**Winter 2003 Program**

**Program**

9:30: Coffee
10:00: "Hear Me Moanin' and Groanin' ": The Transatlantic Transformation of a Chicago Blues Song"--Stuart Cheney
11:00 - "'Aurelian's Chapter 8 and the Carolingian Court" - Barbara Haggh
11:30 - Peabody performance
12:15 to 1:15 - lunch
1:15 to 1:45 - Business meeting
2 - "Theorizing the Musically Abject: Music, Language, and Becoming Human" - Elizabeth Tolbert
2:30 - "A Larger Context for Schubert's So-Called 'Years of Crisis' and the Unfinished Symphony" --John M. Gingerich
3:00 - "Creating a Legacy: William Grant Still's Afro-American Symphony and its Publics (1930-1950)" - Christina Taylor

**Abstracts**

**"Hear Me Moanin' and Groanin'": The Transatlantic Transformation of a Chicago Blues Song - Stuart Cheney**

Otis Rush made the original recordings of Willie Dixon's "I Can't Quit You Baby" in Chicago in 1956 for Cobra Records and again in 1966 for Vanguard. Both versions were known to growing handfuls of young British blues fans and musicians who counted Rush among the pioneers of the black urbanized music that captivated and inspired them. In the hands of two English blues-rock ensembles-John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and Led Zeppelin-Rush's renditions of the song were transformed in the late 1960s into versions intended as homages to both Rush and Dixon, and immediately available to wider audiences. While the ironic phenomenon of young British white bands introducing the blues to white American audiences has received some scholarly attention, particularly from a sociological standpoint, few writers have commented on the musical and performance details that would have preoccupied the musicians themselves and influenced many of their decisions. Other writers have relegated the Mayall and Led Zeppelin recordings of "I Can't Quit You Baby" (and similar works) to the status of "cover version" rather than the more respectable "reworking" that implies greater authorial intention. However, the situation is more complex than previously understood. Despite Mayall's reputation as a blues purist, his 1967 version makes use of the voice, guitar, and piano in idiosyncratic ways, at the same time retaining a texture and instrumentation close to that of the two Otis Rush renditions. Three features make the 1968 Led Zeppelin recording in particular stand apart: a greatly increased energy level achieved through both volume and performing style, a texture stripped down to just four essential parts, and a subtle rhythmic twist appended to a harmonic feature that Otis Rush had added to the song by 1966. I also intend to show that the later Vanguard recording, rather than the original Cobra version, was the primary template for both British recordings of the work.

**Aurelian's Chapter 8 and the Carolingian Court -- Barbara Haggh**

The first western discussion of eight tones begins chapter 8 of Aurelian's 'Musica disciplina'. There the tones are presented in the Byzantine and then the western order. Although interest thus far has revolved around the possible derivation of the text from a lost treatise by Alcuin, Charlemagne's advisor, the text raises more important questions about Aurelian's access to information from the Carolingian court and even about Byzantine influence on music in the Carolingian realm, which is reflected not only in the discussion of the tones, but also in the descriptions of Byzantine intonation formulas in the treatise.

Several manuscripts bring the context of Aurelian's chapter 8 into sharper relief. The resolution of an abbreviation in one manuscript situates Aurelian's dedicatee, Bernardus, in proximity to Louis the Pious. The only manuscript list of abbots of Réôme, Aurelian's monastery, identifies Bernardus's predecessor Modoin as the intellectual nicknamed 'Naso' (Ovid) at the Carolingian court. Finally, the earliest Carolingian manuscripts to include drawings of circular labyrinths give witness to the emergence of the Christian labyrinth among Alcuin's intellectual progeny and close in place and date to the 'Musica disciplina'.

The new evidence makes the presence of a text by Alcuin in Aurelian's treatise highly plausible, and identifies a route leading from Ravenna to Auxerre as crucial for the dissemination of Greek culture to the West. It also associates the Auxerrois labyrinth of 'Chartrain' design with the feast of the Epiphany (and with chant) and argues for a Marian as well as a Christological interpretation of that design. Aurelian's important chapter 8 and even his treatise are thus proven to reflect the culture of the Carolingian court more closely than has ever been suspected.

**Theorizing the Musically Abject: Music, Language, and Becoming Human -- Elizabeth Tolbert**

Kristeva's notion of the abject, the unincorporable aspects of bodiliness, finds a counterpart in the poststructuralist concept of music as the emotional excess that spills beyond the rationality of language. As the abject is that which cannot be incorporated into the socially constituted body, music is that which cannot be incorporated into language. In this paper, I examine the musically abject as it appears in a putatively extra-musical context, specifically, in evolutionary proposals on the co-evolution of music and language in the context of ritual. My analysis suggests music/language ideologies underlie assertions of human uniqueness and concomitant epistemological claims to knowledge more generally. I illustrate these ideas with a case study of the role of the abject in the musical "guilty pleasures" of a gifted Conservatory student.

**A Larger Context For Schubert's So-Called "Years of Crisis" and the Unfinished Symphony \* John M. Gingerich**

The numerous instrumental works Schubert began and did not finish between 1818-1823, including the most famous torso of all, the "Unfinished Symphony" have often been explained by a general "crisis" in Schubert's life. And just as the "Unfinished Symphony" has provided the "crisis" of 1818-1823 with glamour, the most famous document in Schubert's own words, "Mein Traum" of July 1822, which seems to describe allegorically aspects of his struggle for independence, has lent it pathos and notoriety. What has never been explained is why during these same years he continued to produce songs at a normal rate, composed his most ambitious mass, and wrote five complete operas, including his two big romantic operas, Fierrabras, and Alfonso und Estrella. Although he also left his remarkable oratorio Lazarus unfinished, the question remains: Why did the "years" of crisis affect primarily the large instrumental genres?

This paper analyzes the "crisis" in the context of other patterns in Schubert's work:
(1) During his lifetime he made a consistent distinction between the large instrumental works he had written before 1824 and those he wrote after in regards to public performance and publication.
(2) During his lifetime he consistently reserved his post-1824 chamber music for public performance by Ignaz Schuppanzigh and his ensemble, and consistently reserved his symphony for performance by the "Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde." These were the best performance ensembles in Vienna, and not available to Schubert before 1824.

The paper analyzes how these patterns and other contingencies (Schubert's health, his circle of friends) impinge on the mystery of why he did not finish the "Unfinished," and whether and why he gave the torso away for performance in Graz.

**Creating a Legacy: William Grant Still's Afro-American Symphony and its Publics (1930-1950) \* Christina Taylor**

Since its premiere performance in 1930, Afro-American Symphony has been increasingly recognized as a representative American work from the first half of the 20th Century. Recently several textbooks and music anthologies have included the symphony, underlining its growing importance in historical accounts. Textbooks often list the piece as an example of musical nationalism or of composition in an American idiomatic style. However, a close analysis of the reception of Afro-American Symphony reveals that the work's place in contemporary anthologies is the culmination of years of cultural negotiation, with Still, his audiences, and his critics taking part.

This paper explores the role William Grant Still's early public had in shaping the future of Afro-American Symphony. Through reviews of early performances, articles written by Still, and an exploration of the cultural and aesthetic environments of 1930s and 1940s America, I hope to explain the genesis of the work's current legacy.

Several critical factors contributed to the enduring success of Afro-American Symphony. Still composed in a musical language that was accessible to a broad middle-class audience; symphonic orchestras placed the piece on their programs; reviewers attended performances of the symphony and wrote about it throughout the United States; and Still fostered continuing interest in Afro-American Symphony by writing openly about his compositional technique, aesthetic influences, and his perception of the work's place in symphonic repertory. As a result Afro-American Symphony remained in the cultural consciousness for years after its first performance, and the William Grant Still and his publics were already creating a place for Afro-American Symphony in the canon.