Con la mente e con le mani. Improvisation from ‘Cantare super Librum’ to Partimenti

Con la mente e con le mani. Improvisation from ‘cantare super librum’ to partimenti is the title of the second in a series of meetings organized by Institute for Music on improvised music in various historical periods. This event, dedicated to improvisation in the Renaissance and Baroque and organized in collaboration with McGill University thanks to the generous support of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, continues the line of thought begun at the conference Improvised Music in Europe: 1966-1976 in November 2012.

In recent years, scholars and musicians have focused on the revival of improvisation as it was known in the Renaissance and Baroque. This historically informed practice is replacing the late Romantic concept of improvisation as a rhapsody, blossoming out the capricious genius of the player. In the Renaissance and Baroque, composing in the mind (alla mente) had an important didactic function, and it induced a better assimilation of the contrapuntal vocabulary by repetition and memorization of patterns and models. For several categories of musicians, the teaching of counterpoint happened almost entirely through practice on their own instrument: singers learned to improvise canons on a cantus firmus and make diminutions on a motet; organists seeking important positions had to be able to play with fantasia, answering the choir with versets, ricercari, and intonations.

The event is a real laboratory for improvisation and teaching, with lectures, panel discussions, lecture-recitals and musical demonstrations. The central theme will be how one can use improvisation today in theory teaching, and how it can be integrated into the different curricula around the world.
SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2013

1 p.m.
REGISTRATION

2 – 2.45 p.m.
OPENING ADDRESS
Massimiliano Guido & Peter Schubert
(McGill University, Montréal)
Gianmario Borio
(Istituto per la Musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia)

2.45 – 3.45 p.m.
KEYNOTE LECTURE: THEORY IN THE MIDST OF NOTES
Thomas Christensen
(University of Chicago)
Keeping Score while Improvising

3.45 – 4 p.m. / Coffee break

4 – 6 p.m.
FIRST SESSION: THE ART OF MEMORY
CHAIR: Gianmario Borio
Stefano Lorenzetti
(Conservatorio di Musica di Vicenza)
Musical Invento, Locci Communes, and the Art of Memory
DISCUSSANT: Roberto Perata
(University Statale di Milano)

Massimiliano Guido
(McGill University)
Climbing the Stairs of the Memory Palace:
Gestures at the Keyboard for a Flexible Mind
DISCUSSANT: Arnaldo Morelli
(University de L’Aquila)

6.30 p.m.
LECTURE-RECITAL
Bor Zuljan
(Haute École de Musique de Genève)
‘Ricercar una Fantasia: the Techniques for Improvising
a Fantasia on Lute in the Sixteenth Century’

SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2013

9.30 – 10 a.m.
POSTER SESSION: ONGOING RESEARCHES IN HISTORICAL
IMPROVISATION

Niels Berentsen
(Royal Conservatoire of The Hague)
Strategies for Improvisation in Early Fifteenth-
and Late Fourteenth-century Music

Jacques Meegens
(Centre Études Supérieures Musique Danse, Poitou-Charentes)
Improvising a Fifteenth-century Keyboard Prelude

Peter van Tour
(Uppsala University)
Modulatory Segments in Partimenti by Nicola Sala
and Pedele Feneroli

10 a.m. – 1.15 p.m.
SECOND SESSION: INSTRUMENTAL COUNTERPOINT
AND IMPROVISATION
CHAIR: Massimiliano Guido

Edoardo Bellotti
(Eastman School of Music, Rochester University)
Composing at the Keyboard: Banchieri and Spiridion,
Two Complementary Methods
DISCUSSANT: Felix Marangoni
(Università Ca’ Foscari, Venezia)

Giorgio Sanguinetti
(University di Roma ‘Tor Vergata’)
Cheating the Work-of-Art Paradigm: Partimento
Implication for Classical Performers
DISCUSSANT: Marco Pollaci
(Nottingham University)

3 – 5 p.m.
THIRD SESSION: VOCAL COUNTERPOINT AND IMPROVISATION
CHAIR: Peter Schubert

Philippe Canguilhem
(University of Toulouse)
Towards a Stylistic History of ‘Cantare super Librum’
DISCUSSANT: Peter van Tour
(Uppsala University)

Giuseppe Fiorentino
(University of Cantabria)
Singing ‘by Reason’ and Singing ‘by Use’:
Extremepolyphonies in Renaissance Spain
DISCUSSANT: Niels Berentsen
(Royal Conservatoire of The Hague)

5 – 5.15 p.m. / Coffee break

MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2013

9 – 11.45 a.m.
FOURTH SESSION: PEDAGOGY
CHAIR: Thomas Christensen

Jean-Yves Haymoz
(Haute École de Musique de Genève)
Cantare super Librum: Strategies and Techniques. Lecture and Workshop with Professional Singers

10.30 – 10.45 a.m. / Coffee break

Peter Schubert
(McGill University, Montréal)
Teaching Theory through Vocal Improvisation

Michael Callahan
(Michigan State University)
Play It: Some Challenges of, and Solutions to,
Teaching and Learning Undergraduate Music Theory
at the Keyboard

11.45 a.m. – 12 p.m. / Coffee break

12 – 1.30 p.m.
PANEL DISCUSSION: IMPROVISATION AS A TEACHING
AND ANALYTICAL TOOL

6 p.m.
MUSICAL DEMONSTRATIONS: KEYBOARD
& VOCAL IMPROVISED MUSIC

INSTRUMENTS:
Edoardo Bellotti & William Porter, harpsichords
Presentation of the Fondazione Accademia
Internazionale di Smarano: Giacomo Corrà

VOICES:
Benjamin Duinker, Edmund Milly, Ellen Wieser,
and Meagan Zantingh, singers from VivaVoce –
Peter Schubert, conductor