

The Bulletin

of the Society for American Music

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OF OSCAR G. T. SONNECK

Two American Centenarian Pianists and Educators: Eleanor Sokoloff and Helga Hulse

Gregor Benko

In recent months, my continuing research about the pianist Josef Hofmann brought me into contact with two remarkable centenarian women, each of whom had known Hofmann when he was director of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. The first was Eleanor Blum Sokoloff, a piano prodigy born in 1914 in Cleveland. When she was sixteen, after an audition with Curtis's benefactor Mary Louise Curtis Bok and Hofmann, Eleanor was accepted as a student and began lessons at Curtis with David Saperton. Although she had yet to finish her course of study, she was asked to join the Curtis faculty in 1936 to teach supplementary piano. The same year, she and Vladimir Sokoloff, also a member of the Curtis piano faculty, were married, and formed a highly regarded dual piano team. After Vladimir died in 1999, Eleanor continued teaching at Curtis. She also accepted private students, among them Keith Jarrett.

Our interviews began in 2018, when she had just signed a contract to teach at Curtis the next year. I was astonished at her incredible memory—she was 104 years old but seemed to have forgotten nothing. Her honest and forthright attitude was also remarkable and refreshing. She told me much about Hofmann and the Curtis Institute that I had not learned in decades of research; not everything was uplifting.

Her father had not wanted her to go to Curtis because of Hofmann's reputation; one of Hofmann's private students, who was the same age as his daughter, had a child by him out of wedlock. Although he eventually married the student, the story was reported in the press. "In those days it was something really scandalous," Eleanor told me. At Curtis, she soon learned of the plight of young women there, how some of the male teachers and even students would bully and intimidate them into sexual encounters. It seemed that "half of the faculty was having sex with the students." "But," she added, "gay people were considered the devil," invisible except for Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti, who were Mrs. Bok's "pets."

Three years after Hofmann left in 1938, violinist Efrem Zimbalist became director (two years after that he and Mrs. Bok were married). Eleanor's husband had been his accompanist and the Sokoloffs were among Zimbalist's close friends. Once, Eleanor was approached by a frightened student who told of how her teacher at Curtis had propositioned her, telling her that she either would co-operate or be expelled from his class. Would Eleanor speak to her friend, Director Zimbalist, about the situation? Zimbalist listened to Eleanor's pleas on behalf of the unfortunate girl and promised he would "take care of it." After a while, however, it was obvious that nothing was done, and the student was expelled from her tormentor's class. "He taught an instrument for which there was no other teacher available" was all Eleanor would say about the man's identity.

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That culture at Curtis was something almost unimaginable today, but any scholar of music schools knows it was not unique to Curtis. Eleanor told me that such predators were no longer a problem at Curtis, but that the plight of women had not improved much in some other ways. “When I started on the faculty, there were seven piano instructors: six men and one woman. Now, eight decades later, there are still six men and one woman. That’s not right, that’s not progress,” she said.



Eleanor Sokoloff with the print of Hofmann’s palm

A year later, in 2019, Eleanor agreed to participate in a video documentary about Hofmann. We brought a print of Hofmann’s palm to show her during the taping. She was fascinated and handled the item as if it were a holy relic, twice murmuring, “Hofmann’s hand!” and told the camera, “Believe me, I wish I had a hand like this.” Her reverence for Hofmann the musician was obvious and she, in fact, emerged as a highlight of the documentary. Eleanor Sokoloff died of natural causes on July 12, 2020 at the age of 106.

A year before her death, Eleanor approached the president of Curtis, Roberto Diaz, and asked him to promise that her position would be filled by a woman after she was gone. She also talked with others in her musical circle about the importance of recruiting Black faculty members. Not only did Diaz comply with Eleanor’s request, but the school created an endowed chair in her name which was filled by Michelle Cann, a young, gifted Black female pianist. Eleanor would have been pleased.

In 2020, I was told about Helga Hulse, a second centenarian pianist who had studied at Curtis in the 1930s. I interviewed her in Jamestown, New York, where she is a local icon, “the first lady of the piano.” She had just turned one hundred years old on September 21, 2021. Again, as with Eleanor Sokoloff, I learned much delicate information that was new to me. Perhaps advanced age works as a positive factor among interview subjects.

Helga’s life story is colorful, incredible, and touching. Born in Hawaii as Dorothy Johnson, she too had been a piano prodigy. Her father died when she was four. Her mother was an accomplished pianist and teacher who encouraged her, but she was also personally ambitious and, at best, reckless in her role as a mother. Theirs was a deeply troubled relationship that never healed. At age four, Helga played a recital in New York’s Aeolian Hall. In the summer of 1927 and again in summer 1929, she won two national competitions. The prize for one was a scholarship to study with Rudolph Ganz at the Chicago Musical College. Her mother went to Chicago because she wanted to have lessons with Ganz as well. He agreed, but she wasn’t awarded a scholarship and had to pay \$100 per hour. (Teachers take note: that’s about \$2,000 per hour in today’s money). In 1934, Helga played the first movement of Mozart’s D minor Concerto in Honolulu. The local paper reported that she had already been praised by Efram Zimbalist and Percy Grainger as well as Ganz.

While in Chicago, Helga met pianist Josef Lhévinne, then teaching at the American Conservatory of Music in the city, and the two became friends. She was seven, he fifty-four. “Josef Lhévinne was a man of no ego, and I think the greatest pianist of the twentieth century,” she told me.

Helga’s mother arranged for her to audition for the Curtis Institute and put her on a train from Los Angeles to Philadelphia in February 1936. More accurately, she instructed Helga to walk to the train. Helga was only fourteen and had no companion or guardian. She auditioned for Mrs. Bok and, then, Hofmann, and received perfect marks. She began studies there with Martha Massena. (Soon after, Massena’s leaving the faculty to get married opened the position taken by Eleanor Sokoloff.) Helga remembered male students at Curtis intimidating attractive girls, and named some of them, at least one now remembered as a world-class performer.

The lack of an adult guardian proved an insurmountable obstacle because of state law, however, and despite efforts by Hofmann and the Curtis faculty, all of whom wanted Helga to remain as a student, she could not continue studies there after June of that year. Helga soon moved to Cincinnati, where she was accepted as a student at the Cincinnati Conservatory by the husband/wife team of Karol Liszniewski and Marie Melville-Liszniewska. He had studied with Chopin’s pupil Mikuli, while she had been a Leschetizky pupil. A bright future as a concert pianist seemed ensured, but Helga didn’t progress from there to the concert circuit, almost certainly a result of her complicated and unfortunate personal circumstances. Her mother was unsuccessful and their roles reversed—Helga had to take care of her. Helga’s own marriages were problematic, and there were other personal sorrows.

She started teaching in the late 1930s. “I’d had a lot of training, and I studied with some great names in piano and music,” she said. “When I started teaching, it was a very short time later when I started my first studio. That was in the slums of Los Angeles.” She eventually lived in Denmark, Salt Lake City, and elsewhere, always teaching piano. She moved to Jamestown forty-eight years ago. She has been teaching for decades, and continues giving private lessons, which she enjoys. She is proud of her students. She had a successful musical program at the Chautauqua County Jail for three-and-a-half years. Helga expressed only one regret in our interviews. She had recently played three short recitals in the community room of an adult home—Chopin, Brahms, Schubert, nothing unusual. Afterward, she received a letter from the management telling her not to play any more classical music if she were going to play any more recitals. They felt the residents didn’t like classical music. I could tell that rankled her more than anything else in our discussions.



Helga Hulsa in October 2021

Both women were candid in recounting certain memories of their encounters with Hofmann and Mary Bok (and of their own young lives), especially details of Hofmann’s personal relationships with Bok and with his wife. Some of these details are crucial in reconstructing and understanding the tragic history of Hofmann, incidents that could not be discovered elsewhere. When I began these interviews I had not intended to document experiences of women pianists in the United States prior to World War Two, but perhaps this brief report could aid other scholars in researching an under-reported area of musical studies.

Aaron Copland’s Letters to a Boy in Cyprus, 1960–61

Zenon Stavrinides

Introduction

In November 1960, Aaron Copland commenced a short series of correspondence with a teenage boy in Nicosia, Cyprus—me.

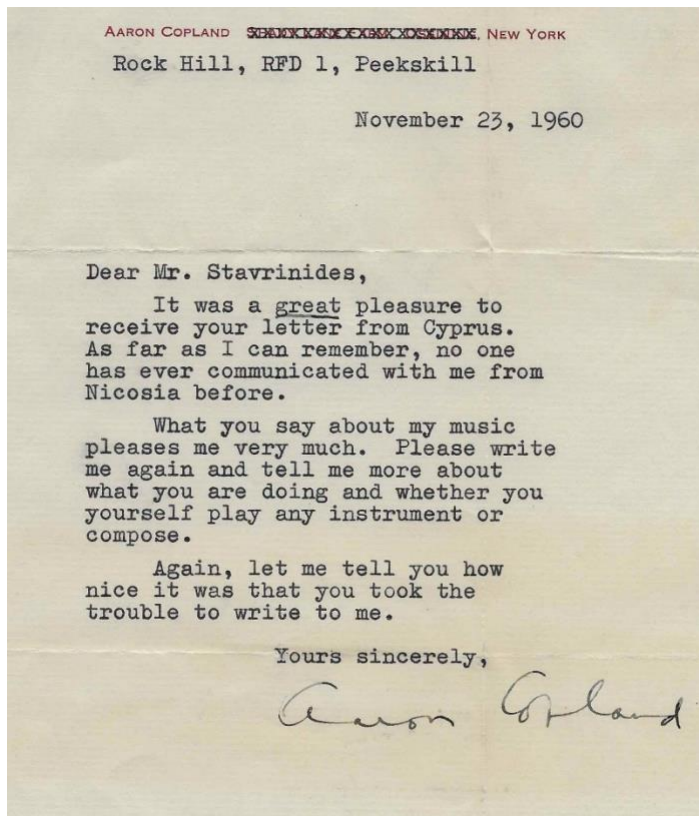
At the time, Copland was 60 and he had had a distinguished career, by no means at an end, as a composer of serious music in several genres, as well as a pianist, conductor, writer on music, and also teacher and supporter of young talent. Indeed, he was recognized by other musicians and critics as “the Dean of American composers.” As for me, aged 15, I was a schoolboy some years before I was to start my university studies in Britain and subsequently follow an undistinguished career as an academic and journalist. What was the link between that important musician and this boy which sustained the brief correspondence? I am not sure. I know I loved great music from Bach to Stravinsky, and this included Copland’s music, at least the music he composed in the “vernacular” style; so, it was not entirely unnatural for me to want to write and solicit an autograph from Copland (and from Stravinsky, too).

As for *his* motive for writing, I can only surmise that he was pleasantly surprised to receive my letter and he wanted to say something about himself and his music to a teenage boy in a child-friendly, even avuncular, manner. Perhaps, given that he had not had a family of his own, his character and temperament had retained a child-like simplicity and directness, for all the complexity and sophistication of his musical compositions. This, I suggest, is what makes the three letters he wrote to me sufficiently interesting to present to a Copland-appreciating public.

The three letters can be identified as follows:

- Letter 1: sent from Rock Hill, Peekskill, NY, where he lived; dated November 23, 1960, in response to an earlier letter by me.
- Letter 2: sent from Rock Hill, Peekskill, NY; dated January 21, 1961, in response to my letter of December 7, 1960.
- Letter 3: sent from Belgrade, Yugoslavia; dated May 31, 1961, in response to my letter of May 9, 1961.

If, as I can suppose, I replied to his last letter, it means that I must have sent him (at least) four letters, of which, regrettably, I have kept no copies. Letter 2 contains a reference to an additional item, my “lovely Christmas card.” In addition to his three letters, he sent me a signed copy of his book, *What to Listen for in Music* (the revised version published in 1957), on the inside cover of which he wrote a dedication: “To Zenon S because he loves music.”



Copland's first letter to the author. Reproduced by permission of The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc., successor to Aaron Copland

Letter 1

This first letter was written on a typewriter on an A5 pale yellow sheet of paper and it went as follows:

Dear Mr. Stavrinides,

It was a great pleasure to receive your letter from Cyprus. As far as I can remember, no one has ever communicated with me from Nicosia before.

What you say about my music pleases me very much. Please write me again and tell me more about what you are doing and whether you yourself play any instrument or compose.

Again, let me tell you how nice it was that you took the trouble to write to me.

Yours sincerely,

[signed] Aaron Copland

I cite in full this rather formal letter to “Mr. Stavrinides” to show that Copland was somehow moved by my initial letter and he urged me—or so I felt—to talk to him about myself. I cannot now recall what I had said to him in my own letter; I may have wished him many happy returns on his birthday which had fallen on November 14. However, I certainly knew—at least on a superficial level—and enjoyed listening

on my record player to *El Salón México*, *Appalachian Spring*, *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and his *Fanfare for the Common Man*, and it would have been natural for me to express my admiration to the composer of such charming and jolly music. Of course, he had received for most of his adult life much more weighty praise from other admirers, but it seems he also enjoyed praise from a boy from Cyprus.

Letter 2

In the second letter, which was hand-written and around 250 words long, I was elevated to “Dear Zenon.” Copland apologized for being late in answering my own “very nice letter” and mentioned the reference I had made in my earlier letter regarding my “musical activities and ...non-musical hobbies.” I must have told him that I played the piano and did some composing. This led him to ask: “Have you written down any of your compositions? In fact have you studied harmony and counterpoint yet?” (I liked the use of the adverb “yet.”) The true answer to the first question would have been “yes,” and to the second, “not yet,” but I want to believe I controlled myself and did not say anything which might suggest that I could be Cyprus’s equivalent to Mozart!

Copland also commended me for speaking “such good English” and he went on to say:

So now you must tell me something of your own life at home, and even perhaps send me a snapshot of yourself, so I have an idea of what you look like!

Finally, he said something about his own musical activities:

I myself have just finished a new composition called a NONET for 9 solo strings—3 violins, 3 violas and 3 celli. It will be played for the first time in Washington in early March, and of course I shall go there to hear how it sounds. That is always an exciting moment, as you can imagine.

He ended by urging me to “write soon again” and signed, “Your friend, Aaron Copland.”

Letter 3

The letter of May 31, 1961, also hand-written, was sent from Yugoslavia, and extended to about 380 words. It contained some warm and soothing “good old uncle” comments on my earlier report of an accident which had resulted in me spending some time in hospital, and he asked me what I would like him to send me by way of a “consolation present” when he returned to the United States. (Parenthetically, I don’t remember if I had an accident at the time, but I am quite sure I did not spend any time in hospital in 1961. I rather think I lied to him to provoke avuncular sympathy from an important composer and a thoroughly nice man. I hope I did not ask for an undeserved consolation present.) He also thanked me for having sent him two photographs of mine, which (since I don’t remember anything about them) I trust did not depict me sitting at the piano and putting on airs!



The author at school with one of his collages; May 1961.

Copland continued the letter with a brief description of his musical activities, which merit quotation at some length.

I am in the midst of a 5 week European tour which began in London and will finish in Lisbon on June 12. In between Paris, Belgrade, Zurich and Madrid for concerts and lectures. Being just now in Belgrade I feel very near Nicosia. Too bad I can’t “hop a plane” and say “hello” to you in person. That *would* be fun!!

...I ought to have answered [your last letter] long ago but it has been a very busy winter for me. I was on several musical trips (to conduct orchestras) in Arizona and Louisiana and Iowa. Do you know where those states are? Arizona is very special-looking; very dry and bare with marvellously shaped cacti and beautiful vistas—and real cowboys.

This, incidentally, was pretty much the picture which was evoked in the imagination of the boy from Cyprus whenever he heard the delightful “Corral Nocturne” from *Rodeo*. Copland went on to say:

...I became involved in the composing of a score for a new film called “Something Wild.” I left it unfinished because of this trip, but will finish it on my return. It is an interesting film, I think, and so I look forward to writing the music. (Do you go to movies much?)

The film, as I learned much later, was a psychological drama involving the rape of a female college student, her suicide attempt, and her subsequent captivity by a mechanic. Copland reworked some of the musical themes in his 1964 symphonic composition *Music for a Great City*, which contained some of his most atmospheric and tense—one might almost say scary—musical writing.

Letter 3 also contained some comments on the Nonet:

The Nonet was premiered in Washington, DC. It is a piece which has a very sad ending, and therefore doesn’t invite demonstrative applause. Nevertheless I think many people liked it. I wish you could hear and tell me frankly what you think.

He proceeded to tell me, evidently at my request, something about his home life:

I live about an hour outside New York City, in the country. I have a lovely house with beautiful views across the Hudson River. I am sure you would like it and I hope some day you will visit me there. It is far enough from New York to assure my privacy, but close enough for me to take part in the cultural life of the city from time to time. Since I never was married, I have no family, but I live with my cook and my secretary, who both care for my needs. Music fills the whole day in one form or another and so I consider myself lucky.

He ended the letter by saying that it had been a pleasure to write to me and asked me to let him know how I got on with my recovery after my accident. He signed, "Affectionately, A.C."

I am as sure as I can be that I wrote to him again, but I never received a fourth letter.

Epilogue

In 1979, a celebration was held at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. to honor Copland on his 79th birthday. The opening speech was given by Leonard Bernstein, who had known Copland intimately for decades. In the course of his speech he said that Copland "has always had time for everyone, especially the young, and that's the mark of a great man." He went on to highlight Copland's generosity, wit, quiriness, compassion and tenderness, and plainness too, "qualities which inhabit his music with a mirror-like truth." I chanced upon this somewhat grandiloquent speech in a video on the Internet and found myself wondering if traces of these personality traits may not have left faint marks on the three letters which I had kept with other childhood memorabilia in a shoebox for 60 years.

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From the President

Daniel Goldmark



Dear Colleagues,

Changes are afoot within the Society for American Music. In addition to the many wonderful papers and presentations at our March meeting, we said thank you to outgoing board members Tammy Kernodle (past president), Leta Miller (secretary), Sarah Gerk and Horace Maxile (members-at-large), and welcome to Douglas Bomberger (president elect), Candace Bailey (secretary), and Marianne Betz and Christopher Chowrimootoo (members-at-large). There were also several dozen SAM members who finished their terms on the standing committees we have that keep the Society running, and dozens more

who took on new roles in those committees. I cannot overstate how important each and every person is to the running of this Society; if you want to get involved in some way, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

When I considered running for SAM president back in 2019 (which now feels like ages ago), I took some time to consider how much the Society had changed in the years since I joined, and also how much the field of musicology and the academy at large changed—or not—during that period. Various scholarly societies in 2019 were having serious conversations about the future of academic publishing, the viability of national conferences, and the academic job market, among other topics.

And then 2020 happened. The pandemic. An international reckoning about race. As divisive a political cycle as anyone had seen in their lifetime.

Suddenly those big issues from 2019 seemed less acute, at least for a time. And now that classes have largely moved back to the classroom, now that we can attend live concerts, and now that in-person conferences have recommenced ... those complex issues have become downright complicated, and the solutions aren't any more apparent. How does conference-going change now that Zoom meetings have forever changed the conversation concerning accessibility? How do we support

publishing when more and more scholars have no financial backing—or professional mandate, depending on their job—to write books or articles?

As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the conception of the Sonneck Society—later renamed the Society for American Music—the desire to think about where we’ve come from and where we’re going looms large, especially given the profound and intense changes we have all faced of late. Along with the celebration of everything SAM has achieved comes a responsibility to think about the future of the Society and how we achieve its mission: “...the study, teaching, creation, and dissemination of all musics in the Americas.” In my remaining year as president, I look forward to exploring these ideas with our entire membership—be it on Zoom or in person, in large groups or one-on-one conversations—as we strive to make SAM as relevant and effective as it can be for today’s members and for those who will join us in the next fifty years.

Summary of Minutes from the Business Meeting of SAM’s 2022 Conference

The SAM Business Meeting, held on 13 March 2022, began solemnly with a moment of reflection for the Russian invasion of Ukraine and for the circumstances that led to the conference being held online.

Committee work has been strong and impactful, and President Daniel Goldmark reported that we have had more volunteers than positions to fill—a happy situation for any organization. The Board noted the excellent conference put together by Program Committee chair Jacqueline Avila and Local Arrangements chair Matthew Mugmon, thanking them for their work in this regard.

The work of outgoing committee members Horace Maxile, Sarah Gerk, Leta Miller, and outgoing President Tammy Kernodle was acknowledged, especially Tammy, who has served as a great role model and mentor to so many of our members. We also welcomed newly elected board members Candace Bailey, secretary; Chris Chowrimootoo, member-at-large; Marianne Betz, member-at-large; and Doug Bomberger, president elect. The Board expressed their appreciation to Paula Bishop, Joice Gibson, and Megan MacDonald for their extraordinary work on the conference as a model for an online meeting.

Financially, most of SAM’s experiences have been positive. The Pisani Student Travel Fund Campaign raised \$23,000, which includes a match from an anonymous donor (to whom we are most grateful). Treasurer Maribeth Clark presented an overview of SAM’s financial position, highlighting revenue of \$156,806.90 and expenditures of \$154,177.93, to yield net operating revenue of \$2,628.97 for 2021. SAM’s investment account stands at \$1,457,282.60 and the checking account at \$91,506.09, yielding total assets of \$1,585,916.48. SAM has given out \$48,077.75 in grants and fellowships. (Awards were announced at a separate ceremony, which constituted a change from the usual procedure.) As to conferences in Minneapolis (2023) and Tacoma (2025), we have prepaid the necessary expenses. On the downside, our membership is down. Nonetheless, the on-line conferences have been financially profitable with an income of \$27,460 and expenses of \$16,700.

Emily Ansari reported on several issues related to *JSAM*, noting that the range of scholarship has been wide and the authors include theorists, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists, making *JSAM* very special as a broad-based publication. We moved to the ScholarOne platform for submission, and the results of this change have thus far had an excellent impact on our review and publication processes. *JSAM* has also published its first colloquy (anti-racism in the curriculum) and is accepting proposals for other colloquies. Submissions are slightly down, and Emily asked for folks to send in their best work! Long-term copy-editor Mark Davidson is resigning, having served admirably under five different editors. The Board thanked David Garcia, now advisory editor, the subeditors, the editorial board, and the anonymous reviewers.

Next year’s meeting will be held in Minneapolis, 8–12 March 2023. The Program Chair is Stephanie Stallings and the Local Arrangements Chair is Alyssa Barna. Alyssa thanked Andy Flory, who prepared for the 2020 meeting that had to be canceled. On a related note, there will be a SAM party at AMS-SMT-SEM—more information to come!

SAM Awards and Fellowships, 2021–2022

Lifetime Achievement Award

Carol Oja

Carol J. Oja is William Powell Mason Professor of Music at Harvard University and serves on the faculty of Harvard's graduate program in American Studies. Her award-winning books on various aspects of twentieth-century American music have been hailed as landmark works in the field, and in 2019 she was elected to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

Her current project on Marian Anderson and racial desegregation on American concert and opera stages continues her explorations of race, racism, and gender identities in American music. Such topics are also infused throughout her recent book, *Bernstein Meets Broadway: Collaborative Art in a Time of War* (Oxford University Press, 2014), which won the Music in American Culture Award from the American Musicological Society. In this study, Oja reveals the contested roles of African Americans and Asian Americans in Bernstein's musical *On the Town* as well as homosexual allusions in the ballet *Fancy Free*.



Carol Oja

In addition to *Bernstein Meets Broadway*, her books include *Colin McPhee: Composer in Two Worlds* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990; University of Illinois Press, 2004), *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford University Press, 2000; winner of the Irving Lowens Book Award from the Society for American Music and an ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award), and *Aaron Copland and His World* (Princeton University Press, 2005; coedited with Judith Tick). Her most recent book, *Sounding Together: Collaborative Perspectives on U.S. Music in the Twenty-first Century* (University of Michigan Press, 2021; coedited with Charles Hiroshi Garrett), reflects her sustained commitment to scholarly collaboration. With Christina Linklater and Katie Callam, she recently spearheaded the Eileen Southern Digital Exhibit, available at <https://eileensouthern.omeka.fas.harvard.edu>.

Deeply devoted to her many students, Oja has been equally generous and supportive to junior SAM scholars. Her gifted teaching and caring mentorship represent major contributions to the study of American music. Prior to joining the Harvard faculty in 2003, she taught at Brooklyn College, CUNY, and at the College of William and Mary. She has received fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute, ACLS, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Newhouse Center for the Humanities at Wellesley College, the National Humanities Center, NEH, and the Mellon Faculty Fellows Program at Harvard. She has chaired the Pulitzer Prize in Music selection committee twice, was the New York Philharmonic Orchestra's Leonard Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence for the 2014–2015 season, and served as president of the Society for American Music from 2003 to 2005.

Distinguished Service Citation

Denise Von Glahn

Denise Von Glahn, Professor of Music at Florida State University in Tallahassee, has given sustained service to both the Sonneck Society and to the Society for American Music for the last twenty-five years. A distinguished and prolific scholar of musical modernism, music and place, music and nature, and women and music, Von Glahn has written three monographs, co-written a fourth, co-edited a *MUSA* edition, and published numerous chapters, journal articles, encyclopedia entries, and reviews. But she has also always found time for professional service to the Society.



Denise Von Glahn

In 1996, Denise co-chaired the Local Arrangements committee for the Sonneck Society's national conference in Seattle; the following year she served on the Lowens Book Award Committee. She subsequently continued to serve on both Local Arrangements and award committees, including Local Arrangement committees for conferences in Cleveland (2004) and Chicago (2006) and two terms on the Book Subvention Award committee (2001–2003).

Denise's service has continued non-stop since that time. She was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2002 (for a three-year term), and the subsequent year helped to establish (and directed) the Ad-Hoc SAM History Project, an oral history undertaking that documented the Society's history through interviews conducted mostly at national meetings from 2003 to 2010. She served on the Nominations Committee (2005–2007) and was elected to two terms as Vice President of the Society (2009–2013), during which time she was also chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee, which provided the Society with important (and almost invisible) work that helped us to re-imagine the future of the organization. Her efforts as a member of the hard-working Development Committee (2009–2016) were valuable and contributed to the successful completion of our first (and only) capital campaign, which raised \$1 million for the Society.

Denise's work with other members of the Society on both the Board and various committees has been most valuable. She is consistently an active participant, making suggestions, volunteering to undertake tasks, and contributing unflinching enthusiasm for the goals of the Society for American Music. She has furthermore been a wonderful and encouraging mentor to younger scholars. At her home institution she has chaired almost forty Ph.D. dissertation and Master's thesis committees and served as a member of nearly seventy other degree committees. And she encourages FSU students to attend SAM conferences, either as presenters or as attendees, on a regular basis.

Her record as a scholar, her mentorship and encouragement of younger scholars, and her sustained, "exemplary, and continued service" to the Society makes her a most worthy recipient of the organization's Distinguished Service Citation.

Irving Lowens Article Award

[Stephanie Doktor](#), "Finding Florence Mills: The Voice of the Harlem Jazz Queen in the Compositions of William Grant Still and Edmund Thornton Jenkins"

The winner of the 2022 Irving Lowens Memorial Article Prize is Stephanie Doktor for her article "Finding Florence Mills: The Voice of the Harlem Jazz Queen in the Compositions of William Grant Still and Edmund Thornton Jenkins," published in the *Journal of the Society for American Music*. Drawing from the insights of Daphne Brooks, Paige McGinley, and Saidiya Hartman, Doktor presents a nuanced new portrait of jazz vocalist and political activist Florence Mills, the Harlem Jazz Queen, by integrating critical press accounts with the indirect depiction of a "voice" gathered from two composers writing for a real voice. Doktor's extraordinary use of this imaginative methodology is brilliantly executed and a model for future scholarship. Above all, Doktor's timely account demonstrates that over the course of Mills's career, her singing and writing voices converged "in their capacious power to articulate the political ambitions of Black women."



Stephanie Doktor

Irving Lowens Book Award

[Shana L. Redmond](#), *Everything Man: The Form and Function of Paul Robeson*

Honorable Mention: [Rae Linda Brown](#), *The Heart of a Woman: The Life and Music of Florence B. Price*



Shana L. Redmond

The Lowens Book Award this year goes to an outstanding study that is at once wildly creative and carefully controlled; reflective of a deep devotion to the archive and of playfully reinterpreting what is found there; beautifully written and lovingly edited. The book is thrilling and important not only because of the ways it sheds new light on its important subject, but also because of how it sheds that light. Cell phone vibrations, holograms, and sound installations may not readily come to mind when one thinks of the great Paul Robeson. But in *Everything Man: The Form and Function of Paul Robeson* (Duke University Press), multidisciplinary scholar Shana L. Redmond nimbly draws such modern elements towards her subject—and vice versa—using such comparative elements to draw out nuances and intricacies of a figure we thought we already knew well. Redmond re-contextualizes multiple aspects of Paul Robeson's life as a musician-artist-actor-activist, political symbol, and public intellectual, and in doing so reveals how Robeson's presence is as important today as it was in the past. Redmond describes with a sense of urgency how Robeson's vision of anti-racism pushed hard against capitalist forces, and how he set a standard for democracy that the United States is still desperately struggling to realize.

Because the number of outstanding books was so high this year, and since one of them is especially meritorious, the Society for American Music awards Honorary Mention to the late Rae Linda Brown for her book *The Heart of a Woman: The Life and Music of Florence B. Price* (University of Illinois Press), edited by Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. Brown's study is a lovingly researched and written biography of a brilliant composer who was until recently lost to history, but whose works are now attracting significant scholarly attention, performances, and recordings throughout the world, in large measure thanks to Rae Linda Brown's pioneering efforts. Brown's final scholarly statement exemplifies not only the power of a lifetime's dedication to one's subject, but also the fact that, as far as we've come as an academic discipline, the work must continue even as we honor our ancestors. Brown served most ably as President of our Society at the turn of the millennium, and two decades passed before her book was published. Guthrie Ramsey, her dear friend and colleague, with the assistance of her beloved sister Carlene J. Brown, most helpfully and expertly saw her book through to publication. With this award, we recognize the many ways in which the author and her subject have, in Brown's own words, "sought to quietly articulate the undeniable role that black women have played in private and public African American life and culture" and American musical life at large.



Rae Linda Brown

Adrienne Fried Block Fellowship

[Aimee E. González](#), "Reviving, Reimagining, and Reclaiming Cuba's Colonial Musical Past, 1990–Present"

[Jasmine A. Henry](#), "Jersey Club: Race, Place and Black Club Culture in Newark, New Jersey"



Aimee E. González

González's dissertation, "Reviving, Reimagining, and Reclaiming Cuba's Colonial Musical Past, 1990–Present," explores the relationship between colonial revivalism, early music revival, and urban renewal in post-Soviet Havana, Cuba. González weaves together a study of urban place with music in a seamless manner, investigating the interconnectedness between urban architecture and spaces and Euro-Caribbean musical practices, and how the revival of colonial sacred music is tied to the revitalization of Old Havana in the wake of new touristic and religious opportunities in modern Cuba. Her work considers how early music revivalism, which is less researched in the Caribbean and Latin America, contributes to the construction of cultural identity within the global and postcolonial contexts of modern Cuba. González will use the fellowship funds to conduct archival research in Cuba focused on state-sponsored cultural heritage radio programming, as well as ethnography of an early music concert series organized in Havana.

Henry's dissertation, "Jersey Club: Race, Place and Black Club Culture in Newark, New Jersey," explores DIY DJ culture in Newark as an expression of Black urban identity in an overtly racialized city. Her project illuminates how Newark musicians must improvise in transforming urban spaces into musical ones, and how this scene is part of identity and expressive practices around race and youth culture in Newark. Henry situates her work within existing scholarship around Black urban DJ and independent cultures, while also decentering whiteness within the study of indie or DIY music scenes, providing a counternarrative to these works that examines "the unique conditions, practices, ideologies, and significance of Black independent music production in large urban communities." Henry will use the fellowship funds to conduct ethnographic research at events in and around Newark, as well as taking lessons from producers within the scene to learn more about their musical practices and techniques.



Jasmine A. Henry

Edward T. Cone Fellowship

R. Justin Frankeny, “Cuban Roots, Uprooted: Compositions of Migration, Memory and Liminality in Miami, Florida, 1959–1985.”



R. Justin Frankeny

The winner of the 2021 Edward T. Cone Fellowship is R. Justin Frankeny for his project “Cuban Roots: Uprooted: Compositions of Migration, Memory, and Liminality in Miami, Florida 1959–1985.” Frankeny’s project builds upon the work of Brigid Cohen, Andrea Bohlman, and Florian Scheduling, with a specific focus Cuban and Cuban American composers and composition students living in Miami during the Cold War. Frankeny’s research will provide foundational work in both collecting oral histories of migrant composer experiences as well as illuminating the contemporary art composition scene in Miami, which has proven to have liminal existence in scholarship, in contrast to other geographic centers of the U.S. (New York, L.A., New England...). In doing so, his work will serve not only his dissertation, but will provide an archive of oral histories that will provide a foundation for further study of migration and its relationship to American concert music.

Paul Charosh Fellowship

Joseph Williams, “Performing Florence Price’s Keyboard Music: A collaboration with Dr. Gwynne Kuhner Brown for *The Cambridge Companion to Florence Price* (eds. Samantha Ege and A. Kori Hill)

The winner of the 2022 Paul Charosh Fellowship is pianist, educator, film producer, and arts and culture curator Joseph Williams. The fellowship will support Mr. Williams in a collaboration with musicologist Gwynne Kuhner Brown on a chapter about Florence Price’s keyboard works for *The Cambridge Companion to Florence Price*. Williams’ performance and discussion is in the same spirit as Price’s own collaborative and community-building ethos.



Joseph Williams

Eileen Southern Fellowship



Ayana O. Smith

Kristen Turner and Ayana O. Smith: “‘A House of Many Mansions’: Undine Smith Moore’s Pedagogical Agenda”

The winners of the 2022 Eileen Southern Fellowship are Kristen Turner and Ayana O. Smith for their project “‘A House of Many Mansions’: Undine Smith Moore’s Pedagogical Agenda,” based on their examination of Moore’s papers documenting her commitment to creating a curriculum based entirely on the music of Black composers and her establishment of the Black Music Center at the Virginia State University. In her 45 years of teaching, Moore trained generations of African American composers, performers, and music educators who remembered her as a “role model, compelling performing artist, a distinguished composer, and a generous friend.” This project is part of a larger undertaking by an interdisciplinary, inter-institutional group known as EMERG (Engaging Music, Race, and Gender) which “engages research, historiography, and pedagogy related to the intersection of music, race, and gender.”



Kristen Turner

John and Roberta Graziano Fellowship



Jean E. Snyder

Dr. Jean E. Snyder, “Art Songs of Harry T. Burleigh.”

The Graziano Award goes to Dr. Jean E. Snyder, for her important project of a critical / performing edition of Harry T. Burleigh’s Art Songs (46 of his original songs as well as several arrangements). Snyder has made a dedicated and sustained commitment to Burleigh scholarship, drawing worldwide attention to his achievements and historical role. For this project she is collaborating with an excellent team of musicians and scholars (including Drs. Louise Toppin and Ann Sears) to make Burleigh’s work more widely available and address issues of contemporaneous performance practice in a thoughtful and meticulous edition.

Charles Hamm Fellowship

[Kimberly Mack](#), “Alternative Voices in Alternative Places: Dailies, Weeklies, and Zines.” Chapter three of book MS titled *The Untold History of Early American Rock Criticism* (under contract with Bloomsbury Academic), to be completed in spring/summer 2022.

The winner of the 2021 Charles Hamm Fellowship is Professor Kimberly Mack, who will use the award toward the completion of the third chapter of her book, *The Untold History of Early American Rock Criticism* (under contract with Bloomsbury Academic). Mack’s book documents the many Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and female writers who contributed to American rock criticism and journalism between 1964 and 1980. In decentering the white, male rock critics who predominated during this stretch, Mack’s project promises to expand on and enrich the historiography of rock music as it developed between the mid- and late twentieth century.



Kimberly Mack

Hampson Education Fellowship in American Song



Peter Fielding

[Dr. Peter Fielding](#), “Sankofa Songs: African Nova Scotian Songs from the Collection of Dr. Helen Creighton.”

Dr. Peter Fielding is the recipient of the 2022 Hampson Education Fellowship in American Song for the project entitled “Sankofa Songs: African Nova Scotian Songs from the Collection of Dr. Helen Creighton.” The fellowship will support Dr. Fielding’s efforts to create transcriptions of historic field recordings made by Dr. Helen Creighton. These transcriptions will be made available as Open Educational Resources and will be freely accessible through the Helen Creighton Folklore Society website as companions to the archival recordings. This project promotes greater awareness of Afro-Nova Scotian folk and liturgical song, assisting in the preservation of oral, traditional culture.

H. Earle Johnson Publication Subvention

[Gretchen Carlson](#), *Improvising the Score: Rethinking Modern Film Music through Jazz*

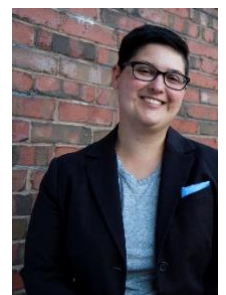
[Lauron Kehrer](#), *Queer Voices in Hip Hop: Cultures, Communities, and Contemporary Performance*



Gretchen Carlson

The first winner of the 2022 H. Earle Johnson Publication Subvention is Gretchen L. Carlson for her book *Improvising the Score: Reinterpreting Modern Film Music through Jazz*, to be published by the University Press of Mississippi. Making a powerful contribution to both jazz and film studies, Carlson’s work takes a sociological approach to contemporary films to consider forms of interaction and collaboration that resonate at all levels of the production process. In doing so, the work reimagines the role of jazz as not only a musical style deployed for particular effects, but as the core of an “integrative jazz-film medium that is rooted in jazz aesthetics.”

The second winner of the 2022 H. Earle Johnson Publication Subvention is Lauron Kehrer for their book *Queer Voices in Hip Hop: Cultures, Communities, and Contemporary Performance*, to be published by the University of Michigan Press. Drawing upon rich musical case studies and grounded in literature in race, gender, and sexuality studies, Kehrer’s work unfurls a powerful argument that “hip hop is queer — it not only has contemporary queer artists, but it also has queer roots that link these artists to a specifically Black queer music lineage.” In doing so, the manuscript makes powerful interventions both in the historiography of hip hop itself, as well as the music’s myriad contributions to a range of cultural discourses over the past half-century.



Lauron Kehrer

Judith McCulloh Fellowship



Michael Kramer

[Michael Kramer](#), *This Machine Kills Fascists: What the Folk Revival Can Teach Us about the Digital Age*

The applications were of a very high quality this year, all projects we would like to have awarded. This year's Judith McCulloh Fellowship is awarded to Michael Kramer, whose grant will go toward archival research on his current book project, *This Machine Kills Fascists: What the Folk Revival Can Teach Us about the Digital Age*. The research addresses the folk revival and its relationship to technology. Big congratulations to Michael, and best wishes for successful archive visits!

Anne Dhu McLucas Award

[Wesley Somers](#), "The *Jarana* as Baroque Guitar?: Decolonizing Eurocentric Re-Inventions of *Son Jarocho* Traditions"

The Anne Dhu McLucas Fellowship for 2021 goes to Wesley Somers. Somers proposes to work as a luthier in an oral tradition of instrument-making and performance for the *jarana* in the *son jarocho* tradition of the Veracruz region in Mexico. Recently, this instrument has become part of the discourse around Baroque Mexican tradition—is it the survival of the baroque guitar?—lending the project a decolonialization aspect tied to today's early music movement. These recent developments succeed the exploitation of the music in Mexican cinema's Golden Age, so quite a number of salient issues are being engaged in this project.



Wesley Somers

Sight and Sound Subvention

[James Michael Hall](#), *Hooked on Polyphony*



James Michael Hall

The winner of the 2022 Sight and Sound Subvention is Mike Hall for the recording project *Hooked on Polyphony*, which will present studio recordings of ten recent compositions for trombone ensemble by American composers Sy Brandon, Daniel Kessner, Gary Powell Nash, Armand Russell, Chris M. Sharpe, Paul Turok, Henry Wolking, and Willard Zirk. Hall performs all the parts himself on alto, tenor, and bass trombones, representing a significant commitment to getting these works recorded. By applying studio production techniques and getting input from the composers themselves, this project will offer high-quality recordings of an under-recorded repertoire while also supporting contemporary American composers.

Virgil Thomson Fellowship

[James O'Leary](#), "'Do You Ever Wonder Whether You're Real?': Stephen Sondheim, Arthur Laurents, and the Politics of Midcentury Megatheater"

[Naomi Graber](#), "Sound and Shadow: Hidden Horrors at RKO"

The 2022 Virgil Thomson Fellowship is awarded jointly to James O'Leary and Naomi Graber in support of proposed archival research travel. James O'Leary's project, entitled "'Do You Ever Wonder Whether You're Real?': Stephen Sondheim, Arthur Laurents, and the Politics of Midcentury Metatheater," will examine the seminal working relationship between those two Broadway masters. He will undertake research at the Library of Congress, Brandeis University, the New York Public Library, and elsewhere, focusing on Sondheim and Laurents's collaboration on *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, and *Do I Hear a Waltz?*.



James O'Leary



Naomi Graber

His findings are intended for a monograph that will offer new insight into Laurents's dramaturgical theories and will demonstrate how these shows intervened in international postwar political debates about the links between the stage and society. Naomi Graber will visit the RKO Archives in the Special Collections at UCLA and the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for a project entitled "Sound and Shadow: Hidden Horrors at RKO." She intends to investigate the relatively unknown studio practices of film scoring and sound design for horror "B" movies developed by the Val Lewton Unit at RKO Studios during the 1940s. Her study will examine films such as *Cat People*, *The Seventh*

Victim, and *Bedlam*, in which budgetary limitations led to innovations whereby a film's audio track and its music took on a primary role in eliciting the "thrills and chills" that drove the genre's popularity.

Judith Tick Award

[Cloe Gentile Reyes](#), "Reggaetón as Resistance: Negotiating Racialized Femininity through Dembow and Perreo"

The 2022 Judith Tick Award committee is pleased to grant Cloe Gentile Reyes, musicology Ph.D. candidate at the University of California Santa Barbara, a fellowship to conduct on-site research for her dissertation in progress, "Reggaetón as Resistance: Negotiating Racialized Femininity through Dembow and Perreo." This study situates queer Caribbean women's "assertions of belonging," agency, and "safe space" through emceeing and dancing to reggaetón in New York City and San Juan in the historical context of Latinx creative resistance to white policing and surveillance. This fellowship will allow Gentile Reyes, "a woman of the diaspora" in need of financial support to visit her ancestral home in Puerto Rico for the first time, to conduct archival, ethnographic, and autobiographical research. Gentile Reyes' compelling, well-theorized, and historical project reveals intersectional and inter-generational layers of this important musical movement.



Cloe Gentile Reyes

Mark Tucker Award for Outstanding Student Paper



Maeve Nagel-Frael

[Maeve Nagel-Frael](#), "Mapping the Camilla Urso Concert Company on the Nineteenth Century Lyceum Circuit, 1873–83"

Nagel-Frael's paper explores important avenues of inquiry about the development of nineteenth-century American music culture, which provide an alternative perspective on the role of classic music in U.S. entertainment. Using violinist Camilla Urso and her Concert Company as a case study, the author examines the confluence of railroad expansion, developments in music management and advertising practices, and the rise of celebrity culture to demonstrate how music performance drove entertainment tours. Nagel-Frael combines archival research and GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping to identify the centrality of commercial tours and their rural consumers in sustaining U.S. classical music.

Wiley Housewright Dissertation Award

[Katie Callam](#), "'To Look After and Preserve': Curating the American Musical Past, 1905–1945"

The winner of the 2021 Wiley Housewright Dissertation Award is Dr. Katie Callam for her dissertation, "'To Look After and Preserve': Curating the American Musical Past, 1905–1945," Harvard University, 2020 (advisor: Dr. Carol Oja). In this beautifully written and researched dissertation, Dr. Callam provides a thought-provoking history of the work of early twentieth-century performers and public historians as curators and presenters of the American musical past. Her carefully chosen case studies, featuring Kitty Cheatham, Atalie Unkalunt, Leonidas Westervelt, and Maud Cuney-Hare, reveal the importance of alternative historical narratives of U.S. music history that highlighted the contributions of women and people of color, and that circulated broadly outside of standard print sources and academic circles in the first half of the twentieth century. Dr. Callam's study extends U.S. music historiography into the realm of the unwritten, advocating for the importance of material and cultural archives and presentations, and encourages an expanded appreciation of performers and collectors as public historians.

Margery Morgan Lowens Dissertation Research Fellowship

[Samuel Golter](#), "Musical Eugenics: Manufacturing Anglo-Saxon Humanity at the Post-Reconstruction University"

[Kendall Winter](#), "Suffragist and Antisuffragist Music and Sound in the United States, 1867–1920"

The co-winner of the 2021 Margery Lowens Dissertation Research Fellowship is Samuel Golter for his dissertation, "Musical Eugenics: Manufacturing Anglo-Saxon Humanity at the Post-Reconstruction University." This study draws close connections between late nineteenth-century university research into eugenics and the study of music, showing that at the time the two areas lay close—surprisingly so. Drawing upon current research in Black Studies and buttressed by rigorous archival work, Golter situates his dissertation in the discourse surrounding whiteness in the decades following Emancipation, a time



Samuel Golter

when eugenics offered a pseudo-scientific justification for maintaining white superiority. Golter shows that eugenics also suffused contemporary academic research, and he focuses on late nineteenth-century research in folk music, early twentieth-century music-appreciation curricula, and early studies of music psychology at the moment when these fields of study were first being established in major universities around the country. Ultimately this dissertation reexamines the roots of academic musicology, ethnomusicology, and music theory in the United States, asking these areas of study today to reckon with their institutionalized racial pasts.

The co-winner of the 2021 Margery Lowens Dissertation Research Fellowship is Kendall Winter for her dissertation, “Suffragist and Antisuffragist Music and Sound in the United States, 1867 – 1920.” It explores the music of the suffragist movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by placing it into dialogue with the contemporaneous anti-suffragist movement. Grounded in recent research in American Studies, and supported by careful, pioneering archival work, Winter reveals a darker side of the suffrage movement, demonstrating that the activists associated with it often sought to assuage broad-based fears that they were upending the prevailing gender, racial, and moral order of the time. The result is a nuanced perspective on the songs, speech, and sounds of the suffrage movement, illuminating the ways in which they drew tactics (including political speech and music) from their purported detractors, with startling implications for their broader ideological goals. By giving a voice to the anti-suffragists, she also methodologically demonstrates the interpretive possibilities afforded by studying the cultural clashes that have accompanied progressive movements in music.



Kendall Winter

Journal of the Society for American Music

Volume 16, Number 2 (May 2022)

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Daniel Abraham, Alicia Kopfstein-Penk, and Andrew H. Weaver (eds.), *Leonard Bernstein and Washington, D.C.: Works, Politics, Performances*
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Met Opera on Demand
Ryan Ebright

George C. Wolfe, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, and Dee Rees, *Bessie*
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Book Review

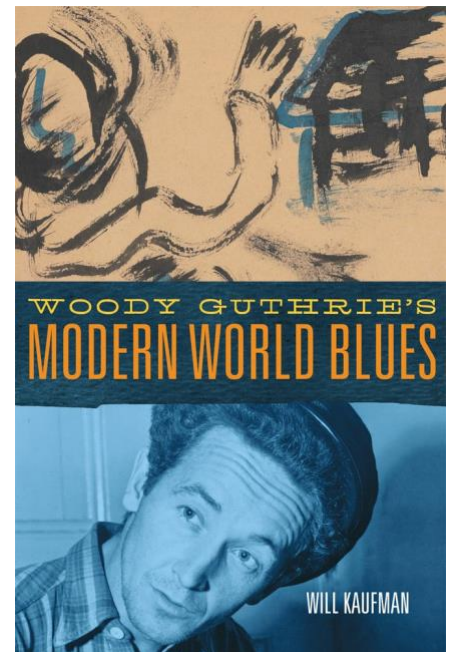
[Woody Guthrie's Modern World Blues](#). Will Kaufman. University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. 312 pp. ISBN: 9780806157610. Hardcover.

Hannah Porter Denecke, Florida State University

When I hear the name “Woody Guthrie,” I think about sitting in my grandpa’s old pickup truck listening to “Do Re Mi” from the Dust Bowl Ballads while enjoying a Werther’s caramel. When I listen to recordings of Guthrie today, I am instantly filled with nostalgia and longing for a bygone era which I never experienced. Needless to say, when I began reading Will Kaufman’s *Woody Guthrie’s Modern World Blues*, I did not expect to walk away convinced that Guthrie was a modernist. I read this book from the perspective of a musicologist, but also as an American folksinger and songwriter. Kaufman’s interpretations illuminated and transformed Guthrie’s archives and lyrics, giving me pause in my preexisting thoughts about the multi-talented folksinger.

Throughout this book, Kaufman examines Guthrie as a musical modernist, while simultaneously seeking a better understanding of the societal nuances and paradigms of American modernism and modernity in the twentieth century. Making rigorous use of Oklahoma’s Woody Guthrie Center archives, Kaufman utilizes the songwriter’s lyrics, correspondence, works of visual art, fiction and nonfiction writing, newspaper columns, and miscellaneous scribbles to paint a more complex picture of the man, alongside existing oral histories and scholarly work. Additionally, the author compares Guthrie and his proclivities with contemporary artists, writers, and creatives whom we might easily describe as modernists by today’s sensibilities. Even as Kaufman positions the songwriter and his work among famous modernist figures such as Marcel Proust or Virginia Woolf, he outlines the paradoxes of Guthrie’s work and life to further illustrate their role in his development as a musician and creative during the twentieth century. By considering Guthrie’s presence and work within a modernist framework, Kaufman invites the reader to broaden their horizons for understanding American modernism.

From the start, Kaufman makes the point that he will not be examining the most famous and recognizable of Guthrie’s tunes in *Modern World Blues*. Rather, he hopes to de-mythologize and bring nuance to the figure known so widely today as the rural vagabond songwriter from Oklahoma. Kaufman organizes his argument through an exploration of the technological advancements and cultural shifts that marked the tumultuous midcentury, documenting Guthrie’s engagement with the changes of his time. In the major chapters of the book, the author considers the songwriter’s experiences and opinions regarding modernist art forms in music, visual art, and dance, as well as the fluctuating technologies of transportation, communication, and mass media. Kaufman also examines the archival evidence of Guthrie’s statements on the transient cultural norms of the time, especially with regards to the musician’s alterable opinions on topics such as gender and race. Haunting the entire book is a rare condition with which Guthrie, his mother, and many of his children were afflicted: Huntington’s Disease. Kaufman demonstrates the way this condition has muddled interpretation of the last decades of Guthrie’s life, as the inherited degenerative disease was barely understood during his lifetime. Along with the biographical details contained in *Woody Guthrie’s Modern World Blues*, Kaufman’s most striking conclusions are about the paradoxes that shaped and formed the songwriter’s engagement with modernity.



As with any argument that appeals to the complex ideals of modernism, Kaufman has to, in part, frame Guthrie within a series of dichotomous paradoxes. Even in the midst of these dialectics, the author reveals the way that the songwriter both embraced inconsistency and found clarity in certain views as he made his career in the music industry of the time. One of the paradoxes Kaufman returns to throughout his narrative is that of the rural and the urban in Guthrie’s life. Within this framework, many other aspects of Guthrie’s biography express themselves in intriguing ways. Though the songwriter was born and raised in rural Oklahoma, he ultimately settled into his career in urban parts of California and, later, in New York

City. The tension between the identities of these regions and their roles in his life also paralleled Guthrie's difficulty in navigating domestic and familial responsibilities that contrasted with his own desires for work and travel.

Kaufman highlights the role technological advancements played in Guthrie's paradoxes, even revealing the ways that the songwriter's opinions on the technologies of his time transformed as further developments were made. For example, Guthrie traveled briefly as a vagabond along the railway system, but transitioned to use of the car as the interstate system in the United States progressed. As air travel became more widespread, the musician took advantage of this technology and found himself inspired by the new possibilities that aviation allowed, while simultaneously stunned by the way this technology shifted his sense of temporality. Kaufman notes that Guthrie's first airplane ride was likely in March 1946. In this flight and the handful that followed, the songwriter "left a comprehensive record of the defamiliarization of his entire world through the experience of flight" in various notes and marginalia Kaufman examined in Guthrie's archives (81). Guthrie's changing views around modes of transportation correspond with his lifelong interest in science and his commitment to the scientific method.

Guthrie is typically associated with progressive politics in most histories, but the role of science in his political consciousness is not always fully interrogated. Without avoiding the contradictions and even disconcerting aspects of the songwriter's opinions about contemporary innovations in science, Kaufman clarifies the vital investment that Guthrie placed in scientific discovery. For Guthrie, science and progress were always intertwined and imperative to his socialist ideals and beliefs about human realizations of modernity. Kaufman discusses at length, however, the way even such rationalist considerations in Guthrie's mind made way for disturbing and confusing moments in his worldview: Kaufman's investigation of Guthrie's shifting views around the atomic bomb is the most arresting example. Through examination of Guthrie's personal correspondence from 1945, Kaufman highlights the musician's support for the atomic bomb, and even for the Nagasaki bombing (139). By 1949, however, Guthrie wrote a letter to President Harry Truman voicing his concern about the potential use of nuclear weapons by the United States (147). The songwriter was not afraid to change his opinion at crucial moments, as Kaufman also demonstrates with regard to Guthrie's ever-changing thoughts about social topics of conversation involving religion, race, or gender. Kaufman allows these paradoxical ways of knowing to animate each chapter of the book, rather than clarifying and categorizing them into easily understood half-truths about the songwriter.

Even so, it is indeed disorienting to read a book that complicates a figure so often viewed monolithically as the iconic Woody Guthrie. By Kaufman's estimation, Guthrie's was a paradigm of endless paradox. Refreshing as it is to read a narrative about a songwriter that does not veer towards hagiography, any reader will desire guiding threads to follow as they pursue the story crafted by the author. Kaufman uses paradox, discontinuity, and change as these threads. Along with these, the author allows the songwriter to be a vehicle for a more expansive and thoughtful engagement with the concepts of modernity and modernism in twentieth-century America. I found Kaufman's recurring descriptions of the strength of Guthrie's most passionate advocates and allies the most striking aspect of his story, though. His surviving children, Guthrie's second wife Marjorie Mazia, folksinger Pete Seeger, and a host of others in his community fiercely stood by the musician even as the mysterious toll of Huntington's Disease deteriorated his abilities and threatened obscurity. Kaufman's writing reveals that not only was Woody Guthrie more complex than the average reader might imagine, but so too were the networks of relationships that sustained and nourished his modernist contributions to society. These loving interventions and preservations for Guthrie's sake stand at the heart of Kaufman's narrative, and reveal in large part why we still listen to and think about the songwriter in the present day.

Bulletin Board & Member News



Ensemble Aubade in Cherry Hill, NC

Flutist [Peter H. Bloom](#) continues to showcase American music in diverse concerts and recordings. Bloom and his chamber group Ensemble Aubade performed across North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia in November 2021 and February 2022. Wide-ranging programs included *Oxygen Footprint* (2016), written for Aubade by Karl Henning, and *Seven Postcards to Old Friends* (1966) by Robert Russell Bennett. In April 2022, Bloom performed with The Henning Ensemble at King's Chapel in Boston, featuring world premieres by Karl Henning and Pamela Marshall.

In January 2022, Bloom and pianist John Funkhouser released a CD, *Exuberant Ellingtonia* (Americas Musicworks), offering inventive interpretations of classics by Duke

and his esteemed collaborators Billy Strayhorn, Juan Tizol, and Mercer Ellington. The album has been called “a treasure trove” (*Textura Magazine*, Ontario) and “one of those albums we know are unique jewels” (*Jazz, ese ruido*, Spain).

In October 2022, The Aardvark Jazz Orchestra (with Bloom, a veteran in the woodwind section) will open its historic 50th season on MIT’s mainstage, Kresge Auditorium, performing works by music director Mark Harvey. The orchestra will give its 50th annual Christmas benefit concert December 10, 2022, at Church of the Covenant in Boston.

[Carolyn Guzski](#) curated the public exhibit “American Opera at the Met,” on view at the Founders’ Hall of the Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center during season 2021–2022 and online at <https://www.metopera.org/discover/archives/american-opera-at-the-met>. With Maurice Wheeler, she co-curated “Black Voices at the Met” (season 2019–2020), funded by the Ford Foundation and now viewable online at <https://www.metopera.org/discover/archives/black-voices-at-the-met>.

[Nancy Newman](#) (SUNY-Albany) is Rudolph Ganz Long-Term Fellow at the Newberry Library during Spring 2022. She is working on a history of the Chicago Musical College, tentatively titled “CMC and the Quest for Social Harmony: The First Century, 1867–1967.”

Call for *Bulletin* Contributions

The *Bulletin* editorial board invites members to contribute feature articles, reviews, and news, as well as ideas for future *Bulletin* segments or series. We welcome essays and opinion pieces on current issues in American music (broadly conceived) and music scholarship; reports on concerts and conferences of interest to our membership; transcriptions of interviews with prominent persons in American musical life; reviews of recent books, online resources, media (including albums and documentaries) pertaining to American music; and updates on our members’ scholarly, creative, and professional activities. You can contact members of the editorial board via the [SAM website](#) or via the email addresses listed at the bottom of the *Bulletin* issue.

The *Bulletin* of the Society for American Music

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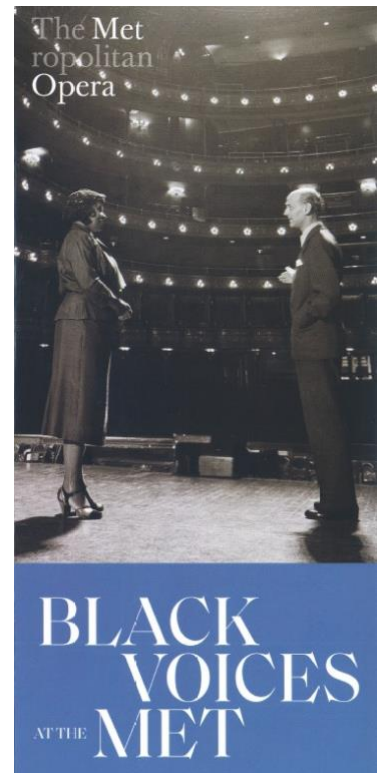
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Items for submission should be submitted via the [Bulletin’s information page](#). Photographs or other graphic materials should be accompanied by captions and desired location in the text. Deadlines for submission of materials are 15 December, 15 April, and 15 August.



General Manager Rudolf Bing welcomes contralto Marian Anderson to the stage of the Met, 1954 (Tim Fitzsimmons, Associated Press; courtesy Metropolitan Opera Archives).