

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
• OF THE •
AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Winter Meeting
February 21, 2015
San Diego State University

Program

8:15 – 9:00 AM Breakfast and Registration

9:00 – 10:30 AM **Session 1**, Alternate Narratives
 Alexandra Monchick (CSU Northridge), Chair

Narrative Modalities and Musical Commentary in Schumann's *Manfred*
 Catherine Ludlow (University of Washington)

Listening Through the Disabled Body: One-Handed Pianist Paul Wittgenstein and Musical Modernism
 Siu Hei Lee (University of California, San Diego)

10:30 – 10:45 AM Break

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM **Session 2**, Postwar Meanings, Public and Private
 Joel Haney (CSU Bakersfield), Chair

Ecstatic Audiences Leave Aspiring British Opera Composer 'Horried': Investigating the Unspeakable in
Postwar British Culture through the Reception of Rutland Boughton's *The Immortal Hour*
 Matthew Buchan (University of California, Riverside)

Chopin and Propaganda Films, 1944-1949
 Ewelina Boczkowska (Youngstown State University)

12:15 – 1:40 PM Lunch

1:40 – 2:00 PM PSC-AMS Business Meeting

2:00 – 3:30 PM **Session 3**, Midcentury Experimentalism
 Eric Smigel (San Diego State University), Chair

From Serial to Open-Form: The Music of Netty Simons
 Joshua Charney (University of California, San Diego)

"The Cinema Delimina": Expanded Cinema Aesthetics in John Cage and Merce Cunningham's *Variations V*
(1965)
 Richard H. Brown (University of Southern California, Occidental College)

3:30 – 3:45 PM Break

3:45 – 5:15 PM **Session 4**, Image, Audience, and the Music Business
 Maya Ginsberg (San Diego State University), Chair

Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera, and the American Premiere of Philip Glass's *Aekhnaten* (1984)
 Sasha Metcalf (University of California, Santa Barbara)

Crossover Evangelism: How Contemporary Christian Music Advanced Post-Christian America
 James A. W. Gutierrez (University of California, San Diego)

5:15 PM Reception for all presenters and attendees

Chapter Officers

Alexandra Monchick, President Joel Haney, Vice President Temmo Korisheli, Secretary David Kasunic, Treasurer

ABSTRACTS

Narrative Modalities and Musical Commentary in Schumann's *Manfred*

Catherine Ludlow (University of Washington)

Robert Schumann's *Manfred: Dramatisches Gedicht in drei Abtheilungen* (1848–52) is often dismissed as too autobiographical and a jumble of genres. Consideration of the work within its literary context suggests instead that Schumann's vision for *Manfred* was far more perceptive, forming a hierarchy of voices within the tale, each with its own manner of expression. Schumann's preferred edition of the drama, Posgaru's 1839 translation and commentary, promotes Byron's play as the ideal vehicle to revitalize the German musico-dramatic stage. The volume appears to have been a strong influence on Schumann's compositional choices. Schumann's musical adaptation of *Manfred* is most notable for the dramatic framework he developed to render Byron's complex hierarchy of spiritual worlds: he manipulated the technique of melodrama to demonstrate differences in spiritual ability and emotional state, whereas texted songs express supernatural power and respect. This paper's structural apparatus for analyzing *Manfred's* incidental music is adapted from Lubomír Doležel's concept of narrative modalities, an approach to literary theory that offers a critical model for understanding Schumann's compositional choices. Doležel's theory of narrative modality provides a path toward understanding the diverse spiritual realms in Byron's *Manfred*, and the varied manners in which Schumann renders them musically. I argue that Schumann's *Manfred* is a legitimate musical drama, furthering the work of John Daverio, who believed that "to consider the music somehow independent of the text is precisely to miss the point." This paper will demonstrate that Schumann's dramatic poem is a well-formed, innovative interpretation of the Manfred story, a text discerningly edited and adapted for the contemporary stage, but also a musical commentary on the literary work itself.

Listening Through the Disabled Body: One-Handed Pianist Paul Wittgenstein and Musical Modernism

Siu Hei Lee (University of California, San Diego)

In the emerging body of literature on disability musical narratives, the discussion of disability and musical modernism is lacking. The obstacle is clear: Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961), a WWI veteran who lost his right hand, and arguably the first performer transnationally renowned for playing piano music for one hand, refused to perform some modernist works he commissioned and preferred Romantic styles. But we should look beyond the stylistic aspect. I consider modernism as, following Michael Davidson in the Russian formalist tradition, defamiliarization from familiar materials, and deriving from Jann Pasler, the heightened sense of modern-ness in the French idea of "ancien et moderne." This paper uses two Wittgenstein commissions to argue that disability enacts modernism when one treats disability not as in need of cure and overcoming, but as an opportunity to enter into new relationship with past musical works through defamiliarization and the heightened sense of modern-ness. Thematic analysis shows the modernist relationship between the "Grotesk" of Erich Korngold's *Suite op. 23* (1930), and Debussy's *Cello Sonata* (1915) and Richard Strauss's *Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica* (1925). I also consider the grotesque musical character of "Grotesk" in the milieu of "new" art of Berlin and Central Europe, particularly Georg Grosz's grotesque modernist paintings of war amputees. Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand* (1929) starts with the musical narrative of, in Joseph Straus's words, "overcoming disability," and that inhibits modernism. But this piece later enters into modernist relationship with Charles-Valentin Alkan's "Fantasie" (1838) and Chopin's *Ballade no. 1* (1835). My study complements Davidson's book that embarks on disability and modernism in theater, literature, and other genres, but rather briefly in music. My study also complicates the disability musical narratives previously proposed by Straus and Blake Howe. Most importantly, as a performer, I argue against listening to one-handed music only as virtuosic spectacle that creates the effect of familiar two-handedness. Instead, performers and educators should see these compositions as opportunities for the public to gain new

knowledge about disability, to understand the creativity inherent in defamiliarization, and to encourage empathizing with and eventually listening “through” the disabled body.

**Ecstatic Audiences Leave Aspiring British Opera Composer 'Horrific':
Investigating the Unspeakable in Postwar British Culture through the Reception of
Rutland Boughton's *The Immortal Hour***

Matthew Buchan (University of California, Riverside)

The inaugural 1923 run of Rutland Boughton's *The Immortal Hour* at the Regent at King's Cross Theatre in London, fueled by a devoted, almost hysterical audience, reached a previously unheard-of 216 performances. While most British composers might have been overjoyed, Boughton was dismayed by the ecstatic applause and particularly upset by the repeated attendance of British noblewomen such as the Princesses Marie Louise and Helena Victoria, the Marchioness of Londonderry, and Lady Maud Warrender. As a devout socialist, such upper class patronage convinced Boughton that his opera had become a plaything for the idle rich. However, a broad cross-section of British society attended the opera repeatedly, and the daily press acclaimed one "Miss Parker" for her one hundred and thirty-three viewings. While such rampant enthusiasm strongly suggests that audiences of the time connected with the opera in a manner whose cultural significance must be investigated in greater depth, the work's enthusiastic contemporary critical reception does little to explain the real cause of its popularity. Ironically, it is through the noble patrons who upset Boughton so greatly then that it is possible to re-evaluate the paradoxical case of *The Immortal Hour's* reception now. By investigating the cultural history articulated by socially prominent devotees such as Princess Marie Louise, in the form of published memoirs, reminiscences, and other historical documents, this investigation will argue that *The Immortal Hour* did indeed make a powerful connection to British citizens as they struggled to cope with the realities of mourning during the years immediately following the First World War, a circumstance unimaginable to Boughton when he composed it during the peaceful years of 1912-13.

Chopin and Propaganda Films, 1944-1949

Ewelina Boczkowska (Youngstown State University)

At the close of World War II, Polish communists embarked on a vigorous campaign to legitimize and gain popular support for their party, couching their ideology in Polish patriotism and the contempt of fascism. Communists were not the only ones claiming these national values at the core of their political identity, yet their propaganda silenced all opposition by 1949. This rise to power coincided with the ideological appropriation of national symbols, including the music of Frederic Chopin. In the transitional years 1944-1949, Chopin's historical status was reinvented to serve different ends: an epitome of societal trauma, an emblem of patriotism, and subsequently an icon of social progress. This paper traces this metamorphosis of Chopin's music in numerous experimental and documentary films from the era. Rather than dismissing these adaptations offhand for their inescapably ideological theses, I argue that the “public” narratives at play in these films tapped into nostalgic yearnings of an oppressed nation trying to rebuild itself.

From Serial to Open-Form: The Music of Netty Simons

Joshua Charney (University of California, San Diego)

This paper intends to explore the music of obscure New York composer Netty Simons (1913-1994). Under the mentorship of German-born composer Stefan Wolpe, Simons formulated ideas that would transform her from a serialist into a composer of open-form works. Wolpe, who, through his students, proved to be a mediator of mid-century American art music and jazz, advocated for Simons at a critical turning point in 1956, when he introduced her music to the European Darmstadt audience and provided her guidance at the Columbia Composer's Forum Concert/Discussion, moderated by Henry Cowell. An incident, when Cowell asked why Simons' progressive compositions failed to communicate to the audience, contributed to her feelings of marginalization as a woman composer at a time when experimentalist

colleagues such as John Cage were gaining popularity amongst peers. In examining letters between Wolpe and Simons, I will show how Wolpe, whose opinion of Cage was ambivalent at best, encouraged and reassured a belittled Simons. After this point, she began to develop a method of indeterminate composition that allocated responsibility to the performer while retaining the composer's voice through written directions and visual representations. The events of 1956 ultimately catalyzed a change in style and technique in Simons' work. By analyzing specific scores and recordings, I will reveal her evolution as a composer, from her twelve-tone piano piece "Night Sounds" (1953), to the aleatoric "Windfall" (1965), and the graphically notated "Too Late the Bridge is Closed" (1976).

"The Cinema Delimina":

Expanded Cinema Aesthetics in John Cage and Merce Cunningham's *Variations V* (1965)

Richard H. Brown (University of Southern California, Occidental College)

John Cage and Merce Cunningham's elaborate multimedia production, *Variations V*, has in recent years sparked a number of debates regarding the role of collaborators, authorship and intentionality, and technical matters of execution. Few, however, have examined what contemporary audiences noticed the most: the elaborate film and video projections by underground filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek and video artist Nam June Paik. This paper reviews archival documents and participant interviews conducted by the author in an effort to reassess the role of Paik and VanDerBeek's contributions to the overall audiovisual experience of *Variations V*. VanDerBeek's film, "Movie Mural," in particular provided an additional level of interactivity within Cage's sound system heretofore unacknowledged. In addition, I clarify several distinctions between the layering of visuals that interacted with the sound system for the premiere and the smaller traveling version of the production.

Avant-garde and experimental film scholars have noted that this production coincided with an ideological break within the underground film community in New York, and VanDerBeek's contribution built on the strategy of assemblage from previous set designers such as Robert Rauschenberg, while looking toward the aesthetics of multisensory immersion in the nascent Expanded Cinema movement. VanDerBeek highlighted many of these concerns regarding medium specificity in his manifesto, "The Cinema Delimina," which echoed Cage's stance on the ontology of the musical artwork, and an examination of the relationship between these two artists helps to clarify the origins of "intermedia" theory, thus bridging the gap between Cage Studies and histories of Experimental, Underground and Expanded Cinema.

Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera, and the American Premiere of Philip Glass's *Akhmaten* (1984)

Sasha Metcalf (University of California, Santa Barbara)

When David Gockley became general director of Houston Grand Opera (HGO) in 1972, he developed a personal mission to broaden the American opera repertory. Blaming the dearth of accessible new music on university-based modernists, Gockley looked to Philip Glass, who had an established record of successfully cultivating his own audience. HGO had its first major opportunity to produce a Glass opera with the American premiere of *Akhmaten* (1984), which was jointly produced with New York City Opera (NYCO). I show that a complicated push and pull between institutions, administrators, and critics can be read into reception of the HGO-NYCO production.

Examining interviews and HGO archival material, I first demonstrate how Gockley and his administrative team launched an aggressive marketing campaign to attract new audiences that typically would not attend an opera, including Egyptian art and history exhibitions and screenings of Glass and Godfrey Reggio's film *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982). Simultaneously, Gockley responded to the concerns of his conservative subscribers via "town hall" meetings and correspondence, using their feedback to balance their needs with his desire to produce new works. The end result was a production with unprecedented box-office success and mixed critical reception. The enthusiastic audience response in Houston allowed Gockley to persuade his board of directors to subsidize another Glass opera—this time, an HGO commission.

In New York, however, critics savaged the production. Despite HGO being one of the largest U.S. companies outside of New York, *Akhnaten*'s success in Houston could not compete with the damning reviews from New York critics. Administrative correspondence reveals how NYCO made alterations to the preexisting HGO production that elicited the criticism. Although HGO's production was a success, critics have since stressed the poor critical reception. John Rockwell, Tim Page, and K. Robert Schwarz, for example, all characterize the production by its failings. My work consequently reveals a much more complicated story about the powers at play in shaping the technical and artistic outcomes of the productions. I stress an under-recognized aspect of musical culture: the significant role administrators and critics play in promoting ideologies and controlling the resources that sustain the reputations of artists.

**Crossover Evangelism:
How Contemporary Christian Music Advanced Post-Christian America**
James A. W. Gutierrez (University of California, San Diego)

Since the mid-1980's Christian/Gospel music has been one of the fastest growing popular music commodities in recorded music history, with sales averaging over a half-billion dollars annually from 2010 to 2013. In 2012 overall Christian music sales saw a total of 1.66 billion albums, singles, music videos, and digital tracks sold; with more than 1,400 radio stations and 80 million listeners, Christian music has become a music industry behemoth. However, the inflation of Christian music market presence counterintuitively corresponds to the simultaneous *deflation* of church population, with mounting evidence indicating a 21st century "post-Christian" America. One-third of adults under age thirty are religiously unaffiliated today, which is more than double those who claim agnosticism or atheism, and is the highest percentage in Pew Forum history. This paper examines how the rise of consumer culture in American Evangelicalism subsequently undermined its own evangelistic rhetoric, and explores the correlation between mass-marketing of CCM/CWM with the stunning decline of young adult Evangelical affiliation since the late 1990's, and demonstrates how Christian bands that crossed over to the mainstream were the first to model faith dis-affiliation, advancing the emerging post-Christian stance of America's young generations (aka- the rise of "Nones"). In this way, popular music is shown to directly establish and perpetuate powerful spaces for cultural dialogue that continue to shape America's philosophical, spiritual, and political landscape.