

ABSTRACTS
(in order of presentation)

SESSION 1 - COLLECTIONS, CLASSIFICATIONS, AND COMPOSITION

**Race, Empire, and Musical Praxis
in the Menageries of the Barnum and Bailey Circus**

Nate Ruechel

During the close of the nineteenth century the Barnum and Bailey Circus was among the most successful purveyors of mass culture in the United States. Their circus operated a vast distribution network that provided spectacular entertainment to remote towns and large metropolises alike. Beginning in the 1884 season, Barnum and Bailey exhibited a “Congress of Nations” as part of the circus’ menagerie. The “Congress” was comprised of various living ethnological displays, or human zoos, which facilitated encounters between circus patrons and unfamiliar cultural practices. The animals and humans displayed in the circus’ menagerie was demonstrative of American imperialism’s expanding scope. The exhibitions also contributed to an ongoing process of racial-cultural differentiation that solidified as a dominant intellectual framework in subsequent decades.

This paper evaluates music’s role in generating the interwoven discourses on race and empire fabricated in the Barnum and Bailey menagerie. Scholars have previously documented the musical acts associated with circus’ central performance spaces, but the music heard in the menageries has received limited attention. My analysis is primarily informed by archival research. Documents, including route books, circus advertisements, and press accounts of the exhibitions advertised the musical lifeways displayed in the menageries as educational opportunities. The exhibited musical practices were ultimately interpreted through intellectual frameworks that conflated zoological and racial-cultural spheres of knowledge. The music of the menagerie ultimately worked as a means for circus attendees to objectify cultural outsiders, solidify their own identities and values, and generate a racialist discourse grounded in white superiority.

American Musicological Society Capital Chapter
9-10 April 2021
Howard University (virtual host)

ABSTRACTS
(in order of presentation)

**From Mythology to Capitalism:
Canon, Genre, and the Othering of Wind Instruments in the West**

Lacey Golaszewski

As Marcia Citron, William Weber, Mark Everist, and Eric Drott have shown, canon and genre have long played a role in the marginalization of repertoires in scholarship. Genres not considered canonical were once regarded as impermissible lines for research inquiry; scholars have since made great strides in overcoming this marginalization.

Despite this progress, however, some genres remain disproportionately underexplored in musicology, including those of wind chamber music. In this paper, I argue that an entrenched Othering of winds in the West is in part responsible. To demonstrate this oversight, I commence with an analysis of the reception history of wind chamber music in musicology, drawing from the work of wind specialists, such as Eugène Bozza, as well as more diversified composers, including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Samuel Barber. Then, I demonstrate evidence of the widespread Othering of winds in the West, including biases against wind instruments in Greek mythology, disinclinations toward winds in Medieval and Renaissance art, the use of wind instruments as representatives of the exotic in nineteenth century symphonies, and the disfavoring of winds for reasons of cultural capital in scholarship as indicated by Ovid, Emanuel Winternitz, Emily Dolan, and Pierre Bourdieu.

By thus examining the roots of bias against winds in Western art music scholarship, I demonstrate that marginalizations due to issues of canon and genre are more complex than previously understood. Moreover, by bringing these intricacies to light, I offer a more nuanced comprehension of the exclusions, ultimately paving the way for their elimination.

ABSTRACTS
(in order of presentation)

Score-Based Site-Specificity in the Music of John Cage

Michael Boyd

Traditional conceptions of art that is site-specific typically fall into two general categories: objects that are in some way inseparable from their setting or unique, non replicable events. The former type is most often associated with visual art, the latter with performance art. In the visual domain, site-specificity is particularly associated with certain sculpture, installation, and land art works. Sound-based installations are often similarly conceived, though in many cases the term installation is used not to denote site specificity but to identify electroacoustic works that are intended for diffusion in a setting other than a concert hall. Outside of these typical conceptions of site-specificity, the notion might also be applied to certain score-based experimental music compositions that, through their realization or performance, become wedded to their surroundings in one way or another. John Cage's work is, at times, notable for engaging with space and environment in such a way that the realized work and its surroundings become inseparable. Though portions of several other composers' output might fall under this rubric, including work by Pauline Oliveros, Alvin Lucier, Alvin Curran, and others, Cage's music offers a fitting initial point of inquiry into site-specific score-based music due to his eminence in American experimental music and his clear influence on these and many other composers. This paper surveys Cage's body of work, locating compositions such as *Variations IV* (1963) and *49 Waltzes for the Five Boroughs* (1977) that become site-specific through performance, and identifies connections and trends between such pieces and the broader context of the composer's creative output.

ABSTRACTS
(in order of presentation)

SESSION 2 – LOWENS COMPETITION PAPERS

Das Volkslied, Das Vöglein, Das Vaterland:

A Historical Analysis of Schumann’s Settings of “Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär”

Gretchen Erlichman

In the early nineteenth century, the German people embarked on an intentional search for national identity through an exploration of the tradition of the *Volk*. Amidst this quest for national roots, the famous German folk song “Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär” was embraced as a symbol of German pride by schoolchildren, artists, musicians, writers, and politicians and established for itself a place of paramount importance in German history and culture. Not only was this quaint little *Volkslied* sung by the mouth of babes as a nursery rhyme, but it also became the subject of great musical masterpieces and a poetic muse for prominent literary figures. Since its introduction into the German literary and musical canon of the nineteenth century, “Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär” permeated society in such a way that it became a symbol of the foundation of the German *Volk* and began to bear personal, national, and political significance. Robert Schumann was not immune from the various influences of this folk song; tunes associated with “Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär” filled his ears, while images of flighty birds and longing lovers were before his eyes. Thus, for Schumann, as for many great German artists of the nineteenth century, this folk song became a means of inspiration for his art. Both his music and personal writings indicate that “Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär” was not only present in his daily life but also bore personal and political significance.

In this paper, I offer perspectives on how Schumann’s settings of “Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär” served as a musical means of the composer’s engagement in the social and political milieu of nineteenth-century Germany. In order to understand how this folk tune permeated the tradition and culture of Germany in the nineteenth century, I first provide a socio-historical analysis of the ways in which “Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär” was present within the literary,

ABSTRACTS
(in order of presentation)

artistic, and musical climate of the time. Subsequently, by examining Robert and Clara Schumann's writings, including letters, diary entries, and daily logs, I identify the ways in which the Schumanns personally engaged with the folk tune in their private musical lives, and I provide evidence that explains why both Clara and Robert composed an art-song setting of the text in the year 1840. Then, using material from letters, newspaper articles, and diary entries as a basis for analysis, I consider Schumann's decision to feature a slightly revised version of his Lied setting of "Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär" in his opera *Genoveva*, and how this compositional choice reveals elements of Schumann's nationalist political views. This historical and musical analysis of Schumann's settings of the traditional folk-song "Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär" reveals that the composer's choice to set this text not only reflects elements of his personal life but also displays his intentional musical engagement in the cultural and political climate of his day.

**The Russian Choir at Drury Lane:
The Reception of the Agrenev-Slaviansky Choir's 1886 English Tour**

Patrick Allies

In the summer of 1886, Russian musicians Dimitri and Olga Agrenev-Slaviansky brought their sixty-voice choir to England as part of a European tour. The choir of men, women and boys performed at prestigious London venues, and their concerts were widely reviewed in the general and specialist press. The choir also sang for Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle, only a year after Britain and Russia had almost gone to war over the Panjdeh Crisis. In this paper I will explore the critical reception of the Agrenev-Slaviansky choir's tour and consider what the reviews reveal about attitudes towards Russian music in late-Victorian England. And I will present evidence which suggests that the choir's visit amounted to informal cultural diplomacy.

The Agrenev-Slaviansky choir, founded in 1868, gave more than 15,000 concerts over four decades. The choir presented themselves as a "folk chorus," and their repertoire was

ABSTRACTS
(in order of presentation)

dominated by popular arrangements of traditional melodies. Their performances, which involved scenery and period clothing, were popular with audiences but criticized by fellow musicians and folklorists. Tchaikovsky's opinion of the choir, for example, was scathing: as he put it, "this exploitation of patriotism from beyond the Moskva River has nothing in common with music whatsoever!" The choir's activities and their wider reception have been explored in the work of Paul A. Bertagnolli, Adalyat Issiyeva, and Lisa N. Mullinger, but this is the first paper to look specifically at the choir's work in Britain. In order to assess the choir's impact, this paper analyzes the reception it received and uses studies of Russian music in late-nineteenth century Britain by Philip Ross Bullock and Stephen Muir for context. My argument about the choir's quasi-diplomatic role makes use of work on British-Russian relations by Kees Van Dijk and Peter Hopkirk.

In this paper I draw on evidence in the reviews to show that English critics made sense of the unfamiliar by falling back on essentialist statements, describing what they were hearing as a "national" sound. The reviews belittle the performers and their traditions on numerous occasions, and in some cases include racist remarks that openly denigrate the ethnic identity of the choir. I place these comments within a greater phenomenon in regard to Russian music described by Richard Taruskin as "the myth of otherness." I also find that the Agrenev-Slaviansky choir's tour acted as a kind of informal diplomatic embassy on behalf of Russia, even if inadvertently. As one reviewer put it, Dimitri Agrenev-Slaviansky "might be the Czar himself on some special state ceremonial." Another reviewer even praised the choir's introduction of new repertoire, writing that "such a "Russian encroachment" in the territory of [musical] literature would excite neither resistance nor indignation." Finally, while most of the English reviews credit Dimitri as the principal creative force, I argue that this is probably incorrect. The evidence I have gathered suggests that the artistic direction of the Agrenev-Slaviansky choir was a joint responsibility shared with composer and keyboardist Olga Slaviansky, who was in charge of selecting the material for the choir's programs.

American Musicological Society Capital Chapter
9-10 April 2021
Howard University (virtual host)

ABSTRACTS
(in order of presentation)

**The Forced Migration of Venezuelan Musicians:
The “music for social change movement” as a transnational guardian in a time of
unprecedented crisis**

Rachel O’Connor

My paper on the forced migration of El-Sistema-trained Venezuelan musicians addresses the slim yet highly polarized academic discourse surrounding the Music for Social Change movement, deconstructing both sides of the argument while also forging a new path through my own research. I demonstrate how the types of data and evidence expected to legitimize arts-intervention programs such as El Sistema can ultimately be dehumanizing to participants, and how to move forward we must expand our horizons in terms of what can be considered “evidence”. I answer this call through my own research on Venezuelan musicians who have been forced to leave their country due to the ongoing crisis. These stories underscore the myriad of ways that musical practices not only help migrants to survive, but to find joy and purpose in the face of acute adversity and wholly dehumanizing circumstances. In particular, musical practices enable El-Sistema trained Venezuelan migrants to resist various forms of oppression subjected upon them by their host society in ways that are simultaneously harmonious and assimilative to it. I then reframe the challenges of migrants and refugees from the perspective of the oppressor, or “dominant” society through John Galtung’s triangular framework of “violences” (some discreet, others more obvious) against immigrants and societal “others” that ultimately result in xenophobia. I propose that musical practices have the potential to disrupt these flows and discourses of power, as demonstrated by the experiences of Venezuelan migrants. Given the current moment of a dangerous rise in xenophobia globally, coupled with unprecedented migrant crises, my work serves as an example of how humanitarian advocacy can be in the front and center of music scholarship. My research is supported by a combination of interviews, case studies and cross-disciplinary academic and policy research.