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# COMMUNICATIONS

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

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### MOZART AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES
### TUFTS UNIVERSITY, 11–13 SEPTEMBER 2015

Not all that long ago, Dittersdorf, Pleyel or Süssmayr might have been the likely suspects of a conference entitled 'Mozart and His Contemporaries' – composers popular enough in their time but who are less well known today. Although a few performers might also have made the cut, by and large 'Contemporaries' would have been taken to mean contemporaneous composers and their works. But this was not the case at Tufts University in September 2015, when members of the Mozart Society of America gathered for their sixth biennial meeting, organized by Jessica Waldoff. Contributors cast the net widely, and the result was an assemblage of papers that brought all sorts of individuals and institutions out of the shadows. Composers and performers got their due (special mention to Martín y Soler, who made it into almost every session), but alongside these relatively familiar characters we also learned about costume makers, playwrights, orphan choirboys, bourgeois dancers and the Deaf-Mute Institute of Vienna. We might not be talking about the coffee porters just yet, but the overall spread of topics and focus on actual people surely demonstrated the commitment among current scholars of the eighteenth century to the telling of history in terms of the humans that made it.

In the first session, 'Mozart in Context(s)', we considered some venues that rarely figure in Mozart scholarship. I (Joseph Fort, Harvard University) explored the group minuet that was ubiquitous at public balls in Vienna at the end of the century. From treatises I reconstructed the steps of the social minuet (as distinct from the theatrical minuet), and considered these alongside several minuet compositions by Mozart's contemporaries. Continuing the Viennese theme, Adeline Mueller (Mount Holyoke College) discussed Mozart's role in the Habsburg reforms of child welfare. She examined his contributions to the city's orphanage: at the age of twelve he conducted its choir and orchestra, and some twenty years later he wrote lieder for the periodical of the Deaf-Mute Institute. Matthew Leone (Indiana University) examined Albert Lortzing's 1832 singspiel *Szenen aus Mozarts Leben*. He explained Lortzing's depiction of the rivalry between Mozart and Salieri in terms of the wider debate during this period concerning German and Italian operatic styles.

The evening had attendees thinking on their feet, with a 'Viennese *Redoute*' led by Ken Pierce (Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Ken Pierce Baroque Dance Company) and organized by Mueller and me. Pierce taught us possible steps for the *contredanse*, minuet and *Deutsche*, as they are likely to have been performed at the Viennese public balls of the 1790s, based on choreographic instructions given in German-language dance treatises from the period. For the music we used arrangements for two violins, cello and keyboard, as would have been the case at small-scale dance events. Mueller and I selected some lesser-known dance compositions by Haydn and Mozart for the occasion.

The following day began with opera, and with two papers regarding Nancy Storace. Daniel R. Melamed (Indiana University) argued that composers cross-referenced each other's recent local productions through their shared performers. For example, when in the first production of *Le nozze di Figaro* Marcellina (Maria Mandini) addressed Susanna (Storace) as 'Madama brillante', members of the Viennese audience who had also attended Domenico Cimarosa's *L'italiana in Londra* in 1783 or 1786 might have recalled that Storace had

previously played a character called Madama Brillante. In other words, performers carried associations with past roles that they had played from one opera to the next, and their own personas counted for as much as the characters they played. Along complementary lines, John Platoff (Trinity College Connecticut) examined several roles performed by Storace in the 1780s, investigating the stylistic approaches taken by composers when faced with writing arias for a prima donna who happened to be playing a lower-class character. Olga Sánchez-Kisielewska (Northwestern University) identified intertextual references between Mozart's late operas and Martín y Soler's *L'arbore di Diana*, a buffa opera in which Diana, the goddess of chastity, eventually finds love. In addition to acknowledged parallels between the plots of *Diana* and *Die Zauberflöte* (Diana's three nymphs and the Queen of the Night's three ladies, for example), Sánchez-Kisielewska noted musical similarities between arias in *Diana* and *Così fan tutte*, and ultimately argued that Soler's opera would have informed the moral backdrop against which audiences would have assessed Mozart's, inviting an interpretation of *Così* as a triumph of love. Finally, with reference to *La finta giardiniera*, Julia Hamilton (Columbia University) analysed costume portraits of 'garden girls' from theatrical productions of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* earlier in the century. Hamilton argued that these costumes carefully depicted these characters not as true servants but rather as wealthy women dressing up as garden girls, which was a popular pastime.

The next session was entitled 'Music as Discourse: Four Studies in Chamber Music'. Eloise Boisjoli (University of Texas at Austin) returned to Richardson's *Pamela*, and offered a redefinition of musical sensibility that takes eighteenth-century literature, instead of music, as its starting-point, before exploring Haydn's Op. 33 string quartets in this light. Next, Amy Holbrook (Arizona State University) argued that Mozart's praise of Ignaz Joseph Pleyel's Op. 1 quartets should not be taken at face value, and posited that Pleyel could in fact be the target of Mozart's *Musikalischer Spaß*, K522 – that the 'joke' of Mozart's composition lies in its parody of Pleyel's style. Gabriel Lubell (Knox College) analysed the 'Gran Partita' Serenade in B flat major, K361/370a, in terms of Johann Georg Sulzer's notions of surprise, beauty and the sublime. William O'Hara (Harvard University) examined Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny's 1803 recomposition of the first movement of Mozart's String Quartet in D minor K421 as a soprano aria. O'Hara illustrated how over the course of his text Momigny seems to forget the music's original wordless existence, explaining Mozart's compositional decisions in terms of their service to his text, and argued that this demonstrates an inherently linguistic notion of form on Momigny's part.

A concert concluded the day, given by Matthew Hall (Cornell University) on fortepiano, Elizabeth Lyon (Cornell University) on cello and James Lyon (Pennsylvania State University) on violin. The programme included Mozart's Piano Trio in B flat major, K502, and Hall's completion of the Andantino fragment for cello and piano, K374g (Anh. 46). It also featured a piano trio by Leopold Mozart, and a duo for cello and piano by Joseph Wölfl, a pupil of Leopold's.

The final session of the conference turned towards secular and sacred vocal music. Laurel E. Zeiss (Baylor University) presented a pedagogical perspective, in a comparison of two duets – Mozart's 'letter duet' from *Le nozze di Figaro* and Martín y Soler's 'Pace, caro mio sposo' from his *Una cosa rara*, which enjoyed considerable popularity in its time. Zeiss demonstrated that comparing these duets can open students' minds to a variety of musical parameters that are often overlooked in the classroom. The fact that both duets reside in a single key and consist mostly of periodic phrasing impels students to investigate other variables, such as rhythm, phrase length, chord inversion and tone colour, in their comparisons. Next, Martin Nedbal (University of Arkansas) explored eighteenth-century adaptations of French musical plays that involve a sultan signalling his chosen concubine by throwing her a handkerchief, including a 1799 singspiel by Süssmayr. Nedbal noted the consistent toning-down or excision of these 'handkerchief moments' in the Viennese adaptations, arguing that this treatment was to bring the works into line with the German notion that theatre should always be morally upright. Along somewhat similar lines, but with very different subject matter, Emily Wuchner (University of Illinois) followed with a paper demonstrating eighteenth-century Viennese adaptations of the story of Moses, for the Wiener Tonkünstler-Societät's oratorio performances, that sought to emphasize similarities between the biblical figure and Joseph II. The final paper of the conference was given jointly by

Christoph Riedo (Harvard University and Université de Fribourg) and John A. Rice (Rochester, Minnesota), introducing a Miserere in D minor by Mozart's Munich contemporary Andrea Bernasconi. Riedo showed us his new edition of the work (available online), based on a single surviving copy, and Rice tracked the use of various galant schemata and their development over the course of the work. There could have been no more inspiring way to end the conference than with this piece, the high quality of which was immediately apparent.

Buoyed by these fifteen papers, the concert, the dance and of course by the stimulating exchanges in between, all of this made possible by Alessandra Campana's local arrangements, attendees departed into the Medford sunshine, ready to begin the academic year.

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'FROM WHERE DO THESE CHORDS COME?': THEORETICAL TRADITIONS IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT
BOSTON UNIVERSITY, 23 OCTOBER 2015

This one-day conference, held under the auspices of the Boston University School of Music, the Boston University Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology, and the Boston University Center for the Humanities, was organized by Deborah Burton (Associate Professor of Music Theory) to discuss the history and legacy of musical thought from the Enlightenment. Burton had invited an impressive range of music theorists and historians of music theory to the event, with papers from Thomas Christensen (University of Chicago), Giorgio Sanguinetti (Università di Roma Tor Vergata) and David E. Cohen (Columbia University), and short presentations by Cynthia Verba (Harvard University), Deborah Burton and David Kopp (Boston University).

James Winn of the Boston University Center for the Humanities set the tone for the day, addressing the audience with a reading from Dryden's 'A Song for St. Cecilia's Day', which weaves classical images of celestial harmony into a Pythagorean creation myth, envisaging the mathematical ratios of musical consonance as a primal animating force. He also reminded us that the model of the sciences 'where new knowledge drives out old knowledge' does not apply in the humanities. The topic of Rameau as theorist, composer and Enlightenment thinker was especially prominent in the day's proceedings. In addition to Rameau, speakers discussed other eighteenth-century theorists and schools of thought, such as Francesco Galeazzi and the traditions of practical theory and partimento. The foundations of Enlightenment musical thought as well as its present-day relevance also entered into the conversation.

Thomas Christensen's paper 'Rameau, A Theorist for Our Times' began with a wide-ranging meditation on the reception of Rameau's theory in the twentieth century, linking renewed interest in Rameau's music with renewed appreciation for his theory. Christensen documented the rehabilitation of Rameau's image after decades of Schenker-dominated music-theoretical discourse in which Rameau was typically assigned the role of 'villain, or at least the seducer'. Christensen segued from there to Rameau's contemporaneous intellectual milieu, thoughtfully presenting the theorist not so much as creature of the Enlightenment but as a 'brilliant and imaginative' appropriator of its intellectual trends. He suggested that Rameau's frequent revisions of his theories reflected an imaginative and intellectually honest mind rather than a fickle one. He then proceeded through an impressive résumé of Rameau's pervasive influence on subsequent music theory, from d'Alembert and Rousseau to Fétis and Riemann to Nicholas Meeús, ranging from very general ideas – carving out territory for music theory between the prescriptive and the analytical – to specific ones such as the *corps sonore* and 'solar model' of harmonic function. The latter two concepts, for instance,