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***Institutionalizing musicians’ professional interests: Musicians’ associations in the late Austro-Hungarian Empire***

Labor movements of the 19th century had heavy impacts on the constitution of musicians’ movements: many of them quickly turned into mass organizations which strongly institutionalized the representation of musicians’ interests. While the history of associations and unions in Western Europe and the U. S. is rather well documented, there still is a big lack of knowledge concerning institutions in Central Europe. In my paper I will mainly examine the rather complicated case of the “Austro-Hungarian Musicians’ Association” [Österreichisch-Ungarischer Musikerverband] in the late Habsburg monarchy. After the foundation of the “Viennese Musicians’ League” [Wiener Musikerbund] in the 1870’s, its main aim was to establish an institution which was represented throughout the empire. This was a challenging project (which nevertheless basically succeeded). The fact that the late Habsburg Monarchy was constituted as a multiethnic state and strongly divided between an Austrian and a Hungarian part, led to specific problems and demanded specific institutional solutions for its linguistically and socially very diverse members. The more successful the formation of the Musicians’ Association was, the more challenging it became for other imperial actors within the field of music organization (e.g. music agents or military bands). Paradoxically enough, the successful institutionalization challenged also the institution itself: The improved social and economic position of musicians led to a new self-concept with strong tendencies to social and ethnical distinctions; Czech speaking musicians, for example, separated in 1908 from the Austro-Hungarian association and founded their own organization – as a competitive factor for the elderly institution. My main focus will be an analysis of the specific Austro-Hungarian problems and solutions by a comparison with recently researched musicians’ institutions in Western Europe and the U.S.. Furthermore, I will discuss the general impact of institutionalizing musicians’ interests in the organization of music performances from a historical perspective and ask for its effects on the music industries from the late 19th to the early 20th century.

Fritz Trümpi studied General History, Philosophy and Musicology in Zürich, Vienna and Berlin and was a scholar of the Swiss National Fund; 2012–2015 researcher in the project “A political history of the Viennese Opera, 1869–1955” (funded by Austrian Science Fund); 2013 member of the commission for investigating the history of the Vienna Philharmonic in the Nazi era. Current position: Assistant professor at the Department of Musicology and Performance Studies of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw). Current research foci: history of the organization of musical performances, music & politics, music culture(s) of the late Habsburg Empire.