

CSULA Choral Music Research Papers

Selected Abstracts of Research Papers Completed by First-Year Graduate Students in the California State University, Los Angeles, Three-Summer Master of Music in Choral Conducting Degree Program

2005

Sergei Vassilievich Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil: An Approach to Proper Divisi

by Rhonda Bauer

Rachmaninoff's technique of choral *divisi*, into as many as twelve discreet vocal parts, is founded on the historical sonority of the Russian church ensemble. Techniques for placing voices into their most effective sections are discussed.

The Influence of Transcendentalism on Charles Ives's Psalm 90

by Michelle Otis

Ives's commitment to the Transcendental movement came late in his career. Sonorities, elements contributing to movement, and the composer's five "choral gestures" are discussed.

Shall We?: Contemporary Settings of "Shall We Gather at the River"

by Jennifer Wortman

Contemporary choral settings by Copland and John Carter of Robert Lowry's 1864 shape-note hymn are compared to the original, examining twentieth-century compositional techniques that complement the hymn's text.

Mistaken Identity: The Influence of an American Musical Tradition in the Music of Randall Thompson

by Christopher G. Fong

Scholars have connected Thompson's "The Paper Reeds by the Brook" from *The Peaceable Kingdom* to shape-note hymnody. Examination of this fifth movement disputes these claims.

"Veni Creator Spiritus": The Impact of Milan Kaderavek's Composition

by Daniel Ian Paulson

This study argues that the craftsmanship and affective abilities of this choral piece should earn its composer's works a place in the standard repertoire of choirs. Excerpts from an interview with Kaderavek are included as well as a preliminary analysis of the Gregorian chant-based composition.

"When David Heard": Three Settings

by John Hamilton

Twentieth-century American composer Eric Whitacre's setting is compared to those by the Tudor master Thomas Tomkins and the early American composer William Billings. Thorough text-painting analysis reveals the various devices employed by these composers, each within the language of his own era and personal musical vocabulary, to elicit the emotions implicit in the Biblical text.

Preserving Stylistic Integrity: Transposition in Modern Performance of Renaissance Choral Music

by Catherine Gilk Robinson

The transposition of Renaissance secular and sacred choral music may seem to violate the dictates of authenticity. However, performance practices contemporary with that era

as well as subsequent changes in vocal tone production, standard pitch, and pedagogy indicate that historical accuracy may be more authentically served via transposition.

Messiaen and Whitacre: A Comparison of Sacred Choral Works

by Sri Silva

Olivier Messiaen's "O sacrum convivium" and Eric Whitacre's "Lux aurumque" show influences of Classicism, Impressionism, Indian modes, Gregorian chant, and spirituality. The musical training and events catalyzing these twentieth-century composers' musical choices are explored.

Music from Baroque Mexico: An Analysis of Selected Villancicos of Gaspar Fernández and Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla

by Dale Harrison

Emigrants from the Iberian peninsula, in the early 1600s these two priest-composers served successively as *maestro de capillas* of the Puebla Cathedral. An important musical center, Puebla authorities hired de Padilla to assist Fernández as the elder's health failed, but little is known about their relationship. Commonalities between their compositional techniques are explored via their use of the *villancico* form in sacred compositions.

Sergei Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil

by Hanson Yeung

This report explores primary and secondary resources into the cultural background and performance practices applicable to Rachmaninoff's *Vespers*.

Just Intonation: The Key to Unlocking the Harmonies in Selected Choral Music of Eric Whitacre

by Jon Keenan

Twentieth-century American composer Eric Whitacre's *a cappella* choral music presents intonation challenges for many choirs. Just intonation is examined via lattice theory, and rehearsal suggestions to achieve proper tunings are made for Whitacre's "Cloud Burst," "Go, Lovely Rose," and "Water Night."

The Contemporary Use of Non-Texted Choir in Film

by Kerry Riccio

A brief history of the earliest uses of the wordless choir in movies is followed by more recent examples of textless vocal ensembles in films scored by Danny Elfman and John Williams.

2006

Breaking the Silence: The Holst and Bairstow Settings of "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

by Carrie Bastian

The contemporaneous composers' settings of the *St. James Liturgy* text reflect their differing personal and spiritual beliefs. Full textual and musical analyses are included.

Stylistic Patchwork: Contemporary Compositional Techniques in Corigliano's "Of Rage and Remembrance"

by Michael Reilly

A survey of audience and performer reactions to this choral piece, based on movement no. 3 of the Oscar-winning composer's Symphony No. 1, accompanies a musical

analysis of its stylistic derivations, both ancient and contemporary, as well as the affective contributions of Corigliano's staging instructions.

“Manning” Britten’s A Boy Was Born: Boys’, Girls’, or Mixed Children’s Choir?

by William Skaff

The issues explored in perception research, the English boy choir tradition, and the introduction of girls' voices into the chapel and cathedral choir are applied to Britten's work. However, the symbology in the piece determines the composition of the children's choir.

The Music Is Up There: The Limits of Authenticity in the Presentation of Sacred Catholic Music in Concert

by John Bonaduce

Liturgical practices and commentary define the role and placement of music in Catholic services.

Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater: Artistic Sensibility or Cultural Trends?

by Nancy Schuette

The “affect” long admired in Pergolesi's well known choral masterpiece may be due as much to crises in the composer's life as to compositional practices of the era.

The Influence of Jazz on Copland’s Old American Songs

by Jean Butler

Rhythmic elements of jazz techniques found in compositions written during Copland's “jazz period” are also employed in these later choral works.

2007

The Standard for Greek Orthodox Ecclesiastical Music: Dr. Frank Desby’s Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

by Elaine Ono

Examines the polyphonic setting of the Liturgy by Frank Desby and its relationship to the tradition of Byzantine chant as practiced in the contemporary Greek Orthodox Church.

Gerald Finzi’s Song Cycle Setting of Thomas Hardy’s A Young Man’s Exhortation

by Ryan Magenot

Examines the parallels between the unusual discourse style of Thomas Hardy and Gerald Finzi's compositional style in the song cycle.

Fusing Past and Present: Folk Revival in the Choral Music of Alice Parker and Ralph Vaughan Williams

by Sally H. Dean

Compares the tonal styles of contemporary composers Alice Parker and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Mozart and Sondheim: The Drama Kings

by Kristy Juliano

Compares the dramatic styles of Mozart's The Magic Flute and Sondheim's Sweeney Todd, classifying both the *Singspiel* and the “musical” as operas.

The Proper Setting of René Clausen’s “Set Me as a Seal”

by Sang Park

Examines René Clausen's "Set Me as a Seal," analyzing the Biblical text and arguing that the 1996 SSAA setting is more effective than the 1989 SATB setting.

Three Contemporary Choral Settings of Shakespeare's "O Mistress Mine"

by Aaron Bryan

Analyzes three contemporary settings of Shakespeare's "O Mistress Mine" from Twelfth Night.

Practically Plagiarism: A Comparison of the Hidas Requiem with the Verdi, Mozart, and Fauré Requiems

by Harmony Murphy

Explores the War Requiem by Hungarian composer Frigyes Hidas, his use of borrowed materials and techniques, and the composers' works from which it derives.

Common Misconceptions in the Performance of Stravinsky's Mass

by Garson Olivieri

Reveals misconceptions of close Stravinsky associates regarding his Mass and applies tuning theory to the controversy over the final chord.

A Psalm for All Time

by Margo Lockwood

Explores Psalm 23 settings by McFerrin and by Bernstein in The Chichester Psalms, including compositional techniques in the latter which account for tonal ambiguity.

2008

Polyphonic Arrangement Integrated into the Greek Orthodox Liturgical Ritual of St. Nicholas in Trieste in the Nineteenth Century: Retrieving Information from Handwritten Comments Found on the Choir Members' Scores

by Athanasia Kyriakidou

Explores the introduction of polyphony into the Greek Orthodox liturgy of major Western European cities with substantial Greek populations and suggests a new history for this introduction based on handwritten marginalia.

Set Me As a Seal Upon Thy Music: Religious Pedigree in Representative Settings of Song of Songs 8:6–7

by David Carter

Traces the circumstances of contemporary settings of the psalm by Jean-Yves Daniel-Lesur and Herman Berlinski and the religious and ethnic influences on these composers.

A Comparison of Chorale Settings of the "Vater unser" by Lutheran Composers Johann Walter and Hans Leo Hassler

by Paul Anthony Ferris

Compares treatments of the "Our Father" by the late Renaissance and early Baroque composers, examining compositional precedents and liturgical purposes.

"O My Love's Like a Red, Red Rose": Applying Burns' Intent to two Contemporary Settings"

by Brad Pierson

Contends that text settings by René Clausen and David Dickau, although different, each serves Robert Burns' intents—one musical and one poetic—and suggests ideas for performance.

A Siren's Song: Boulanger and Debussy's Sirens and the Emergence of Women Composers in Early Twentieth-Century France

by Lyndsey Olsen

Presents the seminal achievements of Lili Boulanger and traces the artistic and social evolution of sirens as well as her incorporation of elements of Debussy's techniques and her own feministic interpretation of the subject.

2009

Absolutist Creed vs. Nostalgia: Stravinsky's Setting of Four Russian Peasant Songs

by Desiree Fowler

Provides background and analysis and compares the composer's well-known disavowal of emotional subtext with these obviously evocative pieces.

Bankrupt Baroque: Purcell's Prestige Shortchanges Concertgoers as a Blackout for Other Choral Composers of the Middle Baroque

by Hans Gunnar Ludwig

Uses statistical methods to examine the relative popularity of middle Baroque composers in current research, live performances, CD sales, and broadcast media.

Authentic, Socially Relevant and Transformative Performance Practice: Multidimensional Presentation in Choral Music

by Janine Dexter

Amid declining audiences for the arts in general, choral musicians search for the means to ensure faithful audiences. Reviews of the performances and ideologies of two contemporary choral groups—Conspirare and the Minnesota Chorale—are explored as models for success.

Common Mistakes of Melismatic Performance: Common Practices for Handel's Messiah

by James Aaron Mosley

Advocates that accentuation and phrasing—understood as a “given” by Baroque performers—needs to be applied to the melismas of this well-known piece.

The State of Nineteenth-Century Church Music in Ireland

by Catherine Mulhern

Examines music education and the sources for liturgical and para-liturgical music and the effects of poverty and political occupation.

Musical Rhythm of Francis Poulenc's O Magnum mysterium: French- or Roman-Influenced Latin?

by Robert Grant

Juxtaposing a history of Latin and changing performance practices in France, Poulenc's text setting and unique musical style are compared.

Shaping Narrative Choral Music of the Twentieth Century: Interaction Between Gestures and Voices in Musical Storytelling

by Rhonda Kay Memmer

Compares narrative choral music of twentieth-century composers Davidson and Distler with conducting and performance suggestions.