

WINTER MEETING

*Northern California Chapter
of the
American Musicological Society*

Saturday, February 1, 2014
Music Department
University of California, Santa Cruz

**Northern California Chapter of the
American Musicological Society**

University of California, Santa Cruz
Music Center, Room 131

February 1, 2014

Registration, 9:45–10:00

Session I, Opera, 10:00–12:15

James Davies (University of California, Berkeley), Chair

Eleanor Selfridge-Field (CCRMA/Stanford University), Art, Music,
and the Stage: Venetian Scenography in the Era of Bernardo Canal
and Antonio Vivaldi

Heather Hadlock (Stanford University), Staging *La damnation de Faust*
in Monte Carlo and Paris, 1893–1903

Riccardo la Spina (Independent Scholar, Oakland), “Ecco il loco
destinato”: Original Opera as an Expression of National Pride in
1863–4 Mexico

Lunch, 12:15–1:45

Business Meeting, 1:45–2:15

Session II, Sound and Process in 20th-Century Music, 2:15–3:45

Leta Miller (University of California, Santa Cruz), Chair

Alex Stalarow (University of California, Davis), The Uncanny and the
Acousmatic in Pierre Schaeffer’s *Symphonie pour un homme seul*

Giacomo Fiore (S.F. Conservatory/UC Santa Cruz), “Morphing” as
Process in the Music of Larry Polansky

Coffee and Refreshments, 3:45–4:00

Session III, Recovering 18th-Century Culture, 4:00–5:30

Sarah Waltz (University of the Pacific), Chair,

Beverly Wilcox (University of California, Davis), *Fort applaudi par une très nombreuse assemblée: Posters and Concert Reviews in Enlightenment Paris*

Daniel Leeson (Neue Mozart Ausgabe), A Long-Lost Portrait of Composer and Cellist Giovanni Bononcini

ABSTRACTS

Eleanor Selfridge-Field (CCRMA/Stanford University) Art, Music, and the Stage: Venetian Scenography in the Era of Bernardo Canal and Antonio Vivaldi

Intersections between scenery and music constitute a rich but little explored topic in Venetian opera of the early eighteenth century. The sudden drop-off of information about scenery in that era is a result of changing circumstances. The earliest Venetian opera libretti (1637–1645) were often issued in pairs—one «little book» for the dramatic text and the other for a brief description each scene and entr'acte (a *coro*, a *ballo*, or a *combattimento*). After 1645 the dramatic text and the scenery summary were conflated into a single opera libretto. Printed libretti, with their suggestive incisions, provide the main basis of such visual histories of seventeenth-century Venetian opera.

By 1700 Venice was on a rapid path to financial ruin, and incisions disappeared almost overnight as theaters became impoverished. Our knowledge of how operas were staged in the eighteenth century is necessarily dependent on the verbiage in libretti, which is generally sparse.

Two happy exceptions shed considerable light on the rise of new ideas in staging, especially at the Teatro di Sant'Angelo, which was Antonio Vivaldi's home turf. These exceptions occur in the works of Bernardo Canal (father of Canaletto; grandson of the noted composer Biagio Marini) and Antonio Mauro. What seems to separate them both from the common run of scenographers is their pursuit of a visual translation of Arcadian values (as understood in Vienna more nearly than Rome) into staging that was naturalistic but also unusually dynamic. They were two members of a trio that included the librettist Grazio Braccioli, a Ferrarese *letterato* who chronicled 17 years of Venetian art and architecture and was well acquainted with a number of singers. Antonio Vivaldi is the best known beneficiary of the sets of Canal and Mauro.

Heather Hadlock (Stanford University) Staging *La damnation de Faust* in Monte Carlo and Paris, 1893–1903

Until 1875, Berlioz's "légende dramatique" *La damnation de Faust* (1846) was known primarily through concert excerpts, and in the 1870s and 1880s it gained popularity as an oratorio. This paper examines the first theatrical stagings of *La damnation de Faust* between 1893 and 1903, and their critical reception. First, I show how Raoul Gunsbourg's production (Monte Carlo, 1893) managed the work's temporal and spatial discontinuities, gaps in plot logic, and magical transformations and illusions, most notably the Ballet of Sylphs and the Ride to the Abyss. Second, I analyze responses in the Paris press to the 1903 revival of Gunsbourg's production at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt during the Berlioz centenary celebrations.

Criticism of Gunsbourg's 1903 *Damnation* reveals a *fin-de-siècle* ambivalence about French grand opera's legacy of visual spectacle, excess, and sentimentality. While the general press tended to praise the production for realizing *La damnation's* dramatic potential, composers such as Debussy and Faure condemned it, arguing that tangible staging inevitably fell short of Berlioz's and Goethe's evocation of dreams and spirits. Such defenses of *La damnation* served Berlioz's posthumous elevation to the canon of French music, for in contrast to the indifference that the work had previously met, Berlioz and his masterpiece could now be seen as needing protection from the assaults of "adapters, falsifiers, and con artists" (Debussy, 1903) like Gunsbourg. Finally, the reviews suggest a triangle of national and provincial hierarchies of class and prestige: in order to disdain Gunsbourg's catering to the low, modern, and cosmopolitan taste of Monte Carlo pleasure-seekers, Paris critics promoted Berlioz's alliance with Goethe and the German cultural heritage.

Riccardo La Spina (Independent Scholar, Oakland)

“Ecco il loco destinato”: Original Opera as an Expression of National Pride in 1863–1864 Mexico

Defined by civil war and political tumult, 1863 is well-known in Mexico's history as a year of singular import in honing national identity, but less so a milestone of autochthonous musico-cultural achievement. Nevertheless, from the early-1863 mobilization of encamped French forces against the legitimate Benito Juárez government, to an imperial crown being offered Archduke Maximilian von Hapsburg in November, Mexican composers staged an unprecedented number of original operas under partial *liberal* government patronage (an exodus of resident Italian companies at the conflict's earlier onset opened the field to enterprising nationals). Set to preexisting *libretti* by Felice Romani and Gaetano Rossi for Carlo Coccia and Vincenzo Bellini, respectively, these works manifested the new Mexican school under Cenobio Paniagua (1821-1882), expressing itself for the first time. Contrasting with Maximilian's historically recognized subsidies, these similar efforts by the early Juárez government, constitute a rallying cry for the imperiled Republic's cultural excellence, but have gone unconsidered. A deeper look at these newly-rediscovered initiatives further profiles the significance of Paniagua's difficult-to-document operatic atelier.

While Paniagua's autographs and materials for *I due Foscari* by Mateo Torres Serrato remain unavailable, the period now lends itself to deeper scrutiny, thanks to the recent reemergence of other long-unobtainable biographical information (especially on Torres), and musical and archival sources. Of these, fragments from the early *Romeo* by Melesio Morales (1837–1908), and the ill-fated *Clotilde di Cosenza* by Octaviano Valle (1826–1869) provide crucial musical insight, finally permitting these rarities to be sampled. Limited documentation has long presented further challenges to demystifying this once 'legendary' theatrical period, largely subjecting it to subsequent historiographical dismissal. However, in reviewing the underlying historic and political reasons for its impetus, our paper will explore and contextualize the circumstances behind this unprecedented operatic *anno mirabilis* during this culturally challenging biennium for Mexico.

Alex Stalarow (University of California, Davis)

The Uncanny and the Acousmatic in Pierre Schaeffer's *Symphonie pour un homme seul*

In May, 1950, Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry premiered *Symphonie pour un homme seul* in the recital hall at the Ecole Normale in Paris, thus giving the burgeoning genre of *music concrete* its first major public appearance. While audiences saw two men on stage amongst an assortment of turntables, speakers, and cables, what they heard, was an abstraction of human sounds accompanied by more familiar instrumental ones. Cries, heavily breathing, footsteps, mumbled speech, and laughter—culled from the arsenal of sound recordings at Schaeffer's disposal from Radio France's sound effects database and his own experiments—presented the piece's protagonist, a “man alone,” into an uncanny series of fragmented sounds. Utterances that were primal in the moment of their capture became mechanical and dead in their manipulated and mediated reproduction. This gap between the real and the reproduced has been explored by many critics and artists, some wary of its uncanny perceptual effects, others hopeful of its subversive potential. For Schaeffer, this gap allows for the emergence of a new mode of listening, the acousmatic, and a new musical grammar detailed in his *Traité de l'objet sonore*. *Symphonie pour un homme seul*—both because of its narrative content surrounding human-produced sounds and their larger sonic environment and its privileged place in Schaeffer's career—provides a fruitful avenue through which to explore the acousmatic. Largely known as a theorization of hearing a sound without seeing its source, acousmatic listening, an active auditory act by human perceivers, insists upon the physiological aspects of hearing, and also manufactures what Schaeffer refers to as the sound object. By placing *Symphonie pour un homme seul* in dialogue with theoretical writings on sound perception by Schaeffer and Michel Chion, this paper locates the sound object in the process of acousmatic listening, and thus, in a fluid network of physiological and external realities.

Giacomo Fiore (S.F. Conservatory of Music/University of California, Santa Cruz)
“Morphing” as Process in the Music of Larry Polansky

Over the course of a four-decade career, Larry Polansky (b. 1954) has composed music that negotiates experimentalism and tradition, exploring aesthetic concerns as diverse as rational tunings, instrumental virtuosity, and the integration of adaptive computer systems and live performers. Much of Polansky’s music relies on processes to produce and develop the musical material. Ranging from performance directions to complex algorithms, Polansky’s processes can control the music on harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and formal levels.

This paper focuses on *morphing*, or the gradual transformation of one musical element into another. Specifically, the discussion draws examples from compositions that feature morphing between related harmonic series; instances of melodic morphing; and finally pieces in which sound events are substituted into an existing structure gradually. These examples, which are representative of the breadth, consistency, and chronological development of the composer’s style, include electronic and acoustic works dating from 1975 to the present day. Among the pieces in consideration are the seminal early works *Four Voice Canons 2–4* (1975–78) and *Psaltery* (1979), which foreshadow Polansky’s preoccupation with gradual parametrical changes; more recent pieces include *51 Melodies* (1991), *for jim, ben, and lou* (1995), *Ensemble of Note and Piker* (1998), and *9 Events* (2011).

Based on archival research, a review of the principal theoretical sources (most published by Polansky himself), musical analysis, and the author’s first-hand experience in performing some of the composer’s morphing pieces, this discussion explores a substantial and previously unaddressed element in the repertoire of one of today’s most prolific composers. Furthermore it relates Polansky’s use of musical processes to broader trends in the U.S. experimental tradition, as exemplified in the musics of John Cage, Christian Wolff, James Tenney, and Steve Reich.

Beverly Wilcox (University of California, Davis)
Fort applaudi par une très nombreuse assemblée: Posters and Concert Reviews
in Enlightenment Paris

One way to distinguish public concerts from private ones is to ask whether the event was reviewed in the press. The Concert Spirituel (1725–1790), for example, was reliably reported, but the subscription-based Concert des Amateurs (1769–1780), only sporadically and the masonic Concert de la Loge Olympique, not at all. Public concerts were an important training-ground for the public use of reason that is necessary to democracy and republicanism: large posters were hung in the streets, inviting all to attend; people of different classes heard the music together; and afterward, newspaper reviews sometimes kicked off spirited public debates.

The posters rarely survive (although three from the Concert Spirituel are extant); in reception studies, concert reviews are often the main sources, unless a musical, literate traveler such as Burney, Casanova, or Mozart happened along. In the early days, reviews were mere chronicles; by mid-century, musical observations and value judgments appear; and finally, in the two decades before the Revolution, critics begin to engage with the music and performers, approaching what we know today as the fine art of concert reviewing.

Eighteenth-century reviews are usually treated as eyewitness accounts. But the reviewers made no such claim, and for much of the century, published “reviews” were often transcriptions of concert posters, with short, formulaic phrases such as *fort applaudi par une très nombreuse assemblée* added. The practice of starting with a poster transcription, inserting stock comments (perhaps based on communications from the reviewer’s friends and associates who had actually attended), and finally adding a short passage on one or two aspects that were of interest to the reviewer became the new structure of review. Only later, and in other lands, did a new model of criticism, based entirely on first-person reaction to a performance, arise.

Daniel Leeson (Neue Mozart Ausgabe)
A Long-Lost Portrait of Composer and Cellist Giovanni Bononcini

This presentation will display an excellent, long-lost portrait of the Baroque composer Giovanni Bononcini (1670-1747) that was painted by William Aikman (1682-1731) and commissioned by the Baillie family on March 17, 1724. Gifted to child Wolfgang between April 23, 1764 and July 24, 1765 during the Mozart family's London stay, the painting was owned and displayed by Leopold Mozart in his two Salzburg residences until his death in 1787. The Bononcini portrait resurfaced in 2003 when it was purchased by a collector from a street vendor in Bologna, along with a cache of family memorabilia saved by Leopold Mozart and some items originally owned by Leopold's landlord, the Salzburg spice merchant, Johann Lorenz Hagenauer (1712-1792).

<http://www.ams-net.org/chapters/norcal>

