

Eighteenth Century Music

<http://journals.cambridge.org/ECM>

Additional services for *Eighteenth Century Music*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



ALEXANDRE PIERRE FRANÇOIS BOËLY (1785–1858), SES CONTEMPORAINS ET LE STYLE SÉVÈRE, CONSERVATOIRE À RAYONNEMENT RÉGIONAL DE PARIS, 4–5 DECEMBER 2008

KEITH CHAPIN

Eighteenth Century Music / Volume 6 / Issue 02 / September 2009, pp 306 - 309
DOI: 10.1017/S1478570609990340, Published online: 03 August 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S1478570609990340

How to cite this article:

KEITH CHAPIN (2009). ALEXANDRE PIERRE FRANÇOIS BOËLY (1785–1858), SES CONTEMPORAINS ET LE STYLE SÉVÈRE, CONSERVATOIRE À RAYONNEMENT RÉGIONAL DE PARIS, 4–5 DECEMBER 2008. *Eighteenth Century Music*, 6, pp 306-309 doi:10.1017/S1478570609990340

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)



The first day of studies was closed by Matteo Giuggioli (Università degli Studi di Pavia), who discussed some examples of classical symphonic music and compared different rhetorical strategies ('Intorno ad alcuni esempi di "sinfonismo" lombardo: strategie retoriche a confronto'). He introduced concepts from James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's *Elements of Sonata Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) in order to analyse some movements from symphonies by Brioschi and other Milanese composers. He argued that sonata rhetoric existed in pieces written before 1750.

To begin the second day of the conference, Sarah Mandel-Yehuda addressed 'Issues of Authenticity in Eighteenth-Century Sources of Symphonies: The Case of Antonio Brioschi'. As she has edited a good number of Brioschi's symphonies, she was well placed to comment on issues of authorship, provenance and chronology that surround the manuscripts and prints of eighteenth-century symphonies preserved in European and North American libraries. Although scheduled to present, Bathia Churgin (Bar-Ilan University), one of the foremost experts on Brioschi, was unable to take part in the conference. Her contribution ('A Brioschi Borrowing from Sammartini: The Andante from His Trio Symphony, Fonds Blancheton, Op. II, 61') will be included in the conference proceedings, to be published in 2010.

The conference ended with papers by students in the Gruppo di Ricerca (Davide Daolmi, coordinator) of the Dipartimento di Storia delle Arti, della Musica e dello Spettacolo at the Università degli Studi di Milano. The topics ranged widely over issues relating to eighteenth-century Milanese music, from newly rediscovered composers such as Gaetano Piazza, Carlo Monza, Ferdinando Galimberti, Giuseppe Paladino, Andrea Zani, Ferdinando Brivio and Francesco Zappa, to identifying challenges and new ways of doing research, such as mining eighteenth-century almanacs or using Frank Zappa recordings as points of comparison.

These young researchers and musicians are a guarantee of strength to the Archivio della Sinfonia Milanese project, or, at least, they add their strength to that of many others. Coordinating such a broad project in which so many are involved – researchers, educators, students, professional musicians, publishers, recording companies – is no easy matter. Nonetheless, the conference demonstrated that collaboration can indeed point the way towards a new way of doing musicology.

BIANCA DE MARIO



doi:10.1017/S1478570609990340

ALEXANDRE PIERRE FRANÇOIS BOËLY (1785–1858), SES CONTEMPORAINS ET LE STYLE SÉVÈRE

CONSERVATOIRE À RAYONNEMENT RÉGIONAL DE PARIS, 4–5 DECEMBER 2008

Musicians will often discuss the 'strict style' in the singular, as if dictionaries, composition manuals and letters all gave a uniform definition of the concept. There is a good reason for this, but the reason is at least as much sociological as it is music-theoretical. Musicians have often defined the inner sanctum of their art – the essence of their claim to be a cut above the rest – by reference to the 'strict style', and have thereby also projected some sense of a coherent community that joins together the select few. According to this ideology, those 'in the know' are the ones who understand strict principles of composition – that is, counterpoint – even though there are many musical techniques that lend themselves to specialization and to artistry. There are certainly times in which this ideal community centred on counterpoint finds some sort of institutional support, whether in the court or church structures of the ancien régime or in the conservatories and universities of the late nineteenth or twentieth centuries. However, there are other times in which the ideal of a musical profession grounded in a solid mastery of 'true' principles of composition sits uncomfortably with institutional structures. When this is the case, definitions of the strict style multiply almost exponentially.



The long eighteenth century was one of these times of tension and transition, marked at its beginning by the relative stability of musical styles and social structures and at its end by the establishment of new styles and structures. The French organist and composer Alexandre Boëly lived through some of these changes, and it is thus no surprise that the strict styles under review were legion at a colloquium devoted to him and like-minded contemporaries, jointly organized by the Centre de Recherche 'Patrimoines et Langages Musicaux' of the Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV and the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris and held at the latter institution. Although the colloquium was devoted to Boëly in name, it was devoted at least as much to the complicated situation that faced composers in France during the first half of the nineteenth century. Boëly lived most of his life in Paris, but he was born and passed his first years in Versailles, where his father had fulfilled various court musical functions, and there is little doubt that his lifelong, decided taste for Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven was linked to his nostalgia for the courtly world of the eighteenth century and his distaste for nineteenth-century public-oriented institutions and musical styles. Yet the politics and other social implications of strict composition were not the primary concern of this colloquium, although many participants alluded to them in passing, and the focus tended to be on precisely the types of technical and stylistic issues that held and hold musicians of various stamps (including the participants themselves) together in a type of virtual community in and across centuries.

The power of the subject to unify musicians was in ample evidence in the opening ceremony, as Xavier Delette (Director of the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris) and Frédéric Billiet (Director of the Unité de Formation et de Recherche de Musique et Musicologie de l'Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV) welcomed the participants and celebrated the joint degree programme in performance and musicology that links the two institutions. It was also evident throughout the two days as numerous concerts by students and professionals showcased little-known works of Boëly and his contemporaries, including many discussed by the colloquium participants. Particular highlights were the concluding recitals by Éric Lebrun on the organ and by Christine Schornsheim on a restored Érard piano of 1802. But this power and inclusiveness also brought with it diversity and variety. In his opening remarks Jean-Pierre Bartoli (Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV) emphasized that he and the other conference organizers – Brigitte François-Sappey (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris), Jeanne Roudet (Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV) and Thomas Vernet (Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris) – did not intend to limit the conference to a single style but rather hoped to address the range of styles, practices and concepts related to 'strict composition'.

The first session was devoted to music-theoretical issues and what was at stake in them, but it was quickly apparent that a range of musical issues could fall under the rubric of strict composition. Two participants focused on the stylistic attributes frequently associated with 'strictness'. In 'Quelques remarques à propos des techniques d'écriture contrapuntique à l'époque de Haydn, Mozart et Beethoven' Frédéric Gonin (Université Lumière Lyon 2) noted the centrality of species counterpoint as a medium of transmission between composers of different periods. Rather than focusing on issues of consonance and dissonance treatment, however, he showed how composers differentiated melodic lines within a homophonic style by using the distinct rhythmic relationships conventionally stylized in the various stages of species counterpoint. In 'Les Fugues d'Antoine Reicha, une nouvelle conception' Louise Bernard de Raymond (Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV) examined Reicha's innovations in fugal procedure in his early *Trente six fugues pour le piano composées d'après un nouveau système* (Vienna: Magazin de l'Imprimerie chymique[, 1803]), including the use of periodic themes (both his own and borrowed ones, such as from Mozart's 'Haffner' Symphony), answers at intervals other than the fifth, non-diatonic modulation patterns and the like. By contrast, two of the participants concentrated on the technical issues of harmony, the foundation of strict composition. In 'Les Véritables causes de l'état d'ignorance et leur contexte' Nicolas Meeùs (Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV) turned to issues both of chord generation and of institutional politics in his examination of a little-known treatise by Alexandre Boëly's father, Jean-François Boëly. As Meeùs noted, J.-F. Boëly generated chords out of Rameau's *corps sonore* as part of a proposed reform of harmonic pedagogy. The full title of the publication sums up well the context for and fate of the proposal: *Les Véritables causes dévoilées de l'état d'ignorance des siècles reculés, dans lequel rentre visiblement aujourd'hui la Théorie Pratique de*



l'Harmonie 1, notamment la profession de cette science. Offres généreuses de l'en faire sortir promptement, faites à M. Gossec, Chef des Professeurs de cette partie, au Conservatoire Impérial de Musique, qui n'a point eu la modestie de les accepter. Réponses indécentes de ce Chef aux lettres suivantes sur ces différens objets. Par M. Boëly. In 'Le Contrepoint dans l'article "Sonate" de Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny' Jean-Pierre Bartoli examined Momigny's surprisingly detailed criticism of passages from J. S. Bach's Sonatas in B minor and G major for Violin and Continuo, BWV1014 and 1015. For Momigny, at least, Bach's composition was not strict enough, and he felt called upon to correct the master. Thus two of the papers in this session emphasized the modifications that the strict style could undergo; two emphasized the search for its 'true' principles over and beyond issues of style. The other paper of the session, 'Temporal Modes and Symbolic Stakes: Strict Composition in Early Nineteenth-Century Europe', was my own (Keith Chapin, New Zealand School of Music), and began with a typology that might account for such differences in the concept of strict composition. Some concepts emphasize precise technical rules of dissonance control and part-writing, ostensibly immutable and grounded in 'nature'; others focus on stylistic features (such as imitative entries or melodic independence) that can be realized in a number of ways; while, at the far end of the spectrum, others depend on suggesting a severe mood or giving an impression of craft. The approach to strict composition, I further argued, influences the temporal character of works, some approaching nearer to stasis and cyclical return, others nearer to flux and developmental teleology.

The next two sessions were concerned with 'Boëly et ses contemporains face au style sévère'. In the first, an unplanned theme was the variety of ways in which musicians could constitute their community depending on how they set up the reference to antiquity and severity. At times, there was a clear promotional bent to the reference, as in études with bows to Handel and other past masters by Moscheles, described by Xavier Mital (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris) in 'Moscheles et le style sévère: l'accueil de la France'. At other times, the links between the musicians of this community were highly intimate, as in Cherubini's realizations of puzzle canons by Martini, beautifully illustrated by Luciane Beduschi (Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV) in 'La Composition de canons au XIX^e siècle: Albrechtsberger, Neukomm, Cherubini et Boëly'. At times, as Brigitte François-Sappey set out in her survey 'Entre France et Allemagne: Boëly et le style sévère', composers conceived of themselves as part of a transnational community, Boëly himself doing so through his fascination with various German composers. At other times, the tie to the past might be sublimated into a particular form of identity, such as the religious identity based on sentiment described by the historian Jérôme Grondeux (Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV) in 'Historicisme et religiosité en France au tournant du XIX^e siècle'.

But, as the other session on Boëly and his contemporaries demonstrated, there may have been aspects of the cultivation of the strict style in France that were proper to the country. Such a national tradition arose in large part from the personal ties that linked musicians who lived in Paris. In 'Saint-Saëns et Boëly et les musiciens de l'ombre' Yves Gérard (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris) convincingly argued that Boëly exerted a greater influence on later composers devoted to strict composition than did the professors of the Conservatoire. The French tradition perhaps also arose in part from a particular form of self-consciousness associated with the cultivation of ancient or foreign traditions in a city famous for opera and virtuoso repertoire. In 'De la fantastique à l'op. 55 de Saint-Saëns: les enjeux du style sévère dans la symphonie française' Muriel Boulan (Université Paris Sorbonne-Paris IV) offered a fascinating look at French composers' integration of fugatos and other imitative passages into their symphonies, especially last movements. Such fascination was well reflected in contemporaneous pedagogical manuals and dictionaries. In 'Du style sévère chez quelques contemporains de Boëly en France (Ladurner, Dumoncheau, Hérold...)' Hervé Audéon (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and Institut de Recherche sur le Patrimoine Musical en France) discussed classicizing works for piano, including an interesting set of three sonatas by Dumoncheau modelled on Haydn, Mozart and Clementi respectively. It was clear that French composers also cast their eyes over the channel and not only across the Rhein. Of course, there was a fine line between national and period practices. As Jeanne Roudet showed in 'Les "À la manière" du style ancien ou la tradition revisitée dans les traités de pianoforte à l'époque de Boëly', performers across Europe developed their own



characteristic approach to styles and genres of music judged 'old', an approach appropriate to the instruments and the aesthetics of their time. For instance, the individual lines of canons were supposed to merge into each other, while the themes of fugues were to be highlighted on each occurrence.

The final session focused on the issues, both methodological and practical, that face those who perform the music of Boëly and his contemporaries. David Rowland (Open University and University of Cambridge) examined 'How Nineteenth-Century Pianists Played Baroque Music: The Evidence of Editions and Keyboard Tutors' and discussed the types of choices made by performers as they played repertoire written for the harpsichord or the clavichord on the piano. Florence Gétreau (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and Institut de Recherche sur le Patrimoine Musical en France) discussed the discovery of and research on hitherto unknown works by Boëly, 'Les Mélodies inédites pour violoncelle et orgue expressif de Boëly'. Finally, Éric Lebrun (Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Saint-Maur), the foremost interpreter of Boëly's organ music, spoke about the issues he faces in 'Jouer, classer, comprendre: défendre Boëly aujourd'hui'.

At the conclusion of the colloquium, Jean-Pierre Bartoli declared the two days to be a celebration of the work of Alexandre Boëly's greatest student, the musicologist Brigitte François-Sappey, whose teachings had shaped many of the participants and whose articles and books on Boëly form the foundation of all work on the composer. Yet it was clear to all that Boëly was the point of departure for the colloquium. Indeed, Boëly himself might have been happy to see the issue of his own compositional persona sublimated into fundamental questions about technique, style and the degree to which the 'style sévère' could change to suit the situation of all those early nineteenth-century French composers with one eye on the past and one on the present. To what extent did strict composition necessitate the maintenance of techniques associated with earlier centuries? To what extent did the strict style bear accommodation to the tastes of the present? Was there perhaps a difference between strict composition and the strict style, and might there be several of the latter? Responses to such questions were various in the long eighteenth century and they were various in the colloquium itself.

KEITH CHAPIN



doi:10.1017/S1478570609990339

ANTONIO EXIMENO (1729–1808): ÁMBITOS DEL DISCURSO SOBRE LA MÚSICA EN LA EUROPA ILUSTRADA

INSTITUT VALÈNCIÀ DE LA MÚSICA, 11–13 DECEMBER 2008

The bicentenary of the death of the Spanish Jesuit mathematician and writer on music Antonio Eximeno (Rome, 9 June 1808) prompted the Institut Valencià de la Música to organize, in the town where he was born on 26 September 1729, a course devoted to this important figure. This was the third in a series of events dedicated to historiographical matters, and its title, which translates as 'The Boundaries of Discourse on Music in Enlightenment Europe', reveals that the meeting was conceived not in terms of a routine celebration, but rather as an occasion for rethinking the peculiar contribution of Eximeno to eighteenth-century musical theory and aesthetics. Six musicologists from Italy and Spain were the main speakers at this event: Paolo Gozza and Elisabetta Pasquini (Università di Bologna), Michela Garda (Università di Pavia-Cremona), Amaya Sara García Pérez (Universidad de Salamanca), Carmen Rodríguez Suso (Universidad del País Vasco) and Miguel Ángel Picó Pasqual (formerly of the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Valencia), who is Eximeno's most recent biographer. The audience consisted of fellow musicologists and music