



FACULTY OF
MUSIC



The Balzan Programme in Musicology 2013-2016
Towards a global history of music
Research director: Reinhard Strohm

Topical Encounters and Rhetorics of Identity in Latin American Art Music



Conference-workshop, 13-15 February, 2015
Convenor: Dr Melanie Plesch (University of Melbourne)
Denis Arnold Hall, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford
Free admission

PROGRAMME

Friday 13 February

Denis Arnold Hall, Faculty of Music

2.00 pm **Opening remarks:** Reinhard Strohm (University of Oxford)

2:15-3:15 pm **Keynote:** Kofi Agawu (Princeton University). "Topic Theory and Music Analysis: Some Methodological Considerations"

Since its modern invention by Leonard Ratner (1980), topic theory has fostered analytical inquiries that reject the ostensible neutrality of musical material and privilege discovery of a variety of sediments from music's sounding forms. The actual practice of topical analysis often displays two competing tendencies, however, one towards proliferation (topic theory), the other towards explicitness and containment (music analysis). I explore the tension between the two (with some attention to institutional habits) and suggest ways in which topic theory's potential might be additionally valued.

Kofi Agawu is Professor of Music at Princeton University. His books include *Playing with Signs* (1991), *Representing African Music* (2003) and *Music as Discourse* (2008). A Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy since 2010, he was Music Theorist in Residence for the Dutch-Flemish Music Theory Society in 2008-09 and George Eastman Visiting Professor at Oxford University in 2012-13. His introductory text, *The African Imagination in Music*, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

3:15-3:45 pm *Break*

3:45-6 pm **Session 1: Topics and landscape.** Chair: Henry Stobart (Royal Holloway, University of London)

3:45-4:25 pm Melanie Plesch (The University of Melbourne). "From abandoned huts to maps of the Pampa: The *topos* of the *huella* and the representation of landscape in Argentine art music"

The idea of the Pampas became the main site of Argentine identity towards the end of the nineteenth century; accordingly, a representational tradition was created in the visual arts, literature and music, emphasising the Pampas' vastness, emptiness and the concomitant idea of loneliness. The *topos* of the *huella* is one of the main signifiers of Pampean landscape in Argentine art music, its perceived associations dating back to Alberto Williams's celebrated piano piece "El rancho abandonado" (The abandoned hut). I explore the development of this *topos*, define its musical features, and consider its meaning in the context of the political and ideological underpinnings of the cultural trope of the Pampas in Argentine imagination.

Melanie Plesch is an Argentine musicologist now based in Australia, where she is a Senior Lecturer in Musicology at the University of Melbourne. Her work focuses on the intersections of music, politics and society, especially the relationship between music and the construction of national identity in Argentina. She has published articles and edited books on various aspects of Argentine music and is currently a Research Visitor at the Faculty of Music, University of Oxford in the context of the Balzan Programme in Musicology.

4:25-5:05 pm Julio Mendivil (Stiftung Universität Hildesheim). "The minor mode and the

Andes: The pentatonic scale as topic and the musical representation of Peru”

Since musicology discovered it as a research object in the early twentieth century, the music of the Andes has been characterised by so-called “Andean pentatonicism”, i.e., a five-note anhemitonic scale (Mendívil 2012). Due to the downward movement of most melodies using this scale, Andean music is often associated with the minor mode (Alviña 1929: 299), although the Andean pentatonic scale is modally ambivalent (D’Harcourt 1925:135). In this paper I aim to show how art and popular music composers use the minor mode in order to evoke Andean pentatonicism. Through a musical analysis of Peruvian compositions, I will demonstrate the role of the minor mode in the construction of the topic of Andean music, both within and outside Peru.

Julio Mendívil is a Peruvian musician, ethnomusicologist and writer. He was associate researcher at the University of Music and Drama in Hannover (2007-2008) and Visiting Full Professor at the Institute for Musicology at the University of Cologne (2008-2012). His research focus is Andean music, popular music in German-speaking countries, and the history of ethnomusicology. He is currently chair of IASPM, Latin American Branch, and director of the Center for World Music at the University of Hildesheim (Germany).

8.00 pm **Concert:** A recital of Latin American art music by Virginia Correa Dupuy (mezzo-soprano) and Marcelo Ayub (piano) (Colón Theatre, Buenos Aires).

This concert functions as a musical complement to the conference, illustrating the topical use of tradition in Latin American art song and piano music. It features some of the works discussed by the presenters, as well as a selection of pieces by most of the composers mentioned during the conference: Heitor Villa-Lobos, Alberto Ginastera, Silvestre Revueltas, Carlos Guastavino, Julián Aguirre, Juan José Castro, Juan Bautista Plaza, Ramón Delgado Palacios, Victor Guzmán Cáceres and Clotilde Arias.

Virginia Correa Dupuy is one of Argentina’s most renowned mezzo-sopranos. Her great versatility has enabled her to cultivate a wide repertoire, from opera to the symphonic and solo vocal repertoires. She has performed leading roles at the Colón Theatre as well as at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, the Teatro de la Zarzuela, Madrid, the State Theatre of Prague, and the Théâtre La Villette, Paris.

Marcelo Ayub is a young pianist of great musical flexibility, equally at home in the worlds of solo performance, chamber music, art song and opera. He is active in Argentina and abroad (USA, Russia, Mexico, UK, France, Uruguay and Chile) as pianist, repetiteur, choir coach, opera director, and organist. He is currently Assistant Musical Director and Pianist of the Colón Theatre Chorus, and teaches classes in operatic repertoire at the Instituto Superior de Arte of the Colón Theatre.

Saturday 14th February

10:30 am-1:00 pm **Session 2: Topical dialogues.** Chair: Kariann Goldschmitt (University of Cambridge)

10:30-11:10 am Paulo de Tarso Salles (Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil). “Tribal Dance: a twentieth-century musical topic and its meaning in Heitor Villa-Lobos’s music”

This paper aims to define a twentieth-century musical topic, tentatively labelled “tribal dance”, and explores its appropriation and re-signification by Brazilian composer Heitor Villa Lobos. Its main signifier is a characteristic use of rhythm, which has been described as “Dyonisian” (Boulez) and of

“almost savage strength” (Griffiths). From its first appearance in Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, this topic was used to evoke rituals and dances predating European civilisation. Other composers, such as Béla Bartók, incorporated this musical gesture to express “outsider” traditions from Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. I propose that Villa-Lobos’s “rhythmic theme”, used in some of his most representative works to signify Amerindian rituals or the apotheosis of the carnival feast in Rio de Janeiro, is in fact a borrowing from the Dionysian character of the “tribal dance” topic.

Paulo de Tarso Salles is a musicologist, composer and guitarist. He holds a Master in Music from the University of São Paulo State (2002) and a doctoral degree from the Institute of Arts, University of Campinas (2005). He is currently a professor of music theory at the Department of Music, University of São Paulo. His research ranges from Brazilian art music to post-modern studies. He is the author of *Aberturas e Impasses: a Música no Pós-Modernismo* (UNESP 2005) and *Villa-Lobos, processos composicionais* (Unicamp, 2009).

11:10-11:40 am *Break*

11:40 am-12:20 pm Juan Francisco Sans (Universidad Central de Venezuela). “Passion and disenchantment: the *valse* and the *danza* topics in a masterpiece of Venezuela’s musical nationalism”

The dancing sets in the Hispanic-American salon of the second half of the nineteenth century included quadrille, valse (waltz), polka, mazurka and *danza*, as well as more local or idiosyncratic genres. Even though Venezuelan composers cultivated all of these genres, only two of them eventually acquired citizenship status in the country: the *valse* and the *danza*. This paper examines the conflicting use of the waltz and *danza* topics in one of the most representative works of Venezuelan musical nationalism, *Fantasia venezolana* by Juan Vicente Lecuna (1891-1954). This study reveals the fragility of topics in the construction of musical citizenship and how they are able to take us from excitement to disappointment in the blink of an eye.

Juan Francisco Sans is a Venezuelan musicologist, composer, and performer. He studied piano, organ, conducting, and recorder. He gained his doctoral degree in the humanities from the Universidad Central de Venezuela, where he is currently Professor of Musicology and director of the School of Arts. His research centres on dance music of the nineteenth century, as well as Latin American piano and orchestral music. He is the general editor of the *Classics of the Venezuelan piano literature* series (11 volumes published), and of the orchestral music of Juan Bautista Plaza (8 volumes).

12:20-2:30 *Break*

2.30 -3:50 pm **Session 3: Topics and politics.** Chair: Egberto Bermúdez

2:30-3:10 pm Omar Corrado (Universidad de Buenos Aires). “Ideologemes in search of topics: Argentine music during the Peronist decade”

Luis Milici’s *Sinfonía In Memoriam* (1953), composed as an homage to Eva Perón shortly after her death, articulates musically a number of ideologemes used by Peronism to construct its symbolic apparatus. Among them feature the palingenetic idea of a New Argentina that transformed the dark past into a luminous present, and the view of Peronism as a secular religion. These are enacted by the use of dysphoric and euphoric topics that replicate the before/after structure present in both the history of the Peronist government and Eva Perón’s personal and political life. These topics are selected from a library of representations that includes both the European and the local folk music traditions. Their temporal distribution within the work’s structure supports a classical narrative arch: conflict, appearance of the hero, triumph tragic fall, and final glorification.

Argentine musicologist **Omar Corrado** gained his doctoral degree in Music History and Musicology from the Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV). He is currently a Professor of Music History at the University of Buenos Aires. His main research field is twentieth-century Latin American art music, with a special focus on Argentina. He is the author of *Vanguardias al sur: la música de Juan Carlos Paz*, for which he received the Casa de las Américas Musicology Prize in 2008, and of *Música y modernidad en Buenos Aires 1920-1940*.

3:10-3:50 pm Roberto Kolb-Neuhaus (Universidad Autónoma de México). “‘The rending call of the poor, forsaken street crier’: the political and expressive dimension of a topic in Silvestre Revueltas’s early works”

As a profoundly political composer, Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940) understood music as an essentially social language. Interested in embodying the political in the musical, he resorted to musical topics diverted from social sound. In *Esquinas* (Street corners, 1931) Revueltas's leftism chooses the poor street-dweller as semantic subject, creating a musical topic from *pregones*, the cries of street vendors, as well as from whistled gang codes or beggar's laments. These topics, at first recognizable, are eventually abstracted, symbolically linking artistic and political change and determining musical form.

Roberto Kolb-Neuhaus is a musicologist and performer. He studied oboe at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, Holland, and gained his doctoral degree from the National University of Mexico (UNAM) in 2007. His field of expertise is the music of Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas, on whose music he has written and edited several books. He has also coordinated three recordings, the critical edition, and a digital library of Revueltas’s musical manuscripts. He is currently the Dean of the Master’s and Doctoral Programmes in Music at UNAM.

3:50-4:30 pm *Break*

4:30-5:30 pm **Session 4. An open-ended session for discussion and enquiries.**

Sunday 15th February

10:00-11.00 am **Session 4: The City and the Country.** Chair: Bernardo Illari

10:00-10:40 am Omar García Brunelli (Instituto Nacional de Musicología “Carlos Vega”, Argentina). “The topic of the tango in the music of Juan José Castro”

Argentine composer Juan José Castro (1895-1968) built his aesthetic using three musical idioms: tango, Spanish music, and the international musical language of his time, particularly neoclassicism. While Castro rejected superficial instances of musical nationalism (exoticism and mere citations of vernacular music), he repeatedly expressed his wish to develop an Argentine musical language. In this paper I will apply the theory of topics to examine Castro’s use of the tango as a source for the construction of his musical universe. I will first identify several tango traits present in his work and then will reconstruct their cultural resonance, in order to determine how they acquire meaning for both composer and listener.

Omar García Brunelli is a musicologist and Research Fellow at the National Institute of Musicology, “Carlos Vega” in Argentina. He holds a music degree from the Catholic University in Argentina and is currently completing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Buenos Aires on the music of Astor Piazzolla. His research area is tango music, particularly orchestral styles in the 1920s, and the relationship between music, lyrics, and performance. He is the editor of *Estudios sobre la obra de Astor Piazzolla* (Gourmet Musical, 2008) and the author of *Discografía básica del tango: 1905-2010*

(Gourmet Musical, 2010).

10:40-11:20 am Acácio Piedade (Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, Brazil). "Musical topics, intertextuality and rhetoricity in Heitor Villa Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras N° 2*"

In this paper I propose an analysis of Heitor Villa Lobos's orchestral piece *Bachianas Brasileiras N° 2*, composed in 1930. My analytical perspective is based on the theory of musical topics, intertextuality and rhetoricity. I intend to show how Villa Lobos's musical style engages important cultural references in the musical narrative of this instrumental piece. Before presenting musical analysis, I will discuss the relations between topics, rhetoricity, and intertextuality, particularly concerning Brazilian National music and culture.

Acácio Piedade holds a music degree from the University of Campinas (1985), master's and doctoral degrees in anthropology from the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (1997, 2004) and a post-doctorate in musicology from the Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV) (2010-2011). He is currently an associate professor at the Music Department and faculty member of the Graduate Program in Music at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. He publishes, supervises and teaches courses in the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, music analysis and composition.

11:20-11:50 am *Break*

11:50 -12:50 pm **Round table: Topic theory and the rhetorical efficacy of Latin American art music** (Eric Clarke, Omar Corrado, Henry Stobart, Melanie Plesch)

Eric Clarke is Heather Professor of Music at the University of Oxford, and a Professorial Fellow of Wadham College. He has published on issues in the psychology of music, musical meaning, music and consciousness, and the analysis of pop music, including *Ways of Listening* (OUP 2005), and *Music and Consciousness* (OUP 2011, with David Clarke). He was Associate Director of the AHRC Research Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (2009-14), and is a Fellow of the British Academy.

Henry Stobart is Reader in Music/Ethnomusicology at the Music Department of Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the founder and co-ordinator of the UK Latin American Music Seminar and editor of *The New (Ethno)musicologies*. His primary research focuses on indigenous music in the Bolivian Andes, ranging from rural music performance practices (*Music and the Poetics of Production in the Bolivian Andes*, 2006) to music video production and media piracy. A current collaboration with Michelle Bigenho examines heritage and intellectual property issues.