

MUSICOLOGY AND SISTER DISCIPLINES

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE



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The session ended with an animated discussion referring, among other things, to the marginal role of so-called 'real socialism' in the music of the early 1950s and to the basic necessity of incorporating the consideration of historical and cultural contexts into the study of music composed under a totalitarian system.

MIECZYSLAW TOMASZEWSKI

Study Session 37

MUSICOLOGY AND ART HISTORY

Tilman Seebass (Chair, A), Kermit S. Champa (US), Yimin Jiang (CN),
Kapila Vatsyayan (IN), Nicoletta Guidobaldi (F)

Ever since the beginnings of modern musicology in the second half of the nineteenth century, scholars have been aware of the intellectual context provided by neighbouring fields. After language and literature, art history was closest. Jakob Burckhardt's and Heinrich Wölfflin's periodizations were adopted, and an interest in style history as well as a tendency towards *Personenkult* in the writing of biographies was typical for both disciplines. The twentieth century brought an emphasis on synaesthetic questions and, most recently, reception history.

Scholarly methods usually develop not only along conceptual paths shared by more than one discipline, but also in line with the essential qualities of the objects studied. It is almost trivial to state that the relationship between musicology and art history is inseparable from the relationship between the two arts themselves. Their most important common feature is non-verbality. But they differ in the fact that while one is time-bound and invisible, the other is timeless and visible, with dance taking a middle position. Finally and most importantly, music and visual arts can both refer to 'things' lying outside them: ideas, emotions, structures, processes. In particular, art can visualize music and music can 'sonarize' visual impressions.

For all their differences, music and the arts still share the purpose of all art: to have an effect on the recipient. In this respect a drawing of, say, a shaman can evoke in the onlooker something comparable to the effect of the shaman's singing, dancing, and drumming. And a portrait of Lord Heinrich Reuss Postumus, his decorated sarcophagus, and the *Musicalische Exequien* composed by Schütz for his funeral are sources that complement each other in their iconicity and referential quality. But only rarely will art historians or musi-

cologists choose an analytical approach that would recognize such iconicity, one that could be called anthropological in a broad sense.

It seems that both disciplines often miss one of the fundamental aspects of the object of their study. This must come as a surprise to the world of critics and to the artists themselves. To give just one example, Romantic and post-Romantic writers, art critics, and music critics in Germany and France show no reluctance to use the same metaphors and images for the description of both music and art. In his paper at this Study Session, Kermit S. Champa demonstrated that concert music was an enormously powerful stimulus for all the arts. Philosophers like Taine and Nietzsche were listened to (for better or worse) for their views regarding the role of music as consolidator of cultural production in general. For painters in France after 1830, Beethovenism and later Wagnerism developed particular ideological trajectories that strongly affected both contemporary painting practice and the receptions of that practice by an audience whose interests encompassed not a single art but several, with music pre-eminent. Compare the way in which Beethovenism, as communicated through Berlioz's writings in particular, invented a notion of nature beyond nature that was instrumental in validating the ambitious practice of landscape painting between 1830 and 1860. Or consider Baudelaire's and Gasparini's attempted verbal constructions of Wagnerism in the 1860s, suggesting how the concepts of the 'modern' and the 'new' which they devised served to guide the emergent aesthetic and subsequent promotional strategies of the so-called Impressionist painters.

But it would be too simple to blame scholars for their reluctance to follow the example of Baudelaire and others. After all, what is of no concern to the poet and the critic—the lack of *Begrifflichkeit* in music—must be an important issue in scholarly discourse; it cannot be overcome by poetic emulation. We historians cannot speak about music and art the way artists and musicians (or writers) do. Still, for our analyses we may benefit from the fact that they perceive commonalities of the anthropological and aesthetic kind. Perhaps the results of the discussion about the closeness or separateness of music and visual art may already be programmed by the desire to find analytical criteria that are either valid for both or that emphasize their differences.

Turning to art itself, we must above all emphasize that no discussion of our topic can do without a reflection on the *Werkbegriff*. Art and music historians have arrived at a concept of the work of art that presumes its definiteness, i.e. its character as an opus. It hangs, stands, or lies in front of them as the finished canvas, bronze sculpture, or *Urschrift* of the score. We may include a study of the stages of the creation—sketches, drawings, versions in clay, *particelli*—because this can help to explain art's ultimate form. We may look at the fate of the product in the course of time and, in the instance of music, at modifications made to the score during rehearsals. But all this does not alter the concept itself. The benefit of the procedure is obvious: by using music in its

written form—notated or transcribed—we get rid of the time factor and can examine something in a definite two-dimensional setting that was originally realized as a succession of sounds. Furthermore, the *Werkbegriff* has the advantage that we are on comparable terminological and verbal grounds; it remains for all of us—including ethnomusicologists—the most important avenue for a study of what is presented as music. Those terminological and verbal grounds have been provided by philology and linguistics—another sister discipline.

Not just the philological tools, but also our understanding of authorship and history is derived from concepts developed long ago and outside music theory/musicology. In the heritage of Vasari's celebration of the masters of the visual arts or on the basis of the cult of genius launched by the German *Sturm und Drang* movement, scholars in the humanities even today have a predilection for male and female heroes, and are sometimes obsessed with the identification of personal styles. Of course, the approach makes sense when we deal with composers of notated music, but wherever the author has not left written traces it becomes difficult, and we can only envy colleagues in art history for their situation. How pale Landini and Paumann must look to us if compared with Piero della Francesca or Urs Graf. In that later phase of Western music history of the upper classes in which music has been completely subjected to written composition—we call it 'art music'—we are ready to call Haydn the Tintoretto of Eisenstadt, and to compare Mozart with Raphael and Piccinni with Titian, as Stendhal did in 1813.

Once music is transformed into the two-dimensional surface of a 'work', the conditions for analysis become similar to those of a painting or the like. Instead of earlier and later we speak of left and right; instead of pairing we speak of symmetry, and so forth. And the formal elements that we identify permit comparison with those in other scores and lead to the formulation of styles. I cannot elaborate on this here but must limit myself to pointing out the consequences. Analytical methods become comparable—we understand how our colleague in art history works—but at the same time our conception of the structure of music changes substantially, differences are patched over, and the fact that music is an art-in-the-making is relegated to a back seat, if not simply ignored.

In other cultures, the differences between time-bound and timeless art are less categorical. In East Asia, for instance, the process of creation is often valued as much as the final product itself in the visual arts. Another obvious example is calligraphy, where the signs in the regulated seriality of the strokes still bear witness to the dynamics of the writing process. There are rules about the succession of strokes that lead to the final product and rules about the process of making of a brush-drawing, including calligraphy. Finally, the owners of the work frequently added in their own hand a comment on their ownership or a seal, and so the work of art continues to be in a process of

perception. In the realm of sound, the static concepts of meditative music among East Asians create a stability that is supposed to defeat time—sound then joins atmosphere and image.

In his paper at this Study Session, Yimin Jiang described how the understanding of the fourness of music, *go*, calligraphy, and painting is the precondition for understanding each of them. An unbroken chain of literati have used the painting *Wen ren xian yi tu* ('Scholar in his retreat') by an unknown artist of the Song Dynasty (960–1279) as a model of the visualization of the ideal life. Jiang observed critically that modern scholars do not seem to recognize the salient quality of this or similar paintings, because they ignore the other elements of the fourness and shun an interdisciplinary analytical approach.

For more than 2,000 years, a comparable holistic approach has been taken by Indian artists and theoreticians. Kapila Vatsyayan's paper traced the history of the creative experience and the critical discourse on the arts in India back to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. This treatise emphasizes commitment to the interdependence and interpenetration of all media, especially sound, speech, music, movement, line and colour, mass and volume. The idea has remained valid to the present day and is the basis for an understanding of the visualization of music and dance, both in images and in action, and of the 'musicality' of works of art.

The Chinese and Indian attitudes could have a profound influence on the analysis of objects in other cultures as well. But so far they have not been lifted into scholarly consciousness, and our image of the actual nature of scholarly enquiry is still blurred and often one-dimensional—though admittedly the last decades have reduced some of the axioms of humanistic scholarship to merely valid and (by nature) ethnocentric principles.

For scholars working with Western art, the dependence of musicology on concepts invented by colleagues dealing with more tangible material is actually almost as obvious. As much as we would sometimes like to put them aside, as unwilling as we are to agree even on terms such as Classical and Romantic, and as eager as we are to ignore their roots in literature, we still cannot do without them. So we remain obliged, just as in the time of Guido Adler and Curt Sachs, to the historical insights of art and cultural historians who have provided us with indispensable vehicles. This is the point that was argued by Nicoletta Guidobaldi in her presentation at this Study Session. In her opinion, the generalists and the advocates of interdisciplinary scholarship are more in demand than ever. Citing examples from the Italian Quattrocento and Cinquecento, she demonstrated how an analysis can lead beyond the world of *realia* and touch the question of the meaning of music for society.

Despite the proximity of art history and other disciplines, nobody can overlook the lack of footholds in the mastering of musicological research. It may also be a reason why the texts we write are often hard to integrate into

non-musicological studies. We are and probably will remain under-represented in historical and ethnological surveys and handbooks. The difficulties extend even into the world of the only tangible aspect of music, that of musical instruments. At one time, we thought we could just restore them as if they were oxidized sculptures or church frescoes blackened by the soot of candles. But all we can do is restore or preserve their visual aspects; and there is much more to them than that.

Of course, the mere existence of musicology proves that scholars are far from capitulating in view of the difficulties of their ephemeral subject. The difficulties are part of the fun, and in our search for what music really is we have prominent and highly original allies in the visual artists of all times. They visualize what music brings about, what it is, and what place it has in our world. Their interest in music is a global and timeless phenomenon; they acknowledge it as a comprehensive symbol of human and cosmic concepts, as structure, as process, as power, as magic. Much is gained for our discipline if we study their visualizations of music.

TILMAN SEEBASS

Study Session 38

THEORIZING MIXED MEDIA

Nicholas Cook (Chair, GB), Claudia Gorbman (US), Mary Hunter (US),
Lawrence Kramer (US), Andrew Goodwin (US)

The starting-point of this session was the current state of research across a range of mixed media extending from opera and song to dance, film, and music video. In each of these fields scholars study how media work together, but there is little communication between them. There are no widely accepted theoretical models or even terminologies for intermedia relations that translate easily from one genre to another. (Traditional film critics' definitions of parallelism and counterpoint, for instance, seem too simple to many writers on opera and song, as well as on film and other audio-visual media.) The session drew together scholars working across a range of genres and from a range of disciplinary backgrounds (musicology/music theory, literature, film studies, and media studies). The aim was to see how far our object of discussion might at least be translatable from one field to another, and to what extent it might be possible to develop an overarching theoretical model, or set of models.