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|---|--|
| Shelby Shapiro, Ph.D. (General Editor) | tis@ncis.org |
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EDITORIAL BOARD

Tula Connell (Ph.D. American History; M.A. European History) is an historian of the United States focusing on 20th century labor and social movements, and author of *Conservative Counterrevolution: Challenging Liberalism in 1950s Milwaukee* (University of Illinois Press, 2016), in the series, "The Working Class in American History". Connell is a writer, editor and media professional with more than 20 years' experience in labor communications. She serves on the board of the Labor and Working Class History Association, where she co-chairs the Committee on Independent Scholars.

Joan Cunningham (Ph.D. Public Health: Epidemiology) is a cancer epidemiologist, recently retired from the Medical University of South Carolina. She holds an MSc (Biology: aquatic eco-embryology) from the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada and Ph.D. (Public Health: epidemiology) from the University of Texas School of Public Health (Houston). Her work focuses on racial disparities in breast cancer, and non-pharmacological mitigation of cancer treatment side effects. She also gives invited lectures on cancer epidemiology to the graduate program at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Texas.

Amanda Haste (Ph.D. Musicology; Dip.Trans.IoLET) is a British musicologist and academic translator whose research interests include identity construction through music and language. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and teaches courses in Translation and in English for Specific Purposes at Aix-Marseille University, France. Her research has been published in leading journals and books by major editors, and she co-authored *Constructing Identity in an Age of Globalization* (Paris: Ex Modio, 2015); and her awards include the Louise Dyer Award for research into British music, and the Elizabeth Eisenstein Essay Prize (2018).

Annie Rehill (Ph.D. Modern French Studies, MFA) specializes in the literature and history of Francophone Canada, focusing on intercultural expressions and implications. Most recently she has studied Métis literature and art. Previous work in ecocriticism centered on representations of the Canadian *coureur de bois* figure, and on Francophone Caribbean writings. Her publications include "Le Travail dans la nature canadienne: L'Équilibre (et le déséquilibre) humain tel qu'il est représenté par Louis Goulet et Joseph-Charles Taché" (2018); "An Ecocritical Reading of Joseph-Charles Taché's *Forestiers et voyageurs*" (2018); *Backwoodsmen As Ecocritical Motif in French Canadian Literature* (2016); and "Inscriptions of Nature from Guadeloupe, Haiti, and Martinique" (2015).

Laurence Dana Schiller (Ph.D. History) is a retired Adjunct Professor from Northwestern University, from which he holds a Ph.D. in African History, and was also the Head Fencing Coach there for 38 seasons. He has authored several papers on East African history, including "Female Royals of the Lake Kingdoms of East Africa: An Examination of Their Power and Status" but is now primarily engaged in writing on the American Civil War. He has produced works on cavalry tactics including the Blue Gray Education Society monograph, *Of Sabres and Carbines: The Emergence of the Federal Dragoon*.

Shelby Shapiro (Ph.D. American Studies), the General Editor of *The Independent Scholar*, served for many years as the English-language editor of *Tsum punkt/To the Point*, the magazine of Yiddish of Greater Washington, as well as for its predecessor publication. He is currently Associate Editor of *Records of the State of Connecticut*. His Ph.D. dissertation dealt with acculturation and American Jewish women in the Yiddish press; he is a Yiddish-English translator, and his research interests include Jazz and Blues (having presented jazz radio programs for nine years), the labor movement, the First World War, and immigrant anarchism.

Patricia Silver (Ph.D. Anthropology) is a sociocultural anthropologist whose research has centered on the Puerto Rican diaspora in the U.S. states. Her publications have appeared in *American Ethnologist*, *CENTRO Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, *Op. Cit.: Revista del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas*, *Southern Cultures*, *Memory Studies*, and *Latino Studies*. Her book, *Sunbelt Diaspora: Race, Class, and Latino Politics in Puerto Rican Orlando* was published in 2020.

Tim Woolley (Ph.D. Theology) is a British Methodist minister and adjunct lecturer at Cliff College, tutor for the Methodist E-Academy and the Oxford University Department of Continuing Education, and research associate of Wesley House, Cambridge. He researches 19C British Methodism, the Holiness Movement, Revivalism and Nonconformity and has co-written *Mission Shaped Intra* (2nd ed.) for Fresh Expressions of Church and *Talking of God and Worship: Leading and Preaching* for The Methodist Church in Britain.



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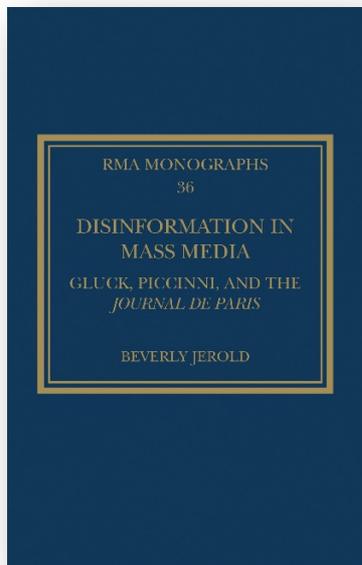
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Disinformation in Mass Media: Gluck, Piccinni, and the Journal de Paris

Beverly Jerold

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Review by Amanda J. Haste.

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From an early twenty-first-century standpoint, one cannot fail to be aware of the power of today's mass media not simply to report current events but to wield considerable influence through the way they present information, and indeed disinformation. But this is not a new phenomenon: in *Disinformation in Mass Media: Gluck, Piccinni, and the Journal de Paris*, Beverly Jerold relates the eighteenth-century quarrel (*querelle*) concerning the operas of the German composer Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787) and the Italian composer Niccolò Piccinni (1728-1800) as "an early instance of using daily mass media to sow discord in society at large for political advantage" (1).

The author is herself an independent musicologist and a practising musician and, although one needs no musical knowledge to follow her gripping account of this political drama, the author's deep knowledge and understanding of the musical issues at stake shine through as she examines the quarrel from several aspects.

The reason this particular quarrel became front page news, as it were, was due to the founding of the *Journal de Paris*, which appeared daily and catered to a large audience in the city of Paris, France. The *Journal de Paris* (JP) was, unlike the political and literary journals which had hitherto only appeared sporadically, a commercial enterprise which "held enormous power to distort facts, ridicule individuals, and publish anything to further its own aims". This meant it "aimed low – and then lower" and was temporarily shut down by the censor after publishing "indiscreet material". However, when the JP resumed publication it "avoided the censor by exciting controversy through cleverly designed attacks on prominent individuals" in the world of opera, and specifically the music of the German-born composer Gluck and the Italian Piccinni (3).

It must be remembered that at that time the opera was not an elitist entertainment: most literate people went to the opera, often to see or be seen, so the "insulting articles, letters, and epigrams" aroused considerable interest (4). Gluck already enjoyed a near-monopoly at

Review: Jerold – *Disinformation in Mass Media: Gluck, Piccinni, and the Journal de Paris*. First published online 28 June 2021.

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the Paris Opéra, and efforts had been made to allow Piccini to compose for the Opéra and to have his works performed there, but the texts published (often anonymously) in the JP consistently supported Gluck's position and undermined that of Italian opera in general, and the music of Piccinni in particular, claiming the latter was only fit "for concerts and the Italian theater" (96).

As Jerold points out, this *querelle* only really escalated just after the JP came into existence, and the "texts and events reveal manipulation of public opinion on a grand scale" and "substantial financial rewards" for the paper and its supporters. (4).

Jerold begins by setting the scene by outlining the major figures and events which preceded the explosion of coverage in the JP. Throughout the book she also explains important aspects of Baroque opera production, such as the use of melody (the French *air* or the Italian *aria*) and *recitative*, the declamatory device used to move the narrative on using natural speech inflexions, with few notes and little rhythmic interest. French opera used far more *recitative* than melody, whereas Italian opera was more melody-oriented (15). It has to be said that Italian audiences rarely actually listened to the *recitative* passages, preferring to spend the time "gossiping, playing cards, and visiting other boxes" (116). While Italians favored beautiful melodies, for French opera-goers it was "volume and high-pitched emotion" which were the crowd-pullers. As W.A. Mozart wrote to his father from Paris in 1778, French singers "really should not be called such – for they do not sing, but scream – howl – that is, from the whole neck, from the nose and throat" (3).¹

Although the *querelle* pitted the German Gluck against the Italian Piccinni, Gluck was much travelled, and had studied and worked in Italy, Austria and London as well as France. Gluck was a demanding musical director and succeeded in getting French singers to introduce more dramatic content rather than simply bellowing, and his operas are a unique blend of Italian and French traditions.

The JP maintained their campaign for over a year, often invoking a nationalistic agenda, and such controversy was clearly very good for business; there was a

complete disregard for integrity and the quarrel "was incited with such cunning that few knew its origin" (119). Jerold concludes by raising some interesting questions about the motives of the individuals concerned, not least among them Gluck himself.

This is a fascinating account of the musical and political background of eighteenth-century Europe, with which the reader will find countless parallels in the present-day campaigns mounted against public figures. This book is a fascinating exploration of the machinations of a few designed to manipulate public opinion and create a furore, which will resonate with anyone who has read a newspaper or delved into social media. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. Academically rigorous, but written in an accessible style, I heartily recommend this book to musicians and non-musicians alike.

Dr. Amanda J. Haste (Ph.D. Musicology, Bristol University, UK) teaches as adjunct faculty in the Music Department of Aix-Marseille University, France and has published widely on identity construction through music and language. She co-authored (with Prof. James Block, DePaul University) *Constructing Identity in an Age of Globalization (Paris: Ex Modio, 2015)* and is currently completing a monograph on music as a vector for identity construction in twenty-first-century monastic communities.

¹ *Mozart Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. W.A. Bauer and O.E. Deutsch, 7 vols. (Kassel : Bärenreiter, 1962-1975). Vol. 2, p. 397.