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The Dent Medal

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## The Dent Medal

THE Dent Medal, in memory of Edward J. Dent, is awarded by the Royal Musical Association annually to recipients selected for their outstanding contribution to musicology from a list of candidates drawn up by the Council of the Association and the Directorium of the International Musicological Society.

For 2004 the medal is awarded to DANIEL CHUA. He was born in Malaysia and educated at St Catharine's College, Cambridge (BA Hons., 1988), and at St John's College, Cambridge (M.Phil., 1989), and was awarded the Ph.D. in 1992 with a dissertation on Beethoven's 'Razumovsky' Quartets. He was Henry Fellow at Harvard University (1991–2) and subsequently served as Research Fellow (1993–7) and Director of Studies in Music (1994–7) at St John's College, Cambridge. In 1997 he was appointed Lecturer in Music at King's College London, becoming Reader in Music Theory and Analysis in 2000.

Chua's two books *The Galitzin Quartets of Beethoven* (1995) and *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (1999) are indications of a brilliant analytical mind at work. In *The Galitzin Quartets*, Chua shows how Beethoven's language progresses toward an abstraction that forces the emotional and technical content of the music to break down in violence; the analyses are based on a combination of Schoenbergian and Schenkerian techniques as well as Adorno's philosophy. And in *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning*, he argues against the notion of absolute music, which tends to be the paradigm for most musicological and analytical studies. The discussion is concerned not so much with what music is, but with why and how meaning is constructed in instrumental music and what structures of knowledge need to be in place for such meaning to exist. Instead of existing in a pure and autonomous form, then, music is woven back into the epistemological fabric and tangled with the discourses of theology, visual perspective, biology, philosophy, gender, chemistry, politics and physics. This contextualization demonstrates the centrality of music in the construction of modernity, and Chua discusses the writings of Vincenzo Galilei, Descartes, Diderot, Rameau, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Hanslick, Wagner, Max Weber and Adorno, as well as works by Monteverdi, C. P. E. Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Chua's important article 'Haydn as Romantic: A Chemical Experiment with Instrumental Music' considers the early Romantic philosophy of instrumental music as a transformative force and the unexpected affinities and connections between irony, chemistry, music and philosophy that were meant to produce a brave face to confront the contradictions bequeathed to the Romantics by the Enlightenment; Chua includes a brilliant discussion of Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony, among other works, and considers how music of the time symbolized a move from the *ancien régime* of the body to the spirit of freedom, from passive to active, and from material biology to vital chemical processes.

His is a unique voice among scholars working in this area, presenting a heady combination of erudition and analytical and rhetorical skills. Particularly impressive is the clarity of his prose. Despite his use of technical language, he has the knack of tackling complicated philosophical and cultural ideas and presenting them in a clear and thought-provoking way. His range of ideas is extensive, as is apparent from the many papers presented at colloquia and conferences: for example 'Music at the Theological Mouthpiece of Modernity' (on Vincenzo Galilei); 'Mozart,

Music, Money'; 'Engendering the Eroica: Sex, Violence and the Canonisation of Absolute Music'; 'The Romantic Chemistry of the Classical Style'; and 'Musical Reflections on Adorno's "Gaps"'. He was appointed editor of *Music and Letters* in 2004.

Previous winners of the Dent Medal have been:

1961	Gilbert Reaney	Great Britain
1962	Solange Corbin	France
1963	Dénes Bartha	Hungary
1964	Pierre Pidoux	Switzerland
1965	Barry S. Brook	USA
1966	F. Alberto Gallo	Italy
1967	William W. Austin	USA
1968	Heinrich Hüsch	West Germany
1969	Willem Elders	Holland
1970	Daniel Heartz	USA
1971	Klaus Wolfgang Niemöller	West Germany
1972	Jozef Robijns	Belgium
1973	Max Lütolf	Switzerland
1974	Andrew McCredie	Australia
1975	Martin Staehelin	West Germany
1976	—	
1977	Reinhard Strohm	Great Britain
1978	Christoph Wolff	USA
1979	Margaret Bent	Great Britain
1980	Craig Wright	USA
1981	Anthony Newcomb	USA
1982	David Fallows	Great Britain
1983	Lorenzo Bianconi	Italy
1984	Iain Fenlon	Great Britain
1985	Curtis A. Price	USA
1986	Silke Leopold	West Germany
1987	Richard F. Taruskin	USA
1988	Jean-Jacques Nattiez	Canada
1989	Paolo Fabbri	Italy
1990	Christopher Page	Great Britain
1991	Roger Parker	Great Britain
1992	Kofi Agawu	Ghana
1993	Carolyn Abbate	USA
1994	Lorenz Welker	Germany
1995	Susan Rankin	Great Britain
1996	Ulrich Konrad	Germany
1997	Philip V. Bohlman	USA
1998	Rob C. Wegman	USA
1999	Gianmario Borio	Italy
2000	Philippe Vendrix	Belgium
2001	Martha Feldman	USA
2002	Laurenz Lütteken	Switzerland
2003	John Butt	Great Britain