

## Editorial

Federico Celestini and Philip V. Bohlman

*M*usics, Cultures, Identities. The very plurals in the triumvirate of themes for IMS Roma 2012 become pluralized in the multiculturalisms, nationalities, genres, social movements, places, and music makers/listeners/laborers constituting the International Musicological Society as it convenes in the first week of July. Clearly, there is room for the multitude, for the program attests to scholarship about difference no less than to different scholarship, and it affords identity the power to muster traditional pasts no less than to liberate uncharted futures. The turn to the plural in IMS announcements and the descriptions of the diverse collective gathered under the identity of a musicology straining toward its own many possibilities is at once celebratory and cautionary, concerned about cultures of conflict and critical of the complacency about art music's canonic singularity.

As the editors of *Acta Musicologica*, we add our voices to the celebration of the plural, and we turn to the IMS membership with a charge to realize the multiple challenges that arise along the many paths that increase the densities at many levels of the musicological landscape. We do not make this charge lightly, for we recognize that one of the most unyieldingly singular modes of scholarly discourse, especially for professional societies, is the journal. Often—we should go so far as to say far-too-often—the academic journal becomes a collection of work, the objects of scholarship, the results of musicological labor. Not often enough, music journals fall short of the potential for new forms of labor, with the concomitant power to shape the very subject positions of musicologies that engage forcefully with musics, cultures, and identities.

How, we ask in this “Editorial,” might the call for the plural in the program for IMS Roma 2012 inspire multiple forms of musicological labor in the pages of *Acta Musicologica*? This question is rhetorical not in the least, especially for *Acta*'s editors. We are committed to a vision for the journal in which it shapes what we do as musicologists. We believe the plurals should emerge in *Acta*'s pages, not simply appear as biannual census. We have linked the journal to labor not as metaphor, rather as practice. *Acta*, we know, can and should multiply the possibilities for the active voice that must do the work of multiple musicologies. Let us not forget that the very name of the journal is itself plural. Historically, it emboldens all IMS members to think in the plural. Once again, we make it clear that our goal, as editors, is not to remain content with the play of metaphor, and so we turn to some editorial practices that we urge the membership to implement when submitting their musicological work to the journal. Please permit us to summarize just a few of those practices that we believe to be particularly promising.

*Collaborative Research/Collaborative Articles.* The promise of plurals bears with it the recognition that we do not act as musicologists in isolation. Cultures, musics, and identities are populated by the many, and together they realize the many ways in which humans experience music. In many sciences collaborative research and writing are the norm, transforming the diverse forms of intellectual experience and experimentation to the culture of scientific discourse. There is an implicit sense that humanistic and artistic discourse is more isolated, predicated on the notion that we experience music internally and form musical thought personally. The gap between the plural and the singular may well be paradoxical, but collaborative writing has the potential to close the gap. To publish collaboratively may require new modes of authorship for musicology, but we submit that these modes have their own traditions and histories, and they are especially apt for *Acta*, a journal that not only accepts articles in different languages, but provides a space for musicology to become a language for difference.

*Postdisciplinary Musicological Research.* Interdisciplinarity is inseparable from the intellectual history of the musicologies, and yet there remains a lingering anxiety about how and why our research and forms of expression truly mix disciplines in the ways many larger fields of scholarship are claimed to do. Historical musicologists, thus, are thought to be disciplinarily narrower than historians, ethnomusicologists overly focused on one aspect of culture while anthropologists take on its entirety, and music theorists are unable to untether themselves from constructs of the musical object that mathematicians and cognitive scientists freely map as they please. The question, we believe, is not one of interdisciplinarity, rather of post-disciplinarity, the search for ways of expressing musical thought, experience, and practice shaping the languages of musical discourse that assume that we can and do speak with each other rather than insisting that we have not and do not wish to communicate. Postdisciplinarity allows for a bold move to common cultures constituting subjective difference rather than objective sameness, and there can be no better places for that move than the pages of *Acta*.

*The Experimental and the Experiential.* It is only when music is represented as product that its transformative role as process eludes us. We all know that the lore of journals is that they publish the products of our research, and yet we yearn for ways in which the dynamic qualities of our research might also be liberated by the journal. We should like to take this moment to ask, Why must this be? Could the experimental processes whereby we see music moving between and among multiple identities lead to a new form, even genre, of article? Can music culture be represented as human experience, say, by including dialogue and exchange? What about the dark sides of experiment and experience, the manipulation of meaning or the violence that renders exchange impossible? Once again, we resist any claim that we are simply playing with metaphors. Experiment and experience set the labor of musicians in motion and can capture the qualities of music to be more than itself.

\*

Our ultimate challenge to you, our colleagues and the distinguished members of the International Musicological Society, is to seek the ways that will enjoin us to allow *Acta Musicologica* to become more than itself, which is to say, to realize multiple musicologies that embrace the problems and practices explicit in the plurals we encounter at IMS Roma 2012. By pluralizing musics, cultures, and identities you help us realize a plural *Acta Musicologica* that joins with you to embark upon the labor of music.