

Symposium 01 Perspectives in avian acoustic communication: in memory of Luis Baptista

Introduction

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Luis Baptista, an outstanding ornithologist, was well known for the eclectic range of his knowledge; his interests embraced areas such as phenotypic variation in pigeons, conservation issues in many species, music broadly defined to encompass that in nature as well as the symphony hall, and all aspects of vocal behavior, including that of humans. This symposium in his honor, which focuses on the field of vocal learning, was organized to reflect just a few of his many interests and enthusiasms.

The papers presented cover a substantial range of topics, examining numerous aspects of sound production. The first paper (Bostwick) reviews nonvocal communication signals produced by feathers and examines how male manakins create such sounds for the primary purpose of mate attraction. The second paper (Severinghaus, Tu and Hau) addresses interactive effects among sympatry, hybridization, and song modification in closely related species of bulbuls. The next paper (Okanoya) hypothesizes that female choice is a factor in the evolution of song complexity in the Bengalese finch (Fig. 1), and discusses the evolution of such complexity with respect to associated changes in the brain. The fourth paper (Todt and Hultsch) also discusses song complexity, but from the standpoint of the social variables that influence the learning and organization of large repertoires in the nightingale. The final paper (Jarvis) examines the evolution of vocal learning in three

orders of birds, using behavioral molecular mapping to identify specific brain structures involved in such learning, and then presents hypotheses for the origin of vocal avian learning. Although the papers touch on only a part of Luis Baptista's areas of expertise and interest, they stand as a testament to his enthusiasm for examining all aspects of avian behavior. Fig. 1, contributed by the third paper in this symposium, has been reproduced here as a testament to Luis' love of aviculture, especially of finches.

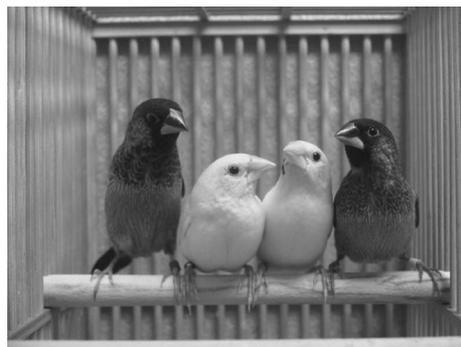


Fig. 1 White-rumped munias (both ends) and Bengalese finches

Photograph by Miki Takahashi.