

Music History and Cosmopolitanism / abstract & bio
Matras, Judah (Hebrew University of Jerusalem and University of Haifa, IL)
Session 6a / Friday, June 3, 9–11 am

Cantus and Rationalization, Commodification and Sanctification: Sociology of Western Art Music as a Cosmopolitan Discipline

Calls for "cosmopolitanization" of music history and related disciplines may be somewhat misplaced, as these already exhibit major cosmopolitan features. In this paper I show that the Sociology of Western Art Musics (WAM) is "cosmopolitan" and has employed both ideas and methodology of cosmopolitanism.

I cite studies of Cantus: of Gregorian and other chant, of troubadour, etc. musics addressing sociological facets, e.g. class relations among singers, patrons, and audiences and recruitment, socialization, status, and power in monastic, ecclesiastical, and knightly orders, which are "cosmopolitan" in all or most respects.

The emergence of notation, harmony and counterpoint are analyzed most prominently by sociologist Max Weber (1958). He relates the "rationalization" of WAM to his more general theory of rationalization and Western means-ends social action and organization, a distinctly "cosmopolitan" analysis.

Best-known among 20th Century sociologists of music, Theodor Adorno's sociology of music (1932, 1962) derives directly from his quasi-Marxian analysis (1951) of the "Culture Industry" which portrays the commodification of art and culture generally, (described by others as decline of patronage and rise of privately-promoted "musicking"). Locating composers, performers, and audiences with respect to commodification (e.g. "authenticity," "truth value," status relations, listener classification, etc.) figures prominently in Adorno's "sociology" of musics which is both "cosmopolitan" in outlook and invokes "cosmopolitan methodology."

Finally, I show that "secular" WAM composers have introduced sanctifying elements, rendering their audiences "believers" or "congregations." I present examples where composers cited are artist "seekers of the sacred" in the sense of Durkheim (1961) and Sherwood (2006). For some, these are substitute belief regimes, or substitute "totems." "Sanctification" of the musics renders both performers and audiences participants in ritual-like events. Several scholars have noted the affinity of WAM to religious ritual and observance. This topic and approach too are inherently "cosmopolitan" and analysis invokes "cosmopolitan methodology."

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