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ABSTRACTS

Day 1: 25 June 2026

Session A1 (EJB130): Gustav Mahler (Sherry Lee, Chair)

Thomas Peattie (University of Mississippi), "Gustav Mahler, (Anti-)Maximalist"

Among the least explored aspects of Gustav Mahler's postwar reception is the oft-repeated claim about the excesses of his music, a charge most recently revived by Richard Taruskin in his account of the composer's maximalist impulse (Taruskin, 2005). Underlying this view are several assumptions that remain to be fully untangled, including the belief that Mahler's music stands at the endpoint of the Austro-German symphonic line, that Mahler himself is the last of the nineteenth-century composer-heroes, and that his contribution to the history of the symphony represents a late stage of musical Romanticism often associated with a still ill-defined notion of "post-Romantic" music. To be sure, there are no shortage of examples that can be used to highlight Mahler's self-evident maximalism, including the sprawling Third Symphony, a work in which the expressive possibilities of the genre are pushed to their breaking point. In this paper I suggest that these impulses are nevertheless almost always tempered by a less often discussed quality of restraint that emerges as a particularly important characteristic in his late works. By placing excerpts from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and *Kindertotenlieder* alongside passages from the Sixth, Eighth, and Ninth Symphonies, I argue that the overriding character of Mahler's entire oeuvre is in fact one of frugality, a tendency that can be traced to his earliest compositions. That this tendency can also be found in precisely those moments of excess in which the music often collapses in on itself, further reveals the composer's ambivalence toward his own maximalizing tendencies.

Virginia Bernardoni (University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz), "Performing Mahler's Contralto: Materiality and Vocal Agency in *Das klagende Lied*"

Lawrence Kramer identifies Mahler's contralto as a locus of transcendence—a gender-ambiguous voice mediating spiritual revelation and existential reflection. Sherry Lee, focusing on *Das klagende Lied*, interprets this voice as an "impossible" or disembodied

utterance, collapsing boundaries between narration and enactment. While both offer valuable insights, they overlook the material and performative conditions through which such voices are realised.

Building on this scholarship, the present study moves beyond hermeneutic readings of Mahler's vocal writing to examine how performance practice—particularly the casting of mezzo-sopranos in the alto role of *Das klagende Lied*—reconfigures the aesthetic and narrative functions of the *Alt-Stimme* as a site where compositional design and performative agency intersect. The work's performance history shows the necessity of voice-type flexibility; for example, Mahler substituted contralto Karoline Kusmitsch with mezzo Edyth Walker for the Viennese premiere in 1901, and only 23.5% of later recordings feature contraltos. Comparative analysis of recordings by, e.g., Sieglinde Wagner, Janet Baker, Marjana Lipovšek, and Linda Finnie further demonstrates that timbral distinctions between contraltos and mezzos escape a specific Fach and are suggestively individual. The distinctive vocal identities of these performers therefore resist any notion of a unified or "authentic" Mahlerian voice.

Their interpretations displace ideas of vocal liminality and universality, revealing moments of supposed disembodiment as grounded in the embodied particularity of individual voices. *The Alt-Stimme* is thus ultimately a site of performative negotiation, in which the material and interpretive agency of singers themselves calls into question notions of gender-ambiguous transcendence and disembodied "impossibility."

Sean Wood (McGill University), "Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* in the Context of Child-Loss Musical Culture at the Turn of the 20th Century"

Content warning: child/infant death

The deaths of children always haunt the fringes of musical culture, but no Western-art-music piece is as associated with the topic as Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*. A common notion in the enormous literature on the cycle is that it is an exemplary illustration of child-loss grief in its time; Peter Russell, for example, writes that they give "surpassing expression" to their subject matter (Russell 1991, 3). The songs are indeed connected to the realities of 19th and early 20th-century child loss in important ways, but in this paper, I argue that they are only one, limited instance of a relationship between child loss and musical life that that was once much more multifaceted. To take just one example, American sheet music archives hold hundreds of popular, sentimental songs dealing directly with the topic of child loss from a variety of angles: "The First and Only Shoes that Baby Wore," "Insane Through the Loss of Her Child," "The Picture of My Baby on the Wall," for example (Harcourt 1896, Hardman 1898, Getz 1890). These songs point not only to a wildly diverse range of child-loss music, but to concrete musical grief practices in the home; while the Kindertotenlieder are progressive and formally-beautiful anatomies of the grieving psyche, they are distant from the sounds families would have actually used to mourn their dead. The history of child loss often suffers from "silences, absences, and elisions" that are characteristic of histories marked by trauma

(Cizmić et al. 2024, 559). This paper aims to contribute to the work of rebuilding our understanding of the cultural impact of high child mortality.

Session A2 (EJB130): Donizetti and His World (Joshua David, chair)

Ditlev Rindom (University of Rome La Sapienza), "The Vanishing Buffo: *Don Checco*, Neapolitan Opera Buffa and Improvisatory Performance"

Nicola De Giosa's *Don Checco* (1850) is regularly described as the final great success of the Neapolitan opera buffa tradition. Set at a village inn near Naples, the plot characteristically focuses on financial woes, intergenerational conflict and romantic frustration – narrative threads pulled together via the debt-ridden Don Checco, posing as Count de Ridolfi. Integral to the work's success was buffo bass Raffaele Casaccia, part of a distinguished family line of performers who excelled in the improvisatory dialogue and physical comedy typical of Neapolitan theatre (Werr, 2002; De Simone, 2014). While the work's extensive Neapolitan-language sections were translated and reworked to enable circulation outside Naples, *Don Checco* nonetheless disappeared from the stage by the late 1870s until a handful of revivals in the twenty first century.

This paper examines the earliest Neapolitan discourses around *Don Checco* – particularly the contributions of Casaccia and fellow buffo Giuseppe Fioravanti – to investigate the historical challenges posed by improvisatory operatic performance. Neapolitan opera buffa has typically been explored against Naples's urban fabric (Sapienza, 1998; Oliva, 2019; Rindom, 2025), but *Don Checco* also bears witness to a growing commodification of embodied performance practices at the mid nineteenth century – a development nonetheless in tension with the political fractures of the Italian peninsula c1850, particularly within Naples. Drawing on manuscripts and theatrical treatises held at the Biblioteca Lucchesi Palli and Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella, this paper ultimately asks what traces De Giosa's score might offer of its vanished performers, and what historically-informed reconstruction might mean today.

Candida Mantica (University of Pavia), "From Sierra Morena to Hispaniola: Colonial Tensions in Donizetti's *Il furioso all'isola di S. Domingo* (1833)"

Donizetti's *Il furioso all'isola di S. Domingo* premiered in Rome in 1833, achieving immediate success. Rooted in Cardenio and Lucinda's episode from Cervantes' Don Quixote (1606-1615), the opera's libretto, by Ferretti, draws on a contemporary anonymous *azione teatrale*, which relocates the story from the Sierra Morena to Hispaniola – a crossroads of European imperialism that gained prominence after revolts leading to the abolition of slavery and the independence of the island's western side (1804). This setting frames the drama within a dense colonial landscape, most vividly embodied by the unprecedented character of the Moorish slave Kaidamà.

This paper situates Donizetti's *Il furioso* within the broader discourse of international imperialism, reflecting on how the depiction of slavery has been refracted across the opera's theatrical tradition. I first examine the earliest operatic adaptation of the azione, Tommasoni's *Il solitario di Ceylan* (1817), set in Sri Lanka (a British colony since 1815), highlighting an English character's anti-slavery stance alongside the westernising ambitions of Maurizio (=Kaidamà). I then investigate a revised version of the azione (1833), which distorts colonial relations under moralising paternalism. Finally, I turn to Donizetti, demonstrating how his opera preserves and amplifies the colonial tensions of its hypotext. By examining two key scenes – the Introduzione and the first-act duet Cardenio-Kaidamà – I show how, through the filter of comic masks, Donizetti depicts Kaidamà's socio-cultural and emotional isolation, prompting nuanced social reflection on colonial hierarchies. Ultimately, I argue that *Il furioso* emerges as a bold engagement with international imperialistic dynamics, foregrounding its controversial reception.

Eleonora Di Cintio (Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom), "*Caterina Cornaro* and Others: Politics on the Italian Stage on the Eve of 1848"

The recent critical edition of Giacomo Sacchero and Gaetano Donizetti's *Caterina Cornaro* has brought to light the original version of a work that was heavily censored before its premiere at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples in 1844. Thus restored, *Caterina* lends itself to politically-inflected readings: in particular one in which the Cypriot revolt against Venice might seem – at least to modern audiences – to foreshadow a yearning for independence nurtured by a people against illegitimate rulers.

Giuseppe Verdi's works before 1848 suggest that *Caterina Cornaro* was not an isolated case of an Italian opera in which one can find elements referring to the political aspirations shared by at least some Italians at that time. However, our limited knowledge of the contemporary operatic scene on the peninsula makes it difficult to determine whether and to what extent other titles also featured plots, poetry and musical patterns potentially referring to political subtexts; who their authors were, the contexts in which they worked, the audiences for which they wrote.

Following recent studies on the relationship between Italian opera and politics during the Risorgimento (Parker, Smart, Vella), this paper sets out to examine a series of works produced in Milan and Naples in the 1840s – by figures such as Sacchero, Jannetti, F. Ricci, Salvi – which, like *Caterina Cornaro*, seem open to political interpretation. In doing so, it aims to recover their "reference field", in the process proposing a more nuanced picture of opera's political engagement in Italy on the eve of 1848.

Session B2 (EJB120): Vienna (Timothy Neufeldt, chair)

Abigail Fine (University of Oregon), "Ready-Made Memory: Kitsch and the Ephemeral in the Musical 'Albumblatt'"

In recent years, musicologists have turned to friendship albums as a tantalizing window into lost social networks and repertoires (Goldberg, Rost). True to their nickname, albums are bunte Blätter, "colorful leaves" of hand-copied poems, drawings, and musical excerpts. But these pages were not as uniquely personal as they appear: the average person was known to copy verse from marketed anthologies, a predecessor of today's Hallmark cards, which produced the same tension between gift and commodity explored by James Davies. By the century's end, miniature photographs and signature books became the preferred way to archive friendships.

This paper shows that the album practice did not die around 1900, but rather jumped from the handwritten page into the medium of Hausmusik, of domestic piano and chamber works. As albums became less numerous, subscription piano magazines and newspaper supplements were peppered with pieces called "Albumblatt," or album leaf, which were not transcribed gifts but sonic representations of gazing upon a tiny page, a trenchant word or curlicue. These works by a litany of unknown Austro-German composers diverge from earlier "Album Leaves" from the Schumann and Mendelssohn circles (Hück). A collection of over two hundred works from Viennese music magazines reveals a stylized language of ready-made memory, with formulaic verse structures that are painted in darkly nostalgic harmonies. These forgotten works in magazines bridge the ephemeral aesthetics of the handwritten album, known for its symbolism of falling leaves and passing moments, with the emerging twentieth-century problem of kitsch, the earnest sentiments stirred by platitudes.

Sadie Menicanin (University of Oslo), "The Wienerwald as Vienna's Musical *Genius Loci* c. 1900"

According to an account published in *Anbruch*, Gustav Mahler had once envisioned the construction of a pair of opera houses on the Kahlenberg, a beloved local hill at the edge of the Wienerwald offering spectacular views of Vienna. These twinned houses—one dedicated to Mozart's works and the other to Wagner's—would host an annual summer festival far removed both physically and ideologically from the Hofoper on the Ringstraße. Additional sources from the early 1910s reveal that others had also discussed the prospect of a Bayreuth-style festival theater situated on the wooded hills overlooking Vienna. Although this vision was never realized, this paper asserts that it is nonetheless revealing of the Wienerwald's symbolic relevance for turn-of-the-century Vienna's musical life and identity. Moreover, it exemplifies the broader cultural significance of the Kahlenberg as a site of "commemorative and image-forming" views of the city (Musner 2009); such views were a widespread iconographic trope c. 1900 that rendered the Wienerwald as Vienna's "complementary" landscape (Békési and Doppler 2021). Taking this unrealized opera festival project as a point of departure, I contextualize it in relation to other musical

engagements with the Wienerwald around 1900 and to the woods' vital role in the formalization of the idea of Vienna as a 'Musikstadt.' Drawing on little-known visual and written evidence, I assert that the Wienerwald, a familiar landscape largely neglected in musicological scholarship, was popularly regarded as Vienna's musical *genius loci*—the source of the city's innate musical identity and itself a sonorous, musical landscape.

Micaela Baranello (Temple University), "Women's Movements, Viennese Operetta, and Austro-Hungarian Liberalism"

Is operetta progressive? A wave of performance projects and scholars have claimed this repertory as forward-looking and subversive while older, critical theory-influenced veins of scholarship consider it reactionary nostalgia. In this paper, I seek a more nuanced approach by examining *Die Juxheirat*, Franz Lehár's largely forgotten 1904 operetta concerning the suffrage movement. Drawing on work by political historians such as Pieter Judson and John Boyer as well as operetta texts and reception, I argue that Viennese operetta at the end of the Habsburg Empire should be read as a product of Austro-Hungarian liberalism, dedicated to the reintegration of rebellious elements into an orderly, somewhat diverse body politic.

Die Juxheirat's protagonist, Julie, the daughter of a New England robber baron and leader of a women's suffrage club, initially sings and acts like the heroine of a nineteenth-century operetta, indulging in its *Juxe* (jokes), fluid gender performance, and Offenbach-style music. Male lead Harold pulls her into the earnest expression and lyrical singing typical of the later operetta style exemplified by Lehár (as well as its "he and she" heteronormativity). This dual focus narrative (a term I borrow from Rick Altman) is the prototypical dramaturgical structure of "Silver Age" operetta, which may evince fascination with modernity but still prioritizes reconciliation to social norms. Though operetta plots are often considered mere formula, here I also argue for their salience as vehicles of meaning.

Session A3 Panel (EJB130) Intertextualities in Nineteenth-Century Music and Dance: Shared Repertoires and Networks of Circulation on the Parisian Stage **(Trevor Penoyer-Kulin, chair and respondent)**

This panel challenges the way we think about theatrical music and dance in the nineteenth century by taking commercial theatres seriously as producers and purveyors of French culture. Whereas most studies of French lyric theatre continue to prioritize the repertoire of state-subsidized "high art" institutions such as the Opéra and Opéra-Comique, our panel shifts scholarly attention to genres and repertoires previously denigrated as inconsequential "lightweight" entertainment staged in profit-oriented venues such as vaudeville and spectacle theatres. This repertoire, which includes thousands of vaudevilles, operettas, and ballets, formed the backbone of Parisian musical culture in prevalence and popularity, yet it remains in the shadows of French cultural history.

Our papers foreground popular genres and institutions as significant players in a complex web of cultural transfer and intertextuality in nineteenth-century Paris. Our first focuses on ballets staged in melodrama, vaudeville, and spectacle theatres, following trends that moved interchangeably between "high" and popular institutions; our second traces choreographic connections across repertoires and theatres, demonstrating a common gestural language understood by broad audiences throughout the century; and our third examines topical and musical intertextuality through the much neglected but wildly popular genre of vaudeville. All three highlight the centrality of popular repertoires to nineteenth-century French culture and reconsider commercial art forms as creative works with a value of their own, as reflections and generators of contemporary trends and tastes, and as key elements in a broader network of cultural artifacts.

Sarah Gutsche-Miller (University of Toronto), "Popular Venues and the Circulation of Ballet in Nineteenth-Century Paris"

When we think about ballet in nineteenth-century Paris, we immediately think of the Opéra. This is reasonable. Before the dissolution in 1864 of Napoleonic theatre laws that restricted certain genres to specific theatres, the Opéra was one of only two theatres officially permitted to stage narrative ballets with dance and mime. Yet newspaper listings and archival collections of programmes and libretti from the 1840s and 1850s reveal dozens of ballets staged in a wide variety of commercial venues, from the Porte-Saint-Martin and Gaîté, Vaudeville and Variétés, to the Folies-Nouvelle and Funambules. Most of these theatres also produced large-scale spectacles that incorporated extended ballet divertissements or staged works titled pantomime that were in fact ballets.

My paper focuses on nineteenth-century Parisian ballet outside of the Opéra before theatre deregulation. I begin with an overview of venues that staged ballets and discuss questions of genre and institution. I then turn to examples of ballets that circulated throughout Paris, demonstrating that choreographic topics and trends moved interchangeably between popular and "high" institutions and formed a network of topical and choreographic resonances over many decades. Although now forgotten, the ballets staged as popular entertainment in the mid nineteenth century were central to the French cultural imagination and to the history of ballet.

Helena Kopchick Spencer (University of North Carolina Wilmington), "Interchoreologies in Nineteenth-Century Ballet: Henri Justamant's Divertissements for the Parisian Commercial Theatres"

When *Les Parisiens à Londres* premiered at the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin in late September 1866, the central attraction of this *fantaisie à grand spectacle* was Henri Justamant's "parade of nations" ballet featuring classical *pas* for French ballerinas and character dances depicting Middle Eastern almées, Mexicans, and South Americans. Henry de Pène, editor of the *Gazette des Étrangers*, asserted that Justamant's divertissement

"certainly surpasses everything the Opéra has done in recent years." Likewise, critic Charles Monselet effused that Justamant had created "dazzling ballets [...] that the Opéra has never equaled!"

As Sarah Gutsche-Miller has shown, late nineteenth-century Paris enjoyed a vibrant ballet culture in popular venues outside of the Opéra. In this paper, I examine Justamant's notations of ballets for the Porte-Saint-Martin and several other Parisian commercial theatres, including the Palace-Théâtre, Menus-Plaisirs, and Château d'Eau. Specifically, I focus on Justamant's practice of repurposing material from his own ballets previously created for state-sponsored and regional theaters. Not only do Justamant's self-borrowings reveal the technical and expressive skills of dancers employed at popular theatres, but they also illuminate a network of embodied "interchoreologies" through which certain gestural vocabularies – and their accompanying musical scores – circulated among various repertoires and theatres.

Mark Everist (University of Southampton), "Music, Theatre and Memory: Rewriting the History of Music for the Parisian Stage"

Understanding nineteenth-century repertoires of music in the Parisian theatre encourages placing "opera" in context. Out of the total of 32,000 works for the nineteenth-century Parisian stage, there are only 1600 *opéras* and *opéras-comique*; *opérette* appears to take up about the same amount of repertorial space with all examples mounted after 1855. Freestanding ballets count less than 500 with *pantomimes* reaching nearly 1000. But the most important genre by far was the *vaudeville* and related types, which dominated music in the Parisian theatre with 10,500 works.

As a genre that sits perfectly balanced between the study of music and theatre, the music in *vaudeville* has, however, been ignored by theatre scholars since it is deemed to fall outside their purview, and by scholars of music because almost all the music in the *vaudeville* is borrowed – from well-known songs indexed the *clé du caveau*, contemporary *romance* and song, dance music, *opéra*, *opéra-comique*, *opérette* after 1855. But not only does the intertextual complexity that characterises the French lyric stage across the entire nineteenth century prompt questions about musical literacy and institutional access to music, it also shows how *vaudeville* and related types evoke musical and dramatic memory from one end of the long nineteenth century to the other.

Roundtable: The panel will be followed by a discussion about theatre terminology and concepts such as "popular," "secondary," and "commercial."

Session B3 (EJB120) Liszt in situ (Emily McCallum, chair)

Theodora Serbanescu-Martin (Cornell University), "Liszt as Necromancer: Morgues, Waste, and the Ecology of Romantic Death"

This paper reimagines Franz Liszt as a necromancer of pianism—a figure whose hands, gestures, and garments materialized a Romantic ideology of touch. Situating Liszt within the nineteenth century's scientific and occult discourses surrounding decay and preservation, I read his technique through the intertwined histories of thermodynamics and vitalism. Opening with the mythology of Liszt's outstretched hand, I trace the material contexts of virtuosity—from François Delsarte's corpse studies identifying the thumb as the "thermometer of life" and contemporary cooling technologies in the morgue, to astrology, palmistry, and phrenology—that shaped Romantic practices of body-reading and Liszt's so-called main morte ("dead-hand") technique. My performance-based analysis of *Réminiscences de Don Juan* shows this life-death paradox literally: in the *ossia* cadenza, the pianist's hands engulf one another, mirroring Don Giovanni's predatory hand-holding and the statue's embrace simultaneously. Liszt's technique thus indexed the piano as a medium of reanimation.

Drawing on literary and visual parallels—from Gautier's "Étude de mains" to Dickens's morgue imagery in *The Uncommercial Traveler*—I argue that Liszt's pianism functioned as an ecological experiment in vitalist-materialist reproduction. His black cloak—both religious and occult symbol—analogously reflected this cosmology. Dressed as such, Liszt performed as a magician of electrical, emotional, and spiritual forces, linking (nec)Romantic virtuosity to thermodynamic models of energy and entropy. Bridging ecomusicology, literary and performance studies, and the history of science, this paper interprets Liszt's pianism as an ecology of Romantic death: a practice that transformed decay, residue, and waste into sites of aesthetic renewal.

Jamie Meyers-Riczu and James Deaville (Carleton University), "'The Hills are Alive…': Liszt, the 'Alpine Sublime', and Geomusical Creativity"

As a looming presence at the continent's center, the Alps have long figured in the European imaginary (MacFarlane 2003), yet for most they remained a "distant presence" (Hoeckner 2002), both fascinating and terrifying: "A peak can exercise the same irresistible power of attraction as an abyss" (Gautier 1858/1907, 13). This dual perception reflects Burke's, and later Kant's, aesthetics of the sublime (Doran, 2015), a concept that resonated with 19th-century artists, writers, and composers before Alpine tourism took hold.

Liszt occupies a leading position among musicians who engaged with the Alps (Ozturk 2012), for he knew them both through contemporary literature and his own travels of discovery. Drawing on the aesthetic and experience of the Alpine sublime, compositions like the *Années de pèlerinage* and *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* rest upon a "geomusical" creativity that exceeds the picturesque character traditionally assigned by musicologists. To

date, scholarship has not entertained the materiality of Liszt's experience of montane topography in analysing his Alps-inspired works.

This paper opens the discussion of Liszt's visceral Alpine experiences by studying the topographical aesthetic and geomusical creativity underlying *Ce qu'on entend*… It draws on first-hand accounts of his 1837 encounter with Mont Blanc's Mer de Glace (Liszt 1837, Pictet 1838) as well as period writings about the mountain by Hugo, Coleridge, and the Shelleys. Closely reading the symphonic poem and accompanying program via Liszt's experiences and the literature suggests the work's material grounding in the Alpine sublime, a perspective that neither Hoeckner (2004) nor Cormac (2017) consider.

Noriko Kamiyama (Shizuoka University of Art and Culture), "The Niederrhein Music Festival in the 1850s–1860s: 'Musical Worship' within a 'National Festival'"

Founded in 1818, the Niederrhein Music Festival soon became one of Germany's leading music events. By the early 1820s, a two-day plan was set: an oratorio on the first day and, on the second, a large orchestral program centered on Beethoven. Conductors such as Ferdinand Ries and Felix Mendelssohn reinforced this model, and an "Artists' Concert" added in 1833 signaled a gradual shift from broad civic music-making toward a more professional concert culture. After the revolutions, the 1851 relaunch reaffirmed the template: day one, an oratorio; day two, a Beethoven symphony.

This paper focuses on the 1850s and 1860s, when those pillars hardened into ritual. Across the seventeen festivals held in these two decades, an oratorio anchored every opening day, and a Beethoven symphony was heard in all but one year. Repetition of canonized masterworks—sustained by audience expectation and institutional habit—cemented its status as a national festival and served as a communal rite of "musical worship," affirming shared cultural identity.

The single major break came at Aachen in 1857, when Franz Liszt conducted Handel's *Messiah* on the first day but, on the next, omitted Beethoven and offered Schubert's "Great" C-major Symphony, Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ*, Wagner's *Tannhäuser* Overture, and his own symphonic poems. This more progressive program exposed mid-century tensions and encouraged later variety.

By the 1870s, programs without an oratorio, without Beethoven, or without both were no longer unusual. Liszt's 1857 intervention thus stands as a controversial turning point that helped redirect the festival's course.

PLENARY (EJB330): Futures of Nineteenth-Century Music

panelists: Berthold Hoeckner (University of Notre Dame), Ellen Lockhart (University of Toronto), Sadie Menicanin (University of Oslo), Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers (University of Ottawa), Ditlev Rindom (University of Rome La Sapienza)

The nineteenth century once served as the disciplinary heartland of musicology—the era that gave us the classical canon, the autonomous artwork, the virtuoso, and the very idea of "music history" as a narrative of progress and genius.

This plenary session imagines futures of nineteenth-century music study: its traditions and values, materialities and economies, discourses and performances. identities and encounters.

Looking forward, it asks how emerging approaches—transnational history, sound and media studies, performance research, ecocriticism, the digital humanities, and others—are reshaping not only our answers but our questions.

Day 2: 26 June 2026

Session A4 (EJB130) Late Liszt (Anton Vishio, chair)

Danny Huang (College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati), "For a 'Society of Virtuosity': The Pedagogical 'War of the Romantics' between Franz Liszt's Later Masterclasses and the Conservatories (1869–96)"

"Leipzigerisch" and "get thee to the conservatory!" are frequently cited as evidence of Franz Liszt's lifelong and utter disdain for conservatories (Walker 1996, Hamilton 2008). Yet such extreme judgments of the conservatory's professionalized and systematized education overlook the valent nature of Liszt's own pedagogy. Liszt experimented with the masterclass in Weimar in 1848-61 as a means to differentiate his pedagogical method from the conservatory model, which discursively formed a "Society of virtuosity." Following Michel Foucault's concept of a "Society of discourse" (Foucault 1972), I suggest that Liszt's "Society" operated in opposition to the conservatories' use of group instruction.

My paper tests this concept against masterclasses given by Hans von Bülow and Clara Schumann at the Frankfurt conservatories. I assess them as a microcosm of a broader didactic conflict—which raged with particular zeal in Germany—among competing discursive societies, as it unfolded in their student's notes and reminiscences and as evidenced in the editions used in those pedagogical settings. Liszt ritualized his class decorum through carefully facilitating language for spoken and musical dialogues with his students and observers. Bülow imparted a historicist curriculum, with his classes hovering between inspired and scholastic interpretations.

Schumann evoked tradition as a means of community building, immersing her students by involving colleagues like Joseph Joachim and Johannes Brahms to work with them. Given these various musical communities, Liszt's approach is not necessarily a wholesale dismissal of conservatory culture, but rather a discontinuity in the teaching and dissemination of piano virtuosity in the *Bildung* tradition.

Caleb Labbe Phelan (University of Toronto), "Mephisto Waltz no. 3 as Late Liszt's Virtuosic Critique"

Humphrey Searle deemed Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz* no. 3 (1883) as one of the composer's finest and most "ruthless" achievements, yet the piece is often overlooked in the literature in favour of the more popular 1862 *Mephisto Waltz* no. 1 (Larkin 2015) or other "late Liszt" works (Loya 2020). The virtuosic, brash, and experimental sounds of the third Waltz—which Liszt himself called in an 1884 masterclass a "terrible piece" devoid of the basics of harmony and form from its opening measures—have made it challenging to interpret. This paper reconfigures the supposed stylistic lateness of *Mephisto Waltz* no. 3 as Liszt's retrospective musical commentary upon changing attitudes and approaches to his brand of virtuoso pianism.

In line with Derek Scott's argument that Liszt's demonic works negate and parody musical beauty (2003), I examine contextual anecdotes from Liszt's late masterclasses that suggest his very intentional composition of ungainly and banal piano music for the *Mephisto Waltz* no. 3 to express its poetic subject, the demonic Mephistopheles. In a short formal analysis and summary of the author's experience playing the piece at the piano, I demonstrate the ways Liszt foregrounds sonic ugliness with coarse formal seams that stitch together repetitive and tiring virtuosic gestures. I argue that Liszt consistently invokes, repeats, and distorts his earlier techniques of transcendental virtuosity in *Mephisto Waltz* no. 3 to deliberately compose a cutting critique of the culture of pianistic virtuosity that he had so famously and controversially cultivated earlier in the nineteenth century.

Sheridan Zahl (Eastman School of Music), "Franz Liszt's Late Piano Music: Romanticism Towards the Inorganic"

Franz Liszt's solo piano music from the last decade of his life is often difficult to understand historically. Pieces which belong to what James Baker (2005) calls "music of premonition, death, and mourning," such as *Trübe Wolken* (*Nuages gris*) and *La lugubre gondola*, exhibit musical techniques atypical of their time. While scholars have frequently worked to consider these pieces in terms of twentieth-century developments by approaching them analytically (Forte, 1987; Toth, 2016; Chapkanov, 2024), I respond to Shay Loya's call (2021) to anchor these late piano pieces in the context of Liszt's life and time. Building on work that explores the older Liszt's state of mind (Pesce, 2014; Coleman, 2023), I propose that Liszt's late "hidden" piano music from the third *Années de pèlerinage* (1877) until his death in 1886 can be understood as representing his personal melancholy state which he associated with "lower-willed" inorganic objects. I explore compositional strategies in *Trübe Wolken* and their potential to express Liszt's interiority via Arthur Schopenhauer's idea of the will (1844/1859), familiar to Liszt, Eduard Hanslick's formalism (1854; Bonds, 2012), and Benedict Taylor's (2022) recent explorations of musical subjectivity. In doing so, I trace the ways in which Liszt's music translates his empathy for the inorganic world into personal expressions of human subjectivity, placing this music firmly in the realm of nineteenth-century romantic individual utterance rather than twentieth-century futurity. Yet, given Liszt's concern with *Zukunftsmusik*, I end by hinting that Liszt's philosophical orientation towards the inorganic hiddenly anticipated future musical outlooks.

Session B4 (EJB120) Voice, Texture, and Idea (Robin Elliott, chair)

Sarah Waltz (University of the Pacific), "'The Starry Sky Above Us': Beethoven and the Changing Universe"

Beethoven's transcription of the phrase "The Moral Law within us and the Starry Sky above us… Kant!!!" comes into Beethoven's conversation book of 1820, immediately after he read a *Wiener Zeitschrift* article on cosmology. Beethoven's first subsequent composition (WoO 150, *Abendlied unterm gestirnten Himmel*) evinces a "starry sky" topic going beyond the

typical high-register "twinkling" starlight in earlier lieder. WoO 150's starlight, with thick-textured repeated triadic sonorities ascending into high registers, adds a representation of the infinite—widely-spaced, high-register sustained chords that similarly accompany the star reference "Über Sternen muss' er wohnen" in the Ninth Symphony. Similar representations of the infinite appear in the Op. 59 no. 2 quartet slow movement, where Czerny reports Beethoven was contemplating the starry skies.

This paper positions Beethoven's representations of the infinite in the "starry sky" topic against the period's new cosmology. Beethoven's lifetime had seen the old cosmology—the seven heavenly bodies, the sphere of "fixed stars"—upended by musician-astronomer William Herschel's improved telescopes, adding not just the planet Uranus (1781) but also myriad comets and deep-sky objects, which eventually confirmed Kant's "nebular hypothesis" in the *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*. Beethoven, who owned Kant's treatise, was not alone in his awe of this new universe: no longer static but infinite, growing, changing—and perhaps inhabited beyond earth. The paper, considering musical examples of the sublime relating to cosmology, suggests that general expressions of the sublime in the early nineteenth century were conditioned by the bold expansions of cosmological and scientific discovery.

Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers (University of Ottawa), "Text and Texture in Clara Schumann's Lieder"

This paper examines the relationship between text expression and voice-leading texture in Clara Schumann's Lieder. I consider three voice-leading devices: linear intervallic patterns (LIPs), chromatic wedges, and pedal points; and I suggest that Schumann exploits the contrasting kinetic impulses of these devices—fluid LIPs, tension-building contrary motion, static pedals—in order to create ever-varied textural 'streams' (De Souza 2015) and tapestries. Building on earlier hermeneutic analyses (Schmalfeldt 2011, Pedneault-Deslauriers 2021, Rodgers 2023), I show how these configurations interact with the poetic texts that Schumann sets.

The formal role, modular and motivic potential, and expressive effect of these textures emerge through five representative analyses. In particular, pedals and LIPs appear in *succession* in "Ich hab' in deinem Auge" and "Sie liebten sich beide." The pedal's stasis and 'expectancy-tension' (Margulis 2005, Koslovsky 2012, Vujović 2019) are used to underscore the poems' ambiguous incipits; immediately afterwards, flowing LIPs (Cadwallader and Gagné 2007, Ricci 2011) provide musical continuity and complete the poetic thought. Alternatively, LIPs and pedals are *superimposed* in "Liebeszauber," "Die stille Lotosblume," and "Geheimes Flüstern." Here, the textural layouts topically evoke whispering foliage and bird songs; and Schumann reconfigures these textures to capture moments of poetic-subjective revelation. Finally, the semi-replicative structure of wedges (Telesco 1998, Gauldin 2004, Dittrich 2007, Franck 2011) is used—with or without LIPs and pedals—to encapsulate psychological tension ("Beim Abschied") or to depict mirroring poetic images

("Ich hab' in deinem Auge.") In sum, Schumann's kaleidoscopic handling of voice-leading devices is a key strategy for linking texture to text expression in her lieder.

Claire O'Donnell (Maynooth University), "The Many Lives of John Field's Nocturne no. 5: From Vocal Origins to Pianistic Embellishments (and Back)"

The origins of the vocal character of John Field's innovative piano nocturnes, along with the composer's frequent habit of revising his works, have long perplexed scholars. This paper proposes to re-examine both questions through a case study of Field's Nocturne no. 5. Originally written as a "Serenade," it was shortened and republished as a "Nocturne," redrafted with orchestral accompaniment, and finally adapted as a vocal piece set to an Italian poem.

Of particular interest is the oft-overlooked song adaptation, which may provide key insight into how Field conceived his piano nocturnes in vocal terms. Indeed, recently emerged evidence suggests that Field received early training in 18th-century Italian *solfeggio*, which taught phrase rhythms based on the meters of poetic verse. Furthermore, past scholars have viewed Field's frequent revisions as indicating a "casual" or even "lazy" approach to composition. This attitude likely stems from the 19th-century emergence of the work-concept – a view of works as untouchable masterpieces, written by composers for posterity. This paper will discuss how Field's training under Italian Galant musicians Tommaso Giordani and Muzio Clementi was still strongly rooted in 18th-century tradition, an era which required musicians to compose "in the here and now" to meet the demands of patrons. As such, an analysis of the different versions of Nocturne no. 5 will reframe Field's compositional habits, not as haphazard, but as driven by a changing patron-based economy. These pieces, long attributed to Romantic inventiveness, instead reflect novelty born from continuity: 18th-century craft adapted to 19th-century commercial realities.

Session A5 (EJB130) Lecture Recital

Zoey Cochran and Robin Wheeler (Université de Montréal), "Rethinking Text-Music Relations in Verdi's *La traviata* through Prosodically Informed Vocal Performance"

This lecture-recital is part of a larger SSHRC-funded research project that reinterprets tension between poetic and musical accents through prosodically informed performance. Musicological studies tend to interpret contradictions between musical setting and text accents as moments in which musical motivations won over textual ones (Bianconi 2005; Fabbri 2007; Kahlke 1996; Parker 1997). However, this view, often based on an analysis of the score, forgets that singers can approach musically accentuated notes in different ways. In this lecture-recital, we argue that when singers follow the accentuation of the poem, their performance reveals that these moments of tension were strong expressive means used by composers.

Our lecture-recital will focus on excerpts from Verdi's *La traviata*. Each aria will be performed twice: first as it is conventionally performed (with a focus on musical accentuation), then, after a prosodic analysis of the text, with the poetic accentuation. For example, in "De' miei bollenti spiriti"—DE' miei bollenti spiriti / IL giovanile ardore / ELla temprò col placido / SorRIso dell'amore (prosodic accents are in bold, musical accents underlined and capitalized)—the direction towards the fourth syllable, followed by another accent on six, generates a nervous energy that reflects Alfredo's internal agitation. On the word "sorriso," the prosodic and musical accents coincide, releasing the tension and reinforcing the rupture in the libretto. Responding to Philip Gossett's call for collaboration between musicologists and performers (2006), we integrate vocal performance into musicological analysis, revising current approaches to text-music relations in nineteenth-century Italian opera.

Repertoire:

"Ah fors'è lui"

"Lunge da lei…De' miei bollenti spiriti"

"Parigi o cara"

Session B5 (EJB120) Failed Reconciliations (Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers, chair)

Jan Meßtorff (Rostock University of Music and Theatre), "Undertones Unheard: Riemann's Speculative Acoustics and its Collapse"

Following experiments on combination tones by Giuseppe Tartini and Hermann von Helmholtz, Hugo Riemann ventured into speculative territory once he started to believe in the objective existence of undertones. Since that moment he sought to substantiate his belief through various means. Different argumentations in his dissertation, followed by the article »Die objective Existenz der Untertöne in der Schallwelle«, and later reflections in the »Musikalische Syntaxis« failed to provide a satisfactory explanation. Nevertheless, Riemann built his means of notation and analysis, the »Unterklänge« as »Klangschlüssel« and »Leittonwechselklänge« in the »Funktionstheorie«. Despite the thorough reception of Helmholtz' ideas by Riemann, both authors are divided by their use of scientific methods. Absolute objectivity in Helmholtz' writing is contrasted by subjective perception in Riemann's experiments.

Inductive theory is combined with a deductive approach by the latter, whereas Helmholtz remains in his physical laboratory, detached from speculative musical thought—surrounded by resonators and a provisionally modified harmonium with just intervals. Riemann offered ingenious but empirically fragile explanations for the inaudibility of undertones: such as the merging of undertones with combination tones or destructive interference. Ultimately, his pursuit of undertones seems to have led him into a theoretical dead end—one he would later

acknowledge himself, admitting in retrospect that he had been mistaken in believing in their objective existence. This rare moment of self-correction marks a turning point in his theoretical framework and its relation to empirical validation.

Laurie McManus (Shenandoah University), "Max Graf's Wagner Reception: A Case Study in Musicological Synthesis"

In late nineteenth-century Viennese discourse, two distinct strands of proto-musicological analysis developed: On one hand, Guido Adler and his followers tried to objectify the study of music into *Musikwissenschaft* by focusing on positivistic qualities of works in style periods. On the other hand, Richard Wagner and followers, drawing on the work of Arthur Schopenhauer, attempted to psychologize the compositional process, situating it in the unconsciousness and thereby placing it beyond the reach of rational inquiry. This paper focuses on the work of Max Graf (1873–1958), who, I argue, created a synthesis of these strands that was made possible by his engagement with Freudian psychoanalysis.
Graf's work – particularly his Wagner analysis – represents the birth of psychoanalytic music criticism, a field sometimes dismissed as an embryonic, simplistic adoption of Freudian principles. Rather, Graf melded positivistic musicological methods he learned from Adler at the University of Vienna with cutting-edge Freudian psychoanalysis, which similarly sought to objectify nineteenth-century explorations of the unconsciousness. In 1900, Graf lamented that composer analyses ignored music as he identified love and death drives in Wagner's work. By 1911, while attending Freud's Wednesday Society meetings, Graf's analysis had shifted to situating these drives within the framework of the Oedipal Complex; in his monograph *The Musician's Inner Workshop*, Graf viewed Wagner like other composers who learned to control their unconscious drives through craft and revision. Ironically, where Wagner had tried to mystify the compositional process to shield composers from such inquiry, Graf found a "scientific" solution to analyze exactly that creative work.

David Chu (Western University), "Desolation and the Schöne Stelle: A Transpacific Reading of Beethoven's *Coriolan*"

Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture (1807) presents a hermeneutic dilemma: its coda forgoes resolution and disintegrates into a *pizzicato* C. This non-resolution became vital in Anglophone musicology's critique of the heroic (Burnham, Kramer), stemming from Theodor Adorno's reading of the collapse as a *schöne Stelle* (beautiful passage), a "musical ruin" revealing the negative truth of the failed Enlightenment subject.

Harnessing this transatlantic critique, I reframe *Coriolan*'s coda as the nexus of a global conversation about modernity and ruinous truths. Inspired by Daniel Chua's diagnosis of Beethoven's "fragile freedom," which provincializes the heroic, I introduce Chinese American writer Eileen Chang's (1920-1995) aesthetics as a prescient, transpacific hermeneutic key. Refuting art critic Fu Lei's (1908-1966) nationalistic appropriation of

Beethoven as a "Confucian Hero," Chang formulated a feminist aesthetics that privileged the fragmentary over totalization.

I stage an explicit dialogue between Adorno and Chang as parallel theories of the fragment emerging from World War II, with *Coriolan*'s coda as a contested site. The debate between Fu and Chang in 1940s Shanghai provides a direct historical link.

Both Adorno and Chang criticized ideologically-charged totalization, locating truths in fragments that resist the whole. Where Adorno's *schöne Stelle* emphasizes *Coriolan*'s tragic ruins, Chang's aesthetics thus reads in the coda the farcical disintegration of a hollow heroism, leaving behind a profound "desolation"—a feminine-coded modern condition of the mundane and the non-reconciled. Sounding together, Adorno's negative dialectics and Chang's anti-heroic gaze transform *Coriolan* into a ruinous theatre, animating and dissecting Beethoven in a global aesthetic counterpoint.

Session A6 (EJB130) Paris (Sarah Gutsche-Miller, Chair)

Emma Kavanagh (University College Dublin), "Between Socialism and Self-Promotion: Gustave Charpentier, the Conservatoire Populaire de Mimi Pinson, and the Gendered Politics of Working-Class Music-Making"

Following the astronomical success of his 1900 opera *Louise*, the bohemian composer Gustave Charpentier used the proceeds to found a music school for garment workers in Montmartre: the Conservatoire Populaire de Mimi Pinson. Such a project was typical of his radical social politics, as well as his long-time interest in garment workers — both as characters in his operas and in his personal life. The Conservatoire Populaire was motivated by both socialism and socialisation; seamstresses held a symbolic status in the fin-de-siècle imagination through the grisette, and it was common knowledge that many supplemented their income with sex work. As both Mary Ellen Poole (1997) and Patricia Tilburg (2019) have argued, the Conservatoire Populaire's curriculum of instrumental, vocal, and dance lessons, led by established professors from the Paris Conservatoire, therefore likely functioned as a tacit means of "refining" these working women.

While Charpentier's life and oeuvre have attracted sustained musicological attention, less is known about his social projects and their role in his carefully-constructed public persona. This paper thus aims to situate the Conservatoire Populaire in the wider context of Charpentier's career, and within music's dual role in social mobility. In the hands of philanthropists and patrons, music could serve as a means of social "improvement"; for the workers themselves, it became a crucial cultural axis around which communities could form. This paper thus problematises the gendered skew of Charpentier's politics, proposing that these women (many of whom toured France to promote the school) became living embodiments of his socialist impulses.

Taryn Dubois (Franciscan University of Steubenville), "Failed Modernities in Caricatures of Manzotti's *Excelsior*"

Choreographer Luigi Manzotti and composer Romualdo Marenco's 1881 ballet, *Excelsior*, presented an allegory of human progress through scientific and technological innovations, and was performed in dozens of theatres across four continents in the 1880s and 90s.

Some technologies showcased in *Excelsior* were closely connected to European imperial ambitions and aggression, and yet such political valences were largely unremarkable within the early reception in Italy. However, beyond Milan, commentators on the work explicitly identified racialized and imperialist frameworks: for example, the Parisian press was quick to situate Manzotti's tableau of the Suez Canal within present-day political and economic challenges in Egypt.

In this paper, I analyze a collection of Parisian caricatures to highlight how race and colonialism inflected *Excelsior*'s positivist spectacle (Fanon 1952, Said 1979). These caricatures of the newly-opened Eden-Théâtre's 1883 production piquantly present political critiques when read against the libretto, reviews, and contemporary French foreign policy. Caricatures of the ballet's 1899 performance at Venice's Teatro la Fenice serve as an additional foil. Recent studies have highlighted the transformation of *Excelsior*'s message in different political and theatrical environments (Prokopovych 2008, Ujvári 2024). Building on these, my transnational investigation highlights not only the politicized Parisian perspective, but the absence of thinking about race and colonial power in Italian reception (Finaldi & Baratieri 2019). This paper advances scholarship on the intersection of nineteenth-century dance, technology, and print culture (McCarren 2020, Järvinen 2020, Rowden 2020), and recontextualizes *Excelsior*'s reception history through the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate political and theatrical milieus.

Elwyn Rowlands (University of Toronto), "Sexualising Sylph: Gendering French Fairies"

To address the role that male danseurs and female danseuses en travesti held on the French stage, researchers like Marian Smith (2007) and Lynn Garafola (1985) argued that the popularity of Taglioni's *La Sylphide* (1832) triggered a balletic gender bias with Parisian audiences craving alluring sylphide in ethereal tutus. They subsequently sought to challenge previous scholars' sylphide myopia and showcase the impact male dancers had upon ballet history by exploring the role ballerinos played outside of the sylphide universe by focusing on different repertoire. This wave of anti-*Sylphide*-centric scholarship, however, accidentally creates alternate misconceptions regarding gendered balletic and operatic narratives by overlooking the gender fluid nature of sylph and the existence of countless winged *danseurs*.

Drawing on iconography, libretti, and press reviews, I dismantle current notions regarding the nature of male sylphs and female sylphides by examining dancing and singing sylph that flitted across the Parisian stages throughout the nineteenth century. Specifically, I focus on the Trilby craze that overtook the commercial theatres in 1823, comparing it with Taglioni's *La Sylphide* (1832) and the vaudeville *Follet, ou le Sylphe* (1832). Furthermore, I examine

sylph spectacles which contain both genders simultaneously, such as *La Fille de l'air* (1837) and *La Rose d'Or* (1838), demonstrating how male sylph supposedly formed the ultimate seductors since their ability to shape shift allowed them to fulfil maiden's sexual desires and fantasies. I also argue that female *danseuses en travesti* championed the sylph phenomenon since cross-dressing facilitated the realisation of sylphs' queer elemental nature.

Ina McCormack (Case Western Reserve University), "Supernatural Schooling: How the Harp Got its Technique"

"The man is a wizard, and his harp is a siren … breathing forth the fascinating sounds of another world." So went the *Mémoires* of Hector Berlioz regarding the harp virtuoso Elias Parish-Alvars. This evocative characterization of both the harp and its performer as being supernatural echoed a host of similar analogies circulating throughout the nineteenth century; indeed, the formation of a predominantly French harp tradition coincided with the instrument's solidification as a purveyor of otherworldly resonances. Harp parts written for orchestral and solo settings were typically conceived as "special effects" that signified Ossianic, celestial, fantastique, or féerique phenomena. Their idiosyncratic vocabularies expanded across the century, eventually embracing harmonics, rolled chords, trills, and gossamer arpeggiation.

Not only was the harp typecast, but, as I argue in this paper, its "marked" sonorities emerged as synonymous with its core technique. In essence, supernatural effects defined and shaped harp performance in extraordinary and pervasive ways. Such effects provided a foundation for formal pedagogies, from the seminal *Nouvelle méthode* of Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis (1802), which declared the harp an instrument "of angels," through key treatises and concert solos by François-Joseph Naderman (1825), Nicolas-Charles Bochsa (1832), Elias Parish-Alvars (ca. 1830s, unpublished), and Félix Godefroid (1891)—all of whom located otherworldly effects at the center of professional harp technique and organological discourse. This practice reached its zenith with Henriette Renié, a composer-pedagogue whose solo *Légende* (1901) and comprehensive *Méthode complète* (1946) reinforced the relationship between harp virtuosity and supernatural evocation, thereby clinching the instrument's illustrious status.

Keynote: Hilary Poriss (Northeastern University), "Companion to a Diva: Ada Wilson Baldwin"

In 1913–1914, Lillian Nordica (1857–1914), one of the era's most celebrated prima donnas, embarked on a tour to Hawaii, Australia, and New Zealand. Tragically, this became her final journey. When her ship grounded on a coral reef near Sydney, Nordica suffered hypothermia during the three-day ordeal. Though rescued and transported to Thursday Island and then Batavia (now Jakarta), she never recovered, dying on May 10, 1914.

Like most traveling divas of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Nordica was accompanied on her journeys by a personal assistant who attended to her professional and personal needs. These companions occupied a unique social position—not equals to the divas they served, yet ranked above domestic staff, joining them in social gatherings, dining, and shopping while providing emotional support. Nordica's companion was Ada Wilson Baldwin, an extraordinary single mother whose archives remain in a private collection to which I was recently granted exclusive access.

This trove includes previously unknown letters, photographs, and most significantly, three journals documenting Baldwin's meticulous observations of Nordica's tours, including the fateful final voyage. This talk introduces Baldwin and explores her relationship with Nordica, then examines her vivid first-hand accounts of a star's itinerant life at the turn of the twentieth century. Baldwin's narratives illuminate previously unknown aspects of Nordica's final years while offering rare behind-the-scenes insights into the diva-assistant relationship and the social hierarchies governing artistic life in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century opera culture.

Day 3: 27 June 2026

Session A7 (EJB130) Representing Women (Taryn Dubois, chair)

Nazli Kashiri (York University), "Female Musical Iconography and the Philosophy of the Male Gaze in Qajar Iran"

The Qajar reign (1789–1925) represents a formative period in Iran's long nineteenth century, when musical life became deeply entangled with emergent technologies of vision and cultural exchange. As photography, lithographic printing, and diplomatic contact with Europe transformed modes of circulation, women's musical practices—once confined to domestic and ritual spaces—acquired new visibility within visual and textual culture. This paper investigates how lithographs, miniature paintings, and muraqqaʿat (albums) of the period construct a specifically gendered soundscape: women are depicted playing instruments, singing, and celebrating within andaruni (private) settings, where the boundaries between audibility and silence, agency and ornament, are negotiated through image.

Drawing upon methodologies from musicology and visual studies, this research argues that such works operate as aural documents—encoding social attitudes toward the female voice, musical performance, and listening in Qajar Iran. Rather than passive illustrations, these visual compositions participate in the very politics of musical representation: they frame the female musician as both central to and excluded from the public soundscape.

Through this lens, the study traces how the nineteenth-century visualization of women's music-making prefigures later discourses of sonic regulation and gendered censorship in post-revolutionary Iran.

By repositioning Qajar visual materials within the historiography of nineteenth-century music, the paper contributes to a broader understanding of how sound, image, and gender intersected across global modernities—revealing how the politics of listening shaped Iran's cultural transition into modernity.

Kristen Whittle (University of Toronto), "Fictional Music Careers: Class, Music, and Aspiration in the Girls Own Paper"

Between 1880 and 1900, The Girls Own Paper (TGOP) filled its pages with musical heroines whose stories bridged domestic discipline and professional ambition. My paper examines how the weekly periodical's serialized stories transformed music into a narrative for imagining social mobility and female agency. Far from treating music as a genteel pastime for girls, the periodical's fiction used musical characters to explore how women navigated class, labour, and self-expression within the constraints of Victorian respectability.

Reading these fictions alongside contemporary writings on class, the Victorian periodical press, and women's music studies, I argue that TGOP reimagined musical practice as a form of self-cultivation available to women across class boundaries. The women featured in

TGOP stories stem from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and espouse an assortment of musical goals.

I analyse the stories of three such heroines, showing how musical aspiration could both affirm and unsettle mass marketed class ideals. Music in these stories is not simply heard—it is lived, laboured, and dreamt into being. Though fictional, the characters in TGOP stories acted as models of female artistry for readers. Heroines blurred the line between music for private amusement and public display, while also demonstrating resilience and the hardships faced by those seeking professional musical engagements. Ultimately, TGOP's fiction allowed the Victorian girl to hear and imagine herself in musical spaces by reading about figures whose performances articulated new possibilities for cultural participation, professional identity, and the social audibility of women's ambition.

Shaena Weitz (University of Bristol), "Henri Herz and the Feminization of Celebrity"

According to the Gazette musicale (1834), the music of Henri Herz was just silly nonsense for "chatty girls." While gendered musical discourse is familiar to music history (since at least McClary 1991), this paper seeks to examine the deeper assumptions and anxieties that drive statements like these, from the viewpoint of attentional and celebrity studies.

Crucial to understanding the Gazette's coverage is that it was planted as a part of a revenge campaign. Although the authors may have believed what they wrote, they were tapping into an understanding whereby calling someone's music girly was embarrassing. This is a psychological persuasion tactic called negative esteem, and something that I argue is structurally dependent on celebrity concepts.

Claire Brock (2006) has argued that fame became feminized in the late eighteenth century, as it became associated with stage actresses. But a popular male composer painted as effeminate allows a way to separate real women from the broader societal misogyny that, I posit, is woven into the historical suspicion of celebrity and discourse surrounding musical value. While claiming an effeminate present toward reclaiming a masculine past may be an old story (Head 2013), the rise of celebrity in the early nineteenth century—with its new concepts about selfhood—gave this rhetoric a particular force that allowed a knotted set of associations about the musical "negative" to evolve. By examining how misogyny became laundered into aesthetic philosophy, this paper reveals how nineteenth-century attacks on popular music established evaluative frameworks that persist today.

Session B7 (EJB120) Romantic Form (Steven Vande Moortele, chair)

Ardi Echevarria (Durham University), "Sonata Reformation: Rethinking Nineteenth-Century Form"

Within discussions of nineteenth-century musical form, Hepokoski and Darcy's Sonata Theory (2006) has received substantial critique. Sonata Theory generally treats nineteenth-century music as 'deformations' of eighteenth-century norms established from a narrow canon. The resulting critique of deformation has encouraged a wider move beyond Sonata Theory. Rather than 'negations' of eighteenth-century norms, nineteenth-century music is increasingly conceptualised on its own terms, involving an empirically driven 'positive' approach that moves beyond canonical figures and cultivates formal 'microtheories' (Vande Moortele 2013; Horton 2017).

To reassess formal theory's nineteenth-century turn, this paper develops the concept of 'sonata reformation'. I begin by demonstrating two key problems in deformation's music-theoretical reception: first, deformation's replacement by the 'positive' approach has problematized formal theory's relationship to history; second, the nineteenth-century turn has detracted from Sonata Theory's broader hermeneutic concerns, as well as critiques from Joseph Straus (2006) surrounding disability. Addressing these two issues, I argue for a formal approach that maintains historical dialogue with the past but allows for the transformation of existing expectations. I demonstrate this idea through the third movement of Felix Mendelssohn's Op. 44 No. 3 (1838). While Mendelssohn's String Quartet largely conforms to conventional sonata form, the introduction of a new developmental theme and its subsequent integration disrupts traditional understanding of the recapitulation. By exploring constructions of inside and outside in this "recapitulatory expansion," I argue that Mendelssohn's practice necessitates traditional expectations while simultaneously challenging such standards. This model of sonata reformation ultimately enables a richer understanding of historical changes throughout nineteenth-century sonata form.

Dan Deutsch (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), "Functional Multiplicity, Fragmentation, and the Model-Sequence Technique in the Romantic Violin Concerto"

The model-sequence technique is invariably associated with medial formal functions, especially the intra-thematic continuation and inter-thematic development (Caplin 1998). Situated within expanded thematic constellations of nineteenth-century "post-classical" form, however, sequential segments may acquire additional layers of meaning that redefine and even challenge their original functions. In the proposed paper, I will explore this functional multiplicity and its stylistic implications by looking at thematic zones that make pervasive use of sequential motion in three romantic violin concertos: Joseph Joachim's Op. 3 (1851), Henri Vieuxtemps's Op. 37 (1858–1861), and Karl Goldmark's Op.28 (1877).

To elucidate the formal organization of the selected thematic zones—ranging from 40 to 70 measures—I will first examine them as instances of form-functional multiplicity or proliferation, where simple classical themes serve as building blocks for hierarchically

complex constellations (Hyland 2023, Vande Moortele 2021, Horton 2015). On this basis, I will then home in on the roles of sequences in these stratified formations. While acknowledging how the tonal mobility of sequential motion enhances a sense of medial function in general, I shall delve into formal situations in which sequences fulfill additional, non-medial functions—for example, a large-scale continuation and a lower-level presentation—or even produce moments of formal dissolution. I will conclude by situating the stratified functionality of the model-sequence technique in relation to two opposing stylistic and generic poles: on the one hand, the generic element of virtuosic display episodes, which often rely on sequential motion (Horton and Smith 2025); on the other, the stylistically innovative fragment, which resonates the circularity and the destabilizing character of the sequence (Davis 2017).

Daria Michirin (University of Toronto), "Dramatic Functions of the Sentence in *Götterdämmerung* Act Two Scene Five"

This paper examines Wagner's use of the Classical sentence theme type in the final scene of act two of *Götterdämmerung* (1874), which features Brünnhilde, Gunther, and Hagen, conspiring to kill Siegfried. Drawing on recent studies of Wagner's use of the sentence (BaileyShea 2002; Duke 2021), I compare the sentences sung by the three characters mentioned above, focusing on phrase structure, text, and formal functions of prominent leitmotifs in each section of the five-part form. I also explore BaileyShea's dramatic categories (2002), including emergence/evolution, aggression/dissolution, and agitation/collapse, commenting on how effectively they describe the dramatic context and where these dramatic situations typically appear within the form.

In my analysis, Brünnhilde and Gunther's sentences consistently feature phrase-structural expansion, repetitive text about betrayal, and the same leitmotives throughout the scene. Hagen's sentences, by contrast, are formally compressed and feature more active text, encouraging the two other characters to kill Siegfried. The differences between Hagen and the other characters are intensified at the end of the scene, when all three sing simultaneously. Brünnhilde and Gunther sing the same text in unison, while Hagen sings different text set to different motivic material. My analysis shows the dramatic connection between Brünnhilde and Gunther, who are enemies at the beginning of the opera but unite in this scene after they are both betrayed by Siegfried. I contrast this connection with Hagen's personal motivation to kill Siegfried out of greed, illustrated by the structural differences found in his music.

Session A8 (EJB130) Unusual Archives (Claudio Vellutini, chair)

Elena Russo (New College, Oxford University), "Traveling Musicians and Opera Singers: A transnational analysis of the 19th-century Adriatic Sea"

In this paper, I analyze the movements of musicians and singers across the Adriatic region, focusing on Dalmatia, Istria, and the Venetian region from 1836 to 1866. What role did musicians and singers, especially those in opera productions, play in defining transnational connectivity? Despite the proximity of the territory, scholars of Modern History tend to divide the Eastern Slavic region from the Western Italian one, interpreting the sea as an insurmountable barrier, dominated by an "us-versus-them" mentality. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Mediterranean historians, my project seeks to rethink our understanding of the nineteenth-century Adriatic as a space defined by strong cultural connections, with music as an entry point for making these links. This paper will analyse two field sites in its thesis. Firstly, I examine a specific example from 1847 in which the Dubrovnik theatre wanted to invite opera singers from Venice for their Carnival season. As they had planned a unique performance wherein Venetian artists were supported by local chorists and musicians from Kotor, nowadays Montenegro, many were involved in the process: theatre commissioners, musicians, singers, but also political and police authorities. The event poses the question of what role the opera has in creating connections between Adriatic towns. Secondly, I consider the perspective of the artists themselves. Why and how do local musicians travel and perform across the Adriatic Sea? What does this movement reveal about local relationships with music in the absence of theatres? Foregrounding original archival sources from Dubrovnik, Venice, Trieste and Rijeka, this paper aims to interpret the circulation of music and musicians as a mirror to understand social connections and transnational links.

Eleanor Legault (independent scholar), "A Lost Legacy: Emilie Mayer and her Impact on 19th-Century Music and Culture in Germany"

Emilie Mayer (1812-1883) was a prolific German romantic composer. Boasting a portfolio of over seven symphonies, fifteen concert overtures, and numerous chamber works, her musical oeuvre situates her in the larger framework of the cultural artistic movement of German Romanticism. She was a key figure in the concert culture of 19th-century Berlin and worked with other prominent musicians to develop a more educated and engaged audience, and gained popularity and praise in reviews focusing on her symphonic prowess despite the limitations imposed upon her sex. While her music has seen some revival in recent years, almost no scholarship exists that takes into account her musical, societal, and political contributions.

In this presentation, I will explore Mayer's agency and unique engagement with the burgeoning nationalistic sentiments of the nineteenth century, and how she situated herself among the German Romantic movement. I will examine historical reviews of Mayer's work, demonstrating her prescience in self-advocacy; her relationships with A.B. Marx and Carl

Lowe, and correspondences with notable publishers; as well as secondary scholarship on international nationalism relating to Mayer's more well-known male contemporaries, which will be used to extrapolate her own influence on the cultural landscape. I will also use the few contemporary articles and only existing biography about Mayer to further a more nuanced narrative concerning Mayer's influence within her musical community and her now-forgotten contributions to the symphonic and chamber genre. This paper will provide a foundation for additional feminist scholarship examining Mayer as a significant voice in the German Romantic movement and highlighting the vast yet under-recognized accomplishments of female German Romantic composers and their impact on the nineteenth-century and beyond. I also hope to use Mayer and my applied research on her work and life as a blueprint for championing other as yet unknown composers.

Kristin Franseen (Western University), "'Earnestly Bruited About': Gossip and Anecdote in Rossini's Published Conversations"

Gioachino Rossini was something of a gossip. That is the impression one gets reading accounts of his published conversations with Ferdinand Hiller and Richard Wagner. In both Hiller's "Plaudereien mit Rossini" (1855/6) and Eduard Michotte's *La visite de Wagner à Rossini* (published in 1906 but reflecting conversations from 1860), Rossini is presented as an enthusiastic conversationalist, eager to share anecdotes of his meetings with other musical celebrities and encounters with important musical works. As might be expected from conversations reported in different languages and published years or even decades after the fact, however, the tone of these stories can vary widely. This presentation focuses on one account mentioned by both Hiller and Michotte: Rossini's meetings with Antonio Salieri in Vienna during the early 1820s. In both versions of the story, Rossini mentions the decline in Salieri's operatic reputation and the rumors about his rivalry with Mozart. Hiller, however, presents the conversation as a largely respectful exchange, whereas Michotte depicts it as a humorous but frustrating incident in his larger quest to meet Beethoven. Building on work on the Beethoven pilgrimage phenomenon (Knittel 2003), the place of anecdotes within composer biography (Fine 2023, Keefe 2023) and the construction of Rossini's reputation in Vienna (Mathew 2013, Vellutini 2018), I argue that the different versions of this encounter reflect shifts in musical nationalism and biographical narrative across the second half of the nineteenth century. I also consider how English translations of these two conversations further play into Salieri's increasingly fictionalized reception history.

Session B8 Panel (EJB120) Understanding Elgar's Themes: Place, Representation, Communication (Ryan McClelland, chair)

Elgar's themes are notable both as one of the most beloved and memorable aspects of his music and as ontological enigmas. His themes cannot solely be spoken of as absolute music structures, living within the confines of single works, as they cross readily between works and display a profusion of associations with people, places, and concepts. The project *Elgar's Themes: New Pathways for Analysis, Interpretation and Engagement* (https://elgar.web.ox.ac.uk/home) conceives of theme as a form of Linked Data, an approach which invites thinking beyond the boundaries of the individual work to multiple associations within new musical contexts, to consider connections of themes to people and places, and to connect musicological enquiry with the possibilities of using technology to support scholarly communication about his music and its connections.

Perry and Bullivant both consider developments in travel and technology which contributed to Elgar's evocations of landscape at home and abroad. Going beyond a pejorative conception of the musical 'picture postcard', Perry points to its demonstration of the mobility of theme, while Bullivant situates such evocative practices within a larger conception of musical and historical development in The Apostles. Lewis turns to *The Music Makers*, a work celebrated (and criticised) for its musical borrowings, using it to ask 'what makes an Elgarian theme?' and how digital musicology can produce and communicate insights into the associative qualities of themes. In sum, the session offers reflections not only on Elgar's music but the wider possibilities of thematic analysis and digital musicology.

Frankie Perrie (University of Oxford), "Elgar's Postcards: Mobility, Souvenir, Theme"

Perry addresses Elgar's engagement with the picture postcard – a medium often overlooked for its ephemerality, but which constituted a 'communications revolution' (Gillen 2023) of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The postcard emerged from an existing visual epistolary culture in which pictorial letterheads, envelopes, and stamps inevitably shaped perceptions of place and travel for both sender and recipient. The composer keenly adopted the medium, seeking out postcard stands whenever travelling, annotating pictures to mark places he visited, and readily deploying the postcard's classic trope: 'wish you were here!'. Drawing upon a corpus of over 700 postcards sent and received by Elgar between 1882 and 1934, this paper uses linguistic, social network, and geospatial analyses to contextualise the particularities of Elgar's use of the postcard. Focusing on cards from places that inspired works with 'distinct "picture-postcard" elements' (Riley 2007) – *From the Bavarian Highlands*, *In the South*, *Introduction & Allegro*, *In Smyrna* – it considers how sometimes complex impressions of travel, place, and feeling split across such postcards' recto and verso may nuance understandings of Elgar's music. It further suggests that broader shifts in modes of communication associated with the postcard might find a corollary in the composer's perception and construction of 'souvenir' themes.

Joanna Bullivant (Royal Birmingham Conservatoire), "Archaeological Oratorio: Representing Faith in Elgar's The Apostles"

Bullivant's paper examines the web of thematic borrowings and leitmotifs that characterise Elgar's oratorio *The Apostles*. The work attracted criticism from its first performance regarding the contrast between its extensive use of leitmotifs and the tableau-like structure of the work organised around specific, seemingly visually-inspired scenes imagining the first-century Holy Land and events of the Gospels. This 'picture postcard' element is reinforced musically in the famous 'Dawn' episode of Act I, by an exotic portrayal drawing on ancient Hebrew melodies and the evocation of the shofar. This paper brings fresh insights by embracing both thematic analysis and visual inspirations for the work. Firstly, it presents the context of Victorian fascination with Biblical archaeology, including colourful visions provided to the public by the Palestine Exploration Fund survey maps and the photography of Francis Frith, which reveal an imaginative context for the work. Secondly, it explores the impact of these discoveries – and theological debates of the period – on conceptions of historical development and modern relationships to the ancient world (including the Bible). The paper proposes a view of *The Apostles* as mapping the physical journey of Christ and the Apostles through the Holy Land, whilst pointing to a larger eschatological and spiritual journey.

David Lewis (University of Oxford), "Digital Companions for Elgar's Themes: What makes a theme a theme?"

Elgar's themes provide musicologists and listeners with paths of approach for his music and his life. Lewis describes how, in a digital world, these give narrative impetus for 'companion' applications that help visitors to explore his creative world. This will first be illustrated with a prototype application exploring the themes and connections around *The Music Makers*, followed by a discussion of how companions to *In the South* and *The Apostles* may be conceived. Where online catalogues and databases provide valuable resources, they are often demarcated by records and collection items, works and objects; on the other hand, where information is made available in accessible digital form, technology can help transcend these boundaries, weaving together different types of material, media and information to support interactive exploration, underpinned by musicological scholarship. The worlds opened up by such tools run a risk of being overwhelming and unstructured without a strong underlying musicological logic and narrative. Thus, the balance of interactive discovery and scholarly focus is one that requires careful consideration.

This paper looks at the collaborative process of creating such 'digital companions', the factors involved in planning and design and the Linked Data that is needed for these to be successful and sustainable.