



de Nebra, Diego Pérez de Camino, Vicente Basset and Antonio Soler highlighted the overlooked richness of Spanish galant repertoire, in terms of both the music and the fine poetic texts. Concerto 1700's appropriate use of instruments, and Peña's well-reasoned ornamentation and fine diction, contrasted with some of the other ensembles, whose performances over-imagined the Mexican-ness of eighteenth-century repertoire with strummed guitar continuo and percussion. Indeed, a folkloric frame proved the rule rather than the exception among most of the musical ensembles performing New Spanish music, and in my view misleadingly gave the impression of an unchanging, transhistorical folkloric culture in Mexico. Other performance highlights included Il Giardino Armonico presenting a programme of Telemann, and two contrasting interpretations of Juan Gutierrez de Padilla's *Missa Ego flos campi*: one sung a cappella in a modern style by The Choir of Queen's College Oxford under the direction of Owen Rees, and the other with *colla parte* instruments and provocative, historically inspired vocal timbres and ornaments by Capella Prolationum and the Ensemble La Dansereye under the direction of Fernando Pérez Valera. Besides making for interesting aesthetic, historical and practical comparisons, these performances connected well to a paper by Luisa Villar-Payá (Universidad de las Américas Puebla), who argued that this mass formed part of the consecration service of Puebla Cathedral in 1649. The performance cycle concluded with a midnight concert of Sephardic songs in Úbeda's medieval Sinagoga del Agua.

The annual Festival de Música Antigua de Úbeda y Baeza is now on the map of major European festivals, and the vision for the programming that brought together such a diverse range of Mexicanist performers and scholars may be attributed to the extraordinary effort of Javier Marín-López, musicologist and director of the festival. These two hilltop Renaissance towns provide inspirational venues for engaging early music both intellectually and aesthetically, and this conference may well come to be regarded as a milestone in the history of Mexicanist musicology. None the less, I left the event conscious of the limitations of the multi-century lens through which Mexico is perennially viewed, and also convinced that in addition to the common *longue-durée* approach, music scholarship needs more micro-histories that are tuned to more specific conditions, institutions, cities and individuals in Mexico's long and complicated past. And lastly, despite the flourishing of early modern Hispanic repertoires over the past two decades, additional research into continuo ensembles and other matters of performance practice remains necessary in order to provide practical support for those aspiring toward historically informed performances.

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WESTERN SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES
LAS VEGAS, 16–17 FEBRUARY 2018

On a brilliant sunny winter's day in Las Vegas, the Western Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (WSECS) convened for their 2018 conference, 'Conversing Among the Ruins: The Persistence of the Baroque', which was scheduled in conjunction with the Las Vegas Baroque Festival at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). For those unfamiliar with WSECS, they meet annually in different parts of the western United States for a two-day conference. Steven Zohn (Temple University) gave the plenary lecture at the Saturday luncheon, and the conference was punctuated by several exquisite performances of baroque music, featuring the House of Time ensemble, Justin Bland on natural trumpet and the UNLV Concert Singers and Chamber Orchestra, together with members of staff, students and guests. The Saturday sessions ended with a rousing



baroque dance party, where participants attempted (with some success) to emulate the elegance of French courtly dances, with everyone having great time.

The conference began on Friday afternoon with three panels. My own paper, 'Constancy vs. Pleasure: Contesting the Baroque through the History of Pastoral Opera' (Stefanie Tcharos, University of California Santa Barbara), featured in a panel on 'Form, Genre and Rhetoric'. My discussion centred on Alessandro Scarlatti's *Gli equivoci in amore, ovvero La Rosaura* (1690), an opera that celebrated a double nuptial, but also reflected the period's new Arcadian influences. My intention was to draw those events and trends into a larger account of how *La Rosaura* evoked a multi-temporal history that resonated with the world of baroque Rome, yet also forecast emerging eighteenth-century ideals. As was the case with many other panels, the interdisciplinary selection of speakers made for lively discussion, with fruitful overlaps of subject matter: the other topics included the Jacobite satires of Dryden's *Pastorals* (Bradford Boyd, Arizona State University) and the politics of religion and the passions in *Robinson Crusoe* (David Alvarez, DePauw University).

Saturday morning was stocked with papers on musical topics, some of them cross-scheduled in concurrent sessions. In the panel 'Baroque Tradition in England and France' Guy Spielmann (Georgetown University) challenged the notion of France turning its back on the baroque in favour of neoclassicism in his paper 'The Enduring Baroque in Early Modern French Court Spectacle'. His presentation examined 'critical forms' of baroque spectacle (*fête, carrousel, ballet de cour* and *tragédie en musique*) and their ability to thrive well into the eighteenth century because of court influence on aristocratic taste. Spielmann was followed by Dorothee Polanz (James Madison University), who presented 'Apollo at the Fair: Staging a Baroque Placard Play Today'. Photographs and videos vividly illustrated a recent experimental production of the 1711 *Apollon à la foire*, a fairground placard play. Polanz examined the scholarly and creative processes needed to attempt coherent reconstructions of otherwise hybrid and subversive theatrical forms, and their potential for modern audiences.

In a separate session held at the same time, Linda Tomko (University of California Riverside) presented 'Dances for Sailors in Early 1700s French Opera: What Did They "Do", How Did They Mean?' as part of the panel 'Baroque Travel and Enlightenment Aesthetics'. She considered a handful of choreographies for dances from the first decade of the eighteenth century that were probably connected to the *tragédie en musique*, trying to analyse how such sailor dances produced affect, created moments of mimesis and made cultural meaning by invoking the past in the present.

The later morning session had two panels with papers covering musical territory. In 'Taste, Harmony and Satire Across the Arts' we were treated to several papers that covered a dazzling range of topics, including song contests, bird poetry and skull medicine. Jessica Sternbach (Temple University) presented a view of musical practice via art history in her paper 'Subtle Harmonies: Gerard ter Borch's Music Lessons'. We learnt how scenes of Dutch music-making by Ter Borch (1617–1681) revealed suggestive interactions between male teachers and their female students – using bodies in motion, clothing and facial glances – that were obscured by the ostensible innocence of musical learning. The panel 'Tonic Transnational Conversations' saw James MacKay (Loyola University New Orleans) present 'Toward an Aesthetic of Conversational Counterpoint: Echoes of the Baroque in Joseph Haydn's String Quartets, Opp. 20–76'. He traced the persistence of baroque musical textures in Haydn's quartets, which were recontextualized in his later compositions by treating counterpoint as a new form of conversation between different lines, at times serious and at other points whimsical.

Steven Zohn wonderfully captured the attention of all participants in his lunchtime plenary address, 'Morality and the "Fair-Sexing" of Telemann's *Faithful Music Master*'. He compared the intentions behind and readership of English and German literary periodicals with those of Telemann's music-centred weekly *Der getreue Music-Meister* (Hamburg, 1728–1729), and found striking similarities. As with its literary counterparts, Telemann's weekly also wanted to 'benefit and entertain' its readers, using distinctly German musical idioms and inviting readers to contribute their own music examples, exercises and texts. The focus of this paper, however, was Telemann's interest in the education of women, and his references specifically



to a literary journal, *Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen* – ostensibly written by women but actually penned by men using female pseudonyms – which promoted the agency of women as crucial for the establishment of a German national culture.

The afternoon session featured one further panel that focused on music: ‘Legacies of the Enlightenment’. In ‘Claudio Monteverdi and *La Favola d’Orfeo*: Character Construction and the Depiction of Emotions’, Julia Coelho (University of Missouri) explored the construction of character on the early operatic stage by examining the impact of Monteverdi’s use of musical gesture, involving voice type, rhetorical devices and stylistic conventions. Her argument was that Monteverdi’s influential operatic developments were connected to the limited parameters of his cultural and intellectual environment. Also on that panel was Laurel Zeiss (Baylor University), who presented ‘The “Persistent” Eighteenth Century in Recent Opera Productions’. Looking at the directors William Kentridge and Peter Sellars, among others, along with the pasticcio *Enchanted Island* (2011), a compilation of baroque music premiered by the Metropolitan Opera, her paper uncovered a number of eighteenth-century elements that can enliven modern opera production even today.

For scholars from a wide range of eighteenth-century research orientations, this conference provided a stimulating mix of ideas, discussions, roundtables and informal gatherings. While it is common to host interdisciplinary conferences that appear to be diverse in methods and fields, it is less often that they cohere as an opportunity for meaningful exchange. ‘Conversing among the Ruins’ readily lived up to the conversational spirit of its title. Each panel I attended was filled with good discussion, useful commentary and engaging critical inquiry. A short two days in Las Vegas was a robust intellectual adventure, augmented by many musical high points.

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BACH ON SCREEN

BALDWIN WALLACE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC, 18 FEBRUARY 2018

Around thirty scholars from several countries assembled at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory to explore the music of J. S. Bach in films, television, video games and advertisements. The conference, sponsored by the Riemenschneider Bach Institute, was an unusual assembly in that it included both scholars of eighteenth-century music as well as academics who focus on twentieth- and twenty-first-century media, two groups whose scholarship only occasionally overlaps. The conference was intended to examine the use of Bach’s music in narrative and non-narrative media, to challenge longstanding assumptions about the dominance of ‘romantic’ musical language in film and to build on both Bach and media studies by bringing to bear diverse methodological and disciplinary perspectives.

A theme that pervaded the conference was the uses of the Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV565, which has been by far the most prominent work of Bach on the screen. Tobias Plebuch (Uppsala universitet) pointed out that the beginning high A, played with a mordent on an organ, is not only the shortest but also the most easily recognized motive in music history, and one semantically encoded with a plethora of changing meanings and allusions. The Toccata has appeared in at least fifty-three feature films, including *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1932), *The Black Cat* (1934) and *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea* (1954). In the 1930s it became associated with the Gothic film tradition, used as a demonic piece to indicate evil or the supernatural, replete with stock narrative elements such as evil geniuses and damsels in distress. But it was also used to portray