

American Musicological Society Capital Chapter
14 April 2018
Howard University
Program

- 8:30 – 9:00 Registration and refreshments
- 9:00 – 10:30 Session 1: Love, Death, and the Arc of Influence (Sam Brannon, chair)
- Alanna R. Tierno** (Shenandoah University): “My Bavarian Renaissance Wedding: A Reconstruction of the 1579 Fugger Nuptial Mass”
- Ashley Sherman** (University of Pittsburgh): “Grief and Transformation: The Lamenting Voice in 20th Century Solo Oboe Repertoire”
- Nicole Steinberg** (Towson University): William Walton’s Pursuit of Compositional Independence in the *Three Songs from Edith Sitwell*”
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break
- 10:45 – 12:15 Session 2: Lowens papers (Bonny Miller, chair)
- Lorenzo Vanelli** (University of Bologna): Themes and tropes in African American field hollers from the Jim Crow era”
- Evangeline Athanasiou** (University of Maryland, College Park): “The Baroque Voice: Perceptions of Baroque Solo Vocal Literature among Voice Students”
- Andrea Copland** (The Peabody Institute): Anderson and Adorno’s Forgotten Posthorn: Power, Intragroup Violence, and the Politics of the Sublime in Mahler’s Third Symphony”
- 12:15 – 1:45 Lunch
- 1:45 – 2:30 Business meeting
- 2:30 – 4:00 Session 3: Topics, reception, and commentary (Katherine Preston, chair)
- Tom Owens** (George Mason University): “Charles Ives and the Ragtime Topic”
- Lars Helgert** (Independent Scholar): “European Paternalism as Musical Migration: *Saroni’s Musical Times* and Criticism of Musical Life in America and in New York City, 1849-1951”
- Alexander Devereux** (University of Maryland, College Park): From Universalization to Eternalization: Peter Weiss’s *The Investigation* and Frederic Rzewski’s *The Triumph of Death*”
- 4:00 End of meeting

ABSTRACTS

My Bavarian Renaissance Wedding: A Reconstruction of the 1579 Fugger Nuptial Mass

On November 23, 1579, a double wedding occurred at Sts. Ulrich and Afra, the Benedictine abbey church in Augsburg. The wedding party involved several members of the Fugger family, an influential Catholic mercantile dynasty. Although a family chronicler recorded the reception activities rather than the actual ceremony, we know about the polyphonic music performed at the wedding Mass from a choirbook presented to one of the grooms, Octavian Secundus Fugger (1549-1600). The manuscript contains a Mass Ordinary and motet by Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594), a second motet by Jacobus de Kerle (1531-1591), and a third motet by Melchior Schramm (1553-1619). These pieces remain obscure among sixteenth-century repertoire with very few performances, recordings, or academic studies.

My work on the 1579 Fugger nuptial Mass culminated in a reconstruction of the ceremony this past summer at the Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. The research process included examining relevant liturgical books from Augsburg to determine when the three motets could be performed during the Mass, ascertaining where additional music such as Gregorian chant should occur, and finding liturgical and cultural customs unique to early modern Augsburg that would add authenticity to the service. This re-created nuptial ceremony serves as an example of how traditional research methods such as source studies can inform public musicology projects and how such projects can create dialogue among musicologists, church musicians, and clergy on liturgical aesthetics and historical performance practice.

Grief and Transformation: The Lamenting Voice in 20th Century Solo Oboe Repertoire

Among the solo repertoire for the oboe, certain pieces and movements stand out as particularly grief-driven, calling upon the topic of lament. These works utilize the emotive power of the oboe as an instrument and replicator of the human voice to demonstrate the depth of life-shattering sorrow expressed through the music. Within this theme, one sonata and one movement of an unaccompanied work stand out. Francis Poulenc's *Sonate pour hautbois et piano*, FP 185, was composed in 1962. Not only is it dedicated to the memory of Sergei Prokofiev, Poulenc's close friend, it is also Poulenc's last completed work before his death in 1963. Additionally, Benjamin Britten's movement "Niobe" from *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid*, op. 49 (1951) is named after the Greek mythological character who brought death upon her children through her hubris. These much-beloved pieces provide the performer with opportunities to excessively emote to the audience, drawing out sympathetic feelings of pain and sorrow, grief and anger.

This paper investigates the use of the lament topic in these two notable instances of 20th century oboe solo repertoire through an analysis of the music as well as through social and psychological understandings of grief as written by Judith Butler and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross.

It seeks to foster an understanding of how the oboe is used idiomatically by the composer and performer to recreate feelings of utter despair, only to then transform away from absolute desolation to acceptance. In-depth analyses provide a foundation for this paper to build upon,

combining with musicological writings about the genre and topic of lament and its social and political function to enrich our understanding of two pieces of the canon of oboe solo repertoire standards and the manner in which the oboe acts as a mediator between the audience and the raw human voice.

William Walton's Pursuit of Compositional Independence in the *Three Songs from Edith Sitwell*

This paper casts new light on the importance of *Three Songs from Edith Sitwell* (1932) in the compositional output of William Walton before his arrival on the international world stage with *Symphony No. 1* in 1934. In contrast to the existing scholarship on *Three Songs from Edith Sitwell*, this work examines the historical and compositional implications of its publication in the context of the works that came both before and after it.

After meeting the Sitwell siblings at the University of Oxford in 1918, Walton's next ten years of compositional development would be inextricably tied with them. He left school in 1920, in part because of his lack of academic prowess but also due to the Sitwells' low opinion of university-trained composers. He became an adopted brother of the trio and would benefit from their wealthy upbringing. The Sitwells took him on trips to France and Italy, exposing him to the works of Russian Ballet, Savoy Orpheans, Stravinsky, and the Gershwin brothers. This wealth of experiences influenced Walton's early experimental compositions. It was during this time that the Sitwells convinced him to work on the *Façade* Entertainment, an intentionally avant-gard work that used a synthesis of Walton's musical influences from their travels. Although the piece was ill-received in its premiere in 1923, the group edited and revised the score for the next five years. Hubert Foss, the head of the music department at Oxford University Press, and his wife Dora Foss, a prolific soprano, were among Walton's camp of admirers who appreciated the compositional inventiveness of *Façade* and found promise in Walton as a composer. Hubert Foss, in his attempt to cultivate Walton's talent, asked him to write *Three Songs from Edith Sitwell* for Dora to sing.

The latter two songs of the set, 'Through Gilded Trellises' and 'Old Sir Faulk,' are almost direct transcriptions from the *Façade* Entertainment. They represent the earlier and more experimental period in Walton's compositional development, exhibited by their use of post-tonal methods and adherence to dance structures. The first song of the set, 'Daphne,' was a completely new creation altogether. Therefore, it contains the neo-romantic idiom of Walton's later career, as demonstrated in his *Viola Concerto* (1929) and *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931). Walton emphasizes the dichotomy of these two periods of his life by compiling all three pieces into a set. However, by placing 'Daphne' first, Walton announces the codification of his neo-romantic style that would permeate the rest of his career. As the First Symphony was premiered a just over a year later, the importance of *Three Songs from Edith Sitwell* cannot be ignored. Through a comprehensive historical and analytical study of the aforementioned pieces, it becomes newly evident how the *Three Songs from Edith Sitwell* helped Walton to achieve a compositional independence from the Sitwells that would lead to the explosion of his international career.

Themes and tropes in African American field hollers from the Jim Crow era

Until the middle of the 20th century, African Americans detained in state penitentiaries or working in levee camps, deforestation camps, construction sites and mines used field hollers to express through musical form subjects regarding their daily routines and thoughts. Field hollers were short poetic compositions shared as solo singing songs, despite the risks of publicly speaking about certain topics. Home longing, work hardships and institutional racism were along the most common themes. But how were they able to sing openly about those subjects?

Although the majority of scholars looked at hollers only as links between African music traditions and the Blues, in recent times researchers outside of the field of musicology started to consider them as oral sources documenting the Jim Crow era. The life conditions that African Americans had to endure in those contexts were brutal, and their hollers reflect that. Acknowledging this, we can rethink the scope of the musical analysis of hollers by trying to outline the elements that made them effective means of encoded communication inside problematic contexts.

The paper I present resumes part of the results of my PhD research project for the University of Bologna. The process that led me to these results started with gathering as many hollers recordings as possible, along with documentation about their context of use, the main sources being the Library of Congress, Smithsonian Archives, Indiana University, Mississippi University. I then transcribed or corrected the available transcriptions of the lyrics of these recordings, and analyzed each one using Sonic Visualizer and a software platform I developed. The analysis focused on the recognition of the modular structure of hollers (melodic profile and ornamentation details, rhythm, timbre, formulas), its relations to the lyrics structure, and the methods of variation used by singers.

The analysis results took into account the communicative nature of hollers, as well as their context of use, leading me to suggest that hollers singers relied on a multifaceted music system, on codified vocabulary and on particular vocal techniques. Singers often built lyrics on tropes, filled stress meter verses with interjections that disrupted the rhythmic flow, and systematically complicated melody lines through different methods of variation. They used voice timbre and pronunciation to thwart a univocal recognition of key words. All of these techniques worked in strict relation with the lyrics: how to structure, present, and ultimately veil them.

I would like to present the main themes sung in hollers, and discuss through audio examples how studying the relations between lyrics and musical form could give us a better understanding of the hollers genre.

The Baroque Voice: Perceptions of Baroque Solo Vocal Literature among Voice Students

In 2017, Washington National Opera's *Alcina* premiered with mixed reviews, many of which highlighted Angela Meade's unexpected participation in a Baroque opera. Even the WNO's website felt it necessary to affirm their casting choice: "with world-class vocal talents impeccably suited to every role." Other productions in the season included works by Verdi, Rossini, Bernstein, and Portman, for which the WNO did not defend appropriate casting choices. It is clear that Meade's

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fach, dramatic soprano, was thought to be an unorthodox choice for a Baroque opera; in many cases, certain aspects of her *fach* led to negative reviews. While attending a collegiate musical institution, a singer is exposed to and encouraged to explore various styles of music. Ideally, this formative experience produces a well-rounded, versatile performer. However, there is evidence to suggest that musical institutions evince a lingering sense of exclusivity in voice casting for Baroque repertoire.

This study argues that the notion of a voice suited to Baroque music may be an unforeseen and perhaps detrimental product of: the Early Music movement of the late twentieth century; pedagogical biases surrounding *fach*; and the current era's inflexible sound ideal entrenched by late twentieth-century recoding culture. To explore assumptions of an ideal Baroque voice, this study draws on surveyed perspectives of current post-secondary vocal majors as well as recent scholarship by Mary Hunter and Leon Botstein. While research into historical sources supports Mary Hunter's assertion that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music holds "overwhelming evidence of enormous variability," this study showed significant relationships between students with certain voice types and their perceived suitability for Baroque repertoire. While voice-casting of more popular eras is similarly impacted by twentieth-century recording tastes, Baroque repertoire does not enjoy the same canonical reputation. With less exposure, audience support, and performers, Baroque solo vocal repertoire may require a greater effort toward accessibility by reevaluating sound ideals and historical information. Findings in this study point toward implications for musicology, pedagogy, performance practice, and the bridging of these disciplines in order to encourage future professional musicians' participation in Baroque music.

The data collected in this study may be useful for further research into the notion of a "Baroque voice" and how institutions and professional companies alike can work with singers, as well as audiences to encourage participation and enjoyment of the Baroque repertoire. Historical performance practice has been an extremely financially, academically, culturally, and indeed musically beneficial element in the Baroque performance world. However, as Botstein states, "an era of enthusiasm has passed," and the repertoire seems to resonate as exclusive and intimidating for singers with voice-types that do and do not fit Hunter's previously stated description. Therefore, it is necessary to address this notion of a "Baroque voice" in order to support and encourage the future performance of Baroque solo vocal literature as an inclusive and accessible artform.

Anderson and Adorno's Forgotten Posthorn: Power, Intragroup Violence, and the Politics of the Sublime in Mahler's Third Symphony

When the call of a lone post horn emerges from the symphonic texture of Mahler's third Symphony scherzo, it is often read as an intrusion of modernity: the forces of an impending and unknowable era interrupting an idyllic forest scene. Rather, I read it as a melody alienated from the world in which it exists: an outsider. The former relies on historical reception while the latter marks a formal narrative. The music's assimilation to the ideology of formal redemption as a connection to an overarching human experience raises disturbing questions surrounding power and intragroup violence. What did it mean for the Jewish composer and conductor to be distanced

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from the society that relied on the performing arts as cultural capital in the place of a middle class? How does music more universally fail to transcend sociopolitical boundaries and disappoint redemptive expectations?

This paper uses the foundational work of Benedict Anderson and Theodor Adorno to inspect the posthorn episodes. Traditional understandings of symphonic form rely on a narrative of redemption and as such, Mahler is read as transcending his Jewishness in keeping with this narrative. I argue that the power inherent in this trope is similar to the cultural forgetting Anderson claims is necessary to achieve totality in a society. Additionally, I reconsider the posthorn episodes in light of the human costs of the political upheaval in fin-de-siècle Vienna. Adorno's deeply humanitarian sociological work on Mahler offers sound and timbre as analyses which point to the sensual, racially coded, and gendered power dynamics in the music. I posit that these musical power dynamics parallel the politics of the sublime that pervaded fin-de-siècle Vienna and are present in neoliberal political machinations today.

By approaching the posthorn episodes through the combined lens of Anderson and Adorno's scholarship, I synthesize my own analytical methodology from critical theory and anthropology to situate Mahler's music in society, gesturing to its relevance in the concert hall today. My initial conclusions stated above advocate for critical listening, historical instruction, and Adorno's humanitarian analysis of Mahler's oeuvre. The subsequent conclusion that the political upheaval and politics of the sublime in fin-de-siècle Vienna are recursive themes throughout history gains relevance when considered in light of the current global sociopolitical arena. Though this kind of interdisciplinary work is more prevalent in the field of ethnomusicology, this methodology and its conclusions propose a sociological and anthropological means to encountering music in the Western canon.

Charles Ives and the Ragtime Topic

Ragtime is chronologically one of the latest vernacular styles that Ives consistently uses in his music. In the *Memos*, Ives recalls hearing ragged rhythms in minstrel performances at the Danbury fair in the early 1890s, and Ives encountered ragtime in many contexts during his time in New Haven and New York at the turn of the twentieth century. Allusions to and paraphrases of ragtime occur in the songs, piano works, chamber and orchestral pieces. Yet Ives's use of ragtime, like so much else about his music, is idiosyncratic and difficult to interpret. In this paper I examine Ives's experience with ragtime and build on Peter Burkholder's application of topic theory to explain stylistic heterogeneity in Ives's works by proposing a ragtime topic in his music. I show how Ives uses the ragtime topic to explore rhythmic and metrical juxtaposition and to suggest secular, comic, and mechanical themes. Using pieces such as "Walking," "The New River," and the First and Second Piano Sonatas as examples to substantiate the ragtime topic, the paper culminates in an analysis of Study No. 23 for Piano. When viewed through the lens of ragtime, the compositional ideas in this enigmatic piece become clear.

“European Paternalism as Musical Migration: Saroni’s *Musical Times* and Criticism of Musical Life in America and in New York City, 1849-1851”

German musician Herrman Saroni (c. 1823-1900) was the founder and editor of *Saroni’s Musical Times* (New York City, 1849-1851), an important publication that has been the subject of far too little prior scholarship. Saroni used SMT to forcefully advocate for improvements to music in America and in New York, and his writings and actions make clear that he viewed the adoption of European musical practices as synonymous with the elevation of the city’s musical community. In this paper, I will show how Saroni’s journalism and advocacy demonstrated a paternalistic attitude toward American musical culture, and how his proposed solutions to the problems he saw were validations of a high-culture and largely European identity transplanted to the United States. The cultivation of “correct taste” in music, a stated goal of SMT, was Eurocentric in several ways, such as the printing of works by European masters and local immigrants, the creation of a local chamber music series, and (entertainingly) harsh criticism of American composers, performers, and writers on music. To Saroni, the country’s lack of suitable music education was to blame: “The United States alone are indifferent to this branch of mental culture, and as a natural consequence, we have Minstrels, Hutchinsons, Woodburys, and other similar nuisances.” To solve this problem, Saroni proposed the adoption of the European conservatory model of music education. Saroni’s music journalism sheds light on European immigrant attitudes toward American musical life as well as the influence of immigrants on the contemporary American music scene.

From Universalization to Eternalization: Peter Weiss’s *The Investigation* and Frederic Rzewski’s *The Triumph of Death*

The Frankfurt Auschwitz trial into Nazi crimes (December 1963–August 1965) exposed the Auschwitz complex to the German public through excruciatingly detailed witness testimony. In October 1965, Peter Weiss’s play based on documentary sources from the trial, *The Investigation*, premiered on fifteen stages in East and West Germany. *The Investigation*, a plotless series of courtroom exchanges investigating different realms of Auschwitz, critiques the failures of the trial and universalizes the Holocaust by implicating contemporary German society. Frederic Rzewski excerpted *The Investigation* in his oratorio, *The Triumph of Death* (1988) for singers and string quartet, to eternalize the Holocaust by showing that its ramifications will always be felt.

Building on Beate Kutschke’s analysis of *The Triumph of Death*, this paper examines the thematic transformation from Weiss’s universalization of the Holocaust to Rzewski’s eternalization. Through analysis of narrative in both works, I argue that Rzewski selectively excerpted Weiss’s play to create a linear narrative documenting increasingly efficient mass murder. By staging the string quartet theatrically, Rzewski separates the excerpts of Weiss’s historical text from the music it is set to. As the oratorio progresses, the music becomes increasingly joyful in contradiction to the text. The setting of a historical text documenting the horrors of Auschwitz to irreconcilably joyous music becomes a metaphor for audiences’ own false distance between themselves and the Holocaust. Both works, while sharing a text, preserve different legacies of the trial, which, despite its importance in documenting Auschwitz, has faded from public memory.