

## Abstracts

MAIKO KAWABATA: *Violinists 'Singing': Paganini, Operatic Voices, and Virtuosity*

Violinists have always sought to imitate the expressiveness of singing. For the modern violinist, to play with the natural phrasing suggested by the breath is a basic aim while interpreting the masterworks. In the early nineteenth century, however, when it was still standard practice for violinists to perform their own works and to improvise, 'singing' carried very different connotations. This paper explores how Paganini and his contemporaries thought about the vocal quality of the violin by examining compositions, performance practices, and reviews. Performers conceptualized tone production, character, and the bow hand with close analogies to singing; critics compared them with stars of the operatic stage; the violin's voice was almost universally regarded as feminine, tying in with popular legends that violins were 'ensouled' with the spirits of women.

Violinists strove to 'sing' because it enabled deep expression, a lasting counterbalance to ephemeral virtuosity: this runs counter to the commonly held view that virtuosi were interested in pyrotechnics alone. Simultaneously, certain singers felt drawn, curiously, to aspire to violinistic virtuosity by treating their voices like mechanical instruments, leading to the question: if a singer could do all that a violinist could do – while the violinist could not better the singer – then why not just have singing? Precisely this question was dramatized in an opera that stages a competition. The voice carries the day, consigning the violin to second place. Yet there were rare exceptions to this rule – as when violin-singing was thought to meet and even exceed the expressivity of singing.

WALTER SCHENKMAN: *Notes and Numbers in the «Goldberg»*

The writer's main thesis is that numbers dominated Bach's thought processes during the composition of the Goldberg. Specifically, the pertinent numbers were 14 and 41 (coinciding precisely with the 19th century Smend's idea of a Bach signature (14 for Bach; 41 for J.S. Bach). In the latter years of the 20th century (in connection with a study of the composer's *Handexmplar* or personal copy of the Variations in their original engraving), the distinguished Bach scholar Christoph Wolff underlined the significance of number in Bach's organization of his (hand-notated) 14 canons. For Wolff, this organization represented an allusion to the composer's own name. But surprisingly, scholars following Wolff failed to look at the Variations themselves within the *Handexmplar* to see if a similar interest in number on Bach's part obtained there. The present study has carried out just such an investigation, and points out – by virtue of numerous musical examples – that Bach did indeed devise and incorporate figures of precisely 14 (or 41) notes throughout his work (even including, in one instance, the incorporation of the musical letters 'BA-CH' divided within the cadential portions of Var 13 the 14th movement of the work taken in its totality). Furthermore, the writer concludes that numbers may well have been the determining factor in Bach's choice of his two folk-tunes (14 syllables and 14 notes) that form the basis of the *Quod libet* Variation, and may thus have provided inspiration for the plan of the complete work from its very inception. On

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the basis of the research presented, the writer concludes that the title of ‘*Goldberg Variations*’ is something of a misnomer. The work should rather be called and henceforth known as ‘*The Bach Variations – on BACH – by J. S. Bach*’.

ELIO MATASSI: «*Musical Carpets*»: *Philosophy of the History of Music ‘contra’ the Sociology of Music*

From the very first edition of *Geist der Utopie*, in the chapter entitled ‘The Philosophy of Music’, E. Bloch semantically and thematically imposes at least two strong expressions-ideas, which will prove fundamental for the construction of his highly unusual *Geschichtsphilosophie* of music. The very philosophy of history must be built on a temporality, that «symphony of history» which is opposite of the sociology of music.