

# MUSICOLOGY AND SISTER DISCIPLINES

## PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE



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## Study Session 15

### MUSIC ICONOGRAPHY: TRANSMISSION AND TRANSFORMATION OF SYMBOLIC IMAGES

Ann Buckley (Chair, GB), Martin van Schaik (NL), Zdravko Blažeković (US),  
Maria Francesca P. Saffiotti (US), Florence Gétreau (F),  
Antonio Baldassarre (CH), Gerry Farrell (GB)

This multidisciplinary session addressed various aspects of the visual representation of music-making. A diverse range of materials was presented, including neolithic carvings from the East Mediterranean, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, engravings of Paris street musicians, nineteenth-century paintings, and gramophone sleeves from recordings of Indian music.

The surviving group of ten marble harp figurines from Early Cycladic Phase II (c.2700–2300 BC) was examined by Martin van Schaik from the perspectives of archaeology, theology, art history, and organology, each providing a particular light on the whole. These grave goods represent the earliest known stage in the history of stringed instruments. The upward inclination of the musicians' faces, the fact that they are engaged in performance, and the presence of a waterbird's head on the frame of the harps all suggest a spiritual function of intercession with the gods on behalf of the deceased. Because the figures are nude, they are more likely to represent professional musicians than priests. While they do not provide any realistic details on matters of performance practice, the consistency of their seated position and the deployment of the right arm (and left, where present) strongly suggest that they are accurate representations from life.

Zdravko Blažeković illustrated how copyists may reflect their changing world as well as their lack of familiarity with particular instruments and texts. Fendulus's twelfth-century abridgment of the *Introductorium maius in astronomiam*, based on the original Arabic text by Abū Ma'šār (787–886), was copied several times over the following 300 years; six copies have survived. The first part of Fendulus's abridgment contains Abū Ma'šār's description and illustrations of the motion of the celestial bodies in their relationship to the zodiac. In this astrological context reference is made to over thirty music instruments. In examining a selection of these, the value of surveying a long transmission sequence was demonstrated. In one case a rectangular psaltery, unrecognizable to a fourteenth-century artist, was reproduced as a gridiron.

The papers from this session were printed in *Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography*, 23/1–2 (1998).

In another, the sword of Perseus (Latin *harpes*—from the Greek ἀρπη—*Persei*) was reproduced by one scribe in the form of a harp.

Maria Francesca P. Saffiotti discussed the Sistine Chapel choirbooks made during the pontificate of Pope Paul III Farnese (1534–49) from the point of view of decoration, circumstances of production, and the historical context surrounding their use in liturgical services at the papal court. She focused on an antiphonary containing the Proper of Saints (*I-Rvat* Cappella Sistina MS 11), written by one of the chapel scribes, Federico Mario da Perugia, with visual images by the papal illuminator Vincent Raymond de Lodève. By means of detailed iconographic and textual analysis, as well as reference to archival material, it was shown how this codex could be reconstructed through the reintegration of recently discovered fragments which have been identified as the work of Raymond.

Florence Gétreau explored the wealth of engravings, archive documents, and song collections in an investigation of how Paris street musicians were represented from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Her emphasis was thus not merely on the history of street music, but on how changing perceptions of these groups can be observed from the manner in which their images are portrayed. As she stated, ‘it is not an exact representation of the people and their music, but a dramatization of popular behaviours’. Surveying three themes, the cries of Paris, street singers from the time of the Pont-Neuf to modern broadsheets, and travelling musicians such as players of hurdy-gurdy and street organ, and one-man bands, one can observe through the eye of the beholder a gradual transformation in attitude from fear and contempt of the lower orders towards a nostalgia for lost innocence and a search for old traditions.

A quite different, but no less idealizing, subject is the collection of portraits representing the life of Hortense de Beauharnais, stepdaughter and sister-in-law of Napoleon I. Following the abdication of her husband, Louis Bonaparte, from the throne of Holland, she eventually settled in Arenenberg Castle on Lake Constance in Switzerland. During her exile years (1822–37), in an environment far removed from the cultural, intellectual, social, and political centres of early nineteenth-century Europe, a unique domestic life emerged with significant social and cultural activities modelled on the French imperial court. Antonio Baldassarre’s close analysis of portraits of Hortense revealed a clear attempt to rescue a past which had long gone. Details of her queenly demeanour and her elegant dress style and accoutrements emphasize this. In particular, the inclusion of large instruments such as a pyramid piano and an Érard harp, as also a well-stocked library, are seen as symbols not only of wealth but of resistance and survival in a changing world, bearing some symbolic resemblance to images of eighteenth-century British colonists in India.

The theme of India was taken up in another context by Gerry Farrell, who examined the relationship between music and iconography in the early history of the gramophone in India (c.1902–7). With an emphasis on

advertisements used to sell records of Indian music, he illustrated how long-established elements of Indian culture, mythological and musical, were deployed in a way which linked the new technology to traditional religious and musical imagery. The magical properties of the gramophone are seen to replace, and sometimes merge with, traditional instruments. As in the *rāgmālā* tradition (which involves depicting the mood of a *rāg* in pictorial form), deities and humans are depicted as though falling under the spell of this recorded music. As such, the iconographic representations function as a symbol of tradition, change, and transformation, providing new juxtapositions of images and contexts for the emerging recording industry.

By exploring readings of these visual texts, specific information may be established concerning the social role of music; the status of musicians; the terminology and construction of music instruments; changing interpretations (and the occurrence of errors) in processes of transmission; images as a tool in the reconstruction of manuscript codices; and the relevance of music iconography not only for musicology but also as a source of information on many other aspects of historical enquiry.

ANN BUCKLEY

## Study Session 16

### REPERTORY AND CANON: THE DYNAMICS OF CANON FORMATION, 1700–1870

William Weber (Chair, US), Christoph-Hellmut Mahling (D),  
James Parakilas (US), Simon McVeigh (GB), Lydia Goehr (Respondent, US)

William Weber began this Study Session with a discussion of the evolution of repertory and canon. During the last two decades scholars in a variety of fields have been using the term ‘canon’ to identify the intellectual frameworks that have defined ‘classics’ in the arts and letters. The term has come into increasing use recently among music historians analysing the values and musical practices that surrounded the works of great composers. Yet the concept has still to obtain a common definition or application, and some scholars are still unconvinced of its utility.

The subject involves a variety of aspects needing study: the role of canon within pedagogy and musical composition; its semiotic function within journalism, criticism, ideology, etc.; its place in social practices and visual imagery; and its relations with aesthetics, literature, and other artistic canons. Lydia Goehr has indeed approached the problem from a philosophi-