

# Capital Chapter of the American Musicological Society

## Fall 2023 Virtual Meeting Saturday, October 21, 2023

### PROGRAM

- 9:00–10:00am    **Session I**
  - **Deborah Lawrence:** “Music Lessons for the Discerning Woman in Seventeenth Century Spain”
  - **Beverly Jerold:** “A Study in Discord: Intonation before Recording Technology”
  
- 10:10–10:50am    **Roundtable & Discussion:**  
Contemporary Intersections of Music, Technology, and Culture
  
- 11am–12pm    **Session II**
  - **James Doering:** “Pawns or Parasites? Motion Picture Exhibitors and the Performance Right Debate of 1917–1924”
  - **Jennifer DeLapp Birkett:** “Aaron Copland’s Elusive Prelude for Piano Trio”
  
- 12:10pm    **Capital Chapter Business Meeting**

**SESSION I, PAPER 1 (9:00 am)**

Music Lessons for the Discerning Woman in Seventeenth Century Spain

Deborah Lawrence

Baldassarre Castiglione published *Il Cortegiano* in 1528. This was the first of several courtesy manuals in the early modern period, which were books instructing readers in how to behave in aristocratic circles, including examples of what they should know regarding music making and dancing. In addition to such explicit instruction, popular fiction also provided implicit guides to behavior, and the stories might include music making. The stories of María de Zayas (1637 and 1647, respectively) in which young noblewomen and men at a party take turns telling tales, often performing songs within their accounts, are examples of such covert instruction. This paper explores the kinds of music making that de Zayas' characters do, especially the "discerning" young women who write their own ballad poetry and sonnets and then compose the music for them. The women accompany themselves on various instruments and, in addition to singing, the hostess stage manages the whole event. De Zayas' tales are cautionary ones regarding love affairs, warning the reader to beware of duplicity and betrayal and illustrating how women can easily be victimized. Carmen Y. Hsu asserts that mastering music was a component of women's acquisition of power, both for themselves and for the status of the men with whom they associated.<sup>1</sup> We will see how that power is embodied in de Zayas' work.

**SESSION I, PAPER 2 (9:30 am)**

A Study in Discord: Intonation before Recording Technology

Beverly Jerold

Today, good intonation forms the bedrock of music performance, so much so that we take it for granted and assume that musicians in the distant past were similarly blessed. Indeed, much of our performance practice is based on this concept. Yet a great many complaints from major writers of past centuries indicate a significant problem. Unless every musician in an ensemble is playing in tune, others cannot judge their own intonation and rhythmic placement of the notes. The record suggests that only a relatively few musicians are born with a "good ear." It can, however, be developed by hearing in-tune music frequently, so the advent of recording technology was a major turning point. Surrounded by in-tune music in every genre, everyone today, including the public, has experienced automatic ear training. Johann Georg Neidhardt's 1706 *Beste und leichteste Temperatur des Monochordi*, devoted entirely to equal temperament, proved decisive in Germany's conversion to it. With reference to meantone temperament, he noted the "abomination" when instruments at *Chorton* pitch level have to be transposed downward to play with ones at *Cammerton* pitch, which makes major and minor semitones fall in a different location—a sound he compared to the dogs' quarrel over Jezebel's fallen body.<sup>2</sup> Because German organs (including

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<sup>1</sup> Carmen Y. Hsu, *Courtesans in the Literature of Spanish Golden Age*, with a prologue by Francisco Márquez Villanueva (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2002), 27.

<sup>2</sup> NEIDHARDT 1706, 39f.: '... so klinget es doch/ wenn er dergleichen Instrumente darzu setzt/ nicht viel anders/ als hätte er den Zanck der Hunde über dem Körper der abgestürzten Jesabel vorstellen wollen. Allen diesen Schwierigkeiten kan keine Temperatur abhelffen/ als eine eintzige/ von welcher Werckmeisterus selbst also schreibt: [Werckmeister's formula for equal temperament quoted].'

J. S. Bach's) were pitched higher than other instruments, the organ part had to be transposed, which requires equal tempering. With many individuals oblivious to excruciating intonation, the conditions against which elite musicians had to struggle provide an unsuspected window into the past.

## **SESSION II, PAPER 1 (11:00 am)**

### **Pawns or Parasites?**

#### **Motion Picture Exhibitors and the Performance Right Debate of 1917–1924**

James Doering

Early in the silent era, motion picture exhibitors recognized music's value in attracting audiences. That realization intensified in the U.S. in the mid 1910s, after feature-length films took hold, theaters grew, and musical support materials (cue sheets, mood music, accompaniment manuals) proliferated. This expansion put pressure on exhibitors to invest in music: i.e., hire skilled musicians, pay them fairly, stock their sheet music libraries, and purchase quality instruments. The period's trade press overflows with cautions to exhibitors who neglect the importance of investing in music.

But in 1917, a new factor was added to the exhibitors' musical calculations: public performance rights. Although music performance rights were written into U.S. copyright law in 1897, they garnered little attention until the Association of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) was formed in 1914. ASCAP's initial focus was music in hotels and restaurants, but once the Supreme Court affirmed ASCAP's validity in 1917 (*Herbert v. Shanley*), movie theaters were also pursued aggressively. A battle played out in the film trade press as exhibitors struggled to understand the legality of "the music tax" in their theaters. ASCAP countered by filing lawsuits and characterizing the exhibitors as "parasites." The debate raged until the last case was resolved in 1924. This paper uses the trade press and court documents to examine this dispute and explore the insights it provides into the perceptions and practices of live music in silent era theaters, as well as the legal precedents that followed from this debate.

## **SESSION II, PAPER 2 (11:30 am)**

### **Aaron Copland's Elusive Prelude for Piano Trio**

Jennifer DeLapp Birkett

In June 2023, a little-known chamber work by Aaron Copland was published for the first time. The Prelude for Piano Trio is Copland's own arrangement of the first movement of his *Organ Symphony* (1924). The score and parts were found at Yale University in John Kirkpatrick's papers around 2000; it was premiered at an all-Copland centenary concert there in November 2000. The composer adapted the three-movement *Organ Symphony* (1924) as the First Symphony (1928) before creating two arrangements of the first movement alone: Prelude for Chamber Orchestra (1934, pub. 1968) and the newly published piano trio.

In this paper, I outline the origins and lineage of the Prelude for Piano Trio, adding my own archival research to the published scholarship of Vivian Perlis and Drew Massey. After correcting minor factual errors that have lingered in the literature, I address two larger questions: When, and for what purpose, did Copland create this undated arrangement? Why did he let it languish for decades? In contrast to other works that he formally or informally withdrew, the reasons apparently stem more from the particulars of his unfolding career and professional relationships than from a conscious decision to reuse or distance himself from the material. My sources include the archival manuscripts at the John Kirkpatrick Collection, the Eastman School of Music, and the Aaron Copland Collection, internal documents from Boosey & Hawkes and the Aaron Copland Fund, interviews with people involved in the Trio manuscript's rediscovery, and the published editions of all four scorings of Prelude (1931–2023).

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### **Business Meeting Agenda**

- I. Reports from chapter officers
- II. Reports from chapter representatives to the AMS
- III. Plans for Spring 2024 meeting
  - a. Host venue?
  - b. Lowens Award for student presentations
  - c. Forthcoming chapter officer openings
- IV. AY 24/25 meetings
- V. additional announcements of happenings around the chapter