition of she, made her in some sense \*he,\* and why would she want to think about this? I want to ask, among other questions, how it felt to perform certain texts with her body, how she made choices and negotiated her spaces. This paper will in some ways be performative, but will also address texts she wrote and texts written about or for her in an effort to position her in a very corporeal way into her historical context. I want to know as best I can what it was she wanted us to see, hear, recognize, remember of her writing-down.

"And why don't you write?" Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it."3 Borrowing from this premise that to claim writing is to claim body, I attempt to unravel some pieces of this critical "why," of this coming to writing.

1. Helene Cixous, "The Laugh of Medusa," Signs 1 (1976).  
2. The phrase is taken from Cixous's book of that title.  
3. Cixous, "Laugh of Medusa."

**Martha Fickett, "Beethoven's Sketches for his Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 26, in the Sketchbook Landsberg 7"**

The sketchbook Landsberg 7 is the sole known source for sketches for the Piano Sonata in A-flat major, Op. 26,1 although there has been speculation that the badly dismembered Sauer sketchbook may have originally contained additional sketches for the finale. At least twelve of Landsberg 7's 186 pages contain sketches for the four movements of this work; they are interesting both for what they include and for what they omit. Stylistically, the sonata is a hybrid work: the theme and variations first movement and the \*marcia funebre\* third movement clearly point to Beethoven's middle period, whereas the more conventional scherzo and rondo movements look back to Beethoven's earlier sonatas.

My paper will explore aspects of the work as a while, with particular attention to what the sketches reveal about it.

1. Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson, and Robert Winter, The Beethoven Sketchbooks (Berkeley, 1985).

**Cyrilla Barr, "From the Berkshire Hills to Capitol Hill: An Examination of the Coolidge Competitions with Reflections on the 'Also Rans'"**

To mark the initiation of her Berkshire enterprise in 1918, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge announced a competition for the composition of a string quartet. The overwhelming response of 82 entries encouraged her to continue the competitions at successive Berkshire (and later Library of Congress) Festivals until the number of entries reached such unmanageable totals that Coolidge began instead to offer commissions. These competitions are meticulously documented in the Coolidge Collection at the Library of Congress. All contest entries were blind; the identity of the entrant was contained in a sealed envelope inscribed with a code name. These envelopes, along with the ledgers listing the names of all entrants, their nationality, the title of the composition, and other comments, reveal that a large number of women competed, and that some very important composers competed unsuccessfully--among them Hindemith, Martinu, Webern, Villa Lobos, Leuning, and Ruth Crawford. Competition ledgers contain the names of the jurors for each year, as well as details of the laborious judging process described in Oscar Sonneck's letter to Collidge in 1921 when he had been one of the jurors. Based upon diaries, personal correspondence, and official contest documents, this paper raises questions concerning the historical value of competitions and offers evidence that the experience of competition may in fact be more important to the composer biographically than musically.

**John Ware, "Leopold Godowsky's Art of Transcription: A Brief Sampling"**

Many of Godowsky's (1870-1938) 400+ compositions were transcriptions, which may account for their relative obscurity at present. While transcription as a device has been practiced since Medieval times, and piano transcribers such as Liszt and Busoni have written a dazzling variety of transcriptions, paraphrases, fantasias, and new works based on existing music, the works of Godowsky present some interesting features not generally found in this genre. Some unusual aspects of his transcriptions of Chopin Etudes include reversing hands for technical effect, combining two etudes simultaneously into a new composition, and combining the technical aims of one etude with the thematic material of another. His "Renaissance" pieces from 1906, vol. I (based on clavecin pieces by Rameau) exhibit some usage from the musical Renaissance, including parody technique. Comparison of Godowsky's Elegie in E Minor with the two Rameau gigues that serve as its sources reveals much about Godowsky's approach to transcription; it shows how, using Rameau's themes, he derives a new and startlingly different composition, with a mood and an impact that differ dramatically from its source.

**Patrick Warfield, "'Could You Use Me?': The Gershwins and the Hollywood Musical's Dual Focus Narrative"**

While George Gershwin's songs have been discussed as individual creations, little theoretical work has been done exploring his contributions to the Hollywood musical as a large-scale unit. Part of the difficulty is that film musicals do not progress along a linear plot. Rather, as Rick Altman has shown, they unfold through a dual-focus narrative, in which the two leading roles' fundamental character traits are established, put in conflict, reversed, and resolved. Girl Crazy presents the clearest example of a dual-focus resolution. The leading male character, Danny Churchill, is introduced with the song "Treat me Rough." He is depicted as a passive, feminine protagonist, both through the song's text and in the choreography as he is manhandled by a chorus of showgirls.

In opposition to Danny's passive introduction, the female lead, Ginger, is described as a dominating heroine in "Embraceable You." The song's verse makes clear her desire for multiple partners with the text, "Somehow I couldn't warm up to one before." The scene's orgy-like quality is emphasized at the song's climax, where Ginger is passed between dance partners and the text "come to papa, do!" is changed by the men to "come to Tommy, come to Georgie, come to Harry, come to Johnny, come to Bobby, come to baby, do!" Both Danny's and Ginger's introductions suggest that while Danny is at the mercy of his relationships, Ginger is in complete control of hers; while Danny has ended his scene exhausted, Ginger leaves the room looking over her shoulder to gaze longingly at the group of eligible men.

This gender reversal is resolved through a Busby Berkeley production of "I got Rhythm." Danny and Ginger have resumed their traditional gender roles, and the cartoon characters that had adorned the opening credits appear once more. Ginger is now shown not fighting with Danny, but with a baby carriage. The dual-focus is resolved with Danny now fully masculine and Ginger feminine.

This paper uses both *Girl Crazy* and *An American in Paris* to demonstrate how classic Hollywood musicals used music to help define and resolve the often overlooked dual-focus narrative.

**Jose Bowen, "Performers Interpreting History: Finding 'Una voce poco fa'"**

This study draws upon manuscripts (including two by Rossini), annotated scores, and published editions from the nineteenth century, but the primary sources are over 150 recordings (made from 1899 to 1999) of Rossini's "Una voce poco fa" (from Act I of \*Il Barbiere di Siviglia\*). Using transcriptions of the notes actually performed, this paper demonstrates that pitch choices in these performances are largely governed not by the written score, but by oral traditions specific to individual measures. Generations of singers have inherited different articulations, dynamics, phrasing, tempo changes, and melodies (not simply ornaments) from their teachers and coaches. It is, therefore, possible to construct a family tree of "Una voce poco fa" and to trace its history in performance.

This paper demonstrates a methodology for separating the regional, institutional, period, and other "styles" (which performers apply to all works) from the work-specifid "traditions" (which are attached to specific pieces or measures) and how the unique interpretation is created out of an interaction with these components (and not generally from a dialogue with the score). It concludes that "performance analysis" demands a unique integration of traditional source study (albeit of new sources) with an awareness of the real conditions of the sounding work.

**Steven Smolian, "Mozart as He was Sung"**

Recordings have been overlooked as a fundamental resource in the study of music history. By a judicious choice of historical recorded examples, the application of some practices can be heard almost as far back as Mozart, connected to him through the Garcia family.

The history of music during our period will surely disclose a significant gap between enlightened scholarly textual accuracy and the world of live and recorded performance, well exemplified in a century of recordings of Mozart's vocal music. Multiple scholars examining the same evidence often publish differing results. Conductors have developed wariness about making alterations before they are secure enough in the accuracy of new findings to alter their musical texts or interpretations. Recorded examples drawn from the past should help bridge this gap.

This paper contrasts examples of improper singing and interpretation with those known to be more accurate. Topics addressed include voice quality and color, appoggiaturae, aspirated vs. non-aspirated vocalizing, false systems of Mozart interpretation involving notes written vs. notes as sung, the introduction of non-text-specific ornaments, and, finally, a performance that looks deeply into the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Examples give a picture, admittedly somewhat faded, of how the performance of Mozart's vocal music has evolved almost from his day to ours.