

Conference Agenda

Session

MR1-06: Musical Iconography around 1500

Time: Tuesday, 25/July/2023: 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Session Chair: Tim Shephard

Location: Meeting room 1

Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Alfons-Goppel-Straße 11;
approx. 100 people

Presentations

ID: 232 / MR1-06: 1

Themed session (120 minutes for 4 papers and 90 minutes for 3 papers, including Q&A)

In-person presentation

Keywords: musical iconography, Apollo and Muses, studiolo, recorders (consort), virginal

The Golden Age of Musical Iconography: Case Studies in Context and Meaning from Around 1500

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SESSION ABSTRACT. The decades around 1500 experienced a spectacular rise of pictorial programs with musical subject matter in unprecedented number and quality. In our session, members of the IMS Study Group 'Musical Iconography' will explore this microcosm and its riches. – As a symbol of inspiration and abundance, the most popular topic of Apollo and the Muses must have offered itself to ambitious patrons. Two papers deal with the treatment of this motif in different settings: the detached frescoes of an otherwise lost *studiolo* decoration in the ambitious Sforza context on the one side (PRIGNANO), the painted cover and flap of a virginal probably commissioned by the Gonzaga on the other (GÉTREAU). – The formation (and depiction) of homogeneous consorts all over Europe is tantamount of Renaissance ensemble music, and yet it remains surprising to see how an angelic recorder quartet even fits into the most sacred eucharist context of a monstration in Portugal. Here the pastoral soundscape as depicted is merged with the apotropaic dimension of little bells which attract the attention of the faithful (ROCHA & SOUSA). – Finally, the Assunta, one of the most rewarding starting points for depictions of the heavenly praise, will be scrutinized, with a particular focus on Umbria. This in turn sheds new light on patterns of imitation and emulation in Renaissance Italy (LUISI).

- **Gaia PRIGNANO, “Proposal for a new interpretation of the ‘music-making’ Muses in casa Maffi”** The paper aims to reassess the iconography of Apollo and the Muses in a late fifteenth-century Cremonese pictorial cycle (detached frescoes, exhibited in the Victoria & Albert Museum since 1889). Scholars have already established the previous context, a lost *studiolo*, and identify the painter, Alessandro Pampurino. Despite the remarkable interest of the elaborate iconographic program that refers to neo-Platonic theories on music, the exact circumstances of its conception remain unclear. We will propose a close reading within Cremona's vivid cultural milieu and put forward a new hypothesis on patronage, that of Francesca Bianca Sforza, Augustinian abbess, natural daughter of Francesco I Sforza, and sister of Ludovico il Moro.
- **Florence GÉTREAU, “Two Allegories of Music painted for a virginal from the Liechtenstein collection in Vienna”** This paper analyzes two anonymous grisaille panels (ca. 1515–40) today preserved in the Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna: *Apollo and the Muses*, and *Lady Music surrounded by Jubal, Pythagoras and Guido d'Arezzo*. We will detect their multiple sources (Raffaello Sanzio, Gaffurio, Viridung) and try to establish the original function as cover and flap of the outer case of a rectangular virginal, quite probably commissioned by the Gonzaga in Mantua and decorated by court painter “Polidoro”. Visible to both the musician and the audience, such paintings of a now lost musical instrument contributed to (and ultimately sublimated) the concepts of *musica instrumentalis* and *musica practica* and their sensory, symbolic and intellectual power within a humanist context.
- **Luís CORREIA DE SOUSA & Luzia Aurora ROCHA, “A consort of flutes in the sixteenth-century custody of Guimarães (Portugal)”** A precious custody of 1534 in the late Gothic ‘Manueline’ style, originally from the church of Nossa Senhora da Oliveira (today Museu Alberto Sampaio in Guimarães, Portugal), is outstanding for its rich decoration which includes a quartet of angels playing recorders of different sizes and displayed in a suggestive way, but also a set of six small bells which are heard when the monstration is raised. This paper analyzes the Guimarães custody within its artistic and historical context, with a special emphasis on foreign engravings that circulated in Portugal at that time, as well as on the popular theatrical tradition of *Entremezes* and *Farsas* as possible scenographic sources of inspiration.
- **Maria LUISI, “Modelli iconografico-musicali per il tema dell’Incoronazione della Vergine nell’Italia centrale” [paper presented in Italian].** The paper intends to examine the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary and the different ‘declinations’ of its musical elements in early sixteenth-century central Italy. Starting from the great artistic models of reference (Lippi, Ghirlandaio) up to the achievements of Spagna and of his followers, the subject is particularly significant within the rich artistic production of Umbria. The iconographical as well as the musical choices made by the respective artists allow to track the continuity of a tradition, but also to observe how the adaptations applied from time to time lead towards more refined crystallizations of the model.