

Music of Faith, Music of Power: Religious ceremonial music in the princely courts of Europe at the time of Louis XIV

International Conference

11th -13th April 2013, Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, Versailles (France)

ANR-MUSÉFREM Programme

Programme organisers: Prof. Thierry Favier (University of Poitiers),

Thomas Leconte (Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles)

Almost thirty years have elapsed since the last conference devoted to the French *grand motet*, which took place at the University of Paris-Sorbonne in 1986. Since then, a great deal of research has been undertaken, both in France and abroad, on religious music in European princely courts of the seventeenth century, and this impels us to return today, with a new global and multidisciplinary approach, to questions relating to the French *grand motet*: to understand its genesis, and the place of the French musical genre within a European context, in comparison with the genres which prevailed in other royal courts at the time. More generally, the conference will aim to assess the role played by religious ceremonial music in the processes of construction or assertion of political, religious and cultural identity in the different European princely courts of the seventeenth century. We wish to look more specifically at the role of religious music in connection with the following issues:

- the reconstruction of political identities in post-war contexts, and especially that of the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War;
- the assertion of legitimacy by new dynasties, particularly in the case of revolutions and restorations ;
- the articulation between the politics and the religion of princes, especially those who have undergone a religious conversion, either for political or for personal reasons.

A preliminary workshop organised at the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles on March 30th 2012, with the aim of reviewing the current state of research on the subject at the European level, enabled us to identify the following themes, which we would like to develop, from a comparative viewpoint:

The institutional context

This would involve examining the different ways in which royal chapels were organised, their role in the institutional framework of the court, their autonomy of decision-making with regard to the political and religious powers of the time, or their links with civil institutions. Studies of the musical organisation of royal chapels could involve aspects such as the

numbers of musicians employed, their status, how they were recruited, and the nature of their duties, as well as the conditions in which their works were produced.

Special attention will be paid to prescriptive texts – their nature, how long they continued to apply, and the conflicts they gave rise to – and setting them into perspective with regard to the uses that can be observed.

The place of music in courtly religious ritual

We will also try to understand the role of music in the religious rituals of royal courts, and what distinguished it from its role in other institutions. We will examine the question of the specific prescriptions of the liturgical calendar and those of ceremonies, the foundations of the hierarchical order of feast days, both ordinary and extraordinary, in comparison with the uses that prevailed in other religious institutions. Dynastic ceremonies, whether commemorative (for example, remembrance of a deceased prince or of a founding event), or celebrations of political events, past or contemporary, will occupy a central place in this line of inquiry, as will the festivals of patron saints of Catholic princes or the ceremonies of orders of chivalry. We will be particularly concerned by the question of how music can contribute to the implementation of new rituals, as in the case of the *Te Deum*.

The central issue of the integration of music within the ritual will also invite us to address the question of physical places and their uses, the arrangement of the musicians, the interplay of the visual and the audible elements of the ritual, and the way in which both these elements contributed to the symbolic construction of the religious essence of political authority.

Repertories

According to the condition and the status of the musical sources that have been conserved, the repertories of royal chapels could be approached from several angles: from a material viewpoint, from a stylistic and aesthetic angle, as well as from the point of view of the way in which the repertory was constituted.

On the one hand, the question of the choice of texts to be set to music and their musical style can help us to understand the scope of the musical mediation involved in the works.

On the other hand, repertories of royal chapels (like those of any institution) can help us to apprehend the representations that were associated with the institution, through its relations with the dimensions of space and time. We will therefore be seeking to determine how the different elements of the repertory evolved: the balance between old elements and more modern ones, and between works that were composed especially for the institution and others that were borrowed from other repertories.

An approach of this kind, which would enable us to identify strategic breaks or works invested with a particular symbolic potential, could thereby shed light on the links between politics and aesthetics in the Early Modern age. We might, for example, observe how an aesthetic can come to represent a national or territorial identity; how claims for a legitimacy based on a past tradition can be reconciled with aesthetic modernity; or how, on the contrary, a political or dynastic break may be reflected in aesthetic terms. One might also examine the elements of appropriation, distinction or influence between the repertories of different European courts, the way in which they circulated, and their function as agents of cultural transfer.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Programme organisers:

Prof. Thierry Favier (University of Poitiers),
Thomas Leconte (Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles)

Prof. Juan José CARRERAS, Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain
Prof. William GIBSON, Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom
Alexandre MARAL, Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, France
Prof. Arnaldo MORELLI, Università degli Studi dell'Aquila, Italy
Prof. Joachim STEINHEUER, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Germany

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Proposals for papers must be received by **October 31st 2012** at the latest.

A summary of approximately 2500 characters (including spaces) and a short biography, in French or in English, should be sent by electronic mail as attached documents (in *.doc or *.rtf format) to Thierry FAVIER (thierry.favier@univ-poitiers.fr) and/or Thomas LECONTE (tleconte@cmbv.com). All proposals will be submitted to the Scientific Committee.

Papers should be planned to last 25-30 minutes.

The two working languages of the colloquium are French and English.

It is expected that the papers presented will be published in a volume of proceedings.

Hotel accommodation and meals will be provided for speakers.

However, speakers are requested to make their own arrangements for transport to Paris, if possible.