Witness to the Execution:  
The Role of the Composer as Narrator in French Cantatas on Judith

Michele Cabrini (Hunter College, City University of New York)

With its intense drama and marked eroticism, Judith’s slaying of Holofernes was one of the most popular myths of the Baroque era. While most artists contrasted Judith’s traits of both chastity and seduction with her heroic deeds to create drama, others added the perspective of another figure—the maidservant. In the paintings by Caravaggio and Artemisia Gentileschi (Uffizi Judith), the maidservant plays a crucial role: an equal partner in crime in Gentileschi, she acquires a disturbingly voyeuristic posture in Caravaggio, witnessing and savoring the murder before the observer, and silently goading a perplexed, mannequin-like Judith. Much like the maidservant, cantata text narrators act as viewers inside a painting, leading the main character and witnessing the scene for the listener. Houdar de La Motte’s Judith provides such a case, in which the narrator constantly guides—and often goads—a waiving Judith.

Composers could either choose to uphold or subvert a text, thus becoming narrators themselves in the process. This paper discusses the little-known cantata settings of La Motte’s text by Brossard (ca. 1704) and Jacquet de la Guerre (1708) and their strikingly different musical treatments of the murder. Following Gérard Genette’s narrative theories, I demonstrate that Jacquet de la Guerre acts as homodiegetic narrator—one who plays an active character role—whereas Brossard acts as heterodiegetic narrator, simply offering his perspective as viewer. Brossard follows La Motte’s vision by emphasizing swiftness of action at the expense of character depiction: he passes over the murder quickly; animates the narrator without regard for Judith with well-crafted yet unremarkable recitatives; and ensures formal continuity with run-on movements, avoiding da-capos, and rearranging the text. Jacquet de la Guerre leaves the text unscathed yet bypasses the voice of La Motte’s narrator with her own through instrumental accompaniments and independent symphonies that give voice to Judith despite a text that downplays her character. The sommeil, for example, with its undulating lines and denial of closure, depicts Judith’s powerful spell on Holofernes. Likewise, the basso ostinato of the murder music, freezes the action into a seemingly never ending moment, celebrating Judith’s murder as heroic and offering a powerfully gendered commentary that recalls Gentileschi’s.
“Upon the lute doth ravish human sense”:
John Dowland and the Culture of Orality in Early Modern England

Graham Freeman (University of Toronto)

Recent scholarship in Renaissance studies has focused upon notions of authorship and self-fashioning among writers and composers, resulting in an increased understanding of the way in which these individuals embraced their artistic subjectivity and navigated the burgeoning world of print and market culture, a perspective that has greatly benefited English composer John Dowland by virtue of his printed books of songs. However, the notion of attributing to Dowland an increased awareness of the “author function”—as Kirsten Gibson has recently done—is complicated by the difficulties involved in the authentication and attribution of the solo lute music, which exists mostly in manuscripts not connected to Dowland.

This paper will suggest that this situation was the result of the complex relationship that existed in early modern England between orality, manuscript, and print; for although Dowland’s printed music does demonstrate an awareness of the power of print and the control afforded by the “author function,” Dowland still maintained close connections with the media of orality and manuscript as evidenced by the condition of the music for solo lute. There are two important reasons for this: 1) the fact that the nature of the lute is one of portability and transience means that the instrument is very much connected to the phenomenon of oral transmission through performance, and; 2) the presence of a powerful link between manuscript, orality, and Catholic culture during a period when Catholics were generally forbidden access to the printing press. Building upon a theoretical foundation derived from the work of Alison Shell, Adam Fox, and Kirsten Gibson, I will demonstrate that while the nature of print might well have allowed Dowland to solidify his reputation as a composer of songs—and subsequently position him as an early example of a composer aware of the importance of the authorial persona—it was his success as an improviser and performer on the lute that forced him to maintain his connection with the world of oral transmission and manuscript dissemination.
Among the hundreds of folia variations written between 1500 and 1680, few have been as influential in bridging the gap between the early and the late folia as Giovanni Kapsberger’s "Partite sulla folia" in the Libro Primo d’intavolatura di chitarone (Venice 1604)—the first known volume of chitarrone music. Within this edition, the introductory poems and dedications by Francesco Contarini, Francesco Zazarra, and Giacomo Antonio Pfender laud Kapsberger’s talents and indicate he may have been attempting to switch from a military career to one of a virtuoso chitarrone player and composer. Thus, the publication appears to have been a strategic career move. The dedications were written by established noblemen, thereby acting as a sort of public recommendation to help establish Kapsberger’s reputation as he prepared for his move to Rome. Further, the publication marked Kapsberger’s debut as a composer and was meant to be impressive in its compositional structure and technical demands.

Kapsberger’s folia, with its set of nineteen variations, is remarkable because it is one of the earliest known examples in which the ground bass folia is set as a sectional variation form that foreshadows the form of the late folia. The Kapsberger folia also distinguishes itself from other basso ostinato compositions of the time in that the harmonic rhythm changes from variation to variation and frequently departs from the standard folia chord formula with various chordal substitutions. It is these irregularities that Kapsberger relied on to accommodate the embellishment.

Within the context of the folia, Kapsberger’s variations are transitional as they are neither consistent with the tradition of the early folia nor the late folia de España. This paper explores the unconventional compositional techniques—specifically the chromaticism, harmonic structure, use of both modal and functional harmony, and ornamentation—in Kapsberger’s folia variations. In particular, I will reflect on how these techniques depart from both earlier and contemporary traditions found in the earliest extant examples of folia compositions within the Cancionero musical de Palacio, Tratado de glosas by Diego Ortiz, and in the Italian guitar rasgueados. Lastly, this paper explores how Kapsberger’s colleagues through the Roman academies, Alessandro Piccinini and Girolamo Frescobaldi, soon after incorporated his folia paradigm and compositional techniques, as it became the norm for folia compositions.

Return to top

Travels with Hésione: The tragédie en musique outside Paris

Anita Hardeman (University of Western Ontario)

Previous studies of tragédies en musique have concentrated on the development of the
genre in Paris. My paper examines the tragédie outside the Académie royale de musique, using Hésione (1700) as a case study. This opera, with music by André Campra and livret by Antoine Danchet, was successful both in Paris and in several other opera houses. The productions outside of Paris, in Lyon, Brussels, and at the royal court, demonstrate both the work’s popularity and its malleability. Surviving livrets and scores of Hésione reveal that each venue changed the work to suit local circumstances. In Lyon, a provincial opera house facing frequent financial shortfalls, cuts were made to reduce production costs, while other changes that had been implemented in Paris and which might have saved the company money, were rejected. For the 1710 production in Brussels, a town occupied by the enemies of France, politically sensitive material was removed. The multiple productions of Hésione that took place between 1730 and 1753 as part of the Concerts de la Reine resulted in many changes to the work, evidence of which survives in the form of two scores held at the Bibliothèque municipale de Versailles. Furthermore, these scores hint at a previously unexplored connection between the performances in Lyon and those given for the court. By situating these performances of Hésione within the repertoire of these companies and the individuals who produced and appeared in the productions, a more complete picture begins to appear with regard to the development and perpetuation of the tragédie en musique in places other than Paris.

Return to top

“You Noble Diggers”: A Seventeenth-Century Musical Contrafact and Its Significance in the History of English Radical Song

Stacey Jocoy (School of Music, Texas Tech University)

The second volume of the collected papers of William Clarke, “Secretary to the Council of the Army, 1647-1649,” reproduce a letter, dated December 8, 1649, signed by Gerrard Winstanley, author of numerous pamphlets and political tracts espousing the principles of the “True Levellers” or Diggers. These Levellers or “Diggers” (for their defiant cultivation of such “waste” lands) were seventeenth-century working-class activists who took advantage of the tumult of the English Civil War and its aftermath to set up habitation on yet-unenclosed public lands. In a time of universal unrest, when changes in economic, political, colonial, and imperial structures threatened old orders and rights and provided new political opportunities, the Diggers were uniformly persecuted by established authorities, including King, Church, and Lord Protector. They saw themselves, and were perceived, as a serious revolutionary threat, despite their minimal numbers, the brevity of their tenure, and the limitation of their “weapons” to spades, hoes, and a millennial interpretation of Scripture.

In this letter, Winstanley, a skilled polemicist, makes the case for the Biblical legitimacy of the Diggers’ agrarian communism, and also reproduces a set of verses. Plainly meant
of the Diggers’ agrarian communism, and also reproduces a set of verses. Plainly meant to be sung, perhaps to the tune Wondrous Love, “You Noble Diggers All” provides a detailed and sophisticated, yet plain-spoken and impassioned critique of the greedy power structures which the Diggers saw as perverting God’s intention that “the poor should wear the crown.” The text targets such authorities as gentry, lawyers, and priests, and would have been readily understood by an unlettered audience—who would in turn have experienced the song as emblematic of identity, solidarity, and apocalyptic hope for change.

In this paper, drawing on textual analysis, historical and vernacular vocal performance techniques, social and cultural contextual studies, iconography, and other documents of the period, I unpack the song’s metaphorical and contextual meaning, examine its melodic possibilities, investigate the use of such contrafacta as political weapons in the period, and place “You Noble Diggers” within the tradition of English radical song.

Return to top

Elizabeth I and the Earl of Essex in Seventeenth-Century Opera: from La regina Floridea (Milan, 1670) to Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus (London, 1705)

Carlo Lanfossi (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

The tragic love of Queen Elizabeth I and her “boy toy” Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, has created a vast theatrical imagery whose origins are found in contemporary chronicles and popular tales. Since the very first years following Essex’s death (1601), novels and plays began to spread all over Europe, thus contributing to create the myth about Elizabeth and Essex, a story in which reality and fiction are linked together to form an original plot. One of the first plays telling this particular story was Antonio Coello’s El conde de Sex (1633), a Spanish comedia which had great impact on Italian commedia dell’arte: three scenarios from Italian “comici” and a printed play from Niccolò Biancolelli (1668) formed the literary context for the first dramma per musica based on the events of Elizabeth and Essex ever to appear on the operatic stage, La regina Floridea (Milan, 1670).

The recent discovery of the manuscript of La regina Floridea (Biblioteca Comunale di Como, MS 3.4.24; libretto by Teodoro Barbò, music by Francesco Rossi, Ludovico Busca, Pietro Simone Agostini) prompted me not only to produce a critical edition of the score but also to reexamine, in light of this manuscript, the general topic of seventeenth-century Italian opera subjects and their transmission. This quest led to Arsinoe by Tomaso Stanzani (Bologna, 1676; Venice, 1677), an opera whose libretto is essentially copied from La regina Floridea with different musical setting by Petronio Franceschini. The comparison of the scores of Floridea and Arsinoe reveals some
Franceschini. The comparison of the scores of Floridea and Arsinoe reveals some musical contamination. But the most significant aspect of Stanzani’s Arsinoe is that the libretto served as the basis for the first English opera ever staged “after the Italian manner,” Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus (London, 1705; libretto by Peter Anthony Motteux, music by Thomas Clayton). Scholars have wondered whether Clayton’s music was original or derived from circulating Italian arias. Based on examples from Italian operas of that period, I will argue that Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus was an original score whose music had been created from Italian tunes, “musical memes” shared by the majority of Baroque opera composers. My paper shows how Elizabeth I entered the history of opera long before her modern renditions by Mercadante, Donizetti, and Britten.

Return to top

“These things were never made for words”: The Instrumental Wit of William Lawes’ Music for Viol Consort

Loren Ludwig (University of Virginia)

This paper explores the operation of wit in the instrumental music for viol consort by William Lawes (1602-1645). Wit, understood in the seventeenth century as a capacity that operated on both substance and style, text and performance, has been studied primarily as it relates to poetry and rhetoric. However, as I demonstrate with recourse to Lawes’ consort music, wit does not depend solely on the semantic properties of natural language (as in, for example, the pun), but emerges as a quality of the artful negotiation of rule-based systems such as harmony and imitation.

Consort music for viols was intended primarily for the enjoyment of those who played it, and its compositional devices and techniques place a high premium on interaction among its different polyphonic voices. I argue that the part-writing of Lawes’ fantasias and aires for viol consort allowed for an experience of wittiness on the parts of the players themselves as they engaged each other in choreographed interactions of musical imitation and counterpoint. Drawing on early modern sources on courtesy, rhetoric, music and poetry, I develop a performative account of wit that reveals its connection with the polyphonic sensibility of late Renaissance high culture as exemplified in consort music.

Lawes’ music has challenged scholars and players to account for the bracing liberties of his partwriting and the eccentricities of his themes, qualities alluded to in a rare bit of contemporaneous criticism by the historian and consort player Anthony Wood, who noted that Lawes “broke sometimes the rules of mathematicall composition.” I read Lawes’ characteristically bizarre compositional gambits for the traces they leave of a social world both playful and competitive, in which polyphonic music served as a rarified stage for witty acts of self-fashioning.

Return to top
Eurydice’s Silence: The Absent Female Voice in the French Orpheus Cantatas

Kaneez Munjee (Stanford University)

“What is this, what great madness has destroyed both poor me and you, Orpheus? Now again the cruel fates summon me back, and sleep of death drowns my swimming eyes. Goodbye: I am carried off, surrounded by massive darkness, holding out powerless hands to you, alas, not yours to have.” With these words, Virgil’s Eurydice reproaches Orpheus for the rash backward glance that costs her renewed life. Virgil’s rendition of the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice was well known in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century France, as was Ovid’s version, in which Eurydice’s speech was reduced to the single word of “farewell.” Mythological stories by both Virgil and Ovid formed the mainstay of the French cantata repertoire, with the story of Orpheus and Eurydice used for ten cantatas between 1680 and 1745. Eurydice is a crucial character in this story, for Orpheus would not be the same figure without her. Despite this, Eurydice never truly sings in these works.

This paper addresses the enigma of Eurydice’s silence in this repertoire, by examining the plots and Classical traditions, earlier musical sources (Italian and French), and the roles of other female characters in the repertory. Another key point is the question of whether, in this small-scale genre, the primacy of Orpheus’s voice necessarily limits the roles of any other characters.

Four of these cantatas, written between 1710 and 1721 by Philippe Courbois, Giovanni Antonio Guido, Charles Piroye, and Jean-Philippe Rameau, invite yet further exploration. The crux is found in a feature central to the genre: the moral statement with which each cantata ends. In these works, the final arias blame the external figure of Cupid for Orpheus’s folly—through either excessive love, desire, or passion—rather than suggest any flaw or weakness in Orpheus himself. If blame is thus deflected away from the hero, Orpheus, onto Cupid, Eurydice cannot speak with any Virgilian reproach. At the end of these works, the focus is turned from the essential characters of the story to the figure of Amour—in keeping with the emerging galant aesthetic.

Return to top

The Rhetoric of Witchcraft in Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s Mors Saülis et Jonathae, H. 304

Brian Oberlander (Northwestern University)
This paper traces connections between Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s *Mors Saülis et Jonathae* and a discourse on magic that was emerging in later seventeenth-century France. Referring to theological treatises, royal edicts, stage works, and popular magazines, I show that *Mors Saülis* was surrounded by an intricate and highly varied network of media through which a new conception of magic was being circulated. I then situate the oratorio as a participant in this circulatory network, on the basis of its own (rather curious) treatment of magic: in Charpentier’s adaptation of the biblical encounter between King Saul and the Witch at Endor, the Witch *fails* in her attempt to raise Samuel’s ghost, and she laments the impotence of her ritual—elaborately depicted in both music and text—at some length.

From official reports on the Affair of the Poisons to a royal edict of 1682, from a highly successful play by Thomas Corneille and Jean Donneau de Visé to the essays of the *Mercure Galant*, various productions of later seventeenth-century France were attempting to divest magic of its supernatural powers, reducing it from an unholy dealing with occult forces to merely a superstition or self-delusion. Bringing the failed, self-critical Witch of *Mors Saülis* into dialogue with the *sorciers* and *magiciens* of this larger discursive effort, I make explicit the resonances between them, and outline a viable place for Charpentier’s oratorio within this incipient discourse itself. This links the music not only to various other media, but also to key French institutions, including the monarchy and the Counter-Reformation Church.

Scholarship on magic in this period of French history has tended to leave music out of the historical and discursive picture. In my discussion of *Mors Saülis*, which refers not only to royal decrees and popular commentaries on magic, but also to contemporary notions of musical morality and the didactic purposes of art, I show that music held an enormous potential for working alongside other media to circulate this fascinating, incipient discourse.

Return to top

“Bodies without soules, sweete substances without sense”:
Automatic Birds in the Early Modern Pleasure Garden

*Kimberly Parke (Mahidol University, Thailand)*

The decades from 1570 onward witnessed a flowering of interest in automatic theaters. Recent scholarship has attended to the roles these machines played in the scientific revolution, with particular attention to the mechanical orientation of natural philosophy. The craftsmen who created them, however, aspired primarily to inspire marvel through simulacra of nature, an impulse seen especially in their bird automata. My study works back and forth from these machines—both real and imagined—and the sounds they
created to locate contacts between the music they produced and the musical ideas they inspired.

The “music” that the machines made had an unusual ontological status—if birdsong could not be music because it was made by irrational creatures, then could the highly rationalized birdsong (re)created by engineers and their machines be considered music? Athanasius Kircher’s Musurgia universalis (1650) shows the processes of the transformation implied by this question. His notation of birdsong, one of the earliest to be found independent of a musical piece, forces the birds into a level of rationality. When he shows the birds in their natural habitat, the vague notation loops around the page. However, when the birdsong is prepared for an automatic theater, clefs and time signatures rectify their songs into proper music. The act of framing causes natural “substance” to acquire “sense.”

This “framing” also occurs in music about birds. Throughout most of the sixteenth century, birdsong was framed by a human interpreter. A marked shift, however, is seen during the age of automata. Michael Praetorius defines the ritornello, the key musical framing device of the seventeenth century, through recourse to machine-like animal behavior (1619). Some of the early ritornellos refer specifically to birds, and the mechanical regularity of the ritornello “body” highlights the range of emotions throughout the rest of the work. The influence of mechanicity, as figured in the bird fountains, resonates throughout the seventeenth century.

Return to top

The West Wind Blows North: Marc-Antoine Charpentier and the “Zefiro” Bass

Graham Sadler (University of Hull, United Kingdom)

Of the 500 or so works preserved in Charpentier’s Mélanges autographes, none bears a date and relatively few specify a patron, venue or raison d’être. Scholars have nevertheless reconstructed a secure overall chronology for the Mélanges and have managed to link numerous compositions to specific events and/or employers. Even so, the origins of many pieces remain obscure, among them the 16-voice Messe à quatre chœurs, H4. While this spectacular work is generally agreed to date from 1672, attempts to link it with the Theatines or the Jesuit Noviciate have hitherto lacked substance.

In an unpublished paper, I drew attention to the fact that the Agnus Dei of this Mass includes twelve statements of the ciacona bass popularized by Monteverdi’s duet "Zefiro torna" (1632). But why? Such allusions would have been meaningless to most French worshippers. The disjunct ciacona bass was not wholly unknown in France before 1672, having been introduced by such composers as Rossi and Corbetta; but no
native composer had yet exploited the catchy syncopations and metrical dislocation that feature in so many ciacona elaborations from Monteverdi onwards.

It is precisely these features that make Charpentier’s allusions to the “Zefiro” tradition so striking, strengthening the link between H4 and the Theatines. This Italian order had been brought to France by an Italian (Cardinal Mazarin/Mazzarino); their church, Sainte-Anne-la-Royale, was designed and decorated by Italians (respectively Guarini and Vigarani), and had become a focal point of the Italian community in Paris. Moreover, the Gazette de France for the relevant year, 1672, describes the Theatines’ celebration of the canonization of their Italian founder S. Gaetano in such a way as to link several major Charpentier works with the celebrations – not only H4 but also the polychoral Te Deum (H145) and Exaudiat (H162), music for a external procession (H515), and a dance suite designed to precede the Theatines’ firework display alongside the Seine.

While there is little doubt that all these works were intended for the canonization celebrations, this paper explores the possibility that H4 itself was never actually performed. It also examines two other Charpentier works with allusions to the “Zefiro” ciaconna, both with demonstrable Italian connections.

Return to top

---

**Artistes in Rome: Froberger, Poussin, and the Modes of Music and Painting**

**David Schulenberg (Wagner College)**

Like Froberger, the painter Poussin spent substantial time in Rome, from 1624 to 1640 and from 1642 to his death in 1665, overlapping with Froberger’s time there (1637–41 and ?1645–1649). Although the two are not known to have met, music and dance are frequent subjects in Poussin’s work, and the painter set forth a theory of “mode” that was intended to explain the “harmony” of his paintings.

Poussin’s idea raises the question of what mode meant not only for painters but for composers. Froberger composed nothing that is explicitly modal, but he and his teacher Frescobaldi wrote sets of pieces organized along quasi-modal lines. These include capricci whose title recurs in the *caprices* of painters: scenes representing specific passions, hence akin to representing musical modes as understood by Zarlino and other music theorists. Yet the transitional character of mode in seventeenth-century music suggests that traditional modal theory was losing force, and that we misunderstand seventeenth-century tonality if we attempt to see it as a closed, theoretically consistent system.

If Poussin’s thinking was influenced by musical ideas, influence in the reverse direction is also possible. Poussin was among the first major painters to take a serious interest in landscape painting; programmatic titles for one or two Froberger pieces raise the
possibility that he too attempted to depict outdoor “subjects.” A possible conduit for the exchange of ideas between painters and musicians was the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher, who was responsible for the first publication of a Froberger work, and whose interests in ancient art and music have reflections in Poussin’s paintings.

The confluences between music and painting proposed here may help explain how listeners as well as viewers of paintings in the seventeenth century understood elements of meaning and expression in both music and the visual arts. The idea that works represent specific “modes,” and that the latter assured “harmony,” even if largely metaphorical, assured artists, musicians, and their audiences of continuity with the culture of Classical antiquity, while validating present-day innovations. Similar thinking may explain other modal references in seventeenth-century music, as in the “Dorick” pieces of John Bull.

Return to top

“Was hört man da vor Seytenspiel / Orpheus nicht dabey gleichen will”:
The Hamburg Huldigung (1603) and its Musical Consequences

Arne Spohr (Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hannover, Germany)

The oath of allegiance (Huldigung) the City of Hamburg swore to the Danish king Christian IV in October 1603 was one of the most important political and cultural events in northern Europe in its time. Its importance becomes obvious in view of several factors: the impressive list of leading political figures of Protestant Europe who were present, the lavish ceremonies and festivities lasting a whole week and including banquets, dancing and festival pageants for the running at the ring, and finally, the huge resonance it found in contemporary festival accounts and chronicles.

The Huldigung of 1603 has hitherto almost exclusively been examined from political and juridical perspectives, neglecting its importance to the cultural and particularly musical life in seventeenth-century Hamburg and northern Germany. This is surprising, since numerous sources (including narrative and pictorial accounts as well as printed music) demonstrate that music was an important part of the Huldigung ceremonies, serving as a focal medium of symbolic interaction between city and king.

I shall begin my paper by reconstructing the different ceremonial contexts in which music was used in the Huldigung festivities, examining its functions and symbolic meanings. Secondly, I shall illustrate how the Huldigung became a “stage” for cultural exchange between Danish court musicians and musicians from Hamburg itself. Through the agency of William Brade (1560-1630), a violinist originally from Britain who later became the leader of the Hamburg Ratsmusik, string music was brought to Hamburg from the Danish court in 1603 and was then published in two anthologies (1607/1609) by the local Ratsmusiker Zacharias Füllsack und Christian Hildebrand. This music subsequently became the starting point for a local repertory tradition that persisted until
subsequently became the starting point for a local repertoire tradition that persisted until the mid-seventeenth century and made the city the most important “trading place” of instrumental ensemble music in Germany. I shall argue that the genesis of this Hamburg string repertoire can be read as a reflection of the city’s search for its own political and cultural identity in opposition to neighboring princely courts, particularly that of Christian IV.

Return to top

**Stormy Weather: Water as an Erotic Metaphor in Seventeenth-Century Italian Music**

**Beverly Stein (California State University, Los Angeles)**

Recent musical scholarship by Laura Macy, Wendy Heller, Christopher Mossey, and Bonnie Gordon has introduced the possibility that water might serve as an erotic metaphor in Italian music of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The association between water and gender or sexuality was much more pervasive than previously understood and originated from the humoral view of the sexes in which women were seen as cold and wet, with flows of blood, milk, and tears. Bodies of water also had traditional male or female associations, foamy water had been a metaphor for semen going back to Classical times, and the common Ovidian symbol of intermixing of waters likely reflected the contemporary belief in the necessity of female orgasm for conception. The seventeenth-century audience’s familiarity with these metaphors opened up a whole range of possibilities for suggestive innuendo on the part of the poet and composer.

A detailed discussion of two Carissimi cantatas demonstrates the danger in overlooking the erotic subtexts of water metaphors. On the surface “Insuperbito il Tebro” presents a dramatic description of a terrible storm and its effect on two lovers separated by the flooding of the Tiber. In characteristic Seicento style, the text shimmers with brilliant metaphors, and musical *meraviglie* support the storm/flood meaning so convincingly that the modern listener might well leave it at that—and miss the entire point of the work. In fact, this cantata swirls with sexual metaphors, and I will demonstrate that the opening actually represents an orgasm in both text and music.

“Deh, contentatevi” appears to be a description of a love affair gone sour, with liquids epitomizing romantic danger in the form of shipwreck, storm, drowning, and poison. Again the musical setting expresses both the ostensible complaints of the protagonist as well as the erotic subtext of sexual excitement, release, and exhaustion which the in-the-know audience would have immediately recognized and enjoyed.

Wider recognition of the erotic subtexts of water imagery will allow a more complete understanding of works from this period so dominated by wit and metaphor.
Putting Words in the Emperor’s Mouth:
Representations of Emperor Ferdinand III in a Milanese Motet Anthology

Andrew H. Weaver (Catholic University of America)

In 1649 the Milanese printer and composer Giorgio Rolla published the *Teatro musicale de concerti ecclesiastici*, a motet anthology featuring works by local musicians alongside some of the most famous composers of the day, including Giacomo Carissimi, Orazio Benevoli, Giovanni Rovetta, and Francesco Foggia. This remarkable print offers many opportunities for exploring the interface of printers, the commercial market, and noble patronage in the dissemination of seventeenth-century music. This paper examines just one such aspect of the publication. In addition to including motets by composers working throughout Italy, the anthology also features works by Antonio Bertali and Giovanni Felice Sances, celebrated Italian composers employed at the imperial court in Vienna. Whether he intended to or not, by including these works Rolla contributed to the representation of Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III of Habsburg (reg. 1637-57) at a particularly crucial moment of his reign.

The three imperial motets, Bertali’s *Exultate et cantate* and Sances’s *Miserere servorum tuorum* and *Excita furorem*, simultaneously offer general themes geared toward a large anonymous audience and also relate directly to the fraught political situation that Ferdinand III faced at the end of the Thirty Years’ War. The texts of all three works pray for deliverance from enemies, thereby speaking to the Habsburgs’ dire situation in the war. Moreover, textual details combine with aspects of the musical settings to present veritable portraits of the emperor, in which he offers prayers for the sake of his people. The connection between the motets and the imperial court is made explicit for users of the volume through paratextual elements such as the dedication, the brief biographies of the contributors, and a rubric before Sances’s *Excita furorem* informing the reader that Ferdinand himself wrote the text. This paper offers insights into the varied functions of music prints in the seicento, and it also illuminates the means by which printed sacred music could contribute to the public image of early modern monarchs.

Performance, or Self-Promotion?
Giorgione, Watteau, and the Politics of Music-Making

Elizabeth Weinfield (Graduate Center, City University of New York)
Giorgione da Castelfranco’s painting of outdoor music-making *Fête champêtre* (or “Pastoral Concert”) quickly became an emblem of Arcadianism after it was unveiled in Venice in 1508. Often discussed in the literature alongside Aristotle’s *Poetics*, the painting features a collection of figures—two female nudes, male courtiers playing music, and a bagpiper in the background—that together illuminate a number of allegorical oppositions concerning high and low art, and the newfound enjoyment of the outdoors. During the Renaissance the fascination with bucolic beauty was based in ideology, but in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries it became material to be manipulated and consumed. This culminates in the *fête galante*, and specifically in the messy crowdedness of Watteau. Scholarship surrounding Giorgione has yet to pay substantial consideration, however, to the fact that Giorgione was, himself, an accomplished lutist and singer. This paper will discuss Giorgione’s pictorial use of the performance both as a literal and metaphoric depiction of the self; moreover, it will reveal that Watteau copied from Giorgione to fashion a “pastoral concert” of his own.

---

“He plaid on that single Instrument a full Consort”:
Thomas Baltzar’s Polyphonic Music for Solo Violin
*awarded the Irene Alm Prize for 2010*

**Patrick Wood Uribe (Princeton University)**

In March of 1656, John Evelyn had the opportunity to hear the greatest violinist of his day. He records in his diary that Thomas Baltzar (1631?–1663) “plaid on that single Instrument a full Consort, so as the rest, flung-downe their Instruments, as acknowledging a victory”; Oxford historian Anthony Wood describes Baltzar as “the most famous artist for the violin that the world has yet produced,” and by the time of his early death in 1663 Baltzar was the most highly paid violinist in the country. At one performance a man even inspected Baltzar’s feet to see if he had cloven hooves, “because he had acted beyond the parts of Man.”

Modern scholars have adopted two principal strategies to account for the sensation Baltzar created, asserting on the one hand that Baltzar imported a virtuosic style from Germany, or on the other hand pointing to a possible transfer of the idiom of the viol from Baltzar’s English colleagues. But the goal of tracing a stylistic parentage for Baltzar’s style has pushed aside any comprehensive examination of his music, which still has a great deal to tell us if we begin by posing different questions: rather than ask where this style and technique came from, we might instead start with our witnesses’ testimonies and ask what it is in Baltzar’s music that so captivated them. My paper focuses, therefore, not on the source of Baltzar’s style but on the cause of his listeners’ amazement. Using a closer comparison of his surviving solo and consort music as a
amazement. Using a closer comparison of his surviving solo and consort music as a point of entry into a wider historical context, I demonstrate that the “full Consort” Evelyn heard from a single violin is not mere hyperbole, but the foundation of Baltzar’s compositional approach. Drawing then on evidence of the violin’s place in the English musical world before the Restoration, I show that beyond his virtuosity, Baltzar radically re-imagined the instrument’s purpose by writing complex polyphony, evoking elevated venues, for an instrument usually associated with beggars and rogues.

Return to top

¿Hay quien me quiera comprar castañas?
Matheo Bezón’s 1599 Alfabeto Songbook and the Erotic Spanish Lyric Tradition in Notated Guitar Song

Daniel Zuluaga (University of Southern California)

The Spanish priest Sebastián de Covarrubias remarked in his 1611 dictionary Tesoro de la lengua castellana that the guitar was nothing but “a cowbell, so easy to play, especially in the strummed style, that there is no stable boy that doesn’t call himself a musician [on this instrument].” In Italy, by this date, the strummed style of playing the guitar was already well known, referred to as alla spagnola. The technique hinged on a deceptively simple system of chordal notation known as alfabeto (or cifras, the Iberian counterpart), which facilitated the guitar’s widespread appeal through the simplification of instrumental pedagogy: eliminating the need to learn mensural notation. To date, only two pre-1600 alfabeto sources, I-Rvat Fondo Chigi ms. L.VI.200 (Libro de cartas y romances) and I-Bu MS 177/IV have been known and examined in detail. This paper is the study of a third source, the Cancionero de Matheo Bezón, an alfabeto songbook of Neapolitan provenance dated 1599 and currently in a private library in Seville. The Bezón manuscript is a first on many levels: it is the earliest source known to include alfabeto solos, the first to bear the name of its compiler, and more importantly, the earliest to contain any type of rhythmic notation for the guitar, predating Girolamo Montesardo’s 1606 print. Its structure, containing guitar solos and songs in Spanish and Italian, will be analyzed in the context of other songbooks it resembles, such as the manuscripts penned by guitarist Francesco Palumbi and those owned by Michele Peretti and Ginevra Bentivoglio, all believed to be from a much later date. Its relevance in early vernacular guitar tradition in Italy is explored; from the literary perspective, an examination of its poetry will be set within the context of the Siglo de Oro amatory lyric, revealing a tradition of notated Spanish “love” song that spans the entire spectrum of eroticism, from the pseudo-Petrarchan type that reveres in sublimation, to the more transgressive bawdy type that intensely exploits unrefined allusions, metaphors and double-entendres, but that seems to find utmost delight in the direct expression of sexuality.

Return to top
da capo