

Sound Expertise

Season 2, Episode 9 – Finding Music in Renaissance Manuscripts with Laurie Stras

TRANSCRIPT prepared by Andrew Dell'Antonio

SPEAKERS

Laurie Stras, Will Robin

Laurie Stras 00:00

But when I sat back and looked at it, and started to notice things, like I said, just noticing stuff about it, flicking through it. And I said, Okay, so here's the Brumel setting. That's great. No, it's there. keep flicking, keep flicking, keep flicking ... and then I see the same piece, about 35 pages on -- and I went, Okay, so this must be a mistake, because this is the Jerusalem of that Brumel lamentations, and I just saw that 35 pages... So I check it back and then I go -- Oh, it's a little bit different. Oh! Oh, right! Okay!

00:59

[Intro Music]

Will Robin 00:59

Hi, I'm Will Robin and this is my podcast, Sound Expertise. You were just hearing my guest on today's show, Laurie Stras, describing a pretty momentous musicological discovery she made a few years back. Diving into a mostly neglected manuscript, she found a version of a piece by the Renaissance composer Antoine Brumel that was way way longer and way more elaborate than the one previously known to scholars. Stras, who is Research Professor of Music at the University of Huddersfield, and Emeritus Professor of Music at the University of Southampton, went on to record Brumel's Lamentations with her ensemble, Musica Secreta. We've got links to that great recording on our website, soundexpertise.org. Unto itself, this is kind of a classic example of what musicologists have done since the beginnings of our field, we go digging for lost music in the hopes of bringing old pieces back into the world after centuries of neglect. But the way that process happens, and how it is thought through, is the subject of this episode, not just Professor Stras's discovery of this piece from a somewhat obscure composer, but how one looks at a manuscript from a faraway time and understands its cultural significance. And, you know, it's not just about what it means for us now having this cool old / new piece to sing from, but what it meant four or five hundred years ago, what the purpose of these manuscripts was to the individuals who copied them out, who purchased them in their convents and confraternities, and who ultimately sang out of them. When we find music in old manuscripts, what meaning can and should we make from it? Let's talk about that now with Laurie Stras, on Sound Expertise.

02:38

[Intro music]

Will Robin 02:49

So you spend a lot of time immersed in very old manuscripts, trying to kind of figure out what they mean, and what kind of music can be made about them. I'm wondering if we could just start kind of with what that process is like for you when you start working on a "new" but in fact, very old manuscript, what are you looking for? What are you trying to do with it? How do you approach these documents when you deal with them for the first time?

Laurie Stras 03:14

Oh, man ... Well, first of all, I want to say thank you very much for inviting me, I'm so thrilled. But you know what, I try not to go in with too much of a preconceived idea of what I'm going to find. I mean, just to a certain extent, when you're sitting in a library and you're thinking, What am I going to call up, you have limited time, you've kind of rushed across Europe to get into the archives of the library, and you've got a limited amount of time, you sit there with a catalogue going, I can call this one, this one, this one, but when they arrive, I try just to take it completely at face value to start with. I mean, particularly if it's a manuscript that nobody's really had to look at for a long time. And I'm kind of late to the manuscript game -- I quite happily for 20 years spent my time with prints and other kinds of documentary evidence and stuff, so coming to music manuscripts much later in in my career, maybe I am ... I haven't had anyone direct me on how to look at a manuscript and so I'm a lot more ... a lot more open minded than I might have been otherwise. Does that sound good? But one of the things that preoccupies me when I do look at the manuscript is, it's pretty much what it looks like, when you're faced with music that takes time to put together, and you have to put together live, you can't just read it straight off the page and know exactly what it's going to sound like. You can ... you've got some kind of clues, but what it looks like, it still looks the same as it looked to somebody who was looking at it 500 years ago. So what it looks like, and how your eye is drawn to particular parts of the page, what those features are, that's what strikes me to start with. And I do approach it very much the way I used to approach prints, or still do approach prints, I will take reams of notes of its objective qualities. That's something that's really ingrained. So, page by page, what the text is, what the clefs are, how it's arranged, all that sort of stuff, just take as many notes as I can about what it looks like and what it contains. So I can get a big picture. But then [laughs] ... then it comes down to -- again, just looking at it and seeing if I can kind of experience something of opening that page in a totally context-free way. Because a lot of the manuscripts that I look at don't have attributions. Sometimes it's even, you have to look closely to work out where a piece starts and ends. And so by taking it out of the musicological context I've put it in, then I try, I hope to see things that I wouldn't -- that I don't see when I'm looking at it as a musicologist.

Will Robin 07:16

Because these manuscripts from four or five hundred years ago, it's not like the people who created them were creating them exclusively to root through to find just the music. There's all this other stuff in it. So to just find the pieces of music to extract from them misses a lot of what else is important to the people who actually created and used it, right?

Laurie Stras 07:39

Oh, sure, you know, some manuscripts do have indexes that are compiled after the fact or whatever. But yeah, so many of them are in themselves compilations, they won't necessarily have been copied all at once, or all by the same person. And so your empathy, I mean, I've been thinking a lot about whether empathy is a goal for musicologists. [laughs] So your empathy has got to start with the people who

handled the manuscripts whilst it was a working document, the people who owned it, and perhaps even the copyist, who inherits it, copying from the person, or the person who's binding together bits of other bits of manuscript, you know, they're ... all the people who've handled that book are going to have come at it from a different perspective, and almost none of them will have been from the musicological or study perspective. Although I would say there are, of course, there's exceptions to every rule. There are books that are clearly compiled as archival records of what goes on in a particular institution. So their whole repertoire is bound up in a lot of books, but the kind of lone manuscripts that belong to some unknown organization somewhere else ... that's got a different feel to it altogether.

Will Robin 09:25

Maybe it might be helpful... Maybe it let's talk a little bit about one of the collections you've been working on recently. I was reading some of your work on a collection that's nicknamed PM as well as another named Biffoli / Sostegni, which sounds like a delicious dish. If either of those, you want to talk a little bit about how you came to it, and ...,

Laurie Stras 09:46

Okay, those two manuscripts are copied by the same person and they are unusual to me in that they are... they appear to have both been copied... they were copied within a year of each other. And each of them were copied from the beginning to the end. And they have some kind of ... they betray a little bit of organizational thought, at least in terms of the copyist. But they're both copied in Florence, in the middle of the 16th century, by someone that we know as Antonio Moro, although his name only appears on one of those manuscripts as Antonius Morus. So that's a Latinization of his name, what his real last name was, who knows, it could have been Moro, it could have been something like ... I got all sorts of ideas about that, but we won't talk about that. So anyway, these two manuscripts are copied by the same guy within a year of each other. And they're copied for two completely different kinds of organizations, the Biffoli / Sostegni manuscript -- and I call it that because of the names of the nuns that are on the bindings of the manuscript, they've actually got their names embossed on the bindings. And that was copied for these two nuns in what I now know to have been a kind of small and not very prestigious convent on the outskirts of Florence; and the PM manuscript -- and I call it that because the only way that we can ... the only identification we have in the manuscript of who might have owned it is a coat of arms at the beginning with the initials PM on the coat of arms. And there are little... in the decorations and the letters in the manuscript you see those initials PM crop up quite a lot. But they don't correspond to anyone, any identifiable character in Florence, or in Rome, or anywhere where it might have been copied. So we just know it as PM. The one thing I would ... that I posit about this manuscript is that it was copied for a male confraternity. There is this kind of cryptic inscription on one of the pages that says something like where... Oh, I'm gonna have to look this up. Hang on here.

Will Robin 12:45

No worries.

Laurie Stras 12:48

Oh, yeah, here we go. Here we go. So on one of the pages in the PM manuscript, there's this motto - "In trinitate manet canentibus favet," which translates as "he who remains or actually spends the night in the Trinity favors singers." Now, there was a confraternity in Florence from the end of the 15th

century to right into the 17th century, in fact, called the Buca di San Paolo — it had a more formal title of the confraternity of San Paolo. And it was actually a really prestigious confraternity. The Medici for generations were members of this confraternity and they had a youth section, [laughs] Leo X, Giovanni de Medici, belonged to this youth section when he was a kid, and Lorenzo de Medici wrote a play for the youth confraternity as well. So you know, it's this really well connected group. Sadly, all of the documents pertaining — or almost all the documents pertaining to this confraternity disappeared. Now, there was a huge flood in Florence in 1557. And a lot of the documentation for the entire city just literally was washed away. And worse still, in 1966, there was another huge flood in Florence, and that damaged some of the archives in the Archivio di Stato. So the documentation of 16th century Florence is really patchy. And so we don't know who precisely was member of this confraternity at that time, we don't have very many records about it. But my sense is that this motto, "In trinitate manet canentibus favet," refers to the fact that they would stay overnight in their church of Trinità vecchia, especially on a Friday night, they would have their late night flagellation ceremony... [laughs]

Laurie Stras 15:21

So they would get together and whip themselves?

Laurie Stras 15:24

They sure would! And then they would... then they'd sleep in their dormitories, they'd change out of their day clothes, and they'd go and they'd do their stuff, and they'd sleep in the dormitory overnight Friday night, and then get up on Saturday morning, have a little bit of breakfast, put on their street clothes again and go out into the world. Now, you know, this sounds really odd, of course. Super odd. But the context of these confraternities, these flagellant confraternities is that they are — Florence is this very special city. It grows ... it's a republic. And then the Medici turn it into something that is not so much a republic, and eventually the Medici become Dukes, but there's this sense of civic responsibility in Florence that stays there for a really, really long time. And these confraternities, when they arise in the 14th and 15th centuries, they are there to humble the rulers of the city — that they go there, and the people in these confraternities can be the Medici, they can be these really, really rich families. But they can also be carpenters, and wine sellers, wool merchants or whatever, they're not necessarily going to be the top echelons, but they're all rubbing in together, and the purpose of their worship is to keep them humble. So in that context, here is this book PM, which is just this mess. I mean, it's big, it's a big, stonking great big collection of lamentation settings. And the importance of the lamentations to Florentine confraternities is something that lots of people have discussed, difficult to kind of get really to the core of it. Like I say, there's this lack of documentation about practice in the 16th century. But it's really part of that humbling, keeping close to your roots, an austere kind of religiosity that hangs over in Florence, right the way through the centuries. So we have this big collection of lamentation settings. One of them has a name on it. But you know, we're talking about 300 pages of music here.

Laurie Stras 18:01

And so were these sung by members of the confraternity on these Friday nights, self-flagellation things or is that not yet...

Will Robin 18:09

I think that they are collected..., they would have probably not necessarily been sung right the way through the year, but certainly in the Easter season, and very definitely during Holy Week, there is some documentation left that shows that this confraternity employed singers to come and perform this ...perform Lamentations they would have a feast on Thursday, to which they would invite the poorer members of the community and they would feed them, and then they would have some kind of spiritual recreation, which may have involved the singing of lamentations settings. So that's something that they would do specifically on Maundy Thursday, on the Thursday of Holy Week. So yeah, these settings could have been part of their devotions, not necessarily all the way through the year, but certainly through a portion of the year. And it looks like it was all kind of collected together, it may have been collected together ... because it was copied right after this big flood. It may have been an attempt to pull together all of the random bits of music that are left over, that didn't get damaged or may have been partially damaged and everything is put into a book. So there may have been this archiving or collecting thing that comes as part of that manuscript. It's not an unknown manuscript. People have looked at this book lots of times before, but they've been looking for pieces that they know. Right? So getting back to this idea about attribution. What are we doing when we are looking for attributions in manuscripts? We're trying to pin them down. We're trying to pin them down in some kind of historical context, in some kind of musicological context. And that's just not a priority for the people who are putting it together. Sadly, for us, as musicologists, this is what we want to do.

Will Robin 20:14

So we want to find out who the author is, so then we can say, well, it's by Josquin, so we can compare it to other Josquin, we can perform on a Josquin concert and sell it on Josquin CDs ... and that has nothing to do with what people were doing with it in the mid 1500s.

Laurie Stras 20:30

Yup yup yup. The idea of Josquin, the idea of the great composer is something that seems to be ... it's certainly building at the beginning of the 16th century, there's this really often quoted passage in Castiglione about the Duchess getting her singers to sing a motet, and the company thinks it's not all that; then she tells them it's by Josquin, and they go -- Oh, right, it's by Josquin, that's so cool. And the printing ... the print culture starts to build big names. So when the Venetian printing industry starts to really get going with printing music that's affordable, there's kind of a program, a building on big names, so Scotto brings out collected editions of Gombert, and Morales, he's kind of building personalities. So we can look at those pieces -- we think, oh right, we can just study this particular composer. But that's not so much of a preoccupation of the person who is either compiling the manuscript or using it, they're more interested in how they're going to use that particular piece of music, its function seems to be more important. Or as important as the person who has written it, I'm not saying that there aren't manuscripts with ascriptions, there are, but when you come across a manuscript that has none, then it can't have been very important to the person paying for the manuscript, or the person compiling the manuscript. It's just not an important thing. But okay, so I've said all of that. And then the reason it's a big deal to me is that I find this huge piece that we can attribute to Brumel, because it's attributed to Brumel in another contemporary manuscript in Florence. But only two little teeny tiny bits of it were attributed to Brumel and appear in that manuscript. And in this other manuscript which sits, you know, on the same shelf, those two little bits appear in it. But they appear in the context of this massive work. And because it didn't have Brumel's name on it, nobody seemed to be particularly interested in the fact that it was just

sitting there. And like I said, it's not a manuscript that hasn't been looked at by musicologists over the decades, I mean, it appears in loads of lamentations... scholarship on lamentations. But the full extent of that set was just not identified. I can't explain it. But when I sat back and looked at it, and started to notice things, like I said, just noticing stuff about it, flicking through it. And I said, Okay, so here's the Brumel setting. That's great. No, it's there. keep flicking, keep flicking, keep flicking ... and then I see the same piece, about 35 pages on -- and I went, Okay, so this must be a mistake, because this is the Jerusalem of that Brumel lamentations, and I just saw that 35 pages... So I check it back and then I go - - Oh, it's a little bit different. Oh! Oh, right! Okay!

Will Robin 24:13

You just find a massive piece of music, or rather you find what was supposed to be a short piece of music, you realize it's a massive piece of music in the manuscript?

Laurie Stras 24:21

Yeah. Yeah. And it was only because I was flicking through it page by page, documenting what I saw on the page. And it was just that moment of looking and going -- hang on. No, wait. [Laughs] Did he copy it twice? What did he do? Did he copy this piece twice? And then I realized, no, he hadn't copied the piece twice. It was just.. and then once you start to put it together and you realize that it's just this long, continuous piece, and then seeing that it's a refrain, and seeing that there is another refrain that's kind of sandwiched in there, and it just got bigger and bigger. And so from the endpoint that I'd got to, and then extending it back, and I realized, Oh, my gosh, this is huge. This is ... how has nobody seen this before? So yeah, I mean it's approaching a manuscript with an open mind, and without a whole lot of preconceived ideas about what I was going to find, because I'm still pretty new to manuscripts. That's what was there. And the Biffoli-Sostegni manuscript also has a piece in it that is not attributed in the manuscript, which is attributed to Josquin elsewhere. And the manuscript doesn't even appear in the new Josquin edition, the fact that it's there, because it's this kind of fairly innocuous looking manuscript that nobody can put a pinpoint on to say, it must be important, because there aren't any attributions. And if there's no attributions, it just looks like a manuscript of a bunch of ... just a bunch of repertoire that's rotting away in a Belgian library. [laughs]

Will Robin 26:13

One thing that you've done with this manuscript ... these manuscripts is obviously find this amazing piece and perform it. But then the other thing is, too ... you've been writing a little bit about trying not to necessarily leap immediately to identify who wrote this music. So can you talk a little bit about how you're conceptualizing anonymity and authorship right now, and how you're thinking about this idea of looking at anonymous music and kind of rethinking what anonymous music is?

Laurie Stras 26:40

Yeah, so I am really fascinated by why music is anonymous, like I said, it's a growing trend in the 16th century to want to have attributions. But in a manuscript, it's kind of coming from a different place, it's almost like the music ... who wrote the music doesn't really matter, it's what the music is about. And the only way you get to know anything about anonymous music is to perform it -- is to transcribe it, and perform it, because you can't say anything about its style, you can't say anything about its affect, without doing the work of bringing it to life through singing and playing. And that's almost like -- that's

doing the work of description, that's doing a really deep reading, almost like an interpretation. And I found an essay that I now know was quite controversial when it came out, called "Close but not Deep," by a literary scholar called Heather Love. And she looks at these different tiers of readings that ... Close, but not deep, is trying to get to the meaning of a text without doing the dive that situates it somewhere. What she says is that ... she suggests that close but not deep reading "registers the losses of history rather than repairing them, and lets ghosts be ghosts." And I love that idea that we just say, okay, we've lost the attribution from this music. We don't know who wrote it, but what do we know about it? What can we know about it? We can know what time of year it was sung; if we try and find a little bit of historical context around it, we can understand a bit about what ensemble, what kind of ensemble it was performed by. I try to steer clear of composer intention. Because that's, you know, that is just a huge can of worms.

Will Robin 29:26

Especially if you don't know who the composer is!

Laurie Stras 29:27

Especially if you don't know the composer is -- rather than insisting on finding a source in order to create value for this music, we need to know what it sounds like. And we need to try and find a context in which it can be valued. That's the big \$64,000 question for the ensemble director who is trying to get gigs, and get audiences to their concerts. Because, believe me, it's hard enough -- I mean, we all know it's hard to get audiences to classical music concerts anyway. And if we're not singing Beethoven, oh, okay, so what are we doing? Well, we better sing some Palestrina! Or we better sing ... we've got to give them a name so that they know what they're coming to hear. And when you say I'm going to do a concert of convent music, they're like -- thanks, I think I'll stay at home and watch Cheers. So you have to find a way of finding a context for that, that an audience can also value. I'm perfectly happy to just glory in the sound of equal voice polyphony, it's so exciting, it just completely knocks my socks off the way you can't avoid dissonance, you can't avoid weird things happening in equal voice polyphony, because that's the nature of the beast. But getting an audience to value it, you have to find another thing to hang it on. And so if you think that attribution has got kind of problems with ethics or empathy, you still have to find a way to reach across the aisle to the audience. So I tend to want to tell stories, and tell stories about the music. So the Brumel, even if I didn't have that attribution on there, the story of Good Friday, and the emotional impact of the music is good enough, I think, to be able to create a context for an audience, and by putting it in the context of this weird confraternity, that also helps me attract people to want to know more about the music. The Biffoli-Sostegni manuscript is harder, or at least it was harder until about this time last year when I went to Florence and found out the kind of knock your socks off element of the manuscript. So originally, I'd narrowed it down to two convents in Florence, I knew it was Florentine because of the names of the nuns, and in fact, a musicologist called Lucia Boscolo had worked on this manuscript some time ago. And even before that, the cataloger in Belgium, because it's now in the library of the Royal conservatory in Brussels, had identified it as being a Florentine manuscript, and so we know that about it. And I looked at it and I thought, Oh, look, there's a bunch of psalms for the apostles at the front. It's probably from a convent dedicated to an apostle, and there's a whole order of ... a whole feast of Saint Clare, the whole of the office for Saint Clare is in this book. So I thought, okay, so it's some convent that's dedicated to an apostle, a Clarissan convent that's dedicated to an apostle, somewhere in Florence. There's two of those. One is called San Iacopo

in Via Ghibellina, and it was a really rich convent. We know it had a choir gallery, and it's situated in an area where there are lots of very active musical convents in Florence. And the other one is a little teeny convent out on the outskirts of Florence called San Matteo in Arcetri. So, I thought okay, which one is it going to... it's a nice-looking manuscript, it has colored illumination, I bet it belongs to San Iacopo. So I kind of spin the story about San Iacopo, it's quite an interesting place because it was completely inundated in this flood. And the records say that, the entire library, you could just see it kind of floating on the river waters. And when you go to what's left of the convent in Florence, the doorway to the church shows, there's this indication of the level of the flood of 1557, which is 20 feet, 30 feet in the air. It's enormous. It's huge. So this is a good story, and I thought, Well, yeah, it makes sense that, like any of those institutions in Florence, you would want to preserve what you had left. If you had water damaged music, you would probably get it all copied into a manuscript so that you carry on doing what you're doing. And it also had this miraculous grain-saving crucifix which is just great, the crucifix jammed itself up against the grain store in the flood. And so, the the miraculous grain-saving crucifix became an object of pilgrimage for two centuries in Florence and again, you'd think these nuns need music for that kind of stuff. So it all fit, and I told this story, and it was great, and people loved it, particularly the miraculous grain-saving crucifix. And then last February, I found out I was wrong. [Will laughs] Okay, so on New Year's Eve 2019, I just said I'm going for it, I have to get to Florence, I've got to know, got to be able to go back into the archive and I'm going to nail this, I'm going to find the document that shows me that this convent... that this manuscript belongs to San Iacopo. And I take the train, and I get very cold, and I'm in Florence in miserable end of January, beginning of February. And I spent a week looking at the archives of San Iacopo -- because they still exist, some of them -- not very much from the 16th century because flood... nothing, I find nothing. I find all sorts of other interesting stuff, but nothing about this manuscript -- nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing ... and I go, All right. Okay. So, on my last day, I go to the catalog and I order up the one document from the other convent that exists from the 16th century. And yeah, within two minutes of arriving at my desk, I find the two nuns, that ... Agnoletta Biffoli and Carmenzia Sostegni -- they're both in this book, the day that ... the years that they joined the monastery, how much their parents paid for their dowries, everything. Okay! Because this convent, San Matteo in Arcetri, became extremely famous about 20 years ago when Dava Sobel published her book Galileo's Daughter, because the convent was where Suor Maria Celeste Galilei spent the 35 years of her life -- twenty of the 35 years of her life because she joined when she was a teenager. And so it is extremely high profile in certain circles. 20 years ago, there was a documentary made, and a lot of attention paid to the correspondence that she had with her father, a lot of which is about his trial and everything. But what Dava Sobel about was not so interested in about the Galileis, and what we as musicologists know about the Galileis, is that they were all musicians, that Galileo Galilei's dad Vincenzo Galilei is a very, you know...

Will Robin 38:03

Yeah, he was in the early opera scene and ...

Laurie Stras 38:05

Yeah, he's a theorist and a composer. And he writes this big treatise about the lute. Galileo's son was a musician. And so, they are this really, really musical family and Maria Celeste actually taught ... she was given the job of teaching the novices to sing plainchant and conducting the choir later on in her life. She says to her dad, I'm gonna have to brush up on my Latin [laughs] because I'm not so great at that.

And this manuscript, this Biffoli-Sostegni manuscript. It's only 50 years off, and it would have stayed, I'm sure, with the convent, it has no value to anyone outside the convent. So it's very possible that Galileo's daughter used this manuscript. When she asked her father for music, which she did, from time to time, she asked for things like organ ricercars. There were three organists at the convent. So we know that it was really quite active musically, but she doesn't ask her dad for motets, because there's an entire year's worth of repertoire just sitting in this manuscript. It's... I don't have the kind of smoking gun to say that she used this manuscript or that she knew this music. But it's ... to me, it just seemed like this kind of thunderclap. I was trying not to go for San Matteo in Arcetri, because I got a bit of flack, three or four years ago when I pinned the music, the Materna Lingua music to Leonora D'Este. You know, I had dudes going -- ah, you're only saying that because you want to jump on the Borgia bandwagon. I spent nine years refining that argument so that nobody would say, Oh, you just wanted to get on the bandwagon, get on the Borgia bandwagon. It took me a long time to come clean with that, because I knew that that's what was going to be said. So I didn't want to know that [laughs] this music belonged to Galileo's daughter's convent...

Will Robin 40:23

You created an entirely different story!

Laurie Stras 40:26

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Because I really did not want to go down ... I thought lightning doesn't strike twice, it's not gonna happen. And yeah, of course, so there I am. So what do you do when you have gone on record, when you've produced liner notes, you've done an entire tour, you've done radio interviews, all that stuff -- presented at AMS...

Will Robin 40:49

You have to do your apology tour. Yeah.

Laurie Stras 40:52

Yeah, exactly! I've got ... I haven't actually published in a journal saying that this is where I thought it was from. But I've done an awful lot of putting that story out there. And so, I've got to come to terms with the fact that I've done that, and be honest as a musicologist and say, No, wait, I got it wrong. I told those stories. Those stories are plausible. But now I found that they're incorrect. And it kind of highlights to me that what we do as musicologists is that we do tell stories. And especially as you get further back, and the documentation gets more and more sparse, you still have to tell stories. People tell stories about Josquin. People tell stories about Brumel, because there are whole decades of their lives that are just gone from the record. So you have to construct some kind of plausible thing. You do that in the close, but not deep reading, don't you? You try and pin things on a map. And I was trying to pin things on the map, to try and find a story that would bring people in to listen to this music -- because the music is stunning. Stunning, stunning music. And the more we do the more we go, Oh, god, this is this is amazing. And so yeah, I have to put my hands up and say -- I got the story wrong... But here's the story I'm going to tell you now, and it's a doozy! [laughs]

Will Robin 42:27

Well, thank you so much for telling me that story. This was a really fascinating conversation, and I appreciate it.

Laurie Stras 42:33

Well, thank you so much for talking to me. It's been so much fun.

Will Robin 42:43

Thanks to Laurie Stras for that fascinating interview. She is Research Professor of Music at the University of Huddersfield and Emeritus Professor of Music at the University of Southampton. You can check out links to her writing and recordings with her ensemble Musica Secreta over at our website, soundexpertise.org, and you can follow me on Twitter @seatedovation. If you like the sound of our show, please check out the work of our amazing producer D. Edward Davis on Soundcloud at [warm silence](https://www.soundcloud.com/warm-silence). I'm also grateful to Andrew Dell'Antonio for transcribing our episodes to make them more accessible. Those transcripts are up on our website. One more thing: If you're a fan of the podcast, please give us a review on Apple podcasts or your platform of choice, or give us a plug on your social media platform of choice. It really gives us an extra boost that can help us reach some new listeners. Finally, I'm super excited about our guest and topic for next week: Imani Danielle Mosley, discussing Benjamin Britten's operas and British identity. See you then.

43:48

[outro music]