

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
• OF THE •
AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Fall Meeting

October 2, 2010
Pomona College

Program

9:00 – 9:30 AM Coffee and Registration

9:30 AM – 12:00 PM Morning Session

Concerning the Analysis of Chopin's "Enigmatical" Finale in the Sonata in B-flat Minor
Roland Jackson (Claremont Graduate University, Emeritus)

Legacies of the WPA on the American Musical Landscape
YouYoung Kang (Scripps College)

Break

The Quiet Hand: Aesthetics of Bodily Decorum in the Keyboard Music of François
Couperin
Eric J. Wang (University of California, Los Angeles)

12:00 – 1:40 PM Lunch

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

2:00 – 5:15 PM Afternoon Session

Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre: A Case Study in the Politics of Gender and Canonization
Matthew D. Blackmar (California State University, Long Beach)

Compositional Planning, Motivic Structure, and Mensural Organization in Hendrik Isaac's
Virgo prudentissima
Alejandro Planchart (University of California, Santa Barbara, Emeritus)

Break

Dynamic Canons: Ornette Coleman's Sound Grammar
Matthew Thomas (University of Southern California)

Anthony Burgess' Symphonic Novel Napoleon Symphony: A Novel in Four Voices
Alan Shockley (California State University, Long Beach)

ABSTRACTS

Morning Session

Concerning the Analysis of Chopin's "Enigmatical" Finale in the Sonata in B-flat Minor

Roland Jackson (Claremont Graduate University, Emeritus)

Since its inception (1839) Chopin's finale in the B-flat Minor Sonata has consistently been regarded as enigmatical: Schumann (1840) found it "puzzling," Leichtentritt (1922) "impressionistic, 75 years ahead of its time," Walker (1967) "atonal," and Samson (1996) "harmonically elusive." Much of the difficulty in its apprehension may be ascribed to the finale's unusual texture, that of unharmonized octaves throughout, making it difficult to discern its chord tones, surrounded as these often are by non-chord tones in an ongoing, "single-line" continuity.

In the present study I will attempt to show that Chopin's finale was neither incompatible with his other music nor stylistically beyond its own time. My method will consist of juxtaposing segments of the finale with passages from other Chopin works that closely resemble them, in this way showing it to be less strange than it has hitherto been felt to be.

The finale consists of seven distinct sections (the first two repeated in a recapitulation), which will be gone into individually, their analytical difficulties considered and an analogous passage cited to help clarify these difficulties. The corresponding musical segments (from the finale and other works) will also bring to light aspects of Chopin's style hitherto for the most part not treated very deeply or systematically by analysts.

1. opening: consecutive diminished-seventh chords, are seemingly unrelated in their keys; but a correspondence with the beginning of the Sonata's first movement clarifies this, revealing an interconnectedness between Chopin's movements hitherto unobserved by analysts.

2. initial theme: profuse appoggiaturas and upper-lower neighbors obscure the underlying chords. A parallel passage in Prelude 18 contains a similar usage, throwing light on the frequent elaborateness of Chopin's ornamentation.

3. excursion: chromatically descending chords may be seen to belong to a typical formula employed by Chopin, as in his early Polonaise in D minor.

4. subsidiary theme: upper-note appoggiaturas, like those in the F# Nocturne, convey a serenely confident mood; this has gone unrecognized by analysts, who have perceived the movement one-dimensionally, as "demonic," or as "winds over graves", etc.

5. retransition: an embedded chromatic line and Neapolitan chord, overlooked by analysts, but matched in Prelude 18, points up the return to the recapitulation.

6. excursion: like 3 (above), but this time containing frequent 6ths and 13ths, a prominent feature of Chopin's style, as in a passage in Etude 4; these sonorities, however, are not observed by the finale's analysts.

7. conclusion: an extended dominant (typical of Chopin's codas) is enhanced in this instance by both an embedded chromatic line and added 6ths and 13ths, these again unrecognized by analysts; a comparison between the finale's ending and that of Ballade 1 reveals similar features between the two works.

Chopin's own remark (rare for him) concerning the finale shows his awareness of the movement's unusual unharmonized texture as well as of its potential programmatic significance (in view of the diverse contents of the movement), that of people conversing after the (third-movement) funeral march.

Legacies of the WPA on the American Musical Landscape

YouYoung Kang (Scripps College)

The Federal Music Project of the Works Progress Administration, inaugurated in 1935, aided musicians who had been left unemployed by the Depression and the conversion of theaters to "talkies." It also aimed to provide the taxpayer with cultural entertainment and musical education. Thus, between 1935 and 1943, this federally funded works project financed group music lessons for the public, lectures on music, symphony and concert orchestras, choirs, operas, dance bands, a Composers' Forum-Laboratory, and even a few "ethnic" ensembles. As a result of federal funding, many rural areas which had never provided music education before 1935 were able to start offering music history classes and lessons on various instruments in schools and in community centers. Moreover, the funds and organization provided by the Federal Music Project allowed many smaller municipalities to start or continue their support of symphony orchestras during this financially troubled time (e.g. Buffalo Philharmonic, Utah Symphony). Consequently, there was arguably more musical activity during the latter part of the Depression than in the previous decade.

Drawing upon letters, typescripts of lectures, newspaper clippings, and concert programs in the FMP archives at the Library of Congress and the Composers' Forum archives at the New York Public Library, this paper will demonstrate the wide-ranging and far-reaching impact of this government-funded program on the musical landscape of the American nation. Even while the program was at its height of activity and employed tens of thousands of people, newspaper critics and musicians argued that the most important aspect of this federally funded program was not aiding unemployed musicians, but rather lifting up the musical culture of the United States. Many programs and musical institutions that would be so important to various musical communities around the country—public musical education in rural areas, symphony orchestras in smaller cities, and the Composers' Forum series in New York—were founded during the idealist WPA era and with federal government money. Finally, these musical legacies of the WPA, usually unacknowledged in musical circles, bespeak to the enormous, and arguably positive role that the government could play in the musical arts.

The Quiet Hand: Aesthetics of Bodily Decorum in the Keyboard Music of François Couperin

Eric J. Wang (University of California, Los Angeles)

When François Couperin published the second book of *Pièces de clavecin* in the mid-1710s, in the preface he urged his readers to consult his *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* for fingerings and advice on how to play certain passages of music. He regarded these directions as "absolutely indispensable"; the music could not exist without the right instruction. Indeed, many scholars and performers have regarded Couperin's "Method" as one of the first documents of the eighteenth century to provide concrete and practical advice on how to perform French keyboard music in a "proper" manner.

I would like to give special consideration to the title itself, in which Couperin chooses the word *toucher*, the sensation of actually touching the instrument. Whereas other French treatises, such as Saint Lambert's or, later, Rameau's, focus more specifically on the mechanical aspects of keyboard technique (i.e., "la mécanique des doigts," such as fingerings and ornaments), Couperin specifically foregrounds the performer's body through physical sensation – that is, touch rather than execution.

Through this viewpoint, I argue that *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* is not just pedagogical in nature; rather, Couperin's performance directions document ways in which the French regarded the

body during performance. Just as Louis XIV's courtiers at Versailles were expected to dance with grace and seeming effortless, Couperin reinscribes the concept of *bon goût* with the harpsichordist. His fingerings, for example, do not facilitate easier execution, but, rather, emphasize the "quiet hand," which is perfectly centered over the keyboard and positioned for the absolute minimum of physical motion. In this paper, I will demonstrate, through the *préludes* from *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* and selected works from Book II of *Pièces de clavecin*, how the keyboardist's body, like dancers, serves as an analog to the French court aesthetics of physical balance and decorum.

Afternoon Session

Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre: A Case Study in the Politics of Gender and Canonization

Matthew D. Blackmar (California State University, Long Beach)

Hailed in her time as a keyboard virtuoso and prolific improviser, Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre is perhaps most widely recognized today for her groundbreaking achievements as a woman in music—the first female composer to have an opera performed on the Paris stage as well as the first to receive an entry in a major music dictionary (Titon du Tillet's 1732 *Le Parnasse François*).

Eighteenth-century audiences, patrons, and commentators, however, recognized her as a standout composer in her own right and a peer among her male contemporaries. While documentary evidence of her contemporary critical acclaim abounds, Jacquet de la Guerre's renown faded during the century after her death as the popularity of the French harpsichord school diminished.

The early keyboard music revival of the late nineteenth century reinvigorated interest in the *clavecin* composers of the *Grand Siècle*, particularly Couperin and Rameau, whose reputations benefited from the publication of scholarly editions (edited by Saint-Saëns and Brahms, respectively) that enabled their keyboard music to reenter the performance repertoire. These composers, along with several of their lesser-known contemporaries, came to be recognized in the writings of historicists and lexicographers as part of a historical canon of "great French composers"—a canon from which Jacquet de La Guerre was conspicuously absent until well into the twentieth century.

Contemporary musicological scholarship has brought to light the ideological underpinnings of canonization, illustrating the tendency the practice of separating the "best from the rest" has to perpetuate the hegemony of dominant groups over marginal ones. Not surprisingly, women composers constitute one such systematically excluded group.

While there is little question that countless such women composers have been similarly 'lost' to history, very few such 'disappearances' before the nineteenth century exhibit as rich a documentary record of contemporary acclaim as that of Jacquet de La Guerre; her disappearance from historical view thus merits additional inquiry and provides a fascinating window into the historiographical phenomenon of canonic exclusion.

This paper explores the reception of Jacquet de La Guerre's works in three stages. First, her career and critical reception in her lifetime are compared with those of her male contemporaries. Second, these male contemporaries are compared in terms of their respective footprints in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century lexicographic literature; here, Jacquet de La Guerre's gradual disappearance is demonstrated. The concluding section recounts the rediscovery of the composer's works in the twentieth century and explores the political implications of recent scholarly efforts to reclaim canonicity for "lost" female composers. Ultimately, Jacquet de La Guerre's reception is

related to broader historical shifts in cultural mores, from Victorian male chauvinism to feminist musicology, illustrating the impact of gender politics upon canonization as a historical phenomenon.

Compositional Planning, Motivic Structure, and Mensural Organization in Hendrik Isaac's *Virgo prudentissima*

Alejandro Planchart (University of California, Santa Barbara, Emeritus)

Isaac's *Virgo prudentissima*, composed in 1507 for the Reichstag in Constance that confirmed Maximilian I as Holy Roman Emperor, is one of the composer's most complex and extended works. It is also a self-consciously constructivist piece that looks back to the repertory of tenor motets pioneered by Guillaume Du Fay, Jehan de Ockeghem, and most prominently by Jehan Le Roy (Iohannes Regis), but its construction is markedly different from similar motets by his contemporary, Josquin Des Prez, with their nearly schematic construction (*Miserere mei Deus*), and ostinato techniques (*Illibata Dei genitrix*). This paper takes a close look at the work in order to show how Isaac achieves at the same time a great deal of variety in textures and sonorities, and at the same time a remarkable degree of motivic and thematic unity in the piece, largely through an interplay of two basic textures and two kinds of motivic construction that are exposed in the first few sections of each pars and then fused in the concluding section, as well as by a judicious choice of which phrases of the cantus firmus, an antiphon for Vespers of the Assumption, he chooses to paraphrase (albeit partially) in the free voices.

The motet's mensural structure: one section with all voices in O, and one with the tenor continuing in O but the other five voices switching to O2, with semibreve – minim equivalence with the tenor, has been ignored entirely in all modern performances of the work that have been recorded in the last 50 years, usually with disastrous consequences for the performance of the second pars of the work. On the face of it, however, Isaac's notation is implausible until one realizes that he is using it for symbolic purposes and at the same time pointing to a correct tempo relationship between the partes by his organization of the phrase structure and the imitation at the beginning of the secunda pars. In doing so he is placing this motet in what can be called a mensural "shadow tradition," that has its beginnings in the motets of Du Fay in the 1430s, and in the wholesale adoption of the "English" relationship between triple meter and duple meter in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Dynamic Canons: Ornette Coleman's Sound Grammar

Matthew Thomas (University of Southern California)

When Ornette Coleman received the Pulitzer Prize for his live album *Sound Grammar* in 2007, he became only the second jazz composer to receive the award and the first artist to receive the prize for a recording accepted in lieu of a score. For many, the award signaled long-overdue critical acknowledgement of Coleman's role as a pioneer of avant-garde jazz. Although Coleman remains at the center of most canonical histories of jazz, questions remain about his own view of the jazz canon. Building on Henry Louis Gates's theory of Signifying and Ingrid Monson's studies on intertextuality in jazz, this paper discusses how Coleman and his collaborators invoke, transform, and Signify upon the music of other artists through quotation and other types of intertextual reference in the prize-winning album *Sound Grammar*. Coleman quotes selections from Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, Billy Strayhorn's "Isfahan" and many other works in order to raise questions about the relationship between these musical traditions. These creative borrowings demonstrate that for

Coleman, the canon is not a fixed list of composers and works but a vibrant and dynamic web of inter-musical connections that bypasses stylistic boundaries.

Anthony Burgess' Symphonic Novel Napoleon Symphony: A Novel in Four Voices
Alan Shockley (California State University, Long Beach)

Anthony Burgess, best known for his controversial novel *A Clockwork Orange*, was easily one of the past century's most prolific authors, and arguably one of its best. Burgess was also an active composer, penning an opera, musicals, symphonies, concerti, and many chamber works. His musical mind often drove his prose. In 1974 his novel, *Napoleon Symphony: A Novel in Four Movements* appeared to almost universal disregard. In it, inspired by Joyce's "mythic method" in *Ulysses*, Burgess eschewed most of the epic novel's conventions, instead paralleling the structure of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony. *Napoleon Symphony* has no real plot, no standard sense of chronology, fails as the biography of Napoleon, and transforms its central character into an archetype, morphing Napoleon into Prometheus, Christ, as well as simply "lui," or "N." Burgess creates a book that the author himself hoped to be "as close to music as it is possible to reach."

Of course, there are well-known connections between the *Eroica* and Napoleon. But, looking beyond these connections to Beethoven the man, Beethoven's symphonies are perhaps the only choice to provide structure for a novel; they offer features (such as connecting the traditionally separate movements of the symphony through thematic transformation) that incline listeners to create stories. In addition, perhaps the music's forcefulness, its size and scope, threaten. As a defensive reaction, listeners limit the music's meaning by containing it with plot. Here, in *Napoleon Symphony*, just as Joyce used Homer to replace a conventional plot, Burgess substitutes a four-movement symphony.

Burgess famously classified himself (and Joyce) as "Class 2 novelists," saying that such writers could "hope to transcend [their] subject matter only by concentrating on form." In the end, the failure of this novel is the failure of Burgess the novelist to make himself heard over the other voices inhabiting it, for there are three phantoms circling this symphony: Beethoven, Joyce, and Burgess the composer. This paper traces these voices by peering into an incoherent novel and finding a coherent musical work.