

The Musical Brain

Arts, Science & the Mind

2011 CONFERENCE

Why Music?

Is Music Different from the Other Arts?



Institute of Neurology, Queen Square, London WC1N 3BG

Friday 7th October 2011



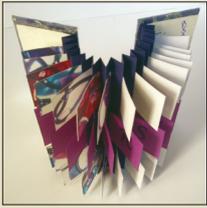
INSTITUTE FOR MUSIC IN
HUMAN AND SOCIAL
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The ACE Foundation

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The ACE Foundation is delighted to be supporting this innovative and inspirational event. The Musical Brain shares many of the ideals of the ACE Foundation and has truly succeeded in furthering cultural exchange of all descriptions.

The ACE Foundation is a Cambridge-based educational charity, founded as the Association for Cultural Exchange in 1958 by Philip Barnes, with the object of encouraging and developing cultural understanding, both within the UK and between nations. We provide and support educational projects, courses and summer schools, locally and internationally, and have had a pioneering role in adult and continuing education.

We recently purchased Bury Farm, an old farm site near Cambridge, and our ambition is to create a new study centre for music and the arts. Bury Farm will be a community-based enterprise which will complement our work on the international stage. Whilst we still have work to do, we have already developed a range of music playing days art and literature courses for all ages and abilities.

The ACE Foundation wholly owns a subsidiary business, ACE Cultural Tours, which provides special interest holidays to destinations in the UK and worldwide, sometimes visiting educational projects that the ACE Foundation supports. In addition to tours concentrating on art, architecture, history and the natural world, ACE Cultural Tours (www.aceculturaltours.co.uk) provides tours to many international classical music festivals. All tours feature small groups and expert lecturers.

The ACE Foundation welcomes contributions from anyone with an interest in our activities. All donations are gratefully received and distributed as efficiently as possible. There are also opportunities to help by becoming involved as a volunteer.

For further information please visit the ACE Foundation website www.acefoundation.org.uk

The Musical Brain Arts, Science & the Mind

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www.themusicalbrain.org

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Conference Leader
Professor Michael Trimble

Artistic Director
Ian Ritchie

Musicians
Ian Brown
Sacconi Quartet

Speakers
Professor Roger Scruton
Professor John Onians
Professor John Sloboda
Dr Biranda Ford
Professor Raymond Tallis
Professor Nigel Osborne
Stephen Johnson

GREEK MYTHOLOGY places Apollo, deity of the sun and master musician, at the head of the Muses, the nine celestial beings who represent the individual arts, as well as science and learning. The notion that music may occupy a special place among the arts, and indeed in human affairs generally, therefore has an ancient pedigree. The image chosen for the cover of this programme is taken from a fresco by Raphael, to be found in the Stella della Segnatura in The Vatican. Apollo plays upon his lyre (the instrument in the fresco is a Lira da Braccio) in the midst of the nine Muses, who appear rapt. The message seems clear – though we must not pre-empt the answer to the question posed in the title of today’s event.

In its 2011 Conference, The Musical Brain reinforces its aim to bring together the worlds of science and the arts into a single forum, and before the widest audience, to advance our understanding of the value of the arts to the human being. Performance will again form an essential part of the proceedings.

The programme for the Conference has been inspired and designed by Professor Michael Trimble, our Conference Leader today, to whom we are much indebted. We are also very grateful to the Institute of Neurology for allowing us the use of their excellent facilities, and to St. Pancras Parish Church, where this evening’s concert will be held.

The Musical Brain extends a warm welcome to everyone taking part and wishes you a stimulating and pleasurable day.



We are most grateful to The ACE Foundation, The Grocers’ Charity, The Derek Butler Trust and The Leopold de Rothschild Charitable Trust for their generous support.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

8.30 *Coffee and registration*

9.45 **Professor Michael Trimble: Introduction**

There have been debates for over 2,000 years about the similarities and differences between art forms, and music has at various times been venerated as superior to the rest. The Conference will explore this view from a multidisciplinary perspective: from the philosophical to the therapeutic; and from the psychological to the neurological. The relevance of the last, especially as revealed by modern brain imaging, will be the subject of debate, questioning the current role of neuroscience for philosophy and aesthetics.

10.00 **Professor Roger Scruton: Can there be a Science of Musical Understanding?**

We speak of understanding and misunderstanding music; music is a form of communication; and the habit of sitting still and listening while music plays is one that demands an explanation, especially at a time when hardly anyone does it. What form should such an explanation take, and is neuroscience likely to have a part in shaping it? And what bearing would the explanation have on our understanding of other art forms?

11.00 *Coffee*

11.20 **Professor John Onians: The Neurohistory of Art: how Neuroscience Illuminates Individual Inspiration**

Neuroaesthetics tends to look to neuroscience for help in the study of universals, such as beauty. Neurohistory uses neuroscience to help to explain those behaviours of individuals and groups that are exceptional, from the creativity of particular artists and musicians to the responsiveness of particular viewers and listeners. The talk suggests ways in which brain scanners and electron microscopes offer insights into the most mysterious activities of the human mind. It also argues that in doing so, far from reducing the mind's mystery, they greatly enhance it.

12.20 **Professor John Sloboda and Dr Biranda Ford: What Classical Musicians can Learn from Other Arts about how to Build Audiences**

There has been a well-documented decline in attendance at classical music concerts at the same time as audiences for other art-forms (e.g. visual art) have never been healthier. This lecture reviews some of the psychological factors that impact on audiences when experiencing music and other art forms, and outlines some recent initiatives, which encourage musicians to build a stronger relationship to audiences by learning from other arts, particularly drama.

1.20 *Lunch break*

2.30 **Professor Raymond Tallis and Professor Nigel Osborne: The Purpose of Art – Especially Music, and the Role of Music in Therapy**

Art, like human consciousness, is gloriously useless. It has no biological function but rather is an attempt to come to terms with, even to heal, the wound in the present tense, which is in part the result of the fact that ideas and experience, content and form are in conflict. It is an expression of the unique freedom of human beings to make their own sense of the world. The therapeutic implications of this for those who have been damaged by life or by illness are both self-evident and ambivalent.

3.30 **Stephen Johnson with Ian Ritchie, Ian Brown and the Sacconi Quartet Can Music Portray Happiness and Sadness?**

Since the Ancient Greeks, writers have presumed that music can portray specific emotions. Happiness and sadness are amongst the emotional responses most frequently reported by listeners. Is there a direct relationship between the sound-patterns in a piece of music and the emotions they apparently arouse? And how much does the performer contribute to this effect? This illustrated discussion considers examples of music commonly supposed to express these emotions and invites the audience to reflect on the nature of their own reactions.

4.30 *Tea*

4.50 **Debate and Open Forum – Neuroimaging is Important for our Understanding of Aesthetics and our Responses to Art**

Professors Michael Trimble, chairman, John Onians, Nigel Osborne, Roger Scruton, John Sloboda, and Raymond Tallis

5.45 *End of conference session* – the programme resumes at 7pm in St. Pancras Parish Church, 10 minutes walk away.

THE SPEAKERS



Professor Michael Trimble For many years Professor of Behavioural Neurology and Consultant Physician to the Department of Psychological Medicine at the National Hospital, Queen Square, where he now holds emeritus status, Michael teaches and lectures on neuroanatomical concepts relevant to understanding behaviour and its variations, including the study of the cerebral basis of artistic experiences. His recent books include *The Soul in the Brain: The Cerebral Basis of Language, Art and Belief*.



Professor Roger Scruton Currently a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, Washington DC, a senior research fellow of Blackfriars Hall, Oxford and visiting research professor at St Andrews University, Scotland, Roger is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, a Fellow of the European Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a Fellow of the British Academy. He is author of over thirty books, including works of criticism, political theory and aesthetics, as well as novels and short stories.



Professor John Onians Emeritus Professor of World Art at the University of East Anglia, he studied Classics before becoming an art historian, completing a PhD with E. H. Gombrich. John first turned to neuroscience in 1977 as a tool for understanding prehistoric art and, since 1992, has been applying the latest knowledge in the field to the study of art as a worldwide phenomenon. He has helped establish neuroarthistory as a distinct set of methodologies and is currently working on a neuroarthistory of Europe.



Professor John Sloboda Research Professor at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he leads their 'Understanding Audiences' research programme, John is also Emeritus Professor at Keele University, where he founded Europe's only MSc in Music Psychology. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and of the British Psychological Society, having in 1998 received its President's Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychological Knowledge. He is author of over 100 publications.



Biranda Ford Teacher at the Guildhall School since 2002 at both junior and senior levels, she developed an interest in music education research, looking at discourses of purpose in modern higher and conservatoire education in her doctoral thesis at the Institute of Education. As Research Assistant at the Guildhall School, Biranda will pursue research around the themes of audiences and improvisation in music and drama.



Professor Raymond Tallis Formerly Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Manchester and a consultant physician in Health Care of the Elderly in Salford, he has published over 300 papers in academic journals including *Nature*, *Medicine* and *The Lancet* and is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences. His 25 non-medical books include works on the philosophy of mind and on Martin Heidegger and Parmenides, as well as several volumes of verse and fiction.



Professor Nigel Osborne A composer whose works are performed by many leading orchestras and ensembles around the world, Nigel is a pioneer in the use of music in therapy and rehabilitation for children who are victims of conflict, in particular in the Balkans during and following the wars in that region in the 1990s. He is currently Reid Professor of Music and co-director of the Institute for Music in Human and Social Development at the University of Edinburgh.

Photo by Camilla Panafnik



Stephen Johnson Studied at the Northern School of Music under Alexander Goehr, at Leeds and Manchester Universities and with the Danish composer Per Nørgård. He broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, 4 and the World Service and is a regular presenter of Radio 3's "Discovering Music". Stephen writes for *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *BBC Music Magazine* and *Gramophone* and is the author of books on Bruckner, Mahler and Wagner, also contributing to *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*.

Photo by Camilla Panafnik

CONCERT PROGRAMME

St Pancras Parish Church, Euston Road, London NW1 2BA

7.00 Introduction: Ian Ritchie in discussion with Stephen Johnson.

7.30 **Sacconi Quartet, Ian Brown piano**

HAYDN *String Quartet Op. 77 No.1 (c.1799)*
Allegro Moderato
Adagio
Minuetto (presto)
Finale (presto)

SCHUBERT *Andantino* from Piano Sonata D959 (1828)

BARBER *Adagio* (1936)

Interval (20 minutes)

BEETHOVEN *Scherzo* from Piano Sonata *Hammerklavier Op.106* (1817-18)

ELGAR *Piano Quintet in A minor Op. 84* (1918-19)

Moderato – Allegro

Adagio

Andante – Allegro

HAYDN, *String Quartet Op. 77 No.1*

The Lindsay Quartet's leader Peter Cropper once described Joseph Haydn as 'the most neglected of the truly great composers'. Fortunately this has begun to change in recent years, not least because of the growing interest amongst performers, composers and concert audiences in Haydn's magnificent series of string quartets. The image of Haydn as a naïve prankster – entertaining in his way, but no match for his younger and more probing contemporary Mozart – has faded. Instead we can now see Haydn as a remarkably resourceful, inventive and sophisticated mind. And although much of his music has a disarming capacity to express happiness, the quartets in particular often reveal a wide emotional range.

The Quartet in G, Op. 77 No.1, composed in 1799, shows Haydn carefully balancing joyous extroversion with more reflective, inward states of mind. This is evident in something as seemingly abstract as tonal structure. The first, third and fourth movements are in the home key of G; but the Adagio second movement and the central trio section in the following Minuet are in the relatively remote key of E flat major. On stringed instruments E flat sounds darker than G, partly because, while in G major the bright open strings on all four instruments are regularly sounded, the key of E flat major tends to avoid them. Even without this carefully calculated key-relationship the Adagio's lyricism would project a pensive character; in context it feels more sombre still. In the Minuet, the trio's alternation of dancing piano with harder-edged forte is arresting enough on its own terms, but again the key-relationship underlines the contrast, throwing the Minuet's exuberance into emotional relief. Ultimately the listener may have the sense of a work poised between two states of being, with neither ultimately 'triumphant'.

SCHUBERT, *Andantino* from Piano Sonata D959

The Andantino (second movement) from Franz Schubert's penultimate Piano Sonata, D959 in A major, could have been conceived as a study in extremes. The outer sections are in Schubert's most poignant instrumental 'songs without words' vein. But at the heart of the movement is an increasingly frenzied cadenza-like passage, described by one eminent pianist as 'a kind of written-out nervous breakdown'. There is an uneasy sense that the very structure itself is imperilled in this music, which the return of the lovely opening melody never quite allays.

SAMUEL BARBER'S *Adagio* is world-famous in the version made in 1938 (on the suggestion of the conductor Arturo Toscanini) for full orchestral strings. But Barber originally conceived it as the slow central movement of his String Quartet, apparently composed in memory of his father. Its elegiac character is enhanced by the seeming simplicity of its means. The chant-like nature of the main theme also plays a part in elevating the mood above purely personal expression of grief. Chant is commonly the expression of collective, rather than private mourning. This no doubt partly explains the *Adagio*'s use in expressions of massed public grief – most strikingly in the aftermath of the 9/11 disaster in New York.

BEETHOVEN, *Scherzo* from Piano Sonata *Hammerklavier Op.106*

Ludwig van Beethoven's ability to fuse dramatic extremes into cogent musical arguments is well known from his symphonies and string quartets. Yet, especially in his later works, there are times when he seems to delight in contrast almost for its own sake, as though intent on seeing how much internal pressure can be applied to the standard classical forms without breaking them irreparably. The Scherzo from his famous Hammerklavier Sonata, Op.106, is a case in point. In essence the form is a simple A-B-A – like the Minuet-Trio-Minuet form of the third movement of Haydn's Op.77 No.1. But the music is full of sudden, startling switches in mood – the playfulness

CONCERT PROGRAMME

verging on the demonic. The Schumanesque first theme yields suddenly to a nervous, minor key dance, full of uneasy rhythmic tugs against the beat. Before the main theme returns – apparently all innocence again – there is a wild, volatile cadenza passage, full of the kind of fantastical quick-witted humour that may remind some modern listeners of Scott Bradley’s brilliant Tom and Jerry scores. The movement is rounded off ‘properly’ (in classical terms) with a fleeting return of the opening motif, but in most performances this seems far from final.

ELGAR, Piano Quintet in A minor Op. 84

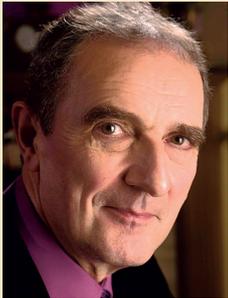
In public, Edward Elgar cultivated the image of the Edwardian Gentleman, though as the son of a lowly provincial shopkeeper – and a Roman Catholic into the bargain – this took some effort. In private he was a much more complicated being: prone to agonising self-doubt and alarming mood-swings. His ever-supportive wife Alice once told the critic Ernest Newman how – even at the height of his success – Elgar ‘was always talking of doing away with himself’. It should come as no surprise to find Elgar calling Robert Schumann his ‘ideal’: like Schumann, Elgar often turns up in lists of possible musical bi-polar sufferers. Elgar avoided the intimate, confessional style of romantic chamber music until very late in his career. The three major works in this medium – the Violin Sonata, String Quartet and Piano Quintet – were all composed

during 1918–19. All three were written while the composer was living amongst the woodlands of West Sussex. On one level he was entranced by what he often called ‘the magic of the woods’; but a group of gnarled and twisted dead trees near his cottage inspired very different, Tennyson-like broodings: ‘a ghastly sight in the evening’, he told his friend and biographer W.H.Reed.

Something of this contrast – the magic of nature as enchanting one moment, unsettling the next – appears to have found its way into the Piano Quintet. ‘It is strange music’, Elgar told Newman of the first movement, ‘and I like it – but it’s ghostly stuff’. The latter element can be felt in the sombre slow introduction, with its oddly halting repeated rhythm. This rhythm and its emotional character also cast a shadow over the main Allegro’s contrasting second theme: warm and robust one moment, nervously questioning the next – rather like its composer, one might suggest. While the central Adagio is (mostly) idyllic in its sustained lyricism, the Finale is more enigmatic. It begins with a poignant reminiscence of the sighing string figures from the Quintet’s slow opening, but then comes a pause, and the music suddenly launches into a much more confident Allegro, marked *con dignita*. Is this an ‘organic’ – or even simply a plausible transition? Or does it leave the Quintet emotionally split? Listeners are invited to form their own conclusions.

Programme notes by Stephen Johnson

THE MUSICIANS



Ian Brown piano – Ian is renowned for his performances with the Nash Ensemble, is regarded as one of the world’s leading chamber musicians and has a growing reputation as a conductor. He has partnered soloists such as Rostropovich, Galway, Isserlis and Dame Felicity Lott.

The Sacconi Quartet – (Ben Hancox violin, Hannah Dawson violin, Robin Ashwell viola and Cara Berridge cello) have curated a week of concerts at Kings Place and performed at the Wigmore Hall this season. Winners of the London International String Quartet competition 2006, the quartet has a fast-growing international reputation for brilliant performance and creative programming.



Photo © Clive Barada



Ian Ritchie, Artistic Director, Director of the City of London Festival, has led the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Opera North and St Magnus Festival, Orkney, among other organisations; Artistic Director of Setúbal Music Festival, Portugal; he is a trustee of Musicians Without Borders, Opera Circus, the Choirbook Trust and The Musical Brain. Together with Nigel Osborne, he was instrumental in establishing a Music Therapy centre in Mostar to address post-traumatic stress disorders among children.

The Musical Brain

Arts, Science & the Mind

Looking forward

An article in The Musical Brain's Summer Newsletter* points to some of the choices that need to be made when organising future events: broadly based or narrowly focussed subject matter; duration – one day or more; location – in Central London or elsewhere; residential or non-residential? The hallmark of Musical Brain events continues to be the inclusion of artistic performance of the highest calibre.

Our plans for next year include evenings of discussion and performance, entitled The Musical Brain's Trust, presented by members of our distinguished panel of speakers and performers from the last two years. If a presentation of this kind might be of interest to your organisation, do please get in touch.

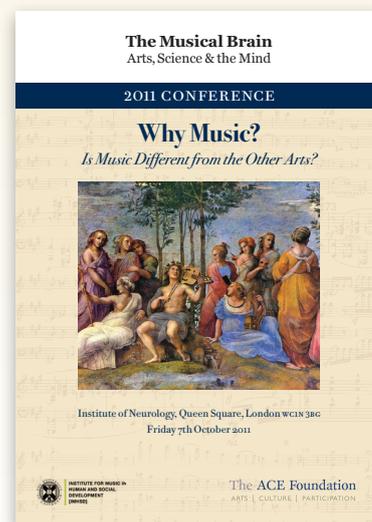
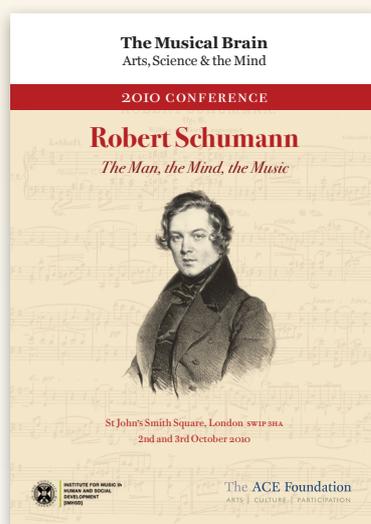
One of the topics under consideration for the 2012 conference is aspects of the life and work of Beethoven – what is it about art that is capable of sustaining a person's life and without which he would rather end it? A major Musical Brain project for 2013 is also beginning to come into focus. There is much to look forward to and we will keep you informed as our plans progress.

Speakers and performers at Musical Brain events 2010–11:

Professor John Cox
Dr Biranda Ford
Dr Jessica Grahn
Stephen Johnson
Professor Stephan Koelsch
Professor John Onians
Professor Nigel Osborne
Dr Katie Overy
Ian Ritchie
Professor Roger Scruton
Professor John Sloboda
Professor Raymond Tallis
Professor Michael Trimble
Ian Brown, piano
James Gilchrist, tenor
Sacconi Quartet
Anna Tilbrook, piano



A Dance to The Music of Time - Poussin



Front cover image: Apollo and the Muses from Raphael's fresco: The Parnassus

*www.themusicalbrain.org