

MOISA – SCS 2019 Panel: “Music and the Divine”

Many literary and philosophical sources throughout antiquity attest the view that music serves as a connection between human and the supernatural realities. The concept of music as a “gift of the gods,” also applicable to instruments and divine (or divinely inspired) musicians, already points at this relationship. From the Pythagoreans to Aristides Quintilianus and beyond, cosmological speculations are frequently aligned with the structure and dynamics of the human soul and described in musical terms. Hence the need of a deeper inquiry about the relationship between music and the divine.

Possible questions to be investigated and topics to discuss include (but are not limited to):

- What are historical, psychological, philosophical, and theological reasons for the perception that music is something divine, which surpasses what is properly human?
- Greek and Roman mythology is full of stories where gods or divine figures are related to or the origin and practice of music as such, instruments, tunes, practices, etc. What does divine patronage reveal about the character of music and its impact on human life?
- The “divinely inspired” musician: origin, role, and development of the concept of musical genius.
- Dionysian “frenzy”: how does the “dark side” of music become associated with divinities? How is this represented in other cultural traditions?
- Human music as a competition or rebellion against the divine (for instance, the stories of Marsyas or Orpheus).
- Cosmology and mathematical musicology: to what degree can modern science support the parallelism between musical and cosmic processes as first described by the Pythagoreans and still thoroughly developed by Kepler? How does such “ideal” music relate to “real” music?
- Contributions of individual classical authors or schools: what are the various views on the relationship between music and creation, and how do they compare? How are these theories reflected and further developed in post-classical traditions?
- Music as mediation between the human and the divine.
- Is the numinous character of music particular, or is it found similarly in other art forms?
- How do ethnomusicological findings support – or question – the idea of a universal notion of music being a privileged link between the human sphere and the divine?
- Is there a continuity or rather a discontinuity between the classical and the Christian (Western or Eastern) view on the role of music in worship or on its divine character?

In an effort to showcase the best papers and the most innovative research in the field of ancient music, we also welcome abstracts that deal with interdisciplinary aspects of Greek and Roman music and its cultural heritage within the framework of the panel theme.

Abstracts for 20-minute papers to be presented at the 2019 SCS annual meeting should observe [the instructions for the format of individual abstracts that appear on the SCS web site](#). The deadline for submission is **March 9th, 2018**, and all prospective presenters should be SCS members in good standing at the time of submission. Please address your abstract to gurds@missouri.edu and any question related to the panel to akramarz@legionaries.org. In accordance with SCS regulations, all abstracts for papers will be read anonymously by two referees.