

Schola Cantorum Basiliensis

Study Day

The moresca in the long 16th century: spotlights on vocal repertoire and dance techniques

in cooperation with
Musikwissenschaftliches Seminar der Universität Basel



Universität
Basel

Friday, 26 April 2024, 9:00 – 17:00

Musikwissenschaftliches Seminar, Universität Basel, Vortragssaal, Petersgraben 27, Basel
free admission

09:00	Introduction
09:15	Hanna Walsdorf (Universität Basel): Moresca, morisque, morischgien tanz – terminological coordinates between music and dance
09:45	Martina Papiro (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis): What insights can be provided by iconography?
10:15	<i>Break</i>
10:30	Hubert Hazebroucq (Conservatoire Régional de Paris): Moresche dance techniques from sources of c. 1480–1610 (Introduction 30' & workshop with students 90')
12:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
13:30	Gabriele Miracle (Amelia, I): The Neapolitan moresca (Introduction 30' & workshop with students 90')
15:30	<i>Break</i>
16:00	Presentation from the workshops and concluding discussion
17:00	<i>End</i>

Contact / information:

Dr. Martina Papiro: forschung.scb.hsm@fhnw.ch

Prof. Dr. Hanna Walsdorf: hanna.walsdorf@unibas.ch

Active participation is encouraged, please contact us to receive the selection of sheet music.

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MAJA SACHER-STIFTUNG

M. Sacher



Moresca dancers. Costume book of Christoph Weiditz, ca. 1535–1540, pp. 107–8. Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nuremberg <https://dlib.gnm.de/item/Hs22474/274>

The moresca is a widespread dance and term in the Renaissance. However, what is referred to as “moresca” in the various regions and contexts is so heterogeneous that it defies a standardised definition. It is precisely because of these characteristics that the moresca is interesting for an examination within the framework of historically informed musical practice. The aim is to find a way of dealing with gaps in knowledge, problematic terms and cultural attributions and, not least, with polyvalences.

On this study day, two very different case studies will illustrate possible approaches: The dancer and musicologist **Hubert Hazebroucq** deals with the reconstruction of dance techniques for the moresca, based on Arbeau’s *Orchésographie* and Italian sources as well as related dances from the prints by Susato, Phalèse, and Praetorius. The percussionist **Gabriele Miracle** examines the relationship between the Neapolitan moresca and the African communities of the time in Naples and its significance for the musical realisation of this repertoire. Both case studies will also be practically explored together with the participants.

As introduction, **Hanna Walsdorf** will contextualise conceptual inconsistencies. And shifts in musical and choreographic aspects of the moresca; **Martina Papiro** will prepare an input on the iconography aspects of the moresca for the two case studies in order to illustrate the questions raised using image sources.

Abstracts & Bios

Moresca, morisque, morischgien tantz – terminological coordinates between music and dance

Hanna Walsdorf

It is not easy to make sense of the inconsistent definitions of the *moresca*. Some researchers in the early 20th century were confident that the *moresca* had come to Europe from North Africa in the late Middle Ages, and that it represented the battle between Moors and Christians. Others were convinced that the *moresca* was a remnant of archaic fertility rites. By contrast, Antoine Furetière had written in 1690: «On appelle [...] des Danses Moresques, celles qui se font à la manière des Mores, comme les sarabandes & chacones, qui se dansent ordinairement avec des castagnettes, ou des tambours de basque.» (Furetière 1690)

The contradictions are obvious. But do the different definitions show the development of a fixed genre or do they rather indicate that the term meant different things in different places and at different times? This input is intended as an introduction to the discussion: How can we deal with the inconsistencies in terminology?

Hanna Walsdorf is Assistant Professor for Musicology at the University of Basel since 2022. She received her PhD in Musicology and Dance Studies in 2009 from the University of Salzburg and completed her habilitation (Dr. habil.) at the University of Music and Theatre “Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy” Leipzig in 2022. Specialising in traditions of music and dance from the 16th to 18th centuries, Hanna worked as a postdoc research fellow in Musicology (Heidelberg University, 2009–2013), and directed the Emmy Noether Research Group *Ritual Design for the Ballet Stage (1650–1760)*, granted by the German Research Foundation (University of Leipzig, 2014–2020). In 2020–2021, she was a guest lecturer at the University of Music and Theatre Leipzig, and at the University of Salzburg. In 2023, Hanna was awarded an SNSF Advanced Grant for the project *The Night Side of Music* (NightMuse, 2024–2029).

What insights can be provided by iconography?

Martina Papiro

Depictions associated with the *moresca* can be found in prints, book illustrations, sculpture, and goldsmith's work. These iconographic sources are valuable for the study of the *moresca* because they add to the information provided by the surviving written and music sources. This applies, for example, to information on the musical instruments and clothing used, but above all to gestures and postures, (con)figurations, indications of the dynamics and aesthetics of movement. However, the iconographic sources also need to be contextualized, and the question arises as to their relationship to reality and historical practice, especially as they are mostly not documentations of performances. Using examples related to the Neapolitan *moresca* and *moresche* performed in festive context, I would like to outline approaches to the evaluation of iconographic sources.

Martina Papiro studied art history, musicology and German literature in Basel, Berlin, and Florence. In 2012 she received her doctorate with a PhD dissertation on Florentine festival prints of the Seicento. She has been part of several interdisciplinary research projects: European Festival Culture (Berlin, 2006–2009), Epistemology of Early Modern Images (Florence, 2009–2011), and Bowed String Instruments c. 1500 (Basel, 2011–2015). Since 2016 she has been member of the Research Department of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

Her research focuses on the interaction between music and visual arts in the early modern period. It encompasses studies in the iconography of singers and musicians, the visuality of opera, and festival culture. Currently she is developing an interdisciplinary, collaborative research project devoted to scenography and the stagecraft of opera singers.

Moresche dance techniques from sources of c. 1480–1610

Hubert Hazebroucq

The many sources describing the *moresca* or *moresque* as a dance demonstrate that the word does not refer to a specific type of choreographies or movements but is associated with virtuosity or theatricality, often in connection with alterity and exoticism. The rare technical information about dances which can be associated with these characteristics will give us clues to the variety of gestures that they could imply. We will mainly be using the *Orchésographie* by Thoinot Arbeau (ca. 1595) and some Italian sources published between 1581 and 1614. Their comparison to the literary mentions and the iconography will raise the question of how a staged version of the *moresca* (as performed by professional dancers) should be extrapolated from our choreographic sources which generally refer to a social or ballroom context.

Hubert Hazebroucq is a professional dancer, choreographer, teacher and researcher who specializes in Renaissance and baroque dance since 1998. He is the artistic director of the company Les Corps Éloquents, founded in 2008, invited in many international festivals (notably Utrecht) and he works for renowned ensembles including *Douce Mémoire* and *Les Arts Florissants*. His aim is to link early dance repertoires and creation with innovative research. He published several articles about the poetics of dance, and holds a M.A. degree with a dissertation on ballroom dancing c.1660. He teaches Early Dance at the Conservatoire Régional de Paris since 2021, and his many master-classes (CNSMD Lyon, CNSMD Paris, Brussels, Rochester and Cleveland USA, Schola Cantorum Basiliensis et al.) focus on the relation between choreographic sources and musical interpretation.

The Neapolitan *moresca*

Gabriele Miracle Bragantini

*“What on earth was early music coming to?” This was the thought that occurred to me on reading through the *moresche* by Lasso. “What about the articulation, proportions, tessituras?”*

So writes Rinaldo Alessandrini in the introduction to his 1994 CD dedicated to Orlando di Lasso's *moresche*. Thirty years have passed but the Neapolitan *moresche* repertoire continues to puzzle musicologists and performers alike: the texts contain parts in distorted Neapolitan dialect, whole phrases in Kanuri dialect – the language of today's Nigerian Borno –, onomatopoeic effects, the music displays daring rhythmic solutions, a harmonic texture reduced to the bone, and atmospheres that change abruptly. These contrasting elements produce comic effects, but preclude a consistent cultural placement. In short, the nature of the Neapolitan *moresche* eludes us with the same bravado, ambiguity, and audacity as the actors of the *Commedia dell'Arte* who drew heavily from the *moresche* repertoire for their inimitable pantomimes.

During the presentation, the most recent studies that shed new light on the interpretation of the *moresche* will be examined, and during the workshop we will experiment with an idea of performance that enhances the close relationship of these compositions with the stylistic features and culture of the community of Africans present in Naples in the second half of the Renaissance.

Gabriele Miracle Bragantini graduated with honours in percussion from the Conservatory of Perugia, where he devoted his studies to early music. He has performed as a percussionist and arranged rhythmic scores for several soloists and groups of early music, including Ensemble Micrologus, Cappella Neapolitana, Pino de Vittorio, Private Musicke, Magdalena Kozena, La Pifarescha, I Barocchisti, Cecilia Bartoli, Concerto Scirocco, I Bassifondi, La Cetra, and Orchestra della Scala. Since 2007, he has collaborated as a performer, arranger, and composer with the choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui in the realisation of the shows *Myth* (2007), *Babel* (2010) – winner of the Laurence Olivier Award for the Best New Dance Production in 2011 –, *Play* (2010, in collaboration with the Indian dancer Shantala Shivalingappa), *4D* (2013), *Icon* (2016), and *Stoic* (2018), taking part in the world tours of each of these.

In collaboration with the French-Israeli group Winter Family, he composes the music for the choreographies *Les Meduses* and *Yama* by the choreographer Damien Jalet. Since 2019 he has been invited by the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis as a percussion teacher in early music.