

Call for Papers “Poetry, Music and Sound Art: Recent Medial Correlations / Lyrik, Musik und Klangkunst: Neuere mediale Konstellationen” (2024)

Track 1: Music, sound and listening in contemporary poetry

How Do the Voices of Spanish Poets Sound? *Voices of Spanish Poets*: A Project for the Experimental Study of Poetry Reading

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Reading poetry aloud represents an essential dimension of this literary genre. In addition, it provides fascinating material to be studied through a wealth of interdisciplinary approaches. Nevertheless, even though many theoretical studies have been conducted in recent years, experimental research on the music of poetry still remains a largely unexplored topic. One wonders, then: how does the voice of poets really sound?

This proposal aims, by using tools from the Digital Humanities, to present the main features of Spanish poetry reading, starting from the twentieth Century and based on an experimental phonetic methodology combined with a musicological approach.

The selected data for this work include a selection of 40 audio recordings, belonging to twentieth-century poets and described in the *Voices of Spanish Poets* (VSP) archive.

The model of study employed has been developed in the *Voices of Italian Poets* (VIP) project and mainly consists of VIP-Radar (VIP-R), a tool for qualitative description of poetry reading. It has been recently perfected and updated in the *Voices of Spanish Poets* (VSP) project, facilitating a more agile analysis. VIP-VSP-R, which aims to track the main prosodic features, together with the main aspects of the relationship between audio and text, includes 20 indices. These are divided into 3 types, concerning different observation points: prosodic segmentation in relation to the text; strictly acoustic parameters; and more generally, style of reading. The influence of music has been essential in the definition of many of these indices: the musical lexicon provides, in fact, part of the terminology, and the interdisciplinary focus enables us to consider prosody also through a combined musicological-phonetical view. Qualitative approaches and, in a second phase, quantitative approaches are part of this methodology and are combined also in this contribution.

This proposal of work shall outline some of the central aspects of the practice of reading poetry aloud: the rich variation of this kind of speech; the revealing information of prosody about the relationship between read-aloud and written text; the relevance of reading in poetry at a cultural and interpretative level; and the importance of preserving and studying this significant cultural heritage. In addition, a proposal of author groupings addresses the further goal of developing a historical and stylistic trajectory of poetry reading in Spain, drawing the outline of the history of poetry reading in Italy and going beyond it through specific improvements.

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Bio-bibliography

Valentina Colonna is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow (MSCA) at the University of Granada (Spain). Her research is mainly focused on the music of poetry, combining interdisciplinary approaches, and primarily using Experimental Phonetics. She completed her PhD in Digital Humanities (Linguistics) at the Universities of Genoa and Turin (Italy). She is the founder and PI of *Voices of Italian Poets* (University of Turin), the first project for the phonetic study of Italian poetry reading vocal archive. She is the author of the monograph "*Voices of Italian Poets*". *Storia e analisi fonetica della lettura della poesia italiana del Novecento* (Edizioni Dell'Orso). Her Postdoctoral Fellowship is dedicated to the project "*Voices of Spanish Poets*": *Vocal Archive and Experimental Study on Poetry Reading* (VSP), the first experimental study of Spanish poetry reading through the tools from the Digital Humanities applied to Phonetics and Cognitive Sciences. She has also published three poetry books, three piano singles, and the album *PianoPoetry. Resonances*, including her piano music (NCM/Egea/Machiavelli).