



CONFERENCES

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FIFTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC WITH THE HAYDN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON, 13–15 APRIL 2012

Chartered in 1785 and nestled in the heart of Charleston's historic district, where horse-drawn carriages cart tourists down cobblestone streets to enjoy three hundred years of history on the way to the waterfront, the College of Charleston provided a most charming location for the 2012 joint meeting of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music and the Haydn Society of North America. All papers were presented in the beautiful Towell Library, a campus landmark built in 1856 in Italian renaissance revival style. Outfitted with a harpsichord for the occasion, the library also features large galleries above the main hall that proved the perfect place to stash singers for surprise live performances of musical examples.

The vibrancy of eighteenth-century musical scholarship was on full display in Charleston, as newly discovered music uncovered by painstaking archival research mingled amicably with new critical approaches to familiar repertory and even the speculative reconstruction of a lost street tune. Participants and attendees travelled from all corners of the United States and as far away as France and New Zealand, testifying to the lure of such a conference.

The programme opened with a detective story followed by a riveting trial as Bertil van Boer (Western Washington University) made his case for the prosecution in the 'purloining' of three viola concertos, the conference attendees serving as musicological judge and jury. After presenting a trail of circumstantial evidence suggesting that the composer of three concertos attributed by Breitkopf to Pater Romanus Hoffstetter, OMB (the same Hoffstetter of the Haydn Op. 3 controversy), might actually be Joseph Martin Kraus, van Boer revealed a smoking gun: an autograph in Kraus's handwriting on which a second hand had added Hoffstetter's name as composer. This second hand is unidentified, but van Boer speculated that it was probably someone who worked for Breitkopf. Although some members of the 'jury' remained unconvinced by bits of both stylistic and documentary evidence, most were swayed, particularly when the matter of self-quotation came up in the discussion following the paper. Kraus quotes himself all the time, and indeed there are quotations – self-quotations if Kraus is the composer – to be found in these concertos.

Several other papers revealed the great returns to be gained from investing in painstaking archival research. Janet Page's (University of Memphis) continued work with the sources from the Ursuline convent in Vienna showed that the nuns observed the 1753 ban on trumpets and timpani in church music immediately and completely. She also suggested that Emperor Joseph II's later reforms and the nuns' abandoning of more elaborate musical performance hastened the decline of Viennese convents. Moving from the seat of the Habsburg Empire to the court of Prince Kraft Ernst zu Oettingen-Wallerstein, Sterling Murray (West Chester University) compellingly demonstrated how much we still have to learn from the archives of smaller courts in southern Germany. By examining the details of Haydn's relationship with his loyal patron the prince, Murray not only painted a vivid picture of Haydn as a clever businessman but also reminded us of an all-too-common danger in historical work. In this case, should we anachronistically apply our own standards of business ethics and find fault with Haydn's occasionally duplicitous nature and even deceitful dealings, we risk falling yet again into the clichéd confrontation of hero worship and human frailty.

A lecture-recital performance of highlights from Franz Xaver Süssmayr's *Der Retter in Gefahr* by the Erskine College Choraleers proved the musical payoff of archival research, as Director Mark Nabholz (Erskine College) framed the excerpts with an introduction to the piece, unfamiliar to many, along with his new performing edition of the work based on the extant sources in the British Museum, the National Széchényi Library, the Sibley Library and the Stanford University Library. The Choraleers also provided a delightful rendition of the reconstruction by Peter Hoyt (Columbia Museum of Art) of a striking seven-bar



street tune transcribed by Haydn in his second London notebook. Hoyt's brilliant investigative work ties this tune – a seeming unicum, as it has not survived in collections of traditional songs, nor has it been identified by Haydn scholars – not only to a modernized form found in eighteenth-century hymnals but also further back to the scathingly satirical 'The Presbyterian Cat', a song that savaged one of Britain's religious minorities and was in fact sung at Protestant rallies in Ireland until the twentieth century. Thus the melody was strongly associated with taunting religious nonconformists. Hoyt argued that Haydn's contact with the violence of religious prejudice, revealed by his jotting-down of this tune sung by 'a gang of rowdy fellows', offers further evidence of the composer's uncomfortable experiences as a Catholic in England.

Taking an analytical tack, W. Dean Sutcliffe (University of Auckland) explored a particular aspect of the sociable ethos of late eighteenth-century style, the management of social tension, in cadential passages that undercut the more heated utterances that precede them. Using examples drawn from a wide assortment of chamber music by Dittersdorf, Pleyel, Kraus, Haydn, Mozart and Gyrowetz, Sutcliffe's reading of cadential discourse ultimately challenged the more conventional reading of such moments. Rather than such discourse involving a lessening of creativity, or 'liquidation' in Schoenberg's terms, Sutcliffe offered a more positive interpretation of conventional cadential formulae: a musical sensibility that implies a sympathetic way of managing human interactions. Even more analytically oriented was Michael Baker's (University of Kentucky) examination of phrase rhythm in the sixteen minuet movements of Gregor Joseph Werner's *Curious Musical Calendar* (*Neuer und sehr curios- Musicalischer Instrumental-Calendar*). The number of bars in each section of a particular minuet movement's binary form corresponds to the number of hours of daylight and darkness in its containing suite's time of the year, generating odd phrase structures and lop-sided proportional relationships (for example, the binary structure of the January minuet contains 9 + 15 bars, the two February minuets contain 10 + 14 bars and 11 + 13 bars, the March minuet, reflecting the vernal equinox, an equal 12 + 12, and so on). Drawing on the work of Edward T. Cone and William Rothstein, Baker's analysis identified several instances of phrase expansion, parenthetical insertion and repeated hyperbeats, thereby revealing Werner's curious collection as a compendium of compositional techniques in mid-eighteenth-century phrase rhythm. Demonstrating the power of more critically oriented analysis, Erin Jerome's (Brandeis University) close reading of 'Castagno, Castagna' from Haydn's opera *L'incontro improvviso* argued that Haydn's patently obvious use of the *alla turca* style offered a commentary on both exoticism and performance.

As with any successful conference, the serendipitous connections between papers generated especially lively discussion in the question-and-answer periods. Issues relating to the march as a genre and martial topics in general popped up at various times, putting papers programmed in different sessions in direct dialogue with one another. For example, as R. Todd Rober (Kutztown University of Pennsylvania) explored the different social roles fulfilled by march material in a *sinfonia* by Dresden composer Gottlob Harrer, the question of the various musical meanings of trumpets and drums connected his paper to three others that addressed martial topics in sacred music: Thierry Favier's (Université de Poitiers) rehearing of the presumed 'Revolutionary' march in several sacred works from the 1770s by François Giroust, Jean-François Lesueur and Nicolas Roze, Erick Arenas's (Stanford University) exploration of *missae solemnes* composed for state liturgies that were sonic emblems of dynastic continuity in the early years of Maria Theresa's reign, and Janet Page's work on Viennese church music, mentioned above.

Adding some delightful local colour was a fascinating paper by Bonny Hough Miller (Rockville, Maryland) on colonial Charleston native Louisa Wells Aikman, who, when banished as a Loyalist during the American Revolution, fled the American colonies. Accompanying this young woman on her perilous sea voyage across the Atlantic was the cherished songbook she herself bound from song sheets imported from London. Along with her compelling narrative, Miller's paging through this amazing document (projected beautifully, so that the audience could even see the water damage from the crossing) and live performance on harpsichord of the only untexted work in the collection, a keyboard rondo, provided a real treat for all in attendance. The only other paper to take up a New World topic was by Dianne Goldman (Northwestern



University), on the performance history of Victoria's motet *Duo seraphim* at Mexico City Cathedral. Using a wealth of primary sources, including correspondence, music manuscripts, the Mexico City Cathedral 1751 Ceremonial, a will, a diary, and even a funeral sermon, Goldman traced the adaptations made to Victoria's motet by successive generations of eighteenth-century chapel masters, among them Antonio de Salazar and Matheo Tollis de la Rocca. The adaptations reveal a fascinating layering of styles, a meeting of three different musical worlds – from polyphonic homophony to polychoral technique to the mid-century galant. Goldman's paper, which was awarded the SECM prize for best student paper, also offered a compelling testament to the need for more Americanists to engage in the activities of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music. Indeed, there is still much to learn and discover about the music of this time in the archives of the Americas.

But much as we may bemoan the paucity of New World topics, the Society should be energized by the number and quality of student papers and participation. In addition to Goldman and Arenas, two other students read excellent papers. Kimary Fick (University of North Texas) explored the aesthetics of performance in the *empfindsamer Stil*, boldly suggesting a new definition of *Empfindsamkeit* as a psychological state in which a performer, as opposed to a listener, experiences an overflow of physical sensations. As evidence for this philosophical re-reading of *Empfindsamkeit* Fick offered three persuasive contemporary descriptions of the altered, trance-like state C. P. E. Bach apparently entered while improvising. The presentation by John Romey (Case Western Reserve University) offered delicious eye-candy along with a fascinating look into the symbolism of virtuosity encountered in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century portraits of violoncellists and gambists. As Romey explained, the position of the left hand became an especially significant marker of virtuosity, with chordal playing becoming an essential virtuosic component of gamba performance while the more melodically oriented virtuosity of the cello required the development of new hand positions in order to play in the higher registers of the instrument. Finally, this conference introduced a new type of session designed especially for students, a dissertation-in-progress workshop of sorts in which one student presents his or her research and receives immediate feedback from a panel whose own experience in the field may prove helpful. The idea, of course, was that after the panel offers comments, the discussion would open up for general conversation among all attendees. Although on this test run we quickly ran out of time, Alison DeSimone (University of Michigan), whose dissertation investigates collaboration among female opera singers in early eighteenth-century London, presented her research-in-progress and received helpful, indeed invaluable, feedback from panellists Mary Sue Morrow (University of Cincinnati), Dorothea Link (University of Georgia) and Sterling Murray.

No musicological conference is truly satisfying without live performances of music from the period in which we invest so much of our scholarly energies, and in this regard the Charleston meeting did not disappoint. Pianist and Steinway artist Mayron Tsong (University of Maryland, College Park) presented a quick tour through many instances of Haydn's humour as encountered in the solo keyboard sonatas, offering analytical explanations of the humorous elements along with her suggestions for effective communication in such moments, a particular challenge for those performing Haydn on a modern concert grand. But for many who attended this meeting, the Eisenstadt Trio's performance of music by Haydn and his contemporaries in Charleston's First (Scots) Presbyterian Church was the highlight of the weekend. While the Trio offered sensitive and delightfully nuanced interpretations of three Haydn trios and a divertimento by Wagenseil, the true revelation of the evening was Andrew Willis's exquisite performance of two mid-century Italian sonatas, one by Domenico Alberti, the other by Giovanni Benedetto Platti, on a replica of a 1735 Florentine piano. For some listeners my parting thought here was literal, for others surely only metaphorical, but either way it rings true: some 260 years after its composition, this was entirely new music.

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