



early modern
CONVERSIONS

Call for Applications

Summer Research Seminar, 31 July – 23 August, 2017

McGill University, Montréal, Québec

Theatre, Masque, and Opera in England and Italy, 1580 to 1650:

Performance Practices and Cognitive Ecologies

Leaders:

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Early Modern Conversions (<http://earlymodernconversions.com/>)

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Doctoral students in their final year, recent PhDs, postdocs, and junior faculty focusing on scholarly work and/or performance are invited to apply to take part in the research seminar. Research projects should have to do with spoken theatre (broadly defined) or theatrical music (broadly defined), or both, in England or Italy, c. 1580 to 1650.

English theatre and Italian opera between c. 1580 and 1650 have a great deal in common. Both regions had significant traditions of court theatre (masque; *intermedii* and court opera); both saw the rise of commercial theatre (the London theatres; Venetian public opera); both engaged with issues of love, history and politics, religion, disguise, and conversion. Boy actors, castrati, and cross dressing raise fascinating gender issues. Professional training combined with theatrical conventions were required for professionals (actors, writers; singers, instrumentalists, composers) to put on shows with very limited rehearsal time. Significant bodies of scholarship on both traditions exist, but the researchers rarely engage with one another, and there is little comparative scholarly work.

Our summer research seminar will bring together scholars and performers who specialize in English theatre, and others who specialize in early Italian opera, to share their work and learn from each other. While we are open to a wide array of methodologies and interests, we will focus on the performance practices and cognitive ecologies of these two theatrical worlds. How did they create works and learn their parts? How did material supports (scripts, libretti, stages, theatres) affect what they could do (on and off stage) and what they couldn't? What makes these traditions similar, and how are they different? Can theatre, masque and opera be seen as conversion machines, operating within distinct cognitive ecologies?

Montreal allows for interaction with other researchers, including faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students associated with McGill, IPLAI, the Schulich School of Music, and Early Modern Conversions. Activities during the seminar will include workshops on period performance practices in theatre and music (including theatrical gesture, staging practices, musical improvisation, and facsimiles of original performance materials).

Travel and accommodation will be provided by the Early Modern Conversions Project. At the end of the seminar, participants will participate in the annual team meeting of the Early Modern Conversions project, at McGill, 24-26 August. Seminar participants will have rooms at the Trylon Apartments for the duration of the seminar and team meeting. McGill offers rich resources for study including excellent libraries, access to early instruments, and a vibrant theatrical and musical scene.

Doctoral students in their final year, recent PhDs, postdocs, and junior faculty focusing on scholarly work and/or performance are invited to apply to take part. Candidates should send a cover letter, CV, brief research proposal, and article-length writing sample to conversions@mcgill.ca by 15 December 2016. Two confidential letters of recommendation should be sent by e-mail to the same address by the same deadline; referees are asked to indicate the name of the candidate in the subject line. At least one referee should confirm time to completion for applicants who have not yet graduated.

