

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
• OF THE •
AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Winter Meeting

February 26, 2011
University of California, Riverside

Program

9:30 – 10:00 AM Coffee and Registration

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM Morning Session

The Ring domesticated, Wagner democratized: The Piano Transcription as Mass Media
Matthew Blackmar (California State University, Long Beach)

Break

Where have all the Flores Gone: Evidence for the Survival of Music for Mixed Voice Choir in
the Repertoire of the California Missions
Steven Ottományi (St. Pius X Catholic Church)

12:00 – 1:40 PM Lunch

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

2:00 – 4:00 PM Afternoon Session

Ethel Smyth, The Great War, and Entente Cordiale
Alyson Payne (University of California, Riverside)

Jewish Composers and Secular Christmas Music: The Creation of the American
Holiday Songbook
Erica Ann Watson (California State University, Long Beach)

Break

Progressives and Music: an Intellectual History
Glenda Goodman (Harvard University)

ABSTRACTS

Morning Session

The Ring domesticated, Wagner democratized: The Piano Transcription as Mass Media

Matthew Blackmar (California State University, Long Beach)

While the inaugural Bayreuth Festival may have been one of the most highly anticipated and widely reported musical events of the late nineteenth century, the obvious practical constraints of producing a fifteen-hour epic prevented Wagner's Ring from widespread distribution outside of urban centers until into the twentieth century. To fill this performance vacuum, concert excerpts from the Ring cycle found steady rotation in the repertoire of many ensembles as a lower cost performance solution.

While Wagner reception scholarship has explored the role such concert excerpts played in disseminating the composer's music dramas, little consideration has been given to the impact of published piano transcriptions, reductions, and arrangements for domestic music-making or recital performance in the early years of the Wagner phenomenon. What scholarship has been dedicated to this repertoire has focused almost exclusively on the fifteen transcriptions authored by Franz Liszt. Yet Liszt only attempted one transcription from Wagner's Ring cycle: his improvisation-like 'Walhall' fantasy on themes from Das Rheingold. Piano transcriptions of excerpts from Wagner's Ring thus represent a body of music that has yet to receive serious scholarly attention.

Recent musicological trends have prompted an overdue reevaluation of both the role of performers and the interrelationships of popular and serious genres in music history. Wagner's Ring cycle is particularly deserving of such reevaluation as Wagner commentators have historically exhibited a preoccupation with the work in its "intended" dramatic context, ignoring a rich and diverse performance tradition in other venues. Likewise, scholars of the piano literature have historically relegated transcriptions, arrangements, and paraphrases to secondary status. Wagner piano transcriptions thus challenge traditional disciplinary views concerning authorship, compositional intent, and "high" and "low" art.

This paper seeks to take a first step toward resurrecting this historically-marginalized repertoire, using Marshall McLuhan's famous assessment that the "medium is the message" as a point of departure from which to evaluate various types of printed sheet music and their corresponding social functions.

First, a context is established that compares the role of the piano in mid-nineteenth century domestic life with Wagner's relationship with the instrument. The publication and performance histories of several significant Ring transcriptions will be reviewed. This representative sample and its diverse social functions are discussed, including four-hand arrangements for domestic Hausmusik, simplified solo reductions for students, bravura works in the tradition of the Parisian virtuosi, and a bevy of ensemble arrangements calling for as many as two pianos and eight hands. Ultimately, Wagner scholarship stands to benefit considerably from examining the experiences of the substantial share of listeners that first encountered Wagner's music outside of the opera house, particularly in arrangements and genres far removed from Wagner's exalted notion of "total art." This paper seeks to provide one point of entry toward such a larger effort.

**Where have all the Flores Gone: Evidence for the Survival of Music for Mixed Voice Choir
in the Repertoire of the California Missions**

Steven Ottományi (St. Pius X Catholic Church)

The surviving repertoire of liturgical music of the California Missions presents a challenge to modern interpretation. Its origin in a monastic tradition parallel and yet nearly completely separate from the mainstream of Spanish music results in a great deal of misunderstanding and mischaracterization of the music. Conspicuous use of parallelisms, antiquated note shapes, and other elements compound and sometimes confound both editors and prospective performers.

It is an established fact that Mission choirs consisted of boys and men (and possibly, depending on one's interpretation of the Interrogatorio of 1814, women). Interestingly, almost all of the surviving manuscripts contain music that seems to be written for tenors and basses. Until now, the dearth of repertoire for boy choir has gone unnoticed and unaddressed by modern scholarship. Why has so little mixed-voice music survived, while music seemingly written for adult male voices has been preserved in abundance?

This paper will demonstrate that the repertoire for mixed voice choirs has in fact been largely preserved in the form of canto de órgano written in four-color notation on a single six-line staff in the F-clef. At least a portion of the surviving canto de órgano settings are in fact intended for SSAB or SATB voices, not TTBB voices as has commonly been assumed.

In order to support this hypothesis, this paper will examine five areas of interest: scribal conventions (especially the exclusive use of the F-clef); transposition (especially Narciso Durán's statement that some passages were too high for boys voices); instrumental writing and ranges, and the use of 16' instruments; voicing, voice leading, and spacing in choral music; and directions found in a manuscript by Pedro Capénaz which indicate mixed voices.

This issue has great significance for the performance and accessibility of the music of the California Missions, and further distinguishes the sacred music of Spanish California from the musical traditions in other parts of Latin America.

Afternoon Session

Ethel Smyth, The Great War, and Entente Cordiale

Alyson Payne (University of California, Riverside)

The First World War inflicted lasting scars on the culture and population of Great Britain. While scholars have studied the impact of the war on British culture, its effect on British music in particular has yet to be fully explored. Recently, however, scholars have begun to discuss how the war influenced works by such notable British composers as Elgar, Vaughan Williams, and Bliss. At the age of fifty-seven, British composer Ethel Smyth entered the war effort as a radiologist at a French hospital near Vichy. Smyth rarely mentioned this episode in her copious writings, both published and unpublished, and it has not engendered much scholarly attention. Despite this lacuna, the war had an influence upon Smyth—she had been raised in a proudly military family, after all. Smyth was conflicted however: her desire to discharge her duties as British patriot clashed with her love of Germany, which she considered a second homeland. Caring for the wounded surely exacted

an emotional price; moreover, the war may have taken a physical toll on Smyth, exacerbating her hearing loss. Smyth's *Entente Cordiale* (1924), a post-war Comedy in One-Act, provides a lens through which to view Smyth's wartime years. Though deceptively light-hearted, this opera constitutes one of Smyth's musical responses to the war as well as her commentary on the military. This investigation seeks to add a deeper dimension to our understanding of Smyth's achievement.

Jewish Composers and Secular Christmas Music: The Creation of the American Holiday Songbook

Erica Ann Watson (San Jose State University)

Tin Pan Alley composers dominated popular song from the 1890s until the 1940s, first through the sale of sheet music and then on recordings and radio. A number of Jewish composers made up the Tin Pan Alley songsters, many of them immigrants or first generation Americans. From the first World War through World War II, there was a sweeping patriotism among many in the United States, and new Americans could show their love of the new country by "doing their part." Since Christmas was already a national holiday, an American cultural celebration followed. Christmas' secular nature during this time was conveyed in popular songs about Santa Claus and with the creation of other characters in song. Using winter themes and a manufactured nostalgia of a "White Christmas," these Jewish composers contributed to the songbook of the season, further secularized and popularized Christmas music on the radio, and shaped their Jewish American identity. This paper will explore select Christmas songs by Jewish composers that were great hits upon their initial releases and have since remained holiday staples. It will also include a brief analysis of particular orchestration that has become commonplace in Christmas music.

Progressives and Music: an Intellectual History

Glenda Goodman (Harvard University)

When Progressive activist Jane Addams founded the Hull-House Settlement in 1889 in Chicago's near west side, the clamor of immigrant children playing and fighting filled the neighborhood. For Addams, the key to turning these children into successful American citizens rested in getting them off the streets by introducing uplifting cultural activities, such as music. To that end, the Hull-House Music School was founded in 1895 to instruct Italian, Greek, and Jewish children on the violin and piano, and to lead them in singing. These music activities were guided by two goals: improving the lives of immigrant children, and using the practice of music to assimilate children into American culture and prepare them for the responsibilities of citizenship.

This paper examines the Progressive idea that music education creates better American citizens. Drawing on my research in Hull-House Collections at University of Illinois, Chicago and contemporary newspapers and magazines, I explore the trends of Victorian morality, Christian Socialism, Progressive reform, and Deweyian educational innovations that ran through the Music School curriculum. I argue that, in an era of virulent nativism and pervasive immigrant disenfranchisement, music was presumed to offer a neutral space in which Progressive activists at Hull-House could present new ideas about what makes an American citizen, and that they did so using classical rhetoric about music's civic purpose. Thus, music played a critical role in the urgent discussion about the nature of naturalization and citizenship in the early twentieth century.