Music, Culture& Society

in Central Europe

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Music and musicians played important roles in Central European cultural life. From the court to the street, from high literature to journalism, attitudes toward music became entwined not only with aesthetic values such as art and beauty, but also social and political values: the nation, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, manliness, and justice.

The conference will take place on **10 June 2017** in the Wood Seminar Room (OK 406)on the Kelburn Campus of Victoria University (Wellington, NZ)



**Conference Participants**

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**Conference schedule**

**10:15 am Welcome**

**10:30 – 12:00 Music of the Ancien régime**

Blyth Sansom (Independent Researcher, Wellington):

“Musical Accompaniment of Poetry in Medieval Europe”

Sam Girling (University of Auckland)

“Competition & co-operation between 18th century German courts (Timpani & Timpanists)”

Corrina Connor (VUW, Music)
“*Die Fledermaus* and Masculine Honour in Habsburg Vienna”

**12:15 pm Lunch break**

**1:00 – 2:00 Hungarian Musical Nationalisms**

Mary Jones (VUW, History)

“Playing with the Heart of the Nation: Gypsy Music in Nineteenth-Century Hungary.”

Alexander Maxwell (VUW, History)

“National Endogamy in Hungarian Folk Music”

**2:15 – 3:15 Songs of Death and Glory**

Richard Millington (VUW, German)

“Songs for the Apocalypse: Musical Motifs in the Poetry of Georg Trakl”

Roger Smith (VUW German)

“Muffled Drums: The Musical Responses to the First World War”

**3:30 – 4:30 Music and the Modern City**

Johannes Contag (VUW, Literary Translation)

“Jazz in Weimar Germany: A Fertile Clash of ‘The Ultramodern and the Ultraprimitive’”

Katie Rochow (VUW Media Studies)

“Backstage Rhythms of Music-making in the City: Copenhagen and Wellington”

**Abstracts**

**Corrina Connor (VUW, Music)
“*Die Fledermaus* and Masculine Honour in Habsburg Vienna”**

My paper examines the behaviour of the men in *Die Fledermaus* and how they exhibit honourable or dishonourable conduct. *Die Fledermaus*, Johann Strauss’s third operetta has an unusual number of male characters, and originating in a period and place were masculinities were moulded by complex social codes and distinctions, a significant new insight may be gained by approaching *Die Fledermaus* through its depiction of masculinities. The behaviour of Gabriel von Eisenstein, his friend Falke, Frank the prison governor, and Orlofsky, a Russian prince, shows how codes of honour permeated civilian Viennese culture in the 1860s and 1870s. *Die Fledermaus*provides examples of men who were *satisfaktionsfähig*, but also men who were not capable of providing satisfaction in a duel. In this context, my paper will show how Falke seeks redress without resorting to the dangers of a duel. In doing so, my paper provides new perspectives on the operatic masculinities of *Die Fledermaus*, while also contributing to scholarship on masculinities in Habsburg Vienna.

**Johannes Contag (VUW, Literary Translation)**

**“Jazz in Weimar Germany:**

**A fertile clash of ‘the ultramodern and the ultraprimitive’”**

In 1920s urban Germany and particularly in Berlin, jazz was an important cultural phenomenon full of contradictions. Jazz music, as well as jazz dancing and revue shows, confronted audiences with a rhythmic aesthetic that was at once starkly modern and exotically archaic. Regarding jazz not only as a 20th-c. product of African-American origin, German audiences also took it to represent a deeper African essence, one that simultaneously scared and enthralled them. After a prolonged absence of any African-American performers from Germany in the first half of the 1920s, the eventual arrival of the likes of Josephine Baker and Sam Wooding in Berlin was nothing but sensational, as well as ultimately divisive.

**Sam Girling (University of Auckland)**

**“Beat this!”: Competition and Co-operation between 18th-century German courts and its Relationship to the Timpani and Timpanists**

An often-overlooked aspect of musical life in eighteenth-century courts is the role of trumpeters and timpanists and the secretive, prestigious guilds to which they belonged. Timpanists, who earned among the highest salaries of all military personnel, even had to be prepared to risk death on the battlefield in order to protect their instruments. A number of eighteenth-century composers created highly-visual spectacles by writing for more than the conventional pair of kettledrums. Some of the best examples of this tradition can be found in German courts such as Hesse-Darmstadt and Karlsruhe. At Darmstadt court composers Johann Christoph Graupner (1683–1760) and Johann Samuel Endler (1694–1762) wrote nearly forty works requiring at least four drums. This paper considers how these works for multiple timpani provided an opportunity for German courts to highlight their wealth and status by simultaneously competing and cooperating with neighbouring courts, perhaps with the intention of establishing deeper political and cultural alliances. A combination of political interests and personal tastes on the part of the patron created a climate for multiple timpani works to flourish in Darmstadt and Karlsruhe, and this paved the way for even more extravagant works for timpani to be composed towards the end of the eighteenth century, among them a concerto for sixteen drums.

**Mary Jones (VUW, History)**

**“Playing with the Heart of the Nation:**

**Gypsy Music in Nineteenth-Century Hungary.”**

In nineteenth-century Hungary a curious situation arose. The music that became associated with the nation was that of a subaltern group. This was particularly surprising at a time when the concept of nation in multi-ethnic Hungary was still very limited. For Magyar patriots the nation included only the nobles and soldiers, not the lower echelons of society. Despite this prevailing view, Gypsy music became recognised as the national music of Hungary both by Hungarian patriots themselves and by the educated musicians of other nations who imitated and appropriated features of the music in their own compositions. Why did Gypsy music, rather than a specifically Magyar genre of music, attain the status of characteristically “Hungarian” music?

**Alexander Maxwell (VUW, History)**

**“National Endogamy in Hungarian folk music”**

Hungarian folklorists published several song collections during the nineteenth century, and while folklore collections reflect the obsessions of their compilers, the repeated presence of similar songs in different collections, in different contexts, suggests some themes actually struck roots in popular consciousness. This paper examines several love songs prizing national endogamy in the multi-ethnic Kingdom: the songs of Magyars (ethnic Hungarians) praised Magyar women and stigmatized romantic or marital relations with non-Magyar nationalities in the Kingdom of Hungary. Slovak songs expressed similar themes. Hungarians of all nationalities shared a belief in national endogamy.

**Richard Millington (VUW, German)**

**“Songs for the Apocalypse: Musical Motifs in the Poetry of Georg Trakl”**

In his studies of musical elements in the work of Austrian lyric poet Georg Trakl (1887-1914), Alfred Doppler emphasise the writer’s immersion in the same cultural milieu in which composers such as Arnold Schönberg and Anton von Webern developed their radical approaches to harmony and counterpoint. The idiosyncratic style of Trakl’s poetry, so the argument goes, hinges on a similar tension between consonance and dissonance as called for by Schönberg in his 1911 *Theory of Harmony*. Doppler posits that the poetry’s musical quality is further reflected in its aspiration towards a realm beyond language, towards articulation of non-verbal experiences and sensations, which ultimately leads him to deny that it achieves (or aims to achieve) thematic coherence. This paper proposes an alternative, thematically more positive interpretation of Trakl’s musical motifs as consistent with the sense of historical crisis pervading his work: Trakl’s speaker sees his own task as commemorating his disintegrating world and lamenting its loss through song.

**Katie Rochow (VUW Media Studies)**

**“Backstage Rhythms of Music-making in the City:**

**A case study of Copenhagen and Wellington”**

The idea of rhythm has figured as a key conceptual and empirical motif in current research on (urban) space, place and everyday life. Urban spaces are considered polyrhythmic fields, a compound of varied everyday life and spatial rhythms, which produce a particular, but ever-changing, complex mix of heterogeneous social interactions, mobilities, imaginaries and materialities. This compound of temporal matter and events includes the regular comings and goings of people, the movement of bodies, objects, ideas and materialities, the sounds, smells and atmospheres as well as the cosmic time of day and night, seasonal and annual cycles. Music-making in the city therefore constitutes and is constituted by a plurality of urban rhythms, which affect the diurnal, weekly and annual experience of place and shape the music-maker’s ‘pathways’ through the city. This paper presents a way of capturing, understanding and interpreting the multi-faceted rhythmical layout of urban spaces. It will do so by introducing a rhythmanalytical methodology, which draws on participant generated photographs and mental maps as analytical tools in order to provoke compelling depictions of musical activity in the city. Based on current ethnographic fieldwork in Wellington and Copenhagen, this paper proposes seeks to recognise the interwovenness of socialities, atmospheres, object, texts and images in people’s everyday lives and in this way affords opportunities for attending to the multiple rhythms underlying music-making in the city.

**Blyth Sansom (private scholar)**

**“Musical Accompaniment of Poetry in Medieval Europe”**

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, musical and vocal performance was the form in which poetry was ‘published’. Long before printed texts became widely available in Europe, ‘publication’ of an epic poem meant that a poet prepared one episode, then with the support of a patron, recited it, usually with musical accompaniment, to an audience of nobles and officials of the patron’s court. If successful, that same episode would then be repeated in different courts with different patrons, either by the original creator or by one or more of the jongleurs who attended the author’s recitation, memorised as much as possible, and then produced their own version. Each performance was tailored to a particular audience and would, to some extent, be different. Musical accompaniment made the delivery slower, easier for the audience to hear and understand, and the rhythm of the music made it easier to remember the lines and words for later use. This paper will discuss the history of medieval music with a view to showing how sources, such as church music, influenced medieval performance poetry.

**Roger Smith (VUW German)**

**“Muffled Drums: The Musical Responses to the First World War**

**of Max Reger, Hans Pfitzner and Hanns Eisler”**

At the beginning of the First World War, Reger and Pfitzner were well established German composers whose careers were in full flight. For them, war engendered patriotic musical responses through the setting of carefully chosen texts. Eisler, on the other hand, was a young composer with little formal musical training by the time he was called up for active service. Yet the will to compose was strong, and he is said to have brought music paper with him to the front. His musical response to the war was also through the setting of texts, but his political point-of-view was strongly anti-war. His pacifist stance became further entrenched after the war; significantly in his collaborations with Bertolt Brecht. In this paper I will compare these musical responses to war, paying particular attention to the texts which were set, and the musical languages employed by the composers to reinforce their political messages.

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