



# **REWORKINGS**

## **Musical re-elaboration and cultural context**

**International Symposium at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis**  
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**Abstracts**

**Carlo Ginzburg** (Pisa)  
**Entering Pascal's Workshop**  
**The Provinciales and their Dialogic Dimension**

In his *Lettres Provinciales*, published at a frantic pace between 1657 and 1658 under a pseudonym (Louis de Montalte) Blaise Pascal launched a savage attack against casuistry – the theological approach based on case reasoning – which he regarded as inspired by moral laxity. The impact of the *Provinciales* was enormous; the Jesuits, the main target of Pascal's attack, were unable to respond. Since then Pascal's *Provinciales* have been considered a masterpiece of French prose – and one of the most successful satirical texts ever. But how did Pascal work on them? Did he rework some pre-existing material – and to what extent? The paper will try to have a closer look at this issue, focusing on one specific device used in the *Provinciales*: dialogue.

**Anne Piéjus** (Paris)  
**Musique, scène et débat moral en France au XVIIe siècle: quelle musique pour la jeunesse?**

While the question of the morality of spectacles and music, much debated in XVIIIth c. France, is well studied, it is particularly useful to consider this question by observing the stand of pedagogues who had to take practical decisions for the young – a particularly vulnerable group in terms of moral contamination. This paper will briefly evoke individual training in music but will focus on collective performance both in collèges and in the Royal House of Saint-Louis at Saint-Cyr. I shall first synthesise the main issues of the recurrent debates and querelles, ranging from social questions to radical philosophical restrictions developed by Jansenists and others. Then I will examine how a series of qualifications, arrangements and solutions made the stage accessible for pupils and were finally accepted and, to a certain extent, promoted by moral authorities.

**João Pedro d'Alvarenga** (Lisbon)  
**"Allo stile dei musici di questa nazione": Balancing the Old and New in Portuguese Church Music from the 1720s and 30s**

Variety of styles is a characteristic of late Baroque church music; repertoires usually rooted in a strong core of older compositions alongside newer works that could be modelled on older styles or inclined towards a more modern idiom. In Roman Catholic countries, these repertoires and their performing practices included plainchant, improvised counterpoint over plainchant and *falsobordone*, pieces in the *stile antico* more often performed a cappella, and small to large scale *pieno* or *concertato* pieces with only the organ accompaniment, or a more substantial instrumental accompaniment for grand occasions. For instance in Rome or Vienna, as music was commonly re-used, church repertoires were acquired by means of a long standing accumulation of layers shaping a slowly-changing and stable tradition. In Lisbon, however, abrupt changes occurred in the late 1710s as a result of a complex political and diplomatic programme designed to legitimize the absolutist power of the Portuguese crown both internally and on the international stage. Because one of the main objectives of the programme was to achieve the endorsement of Rome (as it was a centre of international prestige and global influence), this amounted to a process of "Romanization", that is, of assimilation and adaptation of Roman models by Portuguese culture. "Romanization" was not a simple transplantation of cultural products, ideas and practices from the centre to the periphery but was rather a dynamic process of acculturation and adaptation seemingly rooted in emerging forms of historical awareness and in cultural emulation. This paper aims at tracing the musical context for this process, focusing particularly on the ways local composers understood old repertoires, reused and

rendered older styles into new compositions and distinguished them from their own modern, Italianate style.

**Anthony Rooley** (Basel)

### **'Found in Translation': the Inspiration of Italian Culture on the English, and Its Transformation into Something Uniquely 'English'**

The English 'passion' for all things from Italy – and their ability to turn this inspiration into something quite new.

It is remarkable how much the English feasted on things Italian through the 16thC – not only in music, but in philosophy, art and imagination – but for brevity, we stay with the music!

The prints of 'villotte' in the 1550s/60s by Filippo Azzaiolo gathers music that had been mostly of a popular oral tradition back at least to the beginning of the 16thC. When young Sir Thomas Wyatt visited Italy, in service to his King (Henry VIII), he heard Italian 'street music' on 'ground basses', and wrote poetry, songs, to 'be sung to anie pleasaunt tune'! A good place for us to start...

Then in the 1580s a passion for Italian madrigals led not only to 'Musica Transalpina', but to Italian composers coming to England. The Italian community in London was lively and growing. Translated Italian madrigals inspired English composers – Thomas Morley, John Dowland and others.

A younger generation, after 1600, took up this inspiration – and English singers adopted the lively style of improvised 'passagiate'; and 'first generation' English born composers like Alfonso Ferrabosco the Younger composed songs so utterly 'English' in style.

As ever, there was a touch of 'English Humour' around... Dowland explores it in 'Lasso vita mia' by putting musical syllables on the wrong pitches – for 'blind cantors who did not know the rules of gamut'; and Henry Lawes thoroughly enjoyed sending up the English audiences who loved anything and everything they did not understand in Italian... 'Mock Songs' became a genre that lasted over 200 years!

**Johannes Menke** (Basel)

### **Reworking Carissimi**

It is known that Georg Frederic Handel often has reworked own compositions or works of contemporary or former composers. In his oratorio's the eldest reworked composition seems to be the final chorus of Giacomo Carissimi's *Jephte* from the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century which was a famous work, praised by Athanasius Kircher in his *Musurgia universalis* (1650) as an outstanding example for the "affectus doloris". Handel reworked it in his *Samson* as "Hear Jacob's God".

With his reworking Handel assembles a relation to an early period of the genre; he goes back to an old style, to win archaic moments with which he characterizes the Israelites. He transfers the music of the Roman and catholic oratorio to the modern English oratorio which was established by him and was received by a nationally conscious Anglican audience. Handel doesn't copy his model only. He rather rearranges Carissimi's composition, uses another orchestration, mainly another text and puts it into a completely different context. Thus he transforms not only the musical but the rhetoric, semantic and expressive construction of the chorus.