



Eighteenth-Century Music © Cambridge University Press, 2019
doi:10.1017/S1478570619000137

THE ORGAN IN THE GLOBAL BAROQUE
CORNELL UNIVERSITY, 6–8 SEPTEMBER 2018

The great eighteenth-century music historian Charles Burney wrote that the pipe organ was ‘the largest, most comprehensive, and harmonious of musical instruments’ (‘Organ’, in *The Cyclopædia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, ed. Abraham Rees (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1819), volume 25, 518). Once known simply as ‘the instrument’ on account of its all-encompassing excellence, the baroque organ represents a stand-out state of perfection in organ construction, establishing a model that has been an inspiration for later periods, including our own. In the last few decades, music historiography in the anglophone sphere has experienced three major methodological developments: the performative turn that puts human actions at the centre of musical meaning; the material turn that bridges the chasm between theory and practice through ontology; and, more recently, the global turn, which treats music as a broad historical, cultural and geographic phenomenon, exploring paradigms and terminologies in order to write a music history that encompasses different voices. Embodying technological sophistication, capturing aesthetic attention and the product of networks of cross-cultural influences, the baroque organ – a vital agent in the history of music – might be seen as a nexus of those differing critical strands in contemporary musical scholarship.

Thus the conference ‘The Organ in the Global Baroque’ offered a timely opportunity to explore the instrument as a social artefact, with renewed critical objectives relating to a shifting global order. Organized by the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies with support from Cornell University and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the conference took place on Cornell University’s campus over a three-day weekend. In honour of the late Dutch organist Jacques van Oortmerssen, the conference featured a cosmopolitan cast of scholars and performers, including numerous friends, colleagues and former students of van Oortmerssen. Their diverse research topics and recital repertory were heard and discussed via two keynote lectures, four paper sessions and eight recitals.

John Butt (University of Glasgow) gave the opening keynote address, provocatively entitled ‘The Global Baroque Organ Today – Any Use in an Uncertain Age?’, providing a wide-ranging analysis of the global trajectories of the baroque organ and articulating some of the difficult yet pressing questions confronting music historians, performers and organ builders today. Moving back and forth between the present and the past, Butt framed the story of the baroque organ using the concept of musical modernity. Not only did the baroque organ signify a high point in the development and dissemination of a globalizing organ culture, Butt asserted, it has also provided an important impetus for greater historical awareness. Certainly, from the *Orgelbewegung* of Protestant Europe to the flourishing of all-purpose concert-hall organs in East Asia, it is knowledge of the historical principles surrounding the baroque organ that has sowed inspiration and, in turn, given a sense of vitality to our present-day musical culture. While making a strong case for the phenomenon of the baroque organ as a tool for recharging and imagining the future, Butt cautioned scholars from seeking refuge in two extreme positions represented by, on the one hand, meta-narratives of progress compelled by modernity’s pretensions to universality and, on the other hand, radical relativism that denies values and offers no fruitful responses in our post-truth era. Butt argued that a nuanced understanding of musical modernity might offer a critical toolkit that helps us navigate a path between cultural absolutism and value-free relativism.

On modernity’s relation to historical reconstruction, Butt pointed out that the twentieth- and twentieth-first-century rejuvenation of the baroque organ, along with a renewed interest in craft tradition and heritage, was conditioned by modernity’s logic and simultaneously compensated for the negative aspects of that logic: today’s baroque organ culture, he contended, is less about replicating seventeenth- and eighteenth-century instruments than it is a project, kindled by a modernist mindset, to rework the past.



Furthermore, Butt pointed to the aspects of modernity that might be related to the phenomenon of historical organ-building in East Asia. Indeed, the continuous growth of baroque-inflected instruments and historically informed performance practice in Japan, Korea and China in recent decades demands explanation. Butt went beyond such explanatory platitudes as economic success and cultural ambition to draw our attention to the globalizing forces of cultural democratization and customization. The former permits the heritage of one culture to be shared as a cultural grounding for another, compensating for any loss of indigenous historical roots, while the latter embraces multiplicity as a resistance against global standardization.

Butt's broad rumination on modernity and globalization considered both the critical opportunities afforded and the creative challenges posed by these twin forces; in particular he emphasized the need to imbue music performance and scholarship with depth and nuance, in order to resist the flattening or homogenization of different cultures and traditions. More focused studies in the course of the conference addressed local contexts, histories and politics, and their position within a global system. The first session, entitled 'Asian Encounters', comprised three papers by Cornell's own doctoral students in musicology, who explored the roles played by the organ in forming relations between non-European cultures and the Western tradition. Anna Stepler's paper, 'Of the East India Company and Organs: Witnesses to the History of Asian Trade and Colonialism', presented a fascinating story of how the organ served as a symbol of the trading power of the East India Company, as well as a visual and aural reminder of the Dutch or British homeland throughout the colonies in South Asia. My paper (Morton Wan, Cornell University), 'The Keyboard as Interface between China and the West in the Eighteenth Century', outlined Sino-European encounters as mediated through keyboard instruments. By treating keyboard instruments as a class of media technology, I identified in both Chinese and European sources a recognition of the radical disparity between the two cultures in terms of musical ontology, as both grew increasingly ambivalent towards one another over the eighteenth century. Contesting the idea that European musical culture had little influence on Japanese audiences from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, Thomas Cressy's paper, 'Baroque Music's Arrival in Japan: New Information from the Sources of the Foreign Settlements', examined previously overlooked sources, suggesting that J. S. Bach's music and the organ facilitated social bonding within Western trading communities in Japan during the Meiji period.

Geographical extension and temporal warping continued in the next session, 'Baroque Extensions in Time and Space'. In 'Rudolf von Beckerath: Reclaiming North German Dominance in Worldwide Organ Building', Russell Weismann (George Mason University) provided a case study from the *Orgelbewegung*. Despite the indelible influence Arp Schnitger had on Beckerath's style and technique, Weismann contended that Beckerath's heuristic organ-building practice should be considered not so much a revival as a re-enactment of Schnitger's work in a modern age. Continuing with the theme of re-enactment, Randall Harlow (University of Northern Iowa) subjected the Utopa Baroque Organ – a historically inspired digital-mechanical hybrid organ developed at the Orgelpark in Amsterdam – to a Latourian scrutiny. In raising the question of what constitutes a baroque organ in the digital age, Harlow identified the cybernetic aspects of baroque musical practice by examining the process logic of reconstructing Zacharias Hildebrandt's eighteenth-century organ by means of computerized interface. This challenged us to rethink baroque music in a way that is both historically informed and digitally mediated. An internationally sought-after organ builder and the mastermind behind Cornell's own baroque organs, Munetaka Yokota (Tokyo) presented his recent research into Hildebrandt, reflecting on how the 'Bach sound' may be reproduced in different acoustic environments in the twenty-first century.

Moving beyond the European eighteenth century, the following session, 'Old World to New World', extended the story of the pipe organ both further back to the early modern period and farther afield to colonial America. We heard about evidence of claviorgans in fifteenth-century Iberia from Carlos Roberto Ramírez (Cornell University), the dissemination of Nicolas Lebègue's music in North America from Alexander Meszler (Phoenix, Arizona) and the culmination of the development of the 'organized' piano in nineteenth-century American households from Patrick Hawkins and Thomas Strange (Columbia and Liberty, South Carolina).



The final paper session was devoted to performance practice, with three papers focusing respectively on philological, editorial and pedagogical aspects of the baroque organ. Tracing the use of the organ in the Low Countries in the seventeenth century in chanted Vespers with music by Du Fay, Barbara Hagg-Huglo (University of Maryland College Park) examined the circulation of music, people and wealth through the liturgical intermingling of plainchant and organ music, adding evidence for the diffusion of organ culture across Europe. The paper by Pablo Márquez Caraballo (Conservatorio de Valencia), 'The Influence of Valencian Organ Building in Joan Cabanilles's Organ Works: New Perspectives for Performance Practice', proposed a reconstruction of Cabanilles's organ music from surviving copies, which are rife with modifications and corrupted passages, teasing out the criteria that should inform prospective critical-editorial work of this extraordinary, yet still too little known, repertory. Through analysis and pedagogical re-enactment of Adriano Banchieri's *L'Organo Suonarino*, Edoardo Bellotti (Universität Bremen) demonstrated how the conception of seventeenth-century basso continuo was primarily contrapuntal, differing radically from the eighteenth-century harmony-driven thoroughbass pedagogy.

Interleaved between the lively paper sessions was an eclectic series of recitals featuring Cornell's collection of organs and other keyboard instruments. The centrepiece of this collection is the Anabel Taylor Chapel organ, an extraordinary instrument designed by Munetaka Yokota as a modern reconstruction of a chapel organ at Schloss Charlottenburg built by Arp Schnitger. The organ was completed in 2011 as a result of international collaboration between Cornell University and the Gothenburg Organ Art Center, with Jacques van Oortmerssen serving as the chief inspector of the project. The timbral range of the more than one thousand pipes housed within this quintessentially global-baroque organ seems infinite. Expertly exploring this timbral range, opening windows onto the past while also appealing to modern sensibilities, were the conference's world-class recitalists, many of whom offered their programmes as moving tributes to van Oortmerssen. Memorable moments included Kimberly Marshall's (Arizona State University) intrepid programme that took the audience on a transatlantic voyage from Buxtehude's Lutheran Germany to Zipoli's New World, Anne Page's (Royal Academy of Music) intriguing choice of an antiquarian-inflected completion of *Die Kunst der Fuge* by, quite impressively, a Cambridge medieval art historian (Paul Binski), Matthias Havinga's (Conservatorium van Amsterdam) high-octane performance of selections from Bach's compendious *Clavier-Übung III*, and Atsuko Takano's (St Nicolas Church, Valencia) charming rendition of music by Cabanilles and Cabezón, transporting the listeners to the sunnier shores of the Iberian Peninsula.

Several of the performers reconvened at a special roundtable commemorating Jacques van Oortmerssen. Moderated by Paul Peeters (Göteborgs universitet), the session, entitled 'The Organ as a Source of Inspiration', was joined by Kimberly Marshall, Andrew McCrea (Royal College of Organists), Annette Richards (Cornell University), Hans Davidsson (Gothenburg) and Wim Winters (Leuven). Peeters began by detailing van Oortmerssen's work as teacher and organ consultant, highlighting his humanistic approach to the organ arts, his concern for detail and perfection, and his inspiring vision. The participants then took turns offering their accounts of van Oortmerssen's influence on their personal careers, through touching anecdotes and reflections on his crucial role in fostering an ever-expanding global organ community.

The idea that the organ can serve as the focus for a network of cultural conversations was crystallized in Andrew McCrea's closing keynote address, 'After *The European Organ*: Historiographical Reflections and Global Extensions'. The central figure in McCrea's talk was Peter Williams, who made the academic study of the organ a serious subject with his seminal work *The European Organ, 1450–1850*, published in 1966 (London: Batsford). As he recounted his own memories of Williams, McCrea provided us with a lesson in disciplinary history, outlining the ebbs and flows of generations of British organ enthusiasts who devoted their lives to archival and organological research, in order to tell the story of the King of Instruments. Inviting us to imagine what a newly revised edition of *The European Organ* might be like, McCrea sketched a vision of a global organ culture after – in both temporal and spiritual terms – the baroque model, one that would push Europe beyond its geopolitical confines, and see the shifting world order as a catalyst for new and creative conversations between past and present. Behind this vision, one could not help but discern the



palpable presence of Williams and many others, their legacy a constant striving to cultivate the art of historical storytelling, while shunning the search for simple, ready-made meanings in music.

MORTON WAN
mtw74@cornell.edu



Eighteenth-Century Music © Cambridge University Press, 2019
 doi:10.1017/S1478570619000083

ZELENKA CONFERENCE
 PRAGUE, 19 OCTOBER 2018

In 2015 the Prague-based Ensemble Inégal organized the first Zelenka Festival Prague, an event featuring concerts and a one-day conference devoted to the music of Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745) and his world. The year 2018 marked the fourth instalment of this multi-city festival: in addition to concerts and the conference in Prague, attendees were also treated to a performance of two Zelenka works, the *Missa Sancti Spiritus* (zwv4) and *Litaniae Lauretanae* ‘Consolatrix afflictorum’ (zwv151), in Dresden, the city Zelenka called home from 1710 until his death in 1745. The first of these two works deserves special mention: the performance in Prague represented the Czech premiere of the mass as the result of a new critical edition by Andrew Frampton (‘Jan Dismas Zelenka’s *Missa Sancti Spiritus*, ZWV 4: A Critical Edition and Study of the Manuscript Sources’ (MMus thesis, University of Melbourne, 2015)). Interpreted by Ensemble Inégal and the Dresdner Kammerchor under the direction of Adam Viktora, this performance was given first in Prague and then repeated in Dresden. Two additional concerts, performed respectively by Musica Florea and Musica Aeterna, highlighted Zelenka’s orchestral compositions as well as offering a selection of Italian works from his fascinating collection of secular vocal music. The latter was introduced by Jóhannes Ágústsson (independent scholar, Reykjavík), who also wrote the accompanying programme notes, and featured sopranos Gabriela Eibenová and Lenka Cafourková. Alongside the conference, these excellent performances helped to situate Zelenka’s own music within the composer’s wider world and were a welcome aspect of the festival.

The 2018 conference consisted of seven papers and a celebration of the work of Janice B. Stockigt (University of Melbourne), who also chaired the conference, on the occasion of the publication of her book *Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745): A Bohemian Musician at the Court of Dresden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) in the Czech language (trans. Vlasta Hesounová, Prague: Nakladatelství Vyšehrad, 2018). Bringing together leading Zelenka scholars with differing approaches and perspectives, the conference was filled with lively debate; its atmosphere was that of a convivial gathering of specialists connected by a strong desire to forge new paths in Zelenka research while continuing to raise the reputation and public awareness of the composer. The mutual respect between all speakers and their enthusiasm for their subject were clear throughout the day.

The seven conference papers were presented in four short sessions, beginning with a detailed and carefully researched investigation from Lukáš Vokřínek (Univerzita Karlova) into godparenthood in the family of the schoolmaster, organist and father of Zelenka, Jiřík Zelenka Bavorovský. Vokřínek explained the significance of godparenthood in early modern Bohemian rural areas for a family’s social status and presented a wealth of data showing the number of children for whom Zelenka Bavorovský and his wife, Marie (Magdalena) Zelenková, served as godparents. This intriguing paper provided an excellent backdrop to the conference by capturing the social network in which Zelenka’s parents moved and situating Zelenka himself within this local milieu.