

Editorial: Toward Connective Epistemologies

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We are honored to undertake our journey as the new editorial team of *Acta Musicologica*, following twelve years of Philip V. Bohlman and Federico Celestini's transformative leadership. During their tenure, the journal strengthened its profile as a publication of the highest quality, comprising an impressively broad array of topics and subdisciplines and adhering to rigorous standards of critical analysis, as well as exemplifying crucial initiatives for renewing the musicological discipline. Bohlman and Celestini established fresh channels for reaching out to new readers, and also expanded the scope of traditional scientific articles through engaging essay series.

The three of us came to *Acta* independently from one another, and we bring with us different backgrounds and areas of expertise, but are eager to join forces in the coming years to support the journal as a platform for exchange and reflection. Following our appointment, we noticed a remarkable point of commonality, besides our musicological training: none of us currently work and teach at institutions where the principal language of communication is that of our upbringing and education. We believe this fosters a particular sensitivity for the special challenges of mobility and multilingualism, and we wish to promote *Acta* as a forum for the dissemination of research in a wide range of tongues, in the wake of the International Musicological Society's elimination of a limited number of "official" languages as the basis for conducting its activities, and with an appreciation of the vital importance of representing scholarly ideas through the expressive idioms and forms most appropriate to them.

In their final editorial, Bohlman and Celestini voiced their concerns about the present challenges that confront musicology—defined broadly as discourse about music. Not least among these concerns are existing international political tensions, especially the cultural destruction that is occurring as a result of ongoing wars and violence in Syria, Yemen, Ukraine, Burma, and elsewhere. The new team is in full agreement with Bohlman and Celestini that musicology must "engage with

lived-in worlds.”¹ Such an engagement has never been more urgent, as humans now are faced with multiple global crises arising in just a few decades: climate change, pandemics, wars, and backlashes against democracy. Our predecessors asked how a community of scholars might respond responsibly to these challenges and what ultimately is the meaning of music scholarship. Naturally we are unable to provide easy solutions, but as co-editors of *Acta* we shall strive to offer an open forum for collaboration, inquiry, and discussion about the complex interface between human societies and musicking. We believe that the organ of the International Musicological Society is needed more than ever to promote a globalized approach to music studies, as well as an equitable and accessible distribution of information—above all through a sensible use of new technologies—while still upholding the criteria of excellence that have characterized this journal since its inception.

Acta aims to represent fully the pluralism of our contemporary world, and prospective authors are therefore encouraged to consider the significance of their research from globalized perspectives, and to examine the ways in which their work, regardless of its specific focus, can stimulate the interest of readers who represent different specializations and backgrounds. We would like to foster a scholarship that addresses the issues of today but at the same time offers new insights on the musics of the past and deepens the broader understanding of how knowledges (with the plural as inspiration and aspiration) form connective epistemologies. While global music studies should investigate forms of exchange, connectivity, and mobility, they also need to disseminate hitherto unknown aspects of music making to a wider audience. The five articles contained in this first issue of *Acta* overseen by the new team, encompassing a chronological span from the seventh to twentieth century and covering broadly relevant topics such as mobility (both its compelling reality and the dangers of its idealization), timbre (as alternative music-analytical approach), organology (as a focus for exploration of cross-continental musical transfers), audience studies (with listeners reconceived as active critics rather than passive recipients), and ideas of musical popularity (realized in multimedia forms such as cinema), have been particularly selected with the aforementioned goals in mind.

Digital technologies, employed responsibly, can enhance and democratize access to intellectual resources. Hence, *Acta* will make ever greater use of embedded online textual, sonic, and visual links, especially as we retire the print version of the journal and transition to a strictly electronic format. Maintaining a presence in social media is also important for promoting public debate. At the same time, it is vital to strive for accessibility, usability, and inclusivity in the design and language of the digital version in order to make this publication more welcoming to people with disabilities and from locales with limited access to the internet. Toward this end, we encourage suggestions from our readers.

1 Bohlman and Celestini, “Editorial,” 133.

The new team furthermore emphasizes a supportive peer-review and editorial process in which feedback is intended as a positive opportunity for scholarly growth and improvement. The recent health crisis, while forcing many of us into a state of confinement, also demonstrated that human connectedness, whether physical or virtual, is a necessary condition of well-being. Most importantly, it confirmed what the ancients already understood, namely, the bonding and healing power of musicking. We aim for *Acta Musicologica* to enable scholarly bonds among authors, readers, reviewers, and editors. While a rigorous peer-review process will naturally be maintained, such rigor should firmly exclude disparagement and always serve rather to promote and cultivate the talents of the members of our discipline, even in instances where a submission is ultimately not accepted for publication.

In conclusion, the three of us envision a journal that is a forum for reflexive and critical evaluation of the present and future of music studies and of the role of musicology in an ever-changing world. We look forward greatly to many wonderful dialogues with you, our authors and readers, in the coming years.

Reference List

- Bohlman, Philip V., and Federico Celestini. "Editorial: On the Work of Musicology That Lies Ahead." *Acta Musicologica* 94, no. 2 (2022): 133–35.