MEDREN 2021

49th Medieval and Renaissance International Music Conference

Lisboa ⁙ Portugal

Book of Abstracts

Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, FCSH, Colégio Almada Negreiros, 5-9 July 2021

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The *49th Medieval and Renaissance International Music Conference* is organised and hosted by the CESEM–Centre for the Study of the Sociology and Aesthetics of Music at Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, FCSH–School of Social Sciences and Humanities
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Session 25 (Themed Papers): European Ars Nova: New sources and updates

Chair: Andreas Janke (University of Hamburg)

Session Abstract

The ERC funded project "European Ars Nova. Multilingual Poetry and Polyphonic Song in the Late Middle Ages" (ArsNova, P.I. Maria Sofia Lannutti, https://www.europeanarsnova.eu), hosted by the Department of Literature and Philosophy of the University of Florence, is devoted to the interdisciplinary study of fourteenth-century polyphony with a strong focus on manuscript transmission, philology and music philology, text-music relations and music analysis. Partner institution of the project is the Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage of the University of Pavia, campus of Cremona.

One of the project aims is to overcome the disciplinary divisions that separate literary and musicological studies. This panel puts together research by two romance philologists and two musicologists working on different aspects of fourteenth-century polyphony. Davide Checchi focuses on errors caused by the text's mise en page of the *formes fixes* in musical sources. Michele Epifani addresses one of the most urgent issues in dealing with the relations between music and poetic texts in the fourteenth-century repertoire: whether the mensural notation implies a certain degree of metric accentuation, depending on the *mensura*. Federico Saviotti and Antonio Calvia present for the first time a polyphonic fragment recently discovered and held in Pavia, with a description of the source and combined interdisciplinary analysis of text and music, as a preliminary to the discussion of a possible context for the repertoire.

Individual Abstracts

Mise en page and text displacement in Ars Nova sources | Davide Checchi (University of Pavia)

The bulk of fourteenth-century secular polyphony is represented by the *formes fixes*, where the text is distributed on musical sections that have to be repeated in

various ways. As is well known, in order to save space, these sections are copied only once in musical sources. Consequently, the lines of the text are not written according to their regular order, but they are split and copied under the corresponding musical section or in the *residuum*. The paper will discuss three case studies—*En la sainson que toute riens s'encline* (Humbertus de Salinis), *Plasanche, or tost a eux vous assembles* (Pykiny), and *Tres douche plasant bergiere / Reconforte toi Robin* (anonymous polytextual *virelai*)—where this particular *mise en page* involves the displacement of some lines and other errors in the transmission of the texts.

Metrics and mensural notation in the Trecento repertoire | Michele Epifani (University of Pavia)

Italian polyphony of the 14th century mostly consists of poems set to music (madrigals, ballatas, and caccias), each defined by specific and well-defined metric structures. Each line of the poem is structured at two different levels: the number of syllables (or metric seats) and the rhythmic profile (number and position of metrical accents). Given that a strong relationship between metrics of the poems and music form exists, a fundamental question arises: whether the mensural notation in itself implies a certain degree of metric accentuation, or, in other words, whether a given *mensura* involves a metric grid. Because coeval music treatises do not offer any explanation, it is necessary to resort to musical analysis. The study of some fifty ballatas by Francesco Landini strongly suggests that the text-music relationship also operates at a metrical level.

A newly discovered polyphonic fragment: Description of the finding and analysis of the textual contents | Federico Saviotti (University of Pavia)

A parchment bifolio, recycled as a cover for an early 17th-century printed volume, was recently discovered in the University Library of Pavia by Giuseppe Mascherpa and myself. On the visible side of the bifolio, four polyphonic pieces in Italianised French were in part readable. The parchment's recent restoration has brought to light a further piece on the glued side: a fragment of a polyphonic Credo. In this paper, I will describe the fragment's discovery, as part of a larger campaign to recover reused medieval parchments, and provide a first linguistic and literary analysis of the four French texts.

The Pavia fragment: A new source of secular and liturgical polyphony |
Antonio Calvia (University of Pavia)

The new fragment, a bifolio ruled with fourteen red five-line staves per page, contains five polyphonic anonymous *unica*. The pieces are in 14th-century black notation, using *dragmae*, among which an unknown form of "dragma brevis", and a case of semi-coloration. The songs are all for two voices with untexted tenor: two virelais and two rondeaux. The first rondeau, provided with an *alius tenor*, shows a rubric which allowed me to decipher an unusual treatment of *coloration* to indicate an alternative cadence. The fifth piece is a fragmentary Credo of which only two texted voices remain. Analysis of the counterpoint and the remaining voices' range shows that the extant voices might be the remaining of a four-part setting.