

Capital Chapter of the American Musicological Society

Fall 2022 Virtual Meeting Saturday, October 22, 2022

PROGRAM

- 9:45–10:45am **Session I: *Navigating Popular, Commercial, and Art Music Aesthetics***
 - **Lars Helgert:** “Guitar Music as a Side Hustle in Antebellum America: The Published Guitar Songs and Solo Guitar Works of Philadelphia Conductor and Composer Leopold Meignen (1793–1873)”
 - **Denis Forasacco:** “The ‘Intellectualization’ of the Art Song in the Composers of the *Generazione dell’Ottanta*”

- 11am–12pm **Session II: *Black Encounters with European Music***
 - **Janie Cole:** “The Jesuit Musical Art of Conversion and Indigenous Encounters in 17th-Century Ethiopia”
 - **Jonathan Gerrard:** “Gestures of Memory, Echoes of Abolition: Justin Holland and the Art of Creating Opera Arrangements for Solo Guitar”

- 12–1pm **Lunch Break**

- 1–2pm **Session III: *Representation and Construction of Self-Identity***
 - **Elisse La Barre:** “Music for the Masses: Agency, Race, and Issues of Representation and Record of the 1940 Golden Gate International Exposition”
 - **Ronit Seter:** “Composer Tzvi Avni and His Search of (German-) Israeli Identity”

- 2:15–3pm **Capital Chapter Business Meeting**

SESSION I, PAPER 1 (9:45 am)

Guitar Music as a Side Hustle in Antebellum America: The Published Guitar Songs and Solo Guitar Works of Philadelphia Conductor and Composer Leopold Meignen (1793–1873)

Lars Helgert

Guitar music in antebellum America has received very little scholarly attention despite the large number of guitar songs and solo guitar works produced. Peter Danner and a few others have made efforts to contextualize this repertoire, but large gaps remain in our understanding of its aesthetic, economic, and social functions. This paper focuses on Philadelphia conductor, composer, and publisher Leopold Meignen (1793-1873), who published more than 200 guitar works from 1830-70. Guitar was not Meignen's primary instrument or activity; he was a busy conductor of several high-profile local ensembles and a composer of concert works (including symphonies and oratorios). Furthermore, the vast majority of Meignen's guitar publications (some self-published) were arrangements of existing works, particularly the period's most popular piano songs. Accommodation of American popular taste was crucial to economic success at a time when European-style concert works sold poorly if they were available at all. I argue that Meignen's guitar music functioned as a "side hustle," generating a reliable source of income that did not require too much effort from the arranger and which helped finance his concert music activities. In short, Meignen was "classical" in his primary musical pursuits but largely "popular" in his publication and business practices, a dialectic that applies to many of the era's most prominent American musicians. This research enhances the historical picture of a sizable and poorly understood repertoire, the diverse musical careers economically necessary during this era, the business practices of the sheet music industry, and the tastes of contemporary consumers.

SESSION I, PAPER 2 (10:15 am)

The "Intellectualization" of the Art Song in the Composers of the *Generazione dell'Ottanta*

Denis Forasacco

According to scholars, Italian composers operating in the *Fin-de-siècle* and Decadent atmosphere inherited, in the field of vocal chamber music, a strong tradition of *romanze da salotto* typically influenced by 19th-century operatic arias: grand (and catchy!) melodies with mostly "second-rate" poetic lines. Composers such as O. Respighi, A. Casella, G. F. Malipiero, I. Pizzetti and F. Alfano, partly motivated to exhume the reliques of ancient Italian music, following the vague of medievalism and neo-madrigalism as well as that of nationalism, tried to innovate not only instrumental music, but also vocal chamber music through the revival of Scarlatti, Cesti, Monteverdi, etc. Resurrecting Scarlatti's style of *cantata*, for example, had an interesting goal: the intellectualization of music.

The greatest of Scarlatti's qualities [...] seems to have been his intellectuality, though this without the divine beauty of melody would have been no more than pedantry.¹

Generazione-dell'Ottanta composers' main important action was, in effect, the intellectualization of the *romanza da camera*. While rejecting the name "romanza," they replaced it with *lirica*. The lyrics assumed in such *liriche* greater significance. Their intent was to compose music which might be intended as an exegetic act. The *lirica* differed from the 19th-century *arie da camera* because it involved *logos*. Thus, music and *logos* became not only the focus of nascent Musicology, but also of a way of composing. Scholars have already analyzed the rebirth of symphonism in Italy in the early 20th century. Nevertheless, little literature has been dedicated to the aspect of Italian chamber music in the Novecento. With my

¹ Edmunds, John (1957). "Chamber Cantatas. The Mastery of Alessandro Scarlatti." *Tempo. New Series*, n. 42. p. 25

presentation I would aim to illustrate some aspects of the early 20th-century intellectualization of the traditionally most “un-intellectual” form of Italian vocal music: *aria da camera*.

SESSION II, PAPER 1 (11 am)

The Jesuit Musical Art of Conversion and Indigenous Encounters in 17th-Century Ethiopia

Janie Cole

The Jesuit mission to the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia (1557–1632) was one of its earliest and arguably most challenging projects in the early modern period, bringing one of the most ancient and remote Christian churches, albeit temporarily, under the authority of Rome. Music was central to Jesuit conversion practices as attested by recent studies, however the full spectrum of Jesuit musical activity on the highlands has yet to be uncovered. Drawing on 16th- and 17th-century travelers’ accounts, new archival Jesuit documentation and indigenous sources, this paper examines the musical context of the royal court of King Susānyos (1606–1632) to explore transcultural Ethiopian-European encounters during the Jesuit mission period. It reconstructs the musical art of conversion developed by Jesuit missionaries, which blended indigenous African, Indian and European elements, and argues that these musical activities were based on a well-established Jesuit model from Portuguese India, specifically Goa and Diu, which employed music as evangelical and pedagogical tools and blended indigenous and foreign elements. By outlining key missionary sites on the highlands (including Gorgora, Dänqāz (the royal capital), Qwällāla and Gännätā Iyāsus), musicians and repertoires, it explores a three-way interplay between the indigenous and foreign to consider discourses in cultural identity, appropriation and indigenization in the collisions of political, social and cultural hierarchies in the North-East African highlands. These Ethiopian-Indian-European encounters offer significant broader insights into the workings of an intertwined early modern Indian Ocean World and the role of embodied auralities in constructing identity and religious proselytism in early modern Ethiopia.

SESSION II, PAPER 2 (11:30 am)

Gestures of Memory, Echoes of Abolition:

Justin Holland and the Art of Creating Opera Arrangements for Solo Guitar

Jonathan Gerrard

Conventional wisdom holds that derivative works such as instrumental arrangements have intrinsically less creative value than original compositions; it follows that those who primarily produce the former are held in comparatively lower esteem than composers of the latter. However, rather than stick solely to a “great composers” model of music history, we might instead, as Samantha Ege suggests, seek to adjust our criteria to include a wider breadth of musical activity. In doing so, we are likely to become better equipped to study the lives and works of underrepresented figures like Justin Holland.

Born into a free Black family in antebellum Virginia, Justin Holland (1819–1887) was a highly-regarded arranger credited with over 300 publications in his career. This presentation examines four selections from Holland’s collection of opera arrangements *Boquet of Melodies* (1868) for solo guitar. Utilizing both traditional and performance-based analysis, these “musical case studies” highlight particular facets of Holland’s musical creativity. Drawing on the work of Naomi André and others, I offer a critical discussion of Holland’s activism within the racialized context of Reconstruction-era society before ultimately proposing ways that these works can reinforce philosophical connections between abolitionist practices of the 19th century and today. Theorists from antiquity to Adorno have acknowledged the special ability of arrangements to communicate vital musical features. Holland’s arrangements likewise encourage us to reflect on notions of musical identity and meaning. By taking these works seriously, we may discover new ways to think about our own relationship to the music we know and love.

SESSION III, PAPER 1 (1:00 pm)

Music for the Masses: Agency, Race, and Issues of Representation and Record
of the 1940 Golden Gate International Exposition

Elisse La Barre

Music festivals, especially among schools and fraternal societies, were very popular programming choices at the 1940 Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. Coinciding with “Negro Day” at the fair, the four-day “Negro Music Festival” showcased professional and amateur talent by African-American musicians. Heralded as of “outstanding musical significance in the 1940 season of the exposition,” the Negro Music Festival was a transcontinental event that celebrated African-American talent on the fairgrounds. Radio personalities and entertainers performed throughout the festival; they included famous dancers and actors such as Bill Robinson, the Nicholas Brothers, Eddie (Rochester) Anderson and screen actor Ernest “Bubbles” Whitman. Issues of representation and exclusion were evident throughout the fair’s festival, including the Twentieth Century Motion Picture Company’s Negro Music Festival Grand Ball.

The Business Boosters’ Club of Oakland and its general manager, Benjamin Watkins, sponsored the primary production of the festival. Local African-American musicians Elmer Keeton and Jester Hairston created a musical and stage arrangement for the festival that would “trace the evolution of Negro music.” Presented at the festival three times in total, the production began with the piece “Rhythms of the Tom-toms” and “Dance Africana” by Marion Beasley and Virgil Beanan, respectively. Music was provided by Keeton’s Chorus, an unidentified orchestra, and guest soloists accompanied by a comedic set and two dance routines. This paper sheds new light on the issues of representation, race, and agency of the African-American community at twentieth-century world’s fairs.

SESSION III, PAPER 2 (1:30 pm)

Composer Tzvi Avni and His Search of (German-) Israeli Identity

Ronit Seter

In 1935, Hermann Steinke (b. 1927) left his home town Saarbrücken following persecution by the Nazis. He returned there in 1999 as Tzvi Avni (his Hebraized name), a leader of his generation of Israeli composers of art music, to receive a prize from the president of Saarland, Reinhard Klimt. The celebration included a concert “of my works in the palace (‘Schloss’) of Saarbrücken, whose basement served a headquarters for the Gestapo during Hitler days...” During the last two decades, Avni’s works have been performed in Saarland and in Germany more than in Israel, where he developed his style. Is Avni an exile composer? While in my multiple interviews with him he expressed his proud Israeli identity, the answer might be more complicated. In Israel, as reception has it, he has been consistently seen as an Israeli (non-hyphenated) composer. In Germany, though, the “Deutsch-Israelischer Komponist” epithet appears often in reviews and in his biography by Friedrich Spangemacher (2021).

This paper explores national identity topoi expressed in Avni’s *The Ship of Hours* (1999, commissioned in Saarbrücken), as markedly different from earlier scholarship (Brod & Cohen, 1976; Bohlman and Slobin, eds., 1986; Fleisher 1997; and Hirshberg 2005). Analyzing the roots of its style, I show identity markers in Avni’s works of the 1950s as a student of composers Paul Ben-Haim (b. Munich, 1897) and Mordecai Seter (b. Novorossiysk, 1916); different signifiers in his works of the 1960s and 1970s, influenced by his studies with Vladimir Ussachevsky at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center; and his quasi-postmodern style developed during the 1980s and 1990s.

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Business Meeting Agenda

- I. Reports from chapter officers
- II. Reports from chapter representatives to the AMS
- III. Plans for Spring 2023 Meeting
 - a. Host venue?
 - b. Lowens Award for student presentations
 - c. Forthcoming chapter officer openings
- IV. AY 23/24 meetings: in-person or virtual?
- V. Additional Announcements of Happenings around the Chapter