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Abstracts

the society for
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The abstracts for the SEM 2025 Annual Meeting are organized chronologically (by date and time) and include both organized session abstracts and individual presentation abstracts. For panels, the panel abstract is followed by the individual presentation abstracts.

To find an abstract, search by a presenter's name, a session title, a presentation title, a session code (e.g., 1A), or other key word.

Thursday, October 23

01A. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Brazil: Nation and its Limits for Music Studies

Co-Chairs: Eduardo Sato; Virginia Tech University; Cibele Moura, Cornell University

Brazil: Nation and its Limits for Music Studies

Kaleb E. Goldschmitt, Wellesley College

Juan Diego Díaz, University of California, Davis

Dennis Novaes, Universidade Federal

Michael Iyanaga, William & Mary

Cibele Moura, Cornell University

Luis Ricardo Queiroz, Federal University of Paraiba

As a site for extensive research at the core of ethnomusicology, Brazil occupies an ambiguous position. On one hand, Brazil is commonly framed as a colonial Other, subjected to extractive economies of music and knowledge. On the other hand, Brazil is characterized as a cosmopolitan musical center with a massive commercial circuit that exports musics and rhythms, such as samba, capoeira, and Carnaval. This ambiguity is at once enforced and challenged by the circulation of musicians and music scholars who complicate the nation's meanings as they navigate institutional, political, and socioeconomic boundaries. Drawing from their experiences researching in or about Brazil—on topics including racial and diasporic identities, religion, Brazilian ethnomusicology, and contemporary musical markets—each participant will offer a different angle in imagining Brazil and its music while reflecting on their academic positionality. Guiding questions include the following: What does it mean to study the country from the United States, particularly considering the long history of US imperialism and the creation of disciplinary fields and geographical imagination around Latin America? How do music studies and its institutions reproduce colonial dynamics for Latin American scholars seeking inclusion in the US academy, and what are the stakes for these scholars? How can music scholars examine musical practices in Brazil without reifying the parameters of the nation-state? Six participants whose academic trajectories transit across US and Brazilian borders will respond to these questions with short presentations.

01B. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Musicking through European Migratory Spaces: Gendered, Ethnic, and Racial Place-Making

Chair: Sonia Tamar Seeman, University of Texas, Austin

As governments exert economic and political pressures on ethnic, gendered and racialized migrant minorities, this panel demonstrates the power of musicking to co-create new communal spaces within and around political, social and economic restrictions. Traversing diverse national horizons, these papers explore the multiple forms of sonic signification that grant migrant communities a sense of place in the context of displacement. Evicted during the Yugoslav wars, Kosovo Romani communities in Germany have leveraged musical and ritual practices to enact kin networks, share economic strategies and forge dynamic communal belonging in neighborhood spaces. Forcible expulsion of Muslim Roma and non-Roma from Greece in 1923 through the terms of the Lausanne Treaty have led to a multi-generational celebration of “immigrant” (mu[h]cir) senses of belonging. Romani female gendered musical work and social reproduction helps to secure the economic health of families as well as transmit sonic archives for patron communities. Persian female Christian immigrants to Europe and the US have created emergent religious practices that engender belonging in the face of Iranian state repression. Persian female religious musical traditions produce community-building affect that convert 6/8 dance rhythms into spiritual joy. The final study examines the experiences of diverse immigrant communities in Würzburg, Germany as they navigate policing of musicking in public spaces revealing strategies by which authorities and minorities negotiate class and color lines through sound. Together these studies demonstrate the productive qualities of musicking to generate public place-making and new political discourses in the face of restrictive economic, political and social structures.

Performative Social Space: Trauma, Ritual, and Music among Kosovo Romani Migrants in Germany

Carol Silverman, University of Oregon

Via music, Kosovo Romani refugees from the 1999 Yugoslav war performatively navigate their emplaced relationship between their former homes and their new locations in Germany. These migrants have ambivalent sentiments both about Kosovo (a mixture of nostalgia, violence, revulsion, and trauma) and Germany (a mixture of safety, insecurity, and racial intolerance) but music has been a continual symbol of their identity. Most never want to return due to violent evictions and confiscated properties. In Germany, some display the effects of PTSD in terms of interpersonal hostilities and medical problems. After 30 years some are being deported as “unworthy” migrants, as state policies change, responding to the influx of new refugees. The Romani diaspora embraces multiple European urban locations, and everywhere music is a prime communicative node. One Dortmund neighborhood has emerged as a center of cultural and Muslim religious life. Performative displays embedded in large celebrations (using outdoor space) creatively enact an urban imaginary via music and dance. Embodying affective modalities in ritual, they reaffirm their sense of belonging to a Romani community. I trace the “intimacy of neighborhood and politics of the state” (Gray 2011) via community music and dance events such as weddings and circumcision parties that require huge monetary outlays and intense planning. I also analyze the

repertoire and migratory lives of wedding band members who are often the most mobile members of their communities. These ritual music events (in banquet halls rather than homes) reconfigure urban space by invigorating kinship networks in a European-wide Romani diaspora.

Re-creating “Mu[h]acir” [“Immigrant”] through Women’s Work: Musicking and Social Reproduction

Sonia Tamar Seeman, University of Texas Austin

Musicking sustains communities by re-creating place and belonging in times of adversity. What are the underlying structures that make such resilience possible? This time-depth study over 5 generations/100 years during forced migrations from Greece to varied sites within Türkiye reveals the intertwined relationship between guild-based training, kin-based economic systems and affective musical mediations that secure senses of belonging across changing terrains for musicians as well as their clients. As the backbone of Türkiye’s commercial and state-sponsored musical production, most Turkish Romani professional musicians immigrated from Bulgaria, Greece and Macedonia prior to and as part of ethnonational state formation. The 1923 Lausanne Treaty enforced the cruel “exchange” of Muslim and Christian populations across new national borders. The subsequent creation and maintenance of “mu[h]acir” (immigrant) has been fixed by musical repertoires, rituals, residency patterns and marriage ties maintained by Romani musician families. The societal reproduction of this affective musical labor has been sustained and inflected as much by the hidden labor of women as by the more visible and audible labor of male Romanis. In addition to their significant musical contributions, the choices and accommodations in these women’s lives illustrate the unrecognized work and labor of women in sustaining societal as well as social reproduction (Aruzza 2016). By drawing upon Romani women’s words and co-witnessing, this essay heeds the “...practice of witnessing, of testimony, as providing... evidence of the pain, bodily marks, joy, and everyday existence that mark one’s place in the world” (Hogdson and Brooks 2007: 141).

Post-Migrant Musicking and the Restriction of Public Space: Sonic Color and Class Lines in Provincial Germany

Juniper Hill; Cornelia Guenauer, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

“I would just go down to the riverside and play music on a park bench and the kids would come – until I got banned in my own town, I got a cease-and-desist letter from the mayor.” So lamented José Sanchez, an Irish fiddler with Puerto Rican heritage and long-time resident of Würzburg, Germany. We explore how José and other post-migrant musicians experience sonic policing and how classism and cultural racism affect artists’ access to public space. Since 2020 we have conducted ethnographic research in Würzburg, interviewing 55 musicians and dancers with diverse backgrounds. This conservative Bavarian town has a population of 130,000, of whom over one third are first- or second-generation immigrants from across five continents. Musicking in public spaces is often essential for musicians with migration background to network and establish themselves in their new home. Unfortunately, artists, particularly those who do not pass as white or as European, often experience increased restriction of musicking in public and have

difficulty accessing spaces for musicking and dancing. The city often associates music in public with negative behaviors such as littering, begging, drug use, and nuisance and the law on “unacceptable noise” leaves much leeway for (potentially biased) interpretations. Our questionnaire in progress aims to further reveal how diverse cultural expressions are differently curated and controlled in public spaces. We expand on theories of sonic policing along class lines (Stoever 2016) and color lines (Bijsterveld 2008, 2001; Dommann 2006) as well as European shifts between “biological” and “cultural” racism (Alcoff 2023).

01C. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM
Toward a Ghostly Ethnomusicology

Chair: J. Martin Daughtry, New York University

This panel explores how ethnomusicology might productively intersect with a minor genealogy of thought in the humanities that critically rethinks the solidity (and legitimacy) of a taken-for-granted social world, through the figure of the ghost. From Derrida’s “hauntology” (1993) and Avery Gordon’s *Ghostly Matters* (1997), to tropes of specters, silences, and afterlives across critical race/ethnic studies over the last decade, ghosts and their hauntings give shape to a social theory centered on people and practices refusing to be erased. Ghosts scramble the lines between life and death, domination and resistance, memories and imaginations, human and more-than-human. Ghosts puncture modernity’s fantasy of progress and expansion. How might ethnomusicology listen with ghosts in our ears, as a critical theoretical orientation? What disciplinary exorcism might we need in order to heed our interlocutors’ own ghostly work as they sound and listen? Three case studies experiment with ways to think with and about ghosts in ethnomusicology: 1) how Taiwanese publics ritually reframe a prematurely deceased Mandopop icon, transforming her from ghost into divine presence; 2) how a Romani genocide survivor sings a duet with a 1933 vinyl record to re-animate fading histories and confront ethnoracial stereotypes that refuse to die; and 3) how everyday cacophonies on Taiwan offer a sensorial basis for a ghostly way of listening, through which people keep alive the island’s multiple counterhistories and otherwise futures. A discussant’s remarks conclude the panel, which ultimately considers the sonorous sociality between ghosts and their living counterparts.

Of Ghosts and Goddesses: Musical Commemoration and the Afterlives of Teresa Teng

Meredith Schweig, Emory University

Taiwan-born pop icon Teresa Teng's (1953-1995) sudden passing from an asthma attack, on the floor of a Chiang Mai hotel suite, was legible to her fans throughout the religiously diverse Sinophone world as a “bad death” (Shih 2010, Feuchtwang 2010, Lee 2023)—untimely, violent, and far from her family's home. As an unmarried woman with no patrilineal descendants to venerate her, Teng might have been condemned to wander the earth for eternity as a “hungry ghost” (e'gui), a ravenous creature hellbent on haunting the living. In this presentation, I consider sound and music as potent forces for ameliorating the trauma of Teng's unfortunate passing and

securing her position as an ancestral, even divine, presence in contemporary Taiwanese social life. Building on and moving beyond frameworks that read posthumous musical performances as technologically mediated hauntings (Stanyek and Piekut 2010), I argue that tribute concerts, impersonator competitions, and holographic revivals do not conjure Teng's ghost but rather stimulate what Signe Howell has called “kinning” (2003, see also Lee 2025)—the process through which non-biological relationships may be transformed into enduring kinship ties. Through ethnographic engagement with musical commemorations in Taiwan, I explore how the embodied experience of performing and listening to Teng's songs creates intimate familial bonds that legitimize her veneration. These sonic practices of kinship-making have effectively transformed what might have been a malevolent spirit into a beloved ancestor and emerging deity, revealing music's potential to forge ritual relationships across the boundary between the living and the dead.

Romani Agency, Remembrance, and Recording with the Ghosts of “Du Schwarzer Zigeuner”

Siv Lie, University of Maryland

This paper examines how a genocide survivor creatively manipulates ghostly presences through sound recording. Marie “Tchaya” Hubert (b. 1939) is part of a Romani population that was subject to genocidal persecution by the collaborationist French government during World War II. Against the French state's refusal to take responsibility, Tchaya is one of few Romani survivors who openly advocates for broader recognition of the genocide, which she does through writing, speaking, and singing. This paper undertakes a “palimpsestic” listening (Daughtry 2017) of a digital recording Tchaya made in which she added her voice to a 1933 vinyl recording of the German song “Du Schwarzer Zigeuner” (“You Black Gypsy”), attending to both the accretion and erasure of sonic and historical layers. I focus on relationships between Tchaya's artistic labor and that of the song's original creators, several of whom were Jews who either escaped Germany shortly after the recording was made or perished at Auschwitz. I show how this recording represents an effort to repair cultural and social loss, a corrective to racial essentialization, and a deliberate redirection of music's affective potentials. Against enduring popular narratives that portray Romanies as “without history” (Trumpener 1992, Lemon 2000), Tchaya channels an array of ghostly voices to foster a sense of social cohesion between past and present while transforming listeners' understandings of Romani agency. I argue that by listening to, with, and for those who might otherwise be forgotten, her work generates new modes of relationality and historical consciousness within and beyond her community

How to Listen in Taiwan's Time of No Future

Yun Emily Wang, Duke University

Everyday life in contemporary Taiwan is characterized—and indeed, structured—by bursts of cacophony: hawkers' voices and moped noise fill the wet market in the morning, train stations bustle with transnational migrant laborers by noon, and chaotic song fragments in private karaoke suites bring on the night. Scholars in ethnomusicology and sound studies have typically explained the prevalence of such noisy sociality (“renao,” lit. noisy-hot) across Sinophone Asia as a cultural preference (Hatfield 2010, Rasmussen

2014) with a distinct ritual function (Weller 2023) manifest as an aural aesthetic (Hsieh 2021). In contrast, in this paper, I postulate that these cacophonous spaces are the sensorial grounds for a ghostly way of listening through which people imagine alternative pasts and futures, as they contend with the island's profoundly uncertain present. I situate three ethnographic scenes (of the market, the train station, and the karaoke suite) in a transpacific framework that understands Taiwan as a tenuous multicultural democracy haunted by multiple authoritarian regimes, by overlapping and ongoing forms of colonization, and by the Cold War paradigm designating the U.S. as an "empire of liberty" (Yoneyama 2016). I then trace the modes of listening that my interlocutors cultivate from daily encounters with cacophony, and analyze their diverse auralities as expressive of conflicting historical imaginations and politics of class, race, and gender. In reframing these noisy sites from a sonic index of social warmth to a heteroglossia (an insistently heterogenous collection of voices), ultimately, I try to listen to Taiwan beyond "culture.

Discussant Remarks

J. Martin Daughtry, New York University

01D. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Sounding the Mexican South: Transborder Musics, Economies, and Belonging in the "Nuevo South"

Chair: David Garcia, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

This panel brings together work that chronicles the understudied transborder musical exchanges of Mexico and the southern U.S. We consider both how music has functioned as a tool of empowerment and community-building for Mexican communities in the U.S. South, and also how elites in the music industry have capitalized on the labor of musicians in the South and across the border in Mexico. Often overlooked as a region of ethnomusicological study, the South is home to some of the largest and fastest growing Latinx diasporic communities in the U.S. who contribute to the regional cultural landscape as artists, musicians, and tradespeople. We invoke what scholars of the Latinx South have referred to as the idea of the "Nuevo South" to consider how legacies of white supremacy and racial difference have shaped the experiences of these Latinx southerners. Drawing on theoretical tools from ethnomusicology, history, and cultural anthropology, this panel shows how southern Latinx communities and their musical practices (focusing largely on Mexican traditions) map onto and transform regional economic, racial, and political dynamics. In the transformation of these dynamics are new sonic and musical orientations to place and region that tell stories of migration, articulate new ways of Latinx belonging, and point us toward an increasing southern Latinx future. We argue that ethnomusicology's investment in local and regional traditions—and subsequent discourses of belonging in the performance, negotiation, and transmission of these traditions—warrants closer attention to the music of the Nuevo South, in all its complications and possibilities.

“Uno anda buscando la música”: Mapping Southern Latinx Musical Economies

Iliana Yamileth Rodriguez, Emory University

December 1989 promised an exciting array of events for Latinx Atlantans in search of a good time. The local Spanish-language newspaper announced bailes (dances) and holiday fiestas at bars, event halls and restaurants to be held across the metropolitan region. A local conjunto (band) and mariachi were booked to play at El Azteca Ballroom, where the local musical acts were to be followed by a conjunto visiting from Houston. Also held on Saturdays were Papa Tino’s Latin American Bar & Grill weekly bailes where attendees could dance to cumbia, merengue and salsa. And finally, a local radio station, La Favorita, organized a baile with conjuntos from San Luis Potosí and Piedras Negras, Mexico for an evening of dancing to norteñas. 1989, in other words, made clear how local, regional and transnational cultural and labor networks contributed to Latinx community formations – and economies - in southern cities. The rich roots and routes of Latinx musical economies have been established and sustained in the US South for over four decades. Especially since the 1980s, Latinx musicians, band promoters, and festival organizers have enveloped southern places and spaces into an ever-growing transnational network made up of local and touring musical acts. Through an analysis of promotional materials, audio and visual media, and individual accounts, this paper shows how Latinx people transformed southern spaces into hubs of transnational exchange, reshaping the region’s cultural, economic, and social landscapes in the process.

“We played fiddle and we left smelling like tamales”: Mexican Music and Memory in the Mississippi Delta

Sophia Enríquez, Duke University

In the 1930s, a wave of Mexican immigrants arrived in the Mississippi Delta in search of greater economic opportunity. They formed small, tight-knit communities rich with traditional Mexican music, dance, and foodways while navigating a complicated racial dynamic in the Jim Crow South. Among these early Mexican Missisippians was Nicolás Enríquez, a fiddler share-cropper, and tamal-maker. Enríquez was active at regional fiddle contests, including the annual Mississippi State Fair fiddle contest, and started a country/honky-tonk jam in his backyard shed in the 1960s. As several scholars of Mexican migration to the South have shown, Mexican laborers in the Mississippi Delta made profound impacts on the political, economic, and cultural currents of the South throughout the twentieth century. This paper contributes to scholarship of the Latinx South and employs approaches from historical ethnomusicology to explore the untold story of Mexican music traditions in the Mississippi Delta. Video and audio recordings from the author’s family archives contextualize musical experiences inside the home while field interviews focus on more recently arrived Mexican migrants to the Delta. In tandem, these perspectives reveal how musicians like Enríquez helped to set precedents for the way future generations of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Mississippi would make home in the South. As ethnomusicologists grapple with an ever-shifting and volatile discourse of Mexican migration to the U.S., this historical ethnomusicological study shows how paying closer attention to the music of the southern Mexican communities ultimately reveals a more nuanced narrative of Latinx belonging and futurity.

01E. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Historical Soundscapes I

Chair: TBD

Mozambique!: Cuba's Revolutionary Music on the International Stage, 1964-2025

Hannah Laurel Rogers, Institute for Public Ethnomusicology

In the mid-1960s, the mozambique, a popular Cuban dance rhythm, rose to prominence with the support of Cuban authorities as the sound of a new, revolutionary nation and an alternative to U.S. rock and roll. In the U.S., the music and its significance remain muted, as the fraught political relationship between the two countries has produced a specific, limited sound of “Cuba” made available general audiences, which (not incidentally) also limits its potential meaning. In this paper, I discuss the mozambique in the context of 21st-century late capitalism and tourism in the circum-Caribbean, specifically in and between Havana and New Orleans, arguing for its continuing value as a robust popular art, despite its relative abandonment in popular culture. I do so through my work (as student and researcher) with Leandro Moré, a lifelong percussionist and resident of Havana who participated in the rhythm's rise and dissemination in Cuba and abroad, and who still teaches it today. Our collaborative plan for a public-facing project that would bring the mozambique to New Orleans – a city that trades on its Caribbean connections – has thrown into new relief issues integral to the mozambique itself, including the value and meaning of participatory musicmaking and “cultural exchanges” as well as music's relationship to place. The hurdles faced by the project continue to highlight the specific ways that potential audiences understand music and its value while also exposing the precarity of life and culture in cities oriented towards tourism.

Arba'in 1401

Armaghan Fakhraeirad, University of Pennsylvania

Dammam drumming, or *sinj-o dammam*, is a collective musical performance central to Shia mourning ceremonies in southern Iran, particularly in the port city of Bushehr. Performed in public processions, this percussive tradition shapes the acoustic and spatial dynamics of urban mourning rituals, creating an immersive rhythmic and physical experience. Beyond its religious significance, dammam drumming is deeply intertwined with the Indian Ocean legacy of slavery in the Gulf, reflecting histories of migration and labor. While embedded in local identity, the practice resists fixed interpretation, continually shifting between religious, historical, and political meanings. This experimental documentary, *Arba'in 1401*, emerged from reimagining how the second episode of Nasser Taghvayi's pioneering 1974 film, *Arba'in*—the earliest known audiovisual record of dammam in Bushehr—might look if made in the 2020s. Conceived in dialogue with Taghvayi's work, *Arba'in 1401* draws on my audiovisual recordings and interviews from my PhD

fieldwork (2022–2023) to explore the sensory dimensions of dammam drumming. Approaching this tradition from my perspective as a woman in a historically male-dominated performance space, the documentary also situates dammam within the political context of the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising, which began in late September 2022.

The Traditional Vocal Repertoire of Central Visayas (Philippines)

Peter George Fielding, Kennesaw State University

The traditional vocal repertoire of the Philippines' Central Visayas encompasses linguistic traditions and subdialects, including Visayan, Bisayan, and Cebuano. This oral heritage provides a unique opportunity for comparative analysis, allowing scholars to discern normative patterns and outlier variations in pitch collections and scalar patterns across different song repertoires, geographies, and languages. In the mid-20th century, Silliman University and Indiana University supported the field recording and transcription efforts of Priscilla Magdamo. Her seminal work, "Folk Songs of the Visayas" (1957-58), comprising six volumes, stands as the largest corpus of traditional vocal repertoire in Visayan, Bisayan, and Cebuano languages transcribed by a single Philippine scholar possessing both linguistic and cultural expertise of the repertoire. Magdamo's transcriptions provide a foundational resource for scholarly analysis and exploration.

This presentation evaluates and juxtaposes various analytical approaches applied to this repertoire, drawing from the music pedagogical approach of Zoltan Kodály's pitch maps and post-tonal quantitative methodologies. Through employing contemporary analytical techniques such as tonic-centered successive-interval arrays and composite pitch collection mappings, normative patterns and outlier nuances of tonalities inherent in the Central Visayan vocal traditions can be identified. This presentation builds upon the analytic methodologies employed by the author assessing trends of other multilingual traditional vocal repertoires.

By engaging with both historical archives and contemporary analytical tools, this research serves to contribute to the preservation and appreciation of this vibrant cultural heritage for future generations of Philippine and diaspora music scholars and practitioners alike.

Sanshin in the Survival of Okinawan Culture through Time

Elizabeth Vieyra

This research will focus on the sanshin as it was used to preserve and promote Okinawan culture. Okinawa went through many cultural challenges such as the annexation from Japan, US military presence during and after the Vietnam war, and influences from other cultures. Through these challenges the culture continues to survive and be represented by the people of Okinawa. The sanshin, originally an instrument limited to royalty, survived the cultural oppression faced from Japan. Then after the Vietnam war it was used to create new forms of entertainment influenced by Western culture. Today the sanshin continues to be used by artists born and raised in Okinawa in modern songs showcasing the diverse cultures of Okinawa while uplifting and representing the surviving culture. Through the literacy review of works from Hideyo Konogaya, Henry Johnson, and examples of modern songs by artists such as

Begin, Ozworld, and Awich I was able to understand the value of the sanshin in preserving a culture that was threatened with annihilation. Through this paper I hope to present this research in a way that ties the changes Okinawan music has had, focusing on the sanshin, and goals of the artists together to explain how this culture continues to evolve and survive. Understanding the survival of a culture like the Okinawan culture and the role of the sanshin can help future ethnomusicologists look at other cultures who have faced similar challenges in the hopes to understand its evolution and survival.

01F. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Feeling the Song and Making Sense of the Non-Verbal In Three Vocal Traditions of Central Eurasia

Chair: Richard K. Wolf, Harvard University

This panel explores non-verbal registers of emotion and meaning in traditions of sung poetry in Iran, Tajikistan, and Mongolia. In each case, as words cease to be intelligible or disappear altogether, it is primarily the textures, timbres, and gestures of embodied utterance that facilitate communication among, and awaken feelings within, performers and audiences. Nonetheless, words remain foundational to each performance: although poetic or ritual texts recede from semantic presence, they continue to reverberate sonically, symbolically, and energetically. Paper #1 shows how linguistic unintelligibility during Shia mourning rituals in Tehran shifts attention from ritual poetic and hagiographic texts to the sonic and sensory dimensions of grief, engendering a powerful, collectively shared atmosphere and experience. Paper #2 explores how male musicians in Tajik Badakhshan use plucked lutes in instrument-only performances to emulate and extend the vocal-poetic and affective dimensions of the traditional women's lament-song *dargilik*. Paper #3 considers Mongolian nomadic herders' use of vowel-elongation techniques in performances of the *urtyн duu* song tradition to render texts unintelligible in support of metalinguistic communication with a multi-species audience. The panel concludes with comments from a discussant with expertise in the ethnomusicological study of language, emotion, and embodied practice. This panel engages with a broad interdisciplinary literature on these themes to understand how moments of linguistic unintelligibility or absence in sonic performance—whether through ritual weeping, voice-instrument surrogacy, or verbal modification—serve as powerful contexts for establishing, or reinforcing, relations of intimacy and shared feeling among those who produce and receive them.

Pain Beyond Words: Weeping Voice, Linguistic Unintelligibility, and Embodied Suffering in Shia Mourning Rituals in Tehran

Hamidreza Salehyar, University of Toronto

Performers of Shia mourning rituals in Tehran often emphasize the significance of linguistic content in their vocal performances. Through reciting Persian poetry, Shia prayers, hagiographic accounts, and other linguistic elements, they commemorate the suffering of Shia holy figures, especially Prophet Mohammad's grandson Hossein, whose martyrdom in 680 AD is considered a seminal event

in Shia history. Despite this emphasis on the semantic transparency of moral messages, their performances often display varying degrees of linguistic ambiguity and instances of linguistic unintelligibility. Drawing upon my ethnographic research since 2016, I analyze specific ritual moments to examine how a relative absence of semantic transparency shifts ritual participants' attention from textual to sensory aspects of ritual performance. I focus on ritual weeping, an improvised vocal modality, to demonstrate how the weeping voice generates a powerful affective atmosphere in which participants engage in “the interactional creation of a performance reality” (Schieffelin 1985). In this context, the weeping voice finds not only iconic importance, as anthropologists argue (e.g., Tolbert 1990; Wirtz 2007), but also symbolic significance, embodying “ideologies of voice” (Weidman 2007) in Shia rituals: that is, the suffering endured by Shia holy figures is of such intensity and intolerability that words fail to capture its magnitude and can only be expressed through spontaneous modalities of grief experienced by ritual performers. Investigating the dynamic interplay of semantic and affective modalities of grief, I elucidate how rituals enact shared historical grief not only through collective forms but also by enabling individualized expressions of emotion and meaning-making.

Plaintive Tunes for Tender Words: Plucked Lutes as Voice Surrogates in Folksong Performance, Tajik Badakhshan

Katherine Freeze Wolf, Boston, Massachusetts

This paper probes the relationship between vocal and instrumental performances of *dargīlik*, a centuries-old folksong tradition indigenous to Tajik Badakhshan. Comprising an unmeasured four-note tune and a large repertoire of poetic couplets in the local eastern Iranian Shughani-Rushani language, *dargīlik* expresses the social-emotional state of *dargīli*, or “longing” for a beloved from whom one is separated. Originally sung exclusively by women in private everyday life and for funeral lamentation, *dargīlik* was taken up during the Soviet period by male musicians who used plucked lutes to “voice” their own wordless renderings of the genre. An analysis of field- and archival recordings alongside practitioners' own statements suggests that these new instrumental interpretations of *dargīlik* closely emulated the prosodic contours and idiomatic speech-inspired embellishments of vocal performances while also significantly broadening the genre's musical and poetic-discursive scope. Players re-contextualized *dargīlik* within multi-part instrumental suites, experimented with transposition and harmonization, and, by eliding the texts entirely, obscured both *dargīlik*'s feminine origins and social relations encoded within the poetry. I argue that what were once women's sung evocations of yearning grounded in particular scenarios and environments became—and continue to be today—instrumental utterances of a more generalized emotionality that nevertheless remain uniquely comprehensible to, and playable by, those who know the poetry. Based on fieldwork conducted in Tajikistan, this paper bridges previous folkloristic and musicological studies of *dargīlik* (e.g., Shakarmamad 1993, Yussufi 2003, Berg 2004/2015) and contributes to wider, cross-cultural ethnomusicological explorations of voice-instrument surrogacy, language, and the performative musical semiotics of emotion.

Twisting the Vowels: Preverbal Multispecies Communication in the Practice of Mongolian Urtyn duu

Sunmin Yoon, University of Delaware

In urtyn duu (long song), a genre which developed originally from the nomadic lifeways of Mongolian herders and in relation to place-specific knowledge, the emphasis of singers' artistry has been placed on the use of elongated vowels with ornamental additions and melodic extensions. While herder singers in the countryside mostly employ this as their everyday way of singing, this improvisation technique has been discussed by professional singers using the term *egshig tömök* (vowel twisting). As this indicates, singers create intentional semantic blur by mixing several vowels such that there is an absence of clear diction, or a lack of distinction in semantic meaning, which makes it hard for listeners, even native Mongolian speakers, to understand. Based on my fieldwork, I analyze the practice of sonic utterance created through *egshig tömök* not only within human practice, but also within a multi-species environment. This contextual refocusing considers whether this sonic utterance is not truly non-verbal, but rather "preverbal" (Abram 1996), suggesting an utterance which has been lost to human language. In this way, the singing, particularly given its semantic ambiguity, acts as a metalinguistic tool that makes it possible to co-create and embody meaning with an other-than-human audience, so extending its communicative reach. Drawing from the ideas of ecological dwelling and language (Ingold 2000, Kohn 2013, Tsing 2015), I argue that "linguistic unintelligibility" in urtyn duu is, in fact, sensory intelligence, as I define it in the Mongolian case, and reinforces greater rapport between singers and their audience through energetic connection.

01G. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Music and War

Chair: Medhi Rezaia, University of Alberta

"Based on the Spirit of the Empire": Japanese Military Music and Symbolic Mobility in the Japanese American Incarceration Camps of World War II

Nathan Russell Huxtable, University of California, Riverside

This paper examines how incarcerated Japanese and Japanese American musicians asserted their "symbolic mobility" (Asai 2023) and rejected U.S. Americanization projects by performing Japanese military music (*gunka*) during World War II. Following the 1943 segregation of ostensibly disloyal "No-Nos" to the Tule Lake Relocation Center, incarcerated men covertly formed pro-Japan fraternal organizations such as the *Sokuji Kikoku Hoshidan* (即時歸國奉仕団) and *Hokoku Seinendan* (報國青年団) to contest their imprisonment. As part of their protestations, the *Seinendan* organized a bugle corps that paraded around the camp as part of a broader Japanese cultural training regimen. War Relocation Authority (WRA) officials responded by cracking down on bugling activities, raiding the group's headquarters to squash "anti-American" activity. Nevertheless, the *Seinendan* bugle corps remained active until the

end of the war. While much ethnomusicological scholarship has highlighted how music shaped wartime ethnic identity formation and national belonging for incarcerated Japanese Americans (Waseda 2005; Barbour 2014; Robertson 2017; Asai 2024), the explicitly anti-U.S. sentiments of the Seinendan suggests that music also served as a significant site of political dissent “at camp.” In this paper, I draw upon archival documents and confiscated, handwritten music notation from the U.S. National Archives to consider how Japanese military music contested WRA efforts to police “No-No” political expression. I argue that, unlike musical efforts towards cultural citizenship (Rosaldo 1997), gunka performance rejected the assimilationist agenda of the WRA, allowing incarcerated musicians to assert their symbolic mobility through physical, cultural, and political agency in the face of immobility and confinement.

Musical Propaganda in Myanmar: Army Songs

Heather MacLachlan, University of Dayton

The Southeast Asian country of Myanmar (also known as Burma) is controlled by a military dictatorship. The dictatorship oversees an ecosystem of cultural production that includes films, print media, standup comedy, and music recordings. These recordings, which are the focus of this presentation, are called colloquially “army songs” or “soldier songs,” and are disseminated via regime-controlled television programs and on social media. Burmese people usually dismiss all regime-produced materials as nothing but lies. I argue that army songs do include lies of commission and of omission, but they are best understood as propaganda. Scholars of musical propaganda (eg. Perris 1985, Morris 2014, Fauser 2019, Godfrey 2019, Sultanova 2025) have often declined to engage with the founding theories of propaganda studies, with the result that propaganda in music is only fuzzily understood. In this presentation I analyze several Burmese army songs using Alfred McClung’s seminal appeal-bond-commodity framework for defining propaganda, demonstrating that the army songs push a consistent commodity using number of different appeals. I contextualize these appeals by explaining how they are relevant to Burmese listeners, the intended audience for army songs. This presentation also reveals that propaganda theory, which was first developed to address government messaging in liberal democracies, is also useful in illuminating the manipulative music produced by one of the world’s most repressive governments.

Encrypted in Song: Wartime Music as a Medium of Subversive Communication Between Occupied and Free Ukraine

Olga Zaitseva-Herz, University of Alberta

The ongoing Russian occupation of Ukrainian territories has severely restricted free expression, yet music has emerged as a powerful tool of communication, resistance, and cultural continuity. This paper explores how wartime songs serve as a bridge between Ukrainians in occupied regions and those in free Ukraine, enabling the transmission of censored messages, reinforcing national identity, and sustaining a sense of shared struggle.

Drawing on case studies of songs that have circulated via digital platforms, social media, and underground networks, this study examines how lyrics, melodies, and performance contexts encode meaning that would otherwise be suppressed. Many of these songs

rework historical resistance narratives—reviving folk and partisan songs or adapting pre-existing popular tunes to fit contemporary struggles. Others use metaphor, irony, and coded language to navigate censorship while delivering crucial messages of defiance, hope, and connection. Additionally, this presentation explores how songs serve as a means of communication on the military front, facilitating the transmission of messages between armies.

By analyzing the ways in which music functions as a covert yet effective mode of communication between occupied and free territories, this study contributes to broader discussions on the role of sound in information warfare, cultural resilience, and transnational solidarity in conflict settings.

Uncertain Signs: WWI Musico-therapy and Shell Shock

Briana Nave, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Shell shock, the neurasthenia (nervous exhaustion) diagnosis of World War I, was the first great test for musico-therapy, as the early field was then called. For scientific medicine, shell shock was a dubious condition, and musico-therapy a dubious treatment. Doctors initially believed that shell shock resulted from brain injuries incurred from exploding shells. That organic basis became increasingly doubtful when medical examination did not reveal brain or nerve lesions. Medical humanists have argued that medicine expects symptoms—bodily signs—to signify identifiable medical conditions (Zilcosky 2021, Belling 2012). Neurasthenic patients frustrated that expectation by presenting with medical symptoms—tremors, palpitations, insomnia, memory loss—for which no organic source could be found. This frustration of bodily semiotics made physicians uncertain whether the symptoms they observed were fundamentally physical or psychological. They faced a similar uncertainty regarding musico-therapy. While the therapists insisted their treatment physically soothed shellshocked nerves, physicians wondered if it was mostly a “mental salve.” I draw on William Davis’s (1987, 1993) and Annegret Fauser’s (2013) work on early twentieth century musico-therapy, the published work of musico-therapists such as Eva Augusta Vescelius, and WWI-era news reports of musical treatment to reveal musico-therapy’s neurological strategies of self-validation. I argue that shell shock and musico-therapy legitimized one another within a scientific-medical establishment that doubted whether the condition or its treatment warranted medical attention. My work contributes to medical ethnomusicology by offering WWI musico-therapy as a case of musical negotiation between patients and scientific medicine in the mind-body borderlands where traumatic conditions reside.

01H. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Listening to Archives

Chair: Jennifer Fraser, Oberlin College and Conservatory

01H. October 23, Thursday

Listening to Armenian Baku: History and Memory in Digital Diaspora

Jonathan Lee Hollis, Independent Scholar

Ethnic Armenians constituted a sizeable minority in twentieth century Baku, Azerbaijan. They were particularly prominent as instrumentalists, performing and recording with renowned singers in state-sponsored ensembles as well as informal settings. This community reached its peak in the 1970s, before ethnic tensions spurred mass emigration. The pogroms against the Armenian population in January 1990 ended the Armenian presence in the city. Members of this community, now living in a distinct diaspora within Russia, Armenia, and the United States, are currently involved in digitizing and archiving the musical culture of Armenian Baku through social media networks such as VKontakte, Facebook, and YouTube. In particular, the “Clarinet Caucasus” YouTube account has digitized recordings of well known members of this Armenian musical community, including many amateur home audio and video recordings of performances. Spanning nearly a century, these digital archives and musician-specific memorialization pages serve as a digital record of the Armenian musicking community in Azerbaijan. Considering these digital repositories and how members of the Baku Armenian diaspora experience these recordings, I explore how these digital archives enable acts of remembering and digital diasporic intimacy. Listening to these Armenian musicians of the past elicits karot, the particularly Armenian sense of loss and longing, but also of perseverance. A study of these digital memorialization projects, and the reactions these archives create, reveals the digitally mediated construction of homeland, the reification of a chronological and social place through preservation of sound and image.

The Changing Function of a Choctaw Hymn: Closing Conference, Close of Worship, and Farewell

Emma Wimberg, University of North Texas

While conducting research in Yale’s archive of Choctaw Historical Papers to answer long-standing questions of authorship, I found three original copies of Choctaw hymns by missionary Loring S. Williams that had been left aside and/or changed to such a degree that these early versions no longer exist in the daily usage or memory of the Nation. This paper connects one of these hymns, a Closing Conference hymn written for a meeting to address secular business that ended with all-night singing and prayer, to its modern counterparts for use in worship by the same composer. In doing so, I examine the evolving use and text of the Closing Hymn genre. As I argue, the gradual evolution of the structure, content, and use of this hymn demonstrates the changing purpose, function, and audience of hymns within the increasingly-Christianized portion of the Choctaw Nation. I draw on autoethnographic reflections as a

member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, in addition to Victoria Lindsay Levine's history of Choctaw music (1990) and Sarah Eyerly's historical documentation and understanding of music in Indigenous mission communities (2020). Additionally, I examine modern religious and social usage of Indigenous-Missionary music, drawing on Tara Browner's work concerning Indigenous ownership of non-material culture (2000). Ultimately, this project explores how the changing identity of the Choctaw Nation from the first mission schools, through forced removal, to the revitalization of the Choctaw language, subtly shaped the construction of hymns within the Nation.

Schrödinger's Tapes?—The Discos Smith Collection in the Ralph Rinzler Archive

Peter Verdin, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Discos Smith was a Peruvian record label based out of Lima that operated from the late 1950's to the early 1970's. In 1989, 500 master tapes from Discos Smith's catalog were acquired by the American label Arhoolie Records, containing approximately 2150 individual recordings. These tapes were transferred to Smithsonian Folkways Recordings when SFR eventually acquired Arhoolie Records, and the tapes are now stored in a warehouse outside of Washington D.C. In 2024, I was able to examine roughly 20% of the tapes, documenting the potential contents through the marginalia on their boxes. This examination suggested that there is a rich historical record of the musical character of mid-20th century Lima contained on the tapes with repertoire spanning Andean folk dances, urban criollo musics, Afro-Latin genres from the Caribbean, and early Peruvian rock and roll. Only a fraction of these recordings have ever been released and without substantial restoration the tapes will literally moulder away in obscurity. However, there is no guarantee that these recordings are still viable or that the expense of restoring them would be justified or recouped. Consequently, the Discos Smith collection exists in an existential limbo, possibly containing a rich historical record but also possibly being too damaged to restore. Through this case study, this paper examines the obligations ethnomusicologists have to preserving historical records of musical practice, how commercial discourses around recordings of music define the value of their contents, and what ethical complications arise when considering the fate of the Discos Smith tapes.

Scenes Behind the Zines: Global Music Connections in the pre-Internet Era

Beatriz Goubert, RILM (International Repertory of Music Literature)

The creation of science fiction fanzines in the 1930s laid the groundwork for a new language among music fans, particularly those interested in underground music styles like punk, in the following decades. Characterized by a Do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos, zines are one of the most accessible, democratic, and pervasive art forms. Zinesters document their local scenes; these publications serve as the "first draft of history," providing firsthand accounts of concerts, festivals, music scenes, and newly released recordings, along with insights from musicians and fans. Thanks to the labor of love behind the scenes, zinesters frequently establish connections with bands, other publications, record labels, festivals, stores, and distributors in distant locations, connecting their readers to music scenes they

may never experience firsthand. This networking skill was especially relevant before the advent of the Internet, peer-to-peer file sharing (P2P), and email. An analysis of some of the 1980s popular music fanzines in the RAPMM (RILM Archive of Popular Music Magazines) digital archive reveals how zinesters in peripheral areas (defined loosely as small towns, mid-size cities, and certain countries in the Global South) registered the local scenes, and how they created networks with major popular music centers like New York, London, or Los Angeles. The fanzines show how the connections between peripheries and centers developed through music zine writing and how these networks challenged the perspectives of local audiences regarding bands, styles, politics, and resistance.

01I. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Music, Climate Change, and Extractivism around the Arctic and Antarctic

Chair: Lonán Ó Briain, University of Nottingham

By examining the interplay of social and environmental issues in different forms of music-making, this panel asks: What can we learn by attending to musical and sonic experiences at a time that increasingly feels like the end of the world? In answering that question, we explore musical mediations of environmental struggles within Earth's north and south polar regions, focusing on how complexities of climate change and extractivism offer new but uncomfortable, emplaced cultural experiences that spur sonic actions and musicalized debates. In particular, this panel addresses how Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat's Inuit musical expressions contribute to public discourses of extractivism; how a goavddis (Sámi drum) created in the 1980s by Niillas Somby exemplifies resilience in the face of extractivism and climate change; how the figure of el petrolero (the petroleum worker) can reflect gendered and scalar value systems around weather sounding practices in Magallanes and Chilean Antarctica; and how Mapuche ñ metal uses loudness, distortion and screaming as ways of resisting colonialism and extractivism in Chile. Through theories of extractivism and extrACTIVISM (Willow 2019), we delve into how histories of polar places and non-sustainable environmental practices inform musical aesthetics and activism as well as related experiences of the human and non-human (Moisala 2024) in contexts of popular music recordings and media, and Indigenous musical instruments. This panel thereby expands ethnomusicological studies of the entanglement of musical expressions in multiple environmental crises and provides the first instance in ecomusicology that case studies from the Arctic and Antarctic regions are put into dialogue.

“Saca el petróleo pa' mi nación”: Frontier Nostalgia and the Climate Hyperobject in Songs about the Patagonian Petroleum Industry

Lydia Wagenknecht, University of Colorado Boulder

Since the mid-20th century, the region of Magallanes and Chilean Antarctica in southern Chile has existed as a hotspot for the extraction and refinement of crude oil by the state-owned company ENAP (Empresa Nacional del Petróleo). As a result, the

masculine-coded figure of el petrolero (the petroleum worker) has emerged in regional arts, including musical productions. In this presentation, I reflect on the disjunct and overlapping ways in which we might read el petrolero's relation to climate within sonic contexts based on two years of ethnographic fieldwork and archival research in southern Chile. First, I analyze the musical works al "Cantata al Petróleo" and "Petrolero" through a traditional, petrolero-centric lens. I demonstrate how, in an anthropocentric reading of the songs, the petrolero's relationship to the climate serve as an embodiment of frontier nostalgia. I then place the first analysis in juxtaposition with an analysis that takes climate itself as a main actor, employing Timothy Morton's concept of hyperobject (2012, 2013) to highlight issues of scale beyond human conceptions of gender and place. By bringing these two perspectives into dialogue, I show how both gendered and scalar value systems are reflected in human acoustemological practices. These overlapping and contradictory interpretations of the songs also examine how decentering the human can reconfigure understandings of sonic phenomena to include massive space-time scales. This presentation contributes to current ethnomusicological discourse on acoustic ecologies and anthropocentrism, suggesting a novel frame for hearing climate change and extractivism.

Relistening to the Current Environmental Crises in Chile through Mapuche Ül Metal

Jan Koplow, Duke University

In a short documentary released in 2023, Mawiza, a Mapuche Ül metal band from Santiago, Chile, stated "If we are Mawiza (mountain/forest), we have to be more deafening than the noise of the city. There may be giant skyscrapers and constructions but always mountains and volcanoes will surpass them, resist to the end, and roar louder." As the band highlights diverse contexts, activities, and ecosystems, such as subpolar and alpine regions, their statement conveys an intriguing conceptualization of nature's identity and its sonic capabilities, one where metal music's transgressive sonic elements (i.e., loudness, distortion, and screaming) seem not only compatible, but emerge as guiding aesthetic features. Mapuche's history in Chile has characterized itself with a continuous colonialism, one that has only worsened with the implementation of neoliberalism during the 1980s and the exacerbation of extractivism in the following decades (Cárcamo-Huechante 2019, Svampa 2019). Within this history, metal music gradually became a tool for facing settler-colonial dynamics, Chile's and Chilean Antarctica's ecological situations, and extractivism's social impacts. Though ethnomusicologists concerned with the intersection between settler-colonial dynamics and environmental issues have studied how music mediates and informs connections to land and the manifestation of environmental resistance, there has been a tendency to focus on traditional, folk and acoustic musical genres. Consequently, this presentation aims to expand the scope by exploring how distortion, loudness and screaming can work as modes to think, listen and perform new senses of place, ways to relate to our surrounding environments, and paths to overcome socioecological issues. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEWQZxbrhms>

01J. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Transnational Soundscapes

Chair: TBD

“Not Enough Room to Dance”: Urban Disinvestment, Loss, and the Spatial Ecologies of Cabo Verdean/American Music

Ruby A. Erickson, Brown University

Scholars of music/sound and gentrification have recently argued that while shifts in soundscape must be counted among the violences of “racial/spatial dispossession” (Zanfagna and Werth 2021), numerous communities of color persist against the erasure of their histories through musical or sonic practice (Martin 2024, Summers 2021). While it is crucial to highlight how artists and communities resist gentrification through sound, we must also ask how musical practices shift in response to violent displacement and spatial reconfiguration, and concomitantly how communities navigate the sonic losses entailed by such violence. Drawing on the work of Jeff Todd Titon and others that understand musical practices as dynamic “ecologies” to be sustained, rather than preserved (2021; see also Cooley 2020), I examine how the reconfigurations characteristic of “urban renewal” shift musical practice by changing its spatial ecology. In particular, I focus on the Cabo Verdean and Cabo Verdean American communities of New Bedford, MA, many of whose longstanding musical support network of social clubs, benefit societies, bars, and restaurants have closed in the wake of “urban renewal,” highway-building, and disinvestment. I argue that my Cabo Verdean/American interlocutors engage with the violence of “racial/spatial” capitalism against this community, in part, through discomfort with how their music resonates in spaces not built to accommodate it. Further, I show that “resistance” to this violence is not always audible as protest, but also emerges in attempts to reconfigure and rebuild sound spaces towards present and future musical sustainability.

Finding Chicagotlan: Reflections on Danza Azteca in the Windy City

Ida Maria Tello, Washington University in St. Louis

In the last five decades, Danza Azteca (Aztec dance) has become prominent in Chicago's Mexicano-Latino community and has thrived under community outreach and youth education. This paper argues that Danza Azteca participants in Chicago utilize the practice as a catalyst for resilience, resistance, and respite, navigating region-specific circumstances, authenticity discourses, and conceptions of self and identity. I highlight Chicago's reverence as a “hidden Tenochtitlan” and analyze how external and internal senses of place are cultivated internationally and intertemporally across geographic locations, inviting a broad range of participants. Finally, I explore authenticity discourses amongst Danza Azteca groups in Chicago, explicating how an Aztec identity is navigated, imagined, and critiqued amongst participants. Ultimately, I reflect on notions of “Third Space” and binaries between Self and the Other in Danza Azteca practices, rooting these binaries in Chicago's Danza community.

To do so, I draw upon several interviews as well as participation in velaciones, celebrations, and performances throughout Chicago. While a handful of studies trace Danza Azteca narratives and their complexities in the United States (Armstrong 1985; Luna 2012; Huerta 2019; Nielsen 2017), few incorporate the concretized experiences of danzantes in Chicago into the current discourses and transnational dialogues impacting Danza Azteca group members. This paper fills this gap in the literature by exploring the particular effects that Danza Azteca spaces have on individuals as they navigate their region-specific identities whilst attempting to grapple with enduring transcultural and intergenerational colonial legacies.

Island-Reggae Beats in Urban Streets: Navigating Interracial Dynamics through Island Reggae in Southern California
Chun-Chia Tai, University of California, Riverside

This presentation examines the placeness and cultural geography of the commercialized island reggae by Pacific Islander Americans in the Los Angeles reggae music scene. On the continent of the United States, the island reggae of Los Angeles serves as an Indigenous medium of storytelling for Pacific Islanders to express their metropolitan and interracial experiences. Since its emergence in the 1990s, island reggae has fused Jamaican roots reggae and R&B with traditional island music, sharing spaces and sounds with diasporic Africans. As the genre is commercialized, it now occupies performance spaces in the Southern Californian music scene alongside roots reggae and reggae-rock, the latter predominantly influenced by Caucasian Americans. This commercialization has created a prosperous Islanders' space in the scene but also led to criticisms of inauthenticity, highlighting the complex interracial political dynamics Pacific Islanders navigate in Los Angeles. Despite this, their narratives and musical expressions remain underexplored in music and spatial studies of interracial interactions (Johnson 2013; Alvarez 2022). How do Islanders articulate their shared spaces and sounds with diasporic Africans through island reggae within the capitalist framework of Los Angeles? The case study focuses on the 2025 Marley's Festival in Long Beach, a significant event celebrating Bob Marley's legacy, where roots reggae, reggae-rock, and island reggae are performed concurrently. I argue that Islanders' interracial interactions remain rooted in practices of Indigenous relationality and self-determination despite its commercialization. The presentation advocates for studying the interracial experience as the new continental localness of diasporic Indigeneity.

Japan's High Lonesome Sound: Identity and Imagination in Japanese engagement with bluegrass
Donald Czubernat Bradley, Indiana University, Bloomington

Since the mid-19th century, Japan and the United States have participated in political and cultural exchanges that have influenced Japanese identity. The 20th century especially saw a stark rise in the popularity of Americana in Japan. Drawing from fieldwork done in Japan, I argue that in performing, consuming, and interacting with bluegrass and old-time music, participants cultivate individual and communal identities in uneasy dialogue with imagined class-based, regionalized, and racialized iterations of Americanness. These imagined iterations of Americanness, both temporally contingent and enmeshed in broader cosmopolitan dynamics, demonstrate the

multifaceted nature of identity. By focusing on the imagination, I attend to the complex processes through which Japanese musicians and enthusiasts constitute their identities, investigating how transnational imaginaries are tied to constructions of Americanness yet simultaneously rooted in Japan. To do so, I identify expressions of personal significance, communal meanings, and anxieties connected to participating in these music cultures. In this paper, I focus on divergent meanings tied to imaginaries cultivated within bluegrass and old-time music by highlighting periods of engagement that correlate with heightened geopolitical encounters between Japan and the United States, such as the Japanese anti-Vietnam war protests and accompanying Folk Boom in the 1960s-70s. I suggest that the history of bluegrass is also a Japanese history, furthering an ongoing conversation that repositions bluegrass as a global music. In doing so, I continue conversations within ethnomusicology that examine Japanese consumption and performance of transnational cultural forms while pushing back on overly particularizing discourses of Japanese cultural uniqueness.

01K. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Jazz Futures

Chair: TBD

Constellations of Sound: Race, Technology, and Jazz Performance

Tom Wetmore, Columbia University

This paper investigates how sound technology shapes jazz performances at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City, with a focus on Meyer Sound Laboratories's Constellation adjustable acoustics system. Described by critic Alex Ross as “the acoustic equivalent of Photoshop,” Constellation is an advanced audio technology that uses a network of microphones, speakers, and digital processing to dynamically alter a room's acoustics--simulating acoustic environments ranging from small, intimate clubs to large, reverberant concert halls. At Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room, the system employs 122 speakers and 40 microphones to shape the sonic environment in real-time. Building on three years of ethnographic fieldwork, I analyze how the pursuit of “pure” sound that is simultaneously materially vibrant and mathematically objectified reflects alignments with raced and gendered ideologies of listening. I show how these practices align with Western epistemologies while complicating jazz's Black cultural particularity. The findings illuminate the cultural and political implications of sonic mediation in contemporary jazz spaces, contributing to ethnomusicology and sound studies. By examining the design and implementation of sound reinforcement systems, this paper reveals how technoscientific decisions about acoustics are shaped by broader cultural discourses of race, identity, and authenticity in jazz performance. Through interviews with sound engineers and musicians, I demonstrate how these practices shape perceptions of musical authenticity in ways that intersect with historical patterns of racialized listening and urban spatial organization. This paper offers new insights into the entanglement of sound, technology, and race in live music settings.

Nathan Davis and the Jazz Educational Undercommons

Lee Caplan, University of Pittsburgh

During the protracted struggle to establish jazz studies programs at universities across North America in the late 1960s and 1970s, many Black jazz educators emerged as interlopers, disruptors, and fugitive pedagogues. This network of subversive educators—including Nathan Davis, Archie Shepp, Max Roach, David Baker, and Randy Weston—functioned as both an above-ground and underground guerrilla movement, striving to integrate Black aesthetics into Eurocentric institutional spaces. While these educators embraced a diverse range of sometimes contradictory ideological commitments, they remained united by the transformative potential of Black music-making as an alternative epistemology. Following Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, I conceptualize this cadre's cultural and pedagogical labor as part of a university undercommons. This jazz educational undercommons represents a material and ontological realm of resistance and subversion within and beyond traditional educational power structures.

While the educators mentioned above are jazz luminaries who exemplify social agents with varying degrees of fame, status, and recognition, I draw on Nathan Davis's archives at the University of Pittsburgh to center a lesser-known figure within the jazz educational undercommons that highlights the transformative potential of untold historiographies. I begin the paper by examining the theoretical and socio-historical foundations of the jazz educational undercommons, then trace resonant lineages from the 19th century and connect them to Davis's innovative initiatives. Ultimately, the jazz educational undercommons serve as a historiographical framework that reclaims the radical potential of jazz education and provides an alternative theoretical perspective that challenges Eurocentric narratives.

Free Jazz and Building Community in South Los Angeles: Horace Tapscott and the Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra

Martin Hundley, University of California, Los Angeles

The Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra was founded in 1961 by Horace Tapscott (1934–1999), a pioneering African American musician and community organizer working in Los Angeles. During a period when the Central Avenue music scene that Tapscott grew up in was becoming increasingly dispersed, he conceptualized the Arkestra as a community ensemble that began with the mission of preserving Black arts by playing music of unknown composers in free public concerts. Tapscott's work offers a window into the power of music to build community, claim space, and cultivate political agency for artists. The Arkestra's creative practice of collective improvisation lends insight into the philosophical foundations of L.A.-based community arts movements during a period of volatile racial politics marked by the Watts Rebellion of 1965 and a renaissance of Black cultural activism. This paper considers the Arkestra's music as a hybrid form that responds to the social contexts of the 1960s and 1970s in South Los Angeles, expressing conceptual correlations between the aesthetics of free jazz and the politics of Black radicalism and self-determination. Drawing from the Horace Tapscott papers at UCLA and interviews with Arkestra musicians, the paper highlights contributions of individuals such as Linda Hill (d. 1987), a founding member of "the Ark" who spearheaded initiatives to develop its social and educational reach, and Samuel

Browne (1908–1991), a music teacher at Jefferson High School who set the template of learning and mentorship inherent in the ensemble which lives on and continues to nurture emerging artists in Los Angeles today.

Confluence and Collaboration: How Zakir Hussain Transformed World Music

David Trasoff, Lila Vihun Music

When Zakir Hussain unexpectedly passed away on December 15th, 2024, he was in the midst of multiple international tours with jazz artists Dave Holland and Chris Potter in Europe, American music artists Bela Fleck and Edgar Meyer in Australia and India (after winning three Grammys), and rising Hindustani stars Rakesh Chaurasia and Rahul Sharma in the US. During his career, as Zakir interacted with these and many other musicians, in all of these explorations, he integrated his music and made it a critical part of every style he was involved with, all the while staying within the confines of tabla tradition in terms of sound, technique and repertoire. Zakir’s work represented a “second stage” of the cultural transformation of tabla performance, succeeding the role played by his father and teacher, Allah Rakha, as the principal accompanist to Ravi Shankar. Zakir was exposed to a kaleidoscope of cross-cultural influences, from the Beatles to jazz and western classical. His gift was to understand and leverage these influences by seeking out these musicians and freely offering his immense skills as a collaborator. Understanding the truly exceptional musician who exemplifies and yet stands beyond their nominal cultural background has posed challenges to the theoretical groundwork of ethnomusicology since its foundation, and responses have evolved along with the field itself. I will explore how Zakir Hussain’s personal and professional trajectory exemplifies a confluence of overlapping cultural and personal identities, historical and political circumstances, and interaction with the worldwide commercial economy of music production.

01L. October 23, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Jazz, Collectivity, and Space

Co-Chairs: Maya Cunningham, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Colter Harper, University at Buffalo

This panel brings together four papers that examine different locales of jazz performance and how their musical and community practices participate in the production of space. Space encompasses physical location, cultural expression, and socioeconomic relations and has been theorized in human geography and ethnomusicology. Drawing on the mission statement of the SEM Jazz Special Interest Group, the authors connect theories of space to African American studies and recognize the contested nature of the term “jazz” as well as the importance of framing jazz studies within a larger discourse of Black musical traditions. Drawing from a diverse range of methods such as ethnography, archival research, and historical analysis, panelists seek to answer the following questions: how has jazz practice in a variety of contexts—from Accra to New Orleans to Chicago to Pittsburgh—produced collectivities through its reclaiming of urban space? What are the impediments to such placemaking? How does musical space encrust or sediment

archives and history? How does place manifest affectively in phenomenological experience? Due to the expansive literature on space, we have created a reading list to focus our discussions of jazz venues, performance, and placemaking. A few of these works include, *Jazz Places: How Performance Spaces Shape Jazz History* (Teal, 2021), *Dark Agoras: Insurgent Black Social Life and the Politics of Place* (Roane, 2023), *The Jazz Bubble: Neoclassical Jazz in Neoliberal Culture* (Chapman, 2018), and *Loft Jazz: Improvising New York in the 1970s* (Heller, 2016), *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana* (Feld, 2012).

Maroon Resonance: Fugitive Ecologies of Sound and Jazz Spatiality

Benjamin Barson, Bucknell University

This paper explores the historical and theoretical intersections between marronage, space, and jazz. I do this through a critical analysis of archival records, musical practices, and Black ecological practice. Situating this discussion within the framework of Black geographies, the article draws on the works of Nathaniel Mackey, Édouard Glissant, Sidney Bechet, and Fred Moten to illuminate how fugitive musicianship in antebellum New Orleans shaped the social and cultural contours of Black music throughout the late-nineteenth and twentieth century. Through antebellum police records that depict unauthorized musical gatherings of runaways and free people of color, this paper highlights the role of music in constructing maroon ecologies and horizontal social relations practiced by Louisianan Black communities through Reconstruction and beyond. Employing a methodology that blends music “history from below” with what Saidiya Hartman calls critical fabulation, the study examines the intertwined spatial, ecological, and sonic dimensions of marronage. The framework of “maroon resonance” helps contextualize the aurality of antebellum fugitivity and offers a renewed lens to understand jazz as a site of radical transformation and liberation.

“Keeping Music Live!”: +233 Jazz Bar & Grill and the Making of Ghanaian Jazz History

Samuel Boateng, St. John’s College, Oxford

The discourse of jazz history has traditionally framed Africa as the primitive cultural entity that produces the raw materials needed to create jazz in America. While research on African jazz continues to challenge this narrative, the majority of that scholarship tends to focus on perspectives from South Africa, thereby creating an incomplete picture about the implications of jazz in contemporary African lives. This paper offers an intervention in African jazz research by considering the intersections between jazz practice, space, and Ghanaian jazz history. Situating my discussions within Doreen Massey’s (2013) view of space as “a meeting-up of histories,” and “the product of relations,” as well as Steven Feld’s (1996) notion that “experiencing and knowing place” occurs through “a complex interplay of the auditory and the visual,” I examine the history, role, and cultural impact of the Ghanaian jazz club known as +233 Jazz Bar & Grill. Established in 2010 along Accra’s Ring Road, +233 is an extremely active live music venue where local and international audiences engage with jazz and popular music. I suggest that, due to its prolonged efforts towards jazz education, jazz preservation,

transnational collaborations, and its support for various styles of jazz—practices that it shares with other “jazzing” spaces in Accra—+233 is significant for understanding Ghanaian jazz history and the place of Africa in the world of jazz today.

More than Memories: Jazz Clubs and Post-Industrial Urban Redevelopment

Colter Harper, University at Buffalo

Jazz clubs, such as Pittsburgh’s Crawford Grill no. 2, Detroit’s Blue Bird Inn, and Buffalo’s Colored Musicians Club, sustained a form of Black placemaking (Hunter et al., 2016) that intertwined jazz performance, entrepreneurship, labor organizing, civil rights activism, and music education in mid-20th century African American communities. These venues grounded active listening, public discussions of modernity, cultural production, and musical innovation in African American communities and provided countervisions to city-led development (Harper, 2024). Drawing from interviews as well as scholarship from urban (Winant 2021; Taylor Jr., 1990), jazz (Chapman, 2018; Teal, 2021), and Black studies (Lipsitz, 2011; Roane, 2023), this paper explores various ways non-profit, city government, and private organizations continue to draw on memories of these venues in current redevelopment projects impacting African American neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and Detroit. The spectre of displacement and divestment, driven by government and private industry-driven appropriations of space in the 1950s, looms over a new era of post-industrial development defined by urban population increases, rising costs of housing, “Eds & Meds” economies, and rapid gentrification. How will the lived experiences of Black-owned jazz clubs that operated during the mid-twentieth century guide community-led efforts to honor and preserve African American communities as well as rationalize large-scale projects that accelerate gentrification in American post-industrial cities and what does this reveal about jazz as a living archive of the city?

“Hold the Space, Grow the Space”: The Velvet Lounge & Recent Creative Improvised Music Organizing Strategies in Chicago

Eli Namay, University of Pittsburgh

As many theorists of neoliberalism point out (Harvey 1989, Harvey 2005, Gilmore 2022), racial capitalism deeply affects socio-cultural geographies. Zoning laws, redlining, and the exchange value imposed on physical space create topographies that musicians must navigate. Scholars such as George Lewis (2008), Paul Steinbeck (2010), Michael Heller (2016), Benjamin Looker (2004), and many others have detailed such topographies, along with the strategies creative musicians who seek to organize artist-run spaces have used to navigate them. As a Chicago musician, I have navigated such topographies in my organizing, and worked with many creative musicians who are actively challenging the constraints of neoliberal geographies, as well as the atomization and manufactured scarcity that so often plagues both commodified and non-profit funded cultural production alike. In this panel, I present findings from my research on Chicago creative music organizing strategy, focusing on currently active artist-organizers involved with Elastic Arts, Slate Arts, and Cafe Mustache. In my interviews, I focus on exploring the ways artist-organizers reflect on how their work interfaces with economic structure, how they navigate these constraints and openings, how this is informed by their values as creative artists and

improvisers, and how this ultimately manifests in felt experience. I emphasize how profoundly the organizing ethics of Fred Anderson's work at the Velvet Lounge has influenced communal values in Chicago creative music. These are lessons for how to hold space and grow space that challenge the borders of racial capitalism, affirming a spirit of abundance and inclusivity with the music.

02A. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Beyond Colonial Legacies: Cultural Identity, Adaptation, and Musical Hybridity in Ghana

Chair: John Wesley Dankwa, Wesleyan University

The influence of colonial legacies on Ghanaian music, particularly in church worship and choral traditions, remains a subject of debate. While British missionaries introduced hymnody and Western choral structures, Ghanaian musicians have actively reshaped these elements to reflect their cultural and spiritual identities. Rather than simply preserving colonial-era forms, Ghanaian worship and choral traditions represent a fusion of musical practices that foster inclusivity, community engagement, and artistic innovation. This panel explores how Ghanaian musicians have redefined their sacred and choral soundscapes through adaptation and hybridity. The first presentation, "Beyond Missionary Legacies: Examining the Musical Practices in Ghanaian Methodist Worship," highlights how hymnody has merged with indigenous forms such as Ebibindwom, Singing Bands, and contemporary Praise and Worship styles, creating an evolving, accessible tradition. The second paper, "Cultural Identity and Future Directions in Ghanaian Choral Music," examines how youth engagement, technological advancements, and global collaborations shape the balance between Western and indigenous influences in Ghanaian choral music. The final presentation, "Colonial Residue or Sheer Love for Music? G.F. Handel in Ghanaian Choral Art Music," investigates the sustained performance of Handel's oratorios in Ghana, questioning whether this reflects colonial remnants or Ghana's broader ethos of musical inclusivity. Together, these studies challenge colonial narratives, illustrating how Ghanaian musicians actively shape their artistic legacies by blending inherited and indigenous traditions into a dynamic and evolving musical landscape.

Beyond Missionary Legacies: Examining the Musical Practices in Ghanaian Methodist Worship

Susana Gyamfuaa Agyei, Wesleyan University

When British missionaries introduced Methodism to the Gold Coast in the early 19th century, hymnody became the central musical tradition of worship. Rooted in Wesleyan ideals, hymns were used as theological tools to instill Christian doctrine and foster communal spirituality. However, Ghanaian converts, shaped by rich indigenous musical traditions, found new ways to engage worship beyond the rigidity of European hymnody. This led to the integration of indigenous musical elements such as Ebibindwom, an Akan praise-singing tradition, and other vernacular forms that made worship more culturally resonant. Rather than being a mere preservation of missionary legacies, the evolution of Ghanaian Methodist musical practices reflects a dynamic process of adaptation

and creative synthesis. Singing Bands incorporated choral arrangements that fused Western harmonies with Ghanaian tonal sensibilities, while the rise of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements introduced contemporary Praise and Worship styles, further diversifying the soundscape of Methodist worship. This paper argues that the blending of musical genres in Ghanaian Methodist worship is not simply a relic of colonial influence but an intentional embrace of diverse musical expressions for a shared spiritual and communal experience. By examining historical transitions and contemporary performances, this study highlights how Ghanaian Methodists have redefined worship music as a living tradition that transcends colonial heritage, emphasizing unity, accessibility, and spiritual depth. The study contributes to broader discussions on musical hybridity, postcolonial identity, and the role of indigenous agency in shaping religious soundscapes.

Cultural Identity and Future Directions in Ghanaian Choral Music: A Synthesis of Tradition and Innovation

Emmanuel Abeku Ansaeku, Wesleyan University

Cultural identity and the future trajectory of Ghanaian choral music intertwine, highlighting the role of youth engagement in navigating the coexistence of Western classical traditions and Indigenous musical heritage. This passion has led to numerous choirs in Ghana, including the Gramophone Chorus, Greater Accra Mass Choir, and Kumasi Evangel Choir, being conducted by Western conductors or performing alongside Western choirs, raising important questions about cultural exchange. How do these experiences shape the identity and artistic expression of young choristers? Furthermore, how does participation in such collaborations affect their understanding of Western and traditional music? This study aims to explore these dynamics by examining the repertoire choices of Ghanaian choirs and the representation of diverse musical influences. How can educational institutions foster a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage through choral music? As emerging trends emphasize the integration of contemporary genres and technology, this research will investigate the sustainability of youth interest in choral music. By examining these aspects, the study seeks to illuminate the future of Ghanaian choral music, balancing the importance of preserving cultural heritage with the need for innovation. Ultimately, this study will deepen our understanding of how artistic identity is shaped by music, encouraging a dialogue about the possibilities for resilience and inclusivity in a constantly evolving musical environment.

Colonial Residue or Sheer Love for Music? G.F. Handel in Ghanaian Choral Art Music

John Wesley Dankwa, Wesleyan University

The enduring presence of George Frideric Handel's works in Ghanaian choral music offers a compelling case study on how musical traditions from different historical and cultural origins can coexist, fostering a sense of inclusivity. Year after year, Messiah and other Handelian oratorios are performed across Ghana alongside indigenous and contemporary Ghanaian choral compositions, creating a unique musical landscape where Western classical and African choral traditions thrive together. In an era marked by racial tensions and cultural divisions in many parts of the world, this phenomenon raises important questions: How has Ghanaian choral music

embraced both colonial-era legacies and indigenous creativity without deep conflict? What does this coexistence reveal about Ghana's approach to cultural integration through music? This presentation explores the ways in which Handel's choral works have been embraced not as a vestige of colonial imposition but as a living tradition that coexists with local compositions in church worship and concert performances. Drawing on historical and ethnographic research, it examines how choral musicians, composers, and audiences in Ghana perceive the performance of Handel alongside works by Ghanaian composers such as Ephraim Amu, Kwabena Nketia, Newlove Annan, and James Armaah, highlighting the ways in which this coexistence promotes artistic inclusivity rather than cultural dominance. By analyzing the harmonious cohabitation of these traditions, this study offers insights into how Ghanaian choral music has fostered a model of cultural coexistence that transcends racial and historical divisions, presenting a unique framework for inclusive artistic expression in the global choral community.

02B. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Beyond Venting in the Dressing Room: Abuses of Power, Trauma, and Resistance in the Early Careers of Classical Singers

Chair: Molly Doran, Wartburg College

From traumas experienced by undergraduate voice students to opera singers' exploitation in their Resident Artist contracts to the (in)visibilization of trans singers in institutional DEI initiatives, this panel addresses the multilayered harms young singers endure in the early stages of their careers. Following important scholarship that considers musical and acoustical responses to trauma, and its reparative potentialities, we examine what happens when music and musical environments are the sites of trauma. Our focus on early-career singers experiencing normalized abuses of power, exploitation, and invisibilization in their training and pre-professional experiences, takes as apodictic that trauma is socioculturally constructed (Alexander 2004). Centering musicians' emotional lives (Rogers 2021), we highlight systemic oppressions of class, race, gender, and dis/ability by critiquing institutionalized power relations, structural modes of operation, and built environments. Over time, these shared traumatic experiences contribute to a shared sociocultural identity. The opening paper interrogates trauma and tribalism in undergraduate voice programs, arguing that voice training often creates a cult-like atmosphere that isolates students in toxic, insular environments. The second paper analyzes young artists' exploitation and trauma in Resident Artist Programs, through the lens of "insidious trauma." The final paper posits a care ethics-informed framework to assess the implementation and efficacy of DEI initiatives, understood as reparative measures, in American opera houses, highlighting a particular initiative focused on trans singers. This research collectively aims to critique systems of oppression within the opera industry and its pipeline, validate lived experiences, and posit concrete, actionable steps towards solutions.

The Voice Cult: Trauma and Tribalism in Undergraduate Voice Studies

Stephen Carr, York University

Navigating the challenges of life at a music college or conservatory leaves students, especially those who identify as members of a marginalized community, vulnerable to the tribalism and “guru” mentality that are too often a defining characteristic of voice studios. I will argue that recent scholarship on trauma and tribalism (Ross 2014, Lifton 2019, Stein 2021) paints a picture of those who fall victim to cults that is remarkably similar to the situational profile of a first-year voice major. Not only are many of these students grappling with the emotional burdens of leaving home and cultivating autonomy, but the formalized study of the voice can itself leave a young singer feeling “suddenly vulnerable, tender, and unguarded, rather like a snail without a shell.” (Rodenburg, *The Right to Speak*). Difficult voice lessons, unsuccessful auditions, and the other daily traumas of a conservatory environment only compound the profound psychological shift that occurs when singing, what was once a source of immense joy, becomes a measure of self-worth and perceived success in pursuit of the “ideal” classical sound. For an insecure, susceptible student, a kind of teacher-worship can develop. This phenomenon may provide a sense of comfort in its insular devotion, but can also result in unprofessional behaviour and abuses of power. I will explore tribalism masquerading as studio pride, dogma disguised as vocal technique, and fanatic guru worship camouflaged as voice teacher reverence through interview responses from a recent case study of classical voice graduates at one “elite” music college.

“Other Duties as Assigned”: Abuse, Labor, and Surviving the American Opera Industry’s Resident Artist Programs

Anna Valcour, Brandeis University

At a 2019-2020 donor fundraiser, a Level 3 American opera company (annual operating budget of \$1-\$3 million) raffled off a catered dinner party with a private chef featuring entertainment by its Resident Young Artists. The week of the anticipated event, however, the company ran into budgeting concerns and told the young artists that instead, they would be purchasing the groceries, catering the multicourse dinner, serving, and cleaning in addition to providing the entertainment. This shift in tasked labor was framed as non-negotiable, falling under the “other duties as assigned” clause in their freelance contracts. While this clause grants employers considerable latitude, its nontransparency allows for potential abuses of power and exploitation. Young artists are particularly vulnerable to these forms of abuse due to their economic precarity, replaceability, normalization of “yes, and” mentalities, and lack of protections – leading many singers to accept working conditions that they otherwise would not endure. Applying feminist psychotherapist Maria P. P. Root’s theorization of “insidious trauma,” I argue that young artists experiencing intersectional forms of marginalization are disproportionately affected by these normative, (in)visibilized traumas, often facing greater pressures to comply with unreasonable demands due to fears of career repercussions. Through in-depth interviews with current, aspiring, and former opera singers, I analyze the impact such exploitative labor practices have on young artists, how these abuses are amplified by

intersectionalities of gender, race, and class, and how young artists reconcile these demands with their professional aspirations, personal well-being, and sense of agency within the opera industry.

Meeting “The Other’s” Need: An Analytic Framework to Evaluate DEI Initiatives in American Opera Companies as Acts of Care

Danielle Buonaiuto, The Graduate Center, CUNY

In a 2022 speech, trans tenor Katherine Goforth quoted her colleague Sam Taskinin: “‘Think of all the artists...who never risked transitioning...who were never allowed to participate in music.’ Those who went before and those who are suffering now, are always on my mind.” Goforth invokes the absences and tensions her success reveals: her community of trans opera artists, at once present and invisibilized. Opera is at a reckoning point: its conventions, structures, and culture are often inhospitable to marginalized communities, and reparative measures are sparse to non-existent. American opera companies are thus newly self-conscious about diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA), even as DEIA discourse rapidly complexifies. Following Nel Noddings’ and Carol Gilligan’s groundbreaking studies, and building on Talia Schaffer’s idea of care as “meeting another’s need,” I introduce care ethics as a theoretical framework with which to evaluate DEIA initiatives (which I dub “care initiatives”). Framed as a care act, a DEIA initiative consists of a cared-for and a carer in relationship, and it is possible to evaluate whether the care provided meets the stated need. I articulate specific problems with DEIA initiatives, identify effective methods to solicit the stated needs of artists, and formulate plans to meet them. My analysis is grounded in a case study of the True Voice Award, Washington National Opera’s care initiative first awarded to Goforth, and in data analysis tracking DEIA at major American opera houses. In future, this framework could help formulate metrics to evaluate the efficacy of DEIA initiatives long-term.

02C. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Labor and the Job Market

Presenters (alphabetical order by surname):

Kabelo Chirwa, University of Cincinnati

Mark Feng, University of California, Davis

Garrett Groesbeck, Wesleyan University

Organizer: Abigail C. Lindo, The Ohio State University

Mark Lomanno, University of Miami

Marysol Quevedo, University of Miami

Sponsored by *Rising Voices in Ethnomusicology* and the SEM Board

In recent years, *Rising Voices* has seen an increasing number of submissions from graduate student authors on topics relating to labor, music, and markets. Such conversations are happening parallel to the job market crisis in anglophone higher education, in which a vast pool of applicants compete for a handful of tenure-track positions each year. Given the significance of these topics to both students in ethnomusicology and to many of our research collaborators, the editors at *Rising Voices* have convened a round table of scholars representing diverse research areas and differing stages of their careers. Though questions surrounding public and applied ethnomusicology have produced a wealth of dialogue within our field, graduate students, particularly international students, face a particular set of challenges on the job market. Inspired by historian Erin Bartram's (2018) "The Sublimated Grief of the Left Behind," we ask our participants: how do you understand the role of your labor in relation to collaborators, colleagues, and institutions? How can we retain community, support, and peer review with friends who ultimately leave academia? What has driven your motivations to stay in higher education? How do we define unpaid labor, and what are the reasons for participating (or not) in it? We are particularly interested in ways that ethnomusicology students who ultimately leave higher education might remain connected to our Society and contribute to networks of richly informed, mutually supportive, and academically engaged musicians in the broader world.

02D. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Music In/As Culture Wars

Chair: Kendra Renée Salois, American University

Aleysia Whitmore, Denver University

Benjamin Teitelbaum, University of Colorado

Justin Patch, Vassar College

Sophia Zervas, Harvard University

Christian Poske, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

Ioannis Tsioulakis, Queen's University Belfast

Music scholars track multiple ways people wield music in cultural conflicts. When communities frame political differences in moral terms, cultural, racial/ethnic, and class signifiers invoked by music enhance this framing and foster belonging. Artists and audiences leverage music to crystallize critiques, draw boundaries, and discredit the positions of imagined others. This roundtable gathers scholars of diverse traditions, each of whom centers the ways both artists and listeners deploy complex, sometimes conflicted, moral reasoning. We advocate for ethnographic approaches in understanding and analyzing these phenomena and the debates they support in various public spheres.

Presenters analyze (1) French media condemnations of Aya Nakamura's 2024 Olympics performance as un-French; (2) how transnational networks of white nationalist activists recode recordings to their own ideological ends; (3) how Turkish artists negotiate top-down state initiatives and grassroots opponents; (4) how digital technologies affect collective practices of signification as DIY gains new significance within US political discourses; (5) how Indigenous musicians in South Asia familiarize global audiences with human rights abuses during the Indo-Naga conflict; and (6) how Greek nightclubs maintain cultural intimacies based on rigid heteronormativity and white nationalism, conveying anti-globalist aesthetics. Together, these case studies explore how we might recenter music as an underanalysed form of moral reasoning in conflicts understood as "culture wars." Using music as both a form of expression and a method of investigation, we seek to account for making and listening together, moving towards a cohesive approach to musical practices as simultaneously representing, circulating, and acting in cultural conflicts.

02E. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Singing Resistance and Solidarity: Counter-hegemonic Belonging through Jewish Diaspora Language Song

Chair: Isabel Frey, University of Music and Performing Arts

This panel examines how songs in Jewish diasporic languages—specifically Ladino and Yiddish—function as articulations of resistance, solidarity, and counter-hegemonic Jewish belonging in contemporary musical practice. Due to pressures of assimilation and genocidal destruction, these languages increasingly function within a “postvernacular” mode, where the performative act of using the language becomes more significant than its semantic meaning. Within this context, we analyze how Jewish diaspora language songs are mobilized to challenge various forms of erasure and structural violence, both within and beyond Jewish communities. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from diaspora and postcolonial studies, we examine how these musical practices construct new forms of political solidarity across racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries. The first paper examines how Ladino liturgical songs in Seattle's Sephardic community preserve communal identity and resist cultural erasure through continued ritual performance; the second explores the intersections of Black and Yiddish music through an autoethnographic lens to examine diasporic identity and anti-racist resistance; and the final paper investigates how contemporary Yiddish songs express solidarity with Palestinians while carefully navigating questions of positionality. By bridging Jewish music studies with contemporary critical cultural studies frameworks, we aim to open new analytical possibilities to examine how musical practices in minority Jewish languages negotiate complex intersections of religion, race, coloniality and gender/sexuality in different contexts. This intervention illuminates how postvernacular musical practice serves both cultural preservation and social change, contributing to broader conversations about diasporic belonging, cultural memory and the politics of minority languages.

Koplas as Resistance: The Ladino Liturgy of Reuven Eliyahu Israel in Seattle’s Sephardi Community

Lily Henley, Harvard University

Congregation Ezra Bessaroth in Seattle is one of the last remaining strongholds of Rhodesli Sephardic tradition. Founded in the early 20th century by Jewish immigrants from Rhodes, then under Ottoman rule, the congregation preserves distinct liturgical and musical practices tied to its diasporic history. Among these is the Ladino liturgical repertoire of Reuven Eliyahu Israel (1856–1932), the last chief rabbi of Rhodes, who translated Hebrew piyyutim into Ladino to deepen communal engagement with Jewish ritual. Once an expression of a predominantly Ladino-speaking world, this repertoire now continues in a community where many congregants no longer speak the language fluently. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted during Rosh Ashana services at Ezra Bessaroth, this paper examines how the continued performance of Rabbi Israel's liturgical songs serves as both a linguistic and cultural bridge. Even as spoken Ladino has become endangered, the retention of the language through music and performance resists assimilation and affirms Sephardic identity. Framing this tradition within scholarship on diasporic language shift, I argue that Ladino liturgy today carries significance beyond comprehension—it embodies heritage, continuity, and the persistence of a tradition shaped by migration,

genocide, and marginalization. In resisting erasure, this liturgical tradition demonstrates how ritual performance can sustain endangered diasporic languages even as their communicative function diminishes.

“Everywhere We Gather Power”: Articulations of Blackness Through Yiddish Music

Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell, Mandel Institute for Nonprofit Leadership

The international upheavals of 2020 sparked public reevaluations of the orientation of contemporary American society to the issues of race and systemic racism. In parallel, I had begun an investigation on the implications of being a Black performer, composer and arranger of music in Yiddish, that thousand-year tongue of Jewish diaspora. Through autoethnographic reflection exploring the intersections of Black and Jewish musical traditions, this paper investigates what possibilities Yiddish language and culture possess for those of the African diaspora who engage with it. What does it mean for a queer, classically-trained member of the African diaspora who initially came to Jewishness as a religion, and only afterwards as a medium of artistic expression? And what possibilities does Yiddish language and culture possess for those of the African diaspora who are able to access it? In this paper, I analyze my performances and compositions spanning multiple genres and formats, in particular an album that explores a century of Black and Ashkenazi Jewish folk, art and religious music, a multimedia performance piece reflecting on the status of Paul Robeson as both an artistic and political exemplar, and an interactive concert/lecture featuring new compositions based on by Yiddish cultural responses to the Scottsboro trials of the 1930s. This paper traces a gradual development from mere performance of Yiddish as a bridge of affinity to the active wielding of Yiddish as a dialectical site of Black-Jewish solidarity, articulation of diasporic identity, religiosity, shared political future and possibilities of intercommunal responsibility.

Lider mit palestine: Articulating Jewish Solidarity with Palestinians through New Yiddish Song

Isabel Frey, University of Music and Performing Arts

As many Jews grow increasingly alienated from hegemonic Zionist narratives within Jewish communities, the transnational Yiddish music community has emerged as a space for expressing solidarity with Palestinians and articulating alternative forms of Jewish diasporic belonging. Particularly in the aftermath of the Hamas massacre on October 7th, 2023, and Israel’s subsequent destruction in Gaza, many Yiddish musicians have responded by creating new songs that call for an immediate ceasefire and Palestinian liberation. This paper examines these developments through the project Lider mit Palestine (“Songs with Palestine”), a collaborative album featuring newly composed Yiddish songs spanning multiple genres and styles, intended to raise funds for cultural organizations in Gaza and the West Bank. As one of the organizers, I will provide insights into the conceptualization and curation processes, analyzing how musicians employ diverse songwriting techniques and musical traditions – from folk idioms like protest songs and paraliturgical tkhines prayers to popular styles – in articulating solidarity. Drawing on theories of diaspora, multidirectional memory, and solidarity, this study explores how different musical approaches enable varied forms of political expression and connection, while examining the

specific role that Jewish diaspora languages play in facilitating transcultural alliances. These compositional and stylistic choices will be critically assessed in light of the potential pitfalls of performative solidarity and appropriation, particularly considering the complex power dynamics at play. This research illuminates how Jewish diaspora language songs can serve as instruments of counter-hegemonic resistance and as vehicles for articulating transcultural solidarity through diverse musical means.

02F. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Revising Boundaries of Language, Song, and Ritual in the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia

Chair: Brian Fairley, University of Pittsburgh

Musical repertoires are regularly paired with geographical and cultural enclosures—ethnonational delineations, mappings of minority populations—in ways that can both reinforce and contest the seemingly stable borders drawn by politicians, linguists, and ethnographers. These musical cartographies have always been subject to oversimplification, and recent histories of accelerated displacement, migration, and transsettlement—as well as the advent of digital cultures and cybercommunities—demand even more attention to the intricate and mercurial pathways of cultural interaction, synthesis, and circulation that underlie these mappings. This panel offers inroads in unpacking the contradictions, ambiguities, and dilemmas that result from considering musical and linguistic repertoires both locally and in terms of larger ethnonational constructs. Focusing on the former Ottoman lands of Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, the panel’s speakers explore zones of historical and ongoing contact among speakers of Armenian, Georgian, Russian, multiple varieties of Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Aramaic, among other languages. The first paper considers attempts to challenge the dominance of Indo-European linguistics at the turn of the twentieth century through a turn to sonic archaeology and the intertwined musics of the Caucasus. The second extends the interplay between ethnonationalist geographies and macroregional concepts such as maqam to uniquely Kurdish positionalities. Finally, the third paper argues for the interdependence of bounded linguistic and musical spheres across demarcations of adjacent regional identities, with special attention to Qaderi Sufi rituals and Kurdish wedding celebrations in Turkey.

Language and Song in the Caucasian Borderlands: Nikolai Marr and the Sound of Archaeology

Brian Fairley, University of Pittsburgh

Nikolai Marr (1865–1934), best known today as the eccentric linguist whose ideas dominated early Soviet academic life, gained much of his early fame through archaeological excavations of the medieval city of Ani, beginning in 1892. Situated on territory annexed by Russia from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, the ruins of Ani were an object of Armenian national pride, conjuring, for Marr, the image of a harmonious crossroads between the great cultures of Greece and Persia (McReynolds 2016). In Marr’s own telling (2022 [1924]), the archaeological site itself prompted a major turning point in his career, as he shifted away from philology and the classical

languages of Georgian and Armenian, to focus instead on dialects and “living unwritten languages.” In this paper, I consider Marr’s rejection of Indo-European linguistics, with its genealogical and racialized paradigm of language “families,” as a turn to a more complex archaeology of sound, in which languages and songs retain deposits and vestiges of many stages of development at once. In the process, I highlight Marr’s little-known investment in the vocal music of his home region of Georgia, which his students would later investigate through the phonograph. Drawing out questions of sound and material inscription—from cuneiform tablets to chant manuscripts, to policies of alphabetic reform and new technologies of sound recording—I show how Marr’s investment in a multiethnic, anti-nationalist future for the Caucasus and Eastern Mediterranean informed the way he listened to its past.

Meqamî Kurdî and the Shaping of Musical Identity in Contemporary Kurdistan

Jon Bullock, University of Notre Dame

For centuries, musical practice across the Middle East and Central Asia has relied on various configurations of the cluster of modal traditions widely known as maqām. This “musical family” of traditions is wide ranging in terms of geography, history, and performance practice, and it includes repertoires such as the Arab maqāmāt, the Turkish makamlar, the Iraqî maqām, the Azeri mugham, the Tajik-Uzbek shashmaqom, and the Iranian dastgāh/radif. Especially since the rapid spread of nationalist movements beginning in the late nineteenth century, local populations have increasingly regarded these musical traditions as central components of their various ethnic, national, or spiritual identities, and there is indeed an argument to be made that local manifestations of maqām have developed along unique trajectories deserving of scholarly attention (Blum 2015, Lucas 2019). In this presentation, I examine the ways contemporary Iraqî Kurdish musicians and scholars utilize the concept of meqamî Kurdî to situate Kurdish musical practice in local, regional, and global contexts. Building on ethnographic fieldwork, examinations of music treatises published in Sorani Kurdish, and online discourse, I highlight the diversity of approaches and repertoires subsumed under the label “Kurdish meqam,” while interrogating the ways these practices and discourses have the potential to reshape the way scholars think about Kurdish musical practice vis-à-vis the flourishing of Kurdish meqam’s most closely related living tradition, the Iraqî maqām, as well as the historical development of the “Great Tradition” of maqām.

Between Code-Switching and Kindred Resonances in the Multilingual Polymusicality of a Lived Kurdish Geography

George Murer, Hunter College, City University of New York

Code-switching emerged in the 1950s as a term for framing a socially nurtured fluidity in operating between multiple languages, particularly as a means of navigating structures marked along lines of social class and belonging. In this paper, I explore notions of code-switching and code-melting across seams of linguistic contact and entanglement that are woven through an intricately delineated Kurdish geography. When an abrupt transition is made from one language or musical inflection to another, they are cognitively entwined, the intangible residue of the one lingering, coloring what follows. Comparing spaces of ritual utterance (Qaderi dhikr) with

communal settings (wedding repertoires), I attune to the symbolic as well as strategic dimensions of alternating between Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkish musical vernaculars. In mapping the interplay of spheres according to logics of function and strength, I suggest that where one is decentered and presumed subordinate, its evocative power becomes more pronounced. In the Qaderi context, the vastness of commemorative terrain demands the juxtaposition of disjunct melodic, affective, and linguistic enclosures permeated by the same source of spiritual power and gravitas but articulated through divergent modes of utterance. Kurdish weddings in Turkey become forums in which Kurdish language, identity, and musicality is given full reign but the presence of Arabic and Turkish idioms is at times insisted upon. In different ways, these case studies—drawn from my fieldwork over the years—involve a kindred co-contextualization, prompting us to reflect on kinship and relationality (Strathern 2020), not just between group formations, but between expressive modalities.

02G. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Female Perspectives in Iranian Music

Chair: Matthew Rahaim, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

“Dancing to Modernity”: Musical Everydayness and Politics of Womanhood in Pre-and Post-Revolutionary Iran

Hannaneh Akbarpour, Yale University

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, popular music and its associated entertainment industry were banned. In the shadow of post-revolutionary government penalties, a once-vibrant public musical life was relegated indoors to black-market VHS recordings produced abroad and the auditory remnants of the past—music cassettes. This paper draws on ethnographic interviews with three middle-class women whose twenties—a crucial period in their lives for the development of their sense of self and womanhood—coincided with the Pahlavi era boom of “Iranian pop” (*musiqi-ye pāp*). Inspired by coeval Western popular music and portraying an emancipated female identity, Iranian pop was danced by these women in progressive venues such as discos and nightclubs. Building on previous literature (Breyley 2010, Hemmasi 2020) and supported by an ethnography of these women, focusing on what I call their “musical everydayness” in pre-revolutionary Tehran, I argue that Iranian pop provided an “atmospheric situation” (Riedel 2019) in which women could construct and articulate their “Iranian modern womanhood.” I use this term to describe a state of engaging in social settings with a bodily presence beyond traditional boundaries, facilitated through an increased agency in negotiating feminine body in mixed-gender public venues. Drawing on ethnography and theories of music and identity (DeNora 1999) and music and “the collective” (Shelemay 2011), I then contend that Iranian pop continued to be consumed after the revolution as a medium enabling the creation of a lost social environment tied to “Iranian modern womanhood,” within closed doors to continue embodying pre-revolutionary identity.

From Silence to Song: Tracing Women’s Ascension in the Qadiriyya Sufi Rituals of Iran

Ali Hajmalek, Boston University

Sufism, which has deep roots in Iranian culture and history, has experienced significant transformations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, particularly in relation to the status of Sufi women. Ethnomusicologists have extensively studied Sufi women’s leadership across various regions of the world, yet the status of Iranian Sufi women remains understudied. This paper investigates the evolving status and roles of women in the Qadiriyya Sufi order within the contemporary socio-cultural context of Sanandaj, Iran. At the intersection of religious practices and gender norms, this study examines the shift of women from passive participants to active leaders in a traditionally male-dominated domain. By focusing on a case study of Khalifah Fouzieh, a female Sufi master, along with a literature review and three months of ethnographic fieldwork in 2023, I argue that Sufi women challenge gender-specific limitations to assert their spirituality and authority within the order. They utilize music, protest-oriented ritual practices, and social media platforms to claim agency in both public and virtual spaces. Indeed, they break policies on religious minorities, gender limitations, and gender segregation laws which were imposed by the government on Iranian women since the 1979 revolution. Ultimately, by centering Iranian Sufi women as pivotal agents within Qadiriyya rituals, it highlights musical and religious practices as transformative forces shaping and changing gender norms and women’s societal status in contemporary Iran.

Multimedia supplement:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_jO4hId2B_9-bKXLPLqhrOxdm1dtlbbi?usp=drive_link

Canon Reformation and Rewriting Women’s History in Iranian Music

Hadi Milanloo, University of Toronto

In *The Story of Daughters of Quchan*, the Iranian historian Afsaneh Najmabadi investigates the necessity of “writing women into the history of Iranian modernity and writing a gendered history of that experience” (1998: 9). This idea, foundational to Najmabadi’s influential career, continues to reverberate today as efforts to include women in the histories of Iranian music gain traction in a limited, though flourishing subfield of inquiry. Yet, musicologists like Marcia Citron have long argued that in adding women’s names to music histories and canons, the “why must be addressed [...] otherwise, women’s accomplishments remain window dressing or token contributions” (2007: 210-211). My paper juxtaposes these scholars’ ideas with my ongoing ethnographic research with Iranian female instrumentalists to elucidate how ethnographic research, typically concerned with the recent past, could inform the future historiographies of women and music in Iran. I propose that a dual examination of female musicians’ life stories alongside a critical analysis of their musical performances not only opens new spaces for women’s inclusion in the canons and histories of Iranian music but also interrogates the underlying assumptions that have historically marginalized women from realms of musical recognition and authority. Therefore, by framing female musicians as both women and skillful musicians, ethnography attends to the intricate

intersections of gender and musical authority to reveal and challenge ways in which male hegemony perpetuates women's exclusion despite occasionally recognizing a select few women's musical achievements.

02H. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Narrations of Black Life

Chair: Ambibola Kai-Lewis, Berklee College of Music

Fluid Frequencies: Alternative R&B as a Site of New and Renewed Black Consciousness.

Elizabeth Falade, University of Groningen

This paper examines the emergence and evolution of alternative R&B as a genre that challenges and redefines traditional conceptions of Black musical aesthetics, identity, and cultural consciousness. Rooted in the socio-political legacy of blues and the sonic innovations of contemporary R&B, alternative R&B diverges from mainstream R&B by incorporating elements of electronic music, jazz, and soft rock while adopting introspective and subversive lyrical themes. The genre represents a shift from Contemporary and Traditional R&B's romantic, hyperfeminine and hypermasculine tropes to a more fluid and experimental articulation of Blackness, gender, and sexuality.

This paper highlights how alternative R&B embodies what is termed 'New Black Consciousness'—a contemporary Black identity that resists fixed racial, gendered, and sexual boundaries. This concept, influenced by Alexis De Veaux's theorization of new Blackness and Stuart Hall's notion of identity as unfixed, illustrates how alternative R&B artists navigate and express multifaceted experiences of Blackness that challenge hegemonic norms.

By situating alternative R&B within the broader historical continuum of Black musical traditions, this study underscores its implications for ethnomusicology. It asserts that alternative R&B is not merely a genre shift but a cultural movement that signifies as a reconfiguration of Black artistic expression, offering a new sonic and ideological framework that resonates with contemporary Black diasporic realities. Ultimately, this paper argues that alternative R&B stands as a radical and necessary intervention in Black popular music, affirming the genre's role in shaping new understandings of race, gender, and sexuality in the 21st century.

In the Breath of the Dead: Remixing Black Uchronia in Spirituals, Work Songs, and Avant-Garde Metal

Jake Blount, Brown University

The speculative endeavors of Black Americans have recently gained widespread acknowledgement due to increased awareness of the Afrofuturist movement. Scholars such as Jayna Brown (2021) and Isiah Lavender III (2019) have historicized and expanded upon Afrofuturism by linking it to works that predate and exceed the term, situating it within a centuries-old lineage of Black speculative

thought. I connect these speculative practices to the concept of uchronia as theorized by Amy Ransom (2010): postmodern alternate histories whose relationships to the time and history we know are often obscure and subversive. As an example, I take up the work of Swiss avant-garde metal band Zeal & Ardor. Manuel Gagneux, a Black Swiss-American musician, started the project in 2013 after 4chan users suggested he combine black metal with “nigger music.” The albums *Devil Is Fine* (2016), *Stranger Fruit* (2018), and *Zeal & Ardor* (2022) hybridize Black American spirituals and work songs with menacing heavy metal sounds, scoring a uchronia wherein enslaved Black people rise up against all worldly and divine masters through Satanic rite. Replete with occult imagery, blastbeats, fuzzed-out guitars, and screaming, the songs often seem to speak simultaneously to Black pasts, presents, and futures—as well as to timelines we do not know. I argue that this uchronian slippage between timelines reveals similarly dark speculative visions embedded in the very historical material Gagneux drew upon, illustrating both the historicity of the Black uchronia, and the recursive process at its core.

Black Banjo Bodylands: Conjuring Ancestral Memory and Navigating the White Gaze

Joe Z. Johnson, Indiana University, Bloomington

Among Black Banjo players in the U.S., performing often involves navigating the tension between honoring ancestral memory and confronting the white gaze. Carrying the legacy of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, the string band, New Dangerfield represents a new chapter in the Black Banjo Renaissance. Living in the wake of the Drops requires members of New Dangerfield to reconfigure themselves beyond spectacle of a Black string band. For them, songwriting and arranging with the ancestors in the archives evoke a numinous presence, channeling the banjo’s ase—the spiritual power embedded in the instrument and summoned by the musician—to produce sacred musical offerings. This paper presentation builds upon the theory of “Bodylands” set forth by Ana Maurine Laura, which calls for an investigation of the relationships and simultaneous co-constructions of beings and the lands across/through/on which these entities exist. I extend her framework to propose “Black Banjo Bodylands,” arguing that the Renaissance reveals both memories and tensions embedded in the instrument’s fraught history. This presentation focuses on reflections from one of New Dangerfield’s members’ performance. In the performance, her use of the banjo to conjure her own ancestral bodylands, through Raleigh, Brooklyn, Toronto, and St. George’s, are met with palpable frictions of the white gaze. These frictions emerge throughout elements such as culturally insensitive stage decorations and infantilizing audience engagement. This dynamic site sets the stage for my larger project, *Black Banjo Bodylands*, which examines the places where the banjo, contemporary Black bodies, histories, politics, and spiritual influences converge.

02I. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Soundscapes of Worship

Chair: Alison Mc Letchie, South Carolina State Univeristy

Affect and Authenticity in Contemporary Christian Worship Soundscapes

Sharri K. Hall, Harvard University

Contemporary Christian Music is a homogenous musical genre largely defined by its audience, Evangelical Christians, rather than by its sound which closely resembles pop/rock. Front-running artists in the genre often differ little in style, instrumentation, song structure, chord progression, and even in their visual elements such as clothing and lighting. These performances also have standardized posture: listeners and performers alike are posed in an almost trance-like state where their arms are raised, their bodies are prone, seemingly positioned in a physiological manifestation of belief, leaning forward and upward towards the Father who reigns in Heaven. Drawing on Nina Eidsheim's listening-to-listening framework (Eidsheim 2018) and Wallmark and Fink's exploration of the physical significance of tone (2018) this paper defines the creation of a musical belief system imbedded with fixed timbres, repetition, and a strong relationship with Biblical text.

Following ethnographic research conducted at two Lancaster County, Pennsylvania mega-churches, this paper considers how the "thick event" (Eidsheim 2015) of worship concerts leads to an enchantment with both the repertoire and the performance which could reflect a sense of belief or relationship with the Divine (Gell 1992). Ultimately, this paper considers how sound contributes to the making of a belief system contemplating the cultural environment of the live spaces where this musicking occurs (Adorno 1945) and the "mythical sense of belief" inherent to these affective attachments (Gallope 2017).

Amplifying the Divine Word, or the Aesthetics of Reverb in Sikh Aural Architecture

Conner Singh VanderBeek, Davidson College

Atop a knee-height, raised platform sits two harmoniums and a tabla, a microphone hovering above each instrument. These microphones route into a mixing board, which connects to an array of JBL speakers situated throughout the main hall and grounds of the gurdwara. When these microphones pick up the instruments or the voices that sing Sikh kirtan (hymns), they add a cavernous reverb to the sound that gives it an ethereal, otherworldly quality. Drawing Blesser and Salter's theory of aural architecture (2007) and Auslander's analysis of live performance in mediatized culture (1999), I theorize the spiritual and cultural meanings embedded in the technological filter of reverb in Sikh sacred musical practice. I argue that reverb in Sikh sacred music is understood as an acoustic signifier of the presence of the divine, whether in recorded or live music. This is due to a dual combination of (1) the reverberant acoustics of historical Sikh gurdwaras in Punjab being recreated in both recorded and live sound and (2) the use of reverb to accentuate dramatic song and dialogue in modern Indian popular media. In the 21st century, the wide reach of satellite television and

Internet streaming platforms have further standardized the use of reverb in Sikh musical practice. Whereas previous studies on Sikh sacred music analyze affect, metaphysics, and/or spiritual underpinnings, I focus on the technical aspects and mediation of – and striking consistency across – Sikh kirtan in domestic, religious, and broadcast spaces.

Space, Spirits, and Sound

Ahkeel Andres Mestayer Velasquez, University of California, Berkeley

Contemporary Cuban Santería ceremonies in the Afro-Cuban diaspora contexts often take place in all types of places—from boat houses to garages, public parks, and auto shops. These spaces are temporarily transformed to facilitate rituals through both material culture—offerings and sacred objects, including instruments—as well as the sound of the drums. How are everyday places, as opposed to religious temples, the most frequent site of ritual music practices? What is the role of sound in defining space in the religious ceremonies of Cuban Santería? Drawing on over ten years of ethnographic fieldwork as a religious drummer in the United States, Mexico, and Cuba, I will examine how sound plays a central role for Santería practitioners to reconfigure space in the ritual drumming ceremony, known as the *tambor de fundamento*. By closely examining the relationship between the altar, *igbodú*, sound, and the spiritual co-presences known as *orishá*, I mobilize theoretical insights from Lefebvre (1971) and Abe (2018) to analyze the series of processes and sound evocations that create, define, and finally dissolve an alternative ritual time-space. My goal is to broaden discourses of sound and space in relation to spiritual co-presences and afro-caribbean religion.

02J. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Archiving with Indigenous Communities: Perspectives from South Africa

Chair: Lyndsey Copeland, Carleton University

Leonard Boetles Gewers, Carleton University, Riemvasmaak, South Africa

James Mapanka, South African Nama Development Association

Sharon Gabie, Nelson Mandela University

Lee Watkins, International Library of African Music, Rhodes University

Following much attention toward the re(p)(m)atriation of colonial-era music collections, ethnomusicologists are engaging in constructive discourse on decolonial methodologies emerging from critical perceptions of “the archive”. Indeed, recent scholarship advocates for contemporary archiving with and for Indigenous communities (e.g., Onyeji and Onyeji 2023; Kummels and Cánepa 2023; Watkins, Madiba, and McConnachie 2021), and asks us to consider: What might a postcolonial or decolonial music archive be and do? What are the forms and challenges of archival activism? What role, if any, should academics serve?

This roundtable will foster conversation about best practices in the collaborative making of new archives with Indigenous communities. We bring together Indigenous musicians, activists, and academics engaged in an ongoing project, “Sounding Indigenous in South Africa”, that collaboratively investigates and archives the heritage performance practices of people in the Northern Cape who identify as Khoesan and are known as a “first people”. Our team is establishing digitized performances held in archives jointly managed by Khoesan partners and whose content activists can use to promote cultural revivalism and policy change efforts. The roundtable will open with a performance-presentation by a Khoe (Nama) musician and community researcher. We will then hear short statements from three South African speakers: a Khoe activist and member of S.A.’s Indigenous Rights Commission, an anthropologist and advisor to S.A.’s panel on Intangible Cultural Heritage, and an ethnomusicologist and ILAM archivist. The organizer will then facilitate discussion and invite the audience to share their insights on archiving with Indigenous communities in Africa and elsewhere.

02K. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Reimagining Belonging through Politics of Sound: Asian/American Artists in Global Popular Music

Chair: Sora Woo, University of California, San Diego

Racial tensions have been widely prevalent in contemporary American society, compelling discussions on intersectionality and solidarity in cross-cultural contexts. This panel explores how Asian/American artists navigate race, gender, and ethnicity in the popular music industry. Examining hip-hop, pop, and electronic music, we analyze how musical practices shape cultural authenticity, representation, and solidarity. Situated within critical race studies, feminist theory, and transnational cultural analysis, this panel aims to bridge scholarly discourses on racialized performance and sonic hybridity. The first paper examines hip-hop from Taiwan in the early 1990s, focusing on Taiwanese American artists such as L.A. Boyz, Jerry Lo, and Shawn Song. It explores how their music contributed to transcultural identities and aesthetics that challenged Taiwan’s authoritarian past. The second paper addresses East Asian representation in Western popular music through the lens of “sonic Ornamentalism” (Cheng 2019), adopting the case study of Rina Sawayama’s collaboration with Paris Hilton to investigate how racialized femininity is commodified. The third paper explores the Korean American electronic producer Tokimonsta, whose collaborations with artists like Tinashe and AESPA illustrate the power of cross-cultural and collaborative realities. Drawing from Afrofuturism, it asserts that these collaborations exemplify intersectional solidarity and hint at speculative futures (Sandoval 2000). Methodologically, this panel integrates musical and multimedia analysis, and digital ethnographic engagement with fan communities, to investigate the politics of sound and performance. Bringing together various case studies, we interrogate how Asian/American artists navigate the music industry, challenge essentialist racial formations, and reimagine belonging through sound.

From the West Coast to the Sea: Hip-hop Music and Its Body/Voice Politics in Taiwan

Heidi Yin-Hsuan Tai, University of California, San Diego

Taiwanese popular music industry in the post-martial law period changed drastically amid the sociopolitical and sociocultural changes at that time. Among them, hip-hop music was one of the new genres that, on the one hand, connected Taiwanese popular music to transnational popular culture industry, while on the other hand, reshaped Taiwanese bodies and voices through practices of hip-hop music and dances. In this paper, I analyze the introduction of Hip-hop in early 1990s' Taiwan with an emphasis on several emerging hip-hop artists, including L.A. Boyz, Jerry Lo, Shawn Song and more. Their bodily and vocal performances demonstrated processes of musical and corporeal hybridization and glocalization within Taiwan, United States and East Asia, with a shared identity as Taiwanese Americans in West Coast hip-hop scenes. I argue that the Taiwanese American identity, along with the hip hop music produced by these artists, reconstructs notions of race, ethnicity and gender in popular culture industries, for both people of color and Taiwanese identity. Using archival works and ethnographic writings as methodologies of this research, I examine the critical potentials of these Taiwanese American hip-hop music in dialogue with critical race studies, specifically on how the Afrodiasporic aspects of hip-hop aroused political critique through Taiwanese American bodies. I highlight how hip-hop music embodied sociopolitical dynamics at the time, and how the songs served as a crucial means in 1990s' Taiwan to dismantle the preexisting authoritarian political hierarchy, henceforth creating a new perspective for Taiwaneseess.

Rina, BTS, and The Ethics of East Asian Representation in Western Popular Music

Alissa Liu, University of California, San Diego

In 2024, socialite-turned-DJ Paris Hilton released the single “I’m Free” featuring Japanese-British artist Rina Sawayama to mixed reviews, with music critics and Rina’s fans praising her performance while framing her decision to collaborate with Paris as a betrayal to her role as an advocate for Asian representation in pop music. This placed Rina as both an ornament to her White collaborator, and an inauthentic Asian subject. While these types of collaborations are often framed as attempts at positive Asian representation, its production and critical reception still raises questions within what I define as sonic Ornamentalism – the construction of yellow femininity within musical spaces and musicking—and reinforces Orientalist notions of cultural authenticity, and the exploitation of underrepresented communities in popular music (Cheng 2019, Hutnyk 2000). However, recent musical collaborations between American rapper Megan Thee Stallion and East Asian artists RM and Yuki Chiba, and the positive interactions between East Asian and American fan communities, reveal how these artists are able to fit within the “trend” of Asian representation in Western media without conforming to essentialist constructs of gender and race (Kwon 2023). This paper examines these cross-cultural collaborative performances as a framework for exploring dominant expectations of “Asianness” in music and situating it within broader discourse surrounding the racialization of yellow bodies through performance (Wong 2004) and within popular media (Cheng 2019; Bow 2022).

Through multimedia analysis and fandom-centered ethnographies, I argue that these projects become a site for understanding and challenging colonial and transnational flows of power.

Beyond Borders: Tokimonsta, Politics of Collaboration, and Sonic Speculation

Sora Woo, University of California, San Diego

This paper examines how the collaborative practices of Korean American electronic music producer Tokimonsta (Jennifer Lee) reimagine cultural identity and foster intersectional solidarity. Drawing on Chela Sandoval's concept of "differential consciousness" (2000) and broader discourses in women of color feminism (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Wilson et al. 2022), it argues that Tokimonsta's creative work challenges essentialist identity formations while envisioning speculative futures (Nelson 2002). Her remix of Chaka Khan's "I'm Every Woman" with Tinashe highlights empowerment among women of color, while her collaboration with AESPA — K-pop's first metaverse girl group — on "Die Trying" blurs the boundaries between real and virtual worlds. This latter track, featured in the Netflix film *Rebel Moon*, invokes Afrofuturist aesthetics, where outer space serves as a metaphor for transcending fixed identities, categories, and boundaries. Rooted in early underground multicultural scenes, Tokimonsta's approach to collaborative practices demonstrates how music serves as a site for shaping our subjectivities and forming alliances in solidarity. Situating her work within discourses on women of color feminism and Asian American musicking (Wang 2001; Wong 2004), this paper employs multimedia analysis and archival research to explore how her Afrofuturistic and speculative aesthetics model new possibilities for inclusive creative futures.

02L. October 23, Thursday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nigeria's Middle Belt

Co-Chairs: Aaron Carter-Enyi, Morehouse College; Solomon Abu Dauda, CONAECDA, Nigeria; David Aina, Lagos State University

In the Middle Belt of Nigeria, three major language families converge in a region with cultural diversity rivaling the Amazon Basin and Papua New Guinea. Each of 340 distinct languages is accompanied by distinctive music and dance traditions. Diamond (1958–59) and Quersin (1972) documented a small fraction of these performance practices. These recordings are not accessible to the Anaguta, Berom, Jarawa, or Ngas communities featured in the releases by Smithsonian and Ocora. Widespread adoption of mobile devices has made it possible for community members to share audio and video through Bluetooth and WhatsApp with minimal cost. Often, the content shared through these means is intended to incite conflict between farmers and herders. Since 2021, our team has pursued a documentation drive in partnership with CONAECDA, a coalition of community development associations formed in recognition of the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We have produced hundreds of hours of audiovisual primary sources. We have tested and implemented dissemination strategies that ensure accessibility to the born-digital materials by community members

soon after fieldwork is completed and in the future. The recordings amplify artistic voices for peace, countering divisive narratives. This program will feature three 20-minute films, each representing a cluster of ethnic groups from one of three Nigerian states: Adamawa, Kaduna, and Plateau. An international team, including junior scholars from Nigeria, will present the films. This work is the first Intangible Cultural Heritage project in Nigeria to be funded by the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP).

Adamawa

Ebruphiyor Omodoro, University of Nigeria

Recorded and edited in 2025

20-minute excerpt

Hausa and English interviews with singing in minority languages including Bachama, Chamba, Gude, Kugama, Kwah/Nyabah, Libbo, Sukur, Tsobo, Yungur, and Zambo.

English Subtitles for Hausa interviews and songs in minority languages.

Adamawa is an eastern state of Nigeria on a plateau adjacent to the Cameroonian Grasslands. The state is religiously diverse, approximately 50% Muslim and 40% Christian. The state is afflicted with ongoing agrarian conflict. The Sukur Cultural Landscape was named a World Heritage Site in 1999.

Kaduna

Aaron Carter-Enyi, Morehouse College

Recorded from 2022 to 2025, edited in 2025

20-minute excerpt

Hausa and English interviews with singing in minority languages including Adara/Ehua, Bajju, Chawai, Fantswam, Gbagyi, Ham, Ikulu, Kadara, Nandu, Rumaya and Takad.

English Subtitles for Hausa interviews and songs in minority languages.

Kaduna State is located directly north of Abuja and is the third most populous state in Nigeria. Ethnic minorities are found in the southern portion of the state and the Hausa ethnic majority in the northern part of the state. This film focuses on the music and dance traditions of the ethnic minorities in southern Kaduna.

Plateau

Michael Bulkaam, University of Jos

Recorded from 2021 to 2025, edited in 2025

20-minute excerpt

Hausa and English interviews with singing in minority languages including Berom, Chasoekoeh, Gamai, Kwagallak, Mwachavul, Ngas, Rigwe, Ron, Sigidi, Tal, and Ywom.

English Subtitles for Hausa interviews and some songs in minority languages.

Plateau state is one of the most ethnically diverse areas of Nigeria, without a clear majority ethnicity. It is predominantly Christian surrounded by majority Muslim states and has often scene conflict in the last 20 years. Prior to that, it was known for being a peaceful area.

03A. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Who's Music? Essentialism, Appropriation, Investment, Authenticity

Chair: Tony Perman, Grinnell College

A current attitude holds that people can only legitimately “speak” from and about their own experiences, subjectivity, and identity. Taken to its logical conclusion, a male novelist shouldn't write about female characters, or a gay writer about straight ones—diminishing exploration, imagination, and empathy. Young novelists were advised to “write what you know,” but so as to explore the world and know more, not be stuck in predetermined categories. The restrictive attitude is a major dilemma for ethnomusicologists who historically researched and learned to play the music of others. Ironically, a major initial function of ethnomusicology was to move the academy beyond only studying “our own music,” understood as the classical cannon. Perhaps naive, this was perceived as a corrective for ethnocentrism and elitism and, especially after the 1980s crisis of representation, for enhancing dialogue over monologue. After decades of academic work deconstructing unitary essentialist notions of identity and subjectivity—foundations for multiple dangerous -isms, as well as for strategic counter movements--do we now really want to abandon more nuanced approaches to personhood, “ownership” of a tradition, and legitimate activity? Does essentialist policing preclude possibilities for positive personal and social interaction, learning, and change? With papers investigating the problem of the banjo, the traps for second-generation Balinese performers in the US, the paradox of world music ensembles in ethnomusicological pedagogy, and the tension between bi-musicality, positionality, and political activism, we balance answers to these questions while respecting the strategic essentialisms underpinning social movements countering racism, sexism, colonialism, homophobia, etc.

The Problem of the Banjo

Tom Turino, Scranton, Kentucky

Created as a hybrid of African and European models by enslaved Africans in the 17th century Caribbean, the banjo--so-called “America's Instrument”—uniquely illuminates the history of slavery, race and class relations, the rural-urban divide, folkness, nationalism, and commercialization of popular culture. With minstrelsy and the subsequent northern manufacturing boom, the banjo is the first major example of White appropriation of Black musical resources for profit in the U.S. By the mid-twentieth century the banjo was almost completely associated with southern White “folk” culture, its Black roots largely forgotten but for the work of a growing group of scholars beginning with Dena Epstein in 1977. As an index of southern folks, the banjo invokes both nostalgia for and the actualization of good family and community life in the rural south, and among a variety of old-time “revival” and bluegrass scenes across the country which are primarily White, urban and middle-class. Finally, in the past decade a Black Banjo Reclamation Project has arisen underlining tensions that have been there all along. Here I summarize how the swirling trajectories of the banjo's history, its musics and public meanings, disturb essentialist readings while recognizing the often passionate claims of legitimate cultural ownership and authenticity of different types of players and the musics played. I focus, finally, on the social value of old-time music scenes I have been a part of, various notions of authenticity, and the peculiar essentialist policing within these scenes.

“You’re Not My Kind of Balinese”: Carving Musical Identity in the Silencing of Cultural Essentialism

Putu Hiranmayena, Grinnell College

In this presentation, I problematize processes of being for young Balinese artists in the United States during negotiations of cultural sharing, arguing for a reformation of how cultural sustainability is performed. My family came to the United States to teach gamelan and share Indonesian culture because of opportunities provided by efforts of cultural diplomacy between Indonesia and the U.S. I grew up falling asleep to college students hacking away at interlocking patterns in basements of music programs. I experience a certain privilege defined by my family’s collaboration with ethnomusicologists to create gamelan communities but also face certain cultural weights. I am not the only one. Much of my diasporic network is disparate and rarely convenes. Many have gone back to Bali. At this point, the existence of gamelan in higher education is arguably canonical, but there is an epistemological paradigm shift that uncovers growing intracultural frustrations of younger Balinese artists. How are younger Balinese artists carving unique identities when their predecessors are so revered? How are we to liberate artistic voices when we are met with, “that’s not the way I was taught by your uncle” discourse? Concepts of marginalization in ethnomusicological studies have become generically synonymous with BIPOC practitioners. The discourse surrounding marginalization discounts voices of younger generations interested in participating and problematizing legacies of music studies. This overlooks layers of complex negotiations of syncretic identities and often creates gatekeeping neo-exoticization. I aim to critique these ideas of marginalization in favor of a less essentializing performance of creativity.

From Empathy to Justice: Ethnomusicological Paradoxes, Music Participation, and the Utility of Indebtedness

Tony Perman, Grinnell College, Grinnell College

The history of ethnomusicology is partially defined by a fundamental paradox. Firstly, it asserts that musical meaning emerges primarily from culturally specific and historically salient contexts. Secondly however, it often decontextualizes musical practice it demonstrates this meaning by decontextualizing music and bringing it into ensembles and classrooms of higher education. This paradox grows more and more difficult to resolve as the politics of identity, emphases on equity, and unresolved legacies of racism and colonialism grow undeniable. How can we as educators, performers, and musical guests resolve this paradox? I've played the mbira from Zimbabwe for almost thirty years, but I'm not Zimbabwean; I've played the guqin from China for over five years, yet I'm not Chinese; and I've sung Christian liturgy for most of my life but am not Christian. How should I feel about these realities? Are they morally redeemable? In this talk I offer potential paths towards harnessing the obvious benefits of participation in these practices while also working against accompanying legacies of essentialism, racism, and colonialism. By centering ethnomusicology's defining paradox and exposing the double-edged "benefits" of cross-cultural performance like empathy, *communitas*, and the formation of mutual indebtedness, I argue that it is only by embracing the risks and responsibilities of musical practices such as these as much as the rewards that we can overcome ossified understandings of identity to serve justice and community rather than appropriation and self-indulgent freedom.

Bridging the Gap: The Complicated Politics and Potentials of Creative Bi-musicality

Donna Lee Kwon, University of Kentucky

When Mantle Hood wrote the "Challenge of 'Bi-musicality'" in 1960, he could not have foreseen all the extramusical ramifications that were set in motion by encouraging generations of ethnomusicologists to deeply engage with, learn, and teach world music in the academy. When I entered graduate school as a younger Asian American, it was my dream to teach Korean music ensemble performance at the college level. Now, two decades later, I am still grappling with the complex dynamics that can occur when teaching non-Western music ensembles in an academic setting, even as I remain committed to performance and practice as an extension of research. Drawing on my experience as well as interviews with other scholar/performers who are teaching Korean music in academic settings, I will examine some of the various challenges that can occur while also considering how the nuances of one's positionality can greatly impact one's experience. I am interested in attending to the gap between teaching in community settings versus academic ones, where the student or member make-up and motivations can be radically different and where the dynamics of essentialism and the politics of representation can play out in unexpected ways. For example, I began learning Korean drumming in a Korean American community-based group with strong ties to political activism. In trying to stay true to this experience, I aim to

explore how to best reckon with the gaps between academic and community/activist environments especially during a time when engaging with politics has become increasingly tenuous.

03B. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Afrodiasporic Linguistics and Gestures

Chair: Abigail Lindo, University College Dublin

They Not Like Us: The Relationship Between (Black) American Sign Language and Hip-hop Performance

Warrick Moses, University of Wisconsin, Madison

In 2022 for the first time the National Football League featured American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in the live televised performance of the Superbowl halftime show, one comprising performances by Dre, Snoop, Mary J. Blige, Eminem, and Kendrick Lamar. While the inclusion of such hip-hop and pop music luminaries was read by some as a reluctant concession in the wake of the organization's fumbling of Black Lives Matter advocacy, the move inadvertently highlighted the confluences between the speech forms of African American English (AAE) and Black Sign Language (BSL); the gestural, visual, highly nuanced, and specifically embodied nature of BSL interpretation; and the question of racialized linguistic propriety. Conversations around Lamar's recent Superbowl performance, also accompanied by live BSL interpretation, as exemplary of conscious hip-hop's resistive ideals again brought attention to the enduring distinctions between white and Black soundscapes or sonic ways of being (Stoeberl 2016, Eidsheim 2019). In this presentation I adapt Sarah Cervenak's proposal of "Black gathering" (2021) and suggest a corporeal relation to one's sound ecology as opposed to one's physical ecology/surroundings as an opportunity to enact collective unboundedness in opposition to a Lockean philosophy of Black regulation. Analyzing the BSL interpretation of Lamar's hip-hop performance, I interrogate the possibility for the execution of this embodied speech form to realize a site for the expression of inextractable Black togetherness. This project addresses concerns of disability and access within hip-hop studies and ethnomusicology more broadly and offers new ways to imagine musicking in light of pervasive auditory chauvinism.

Too Bla (ck)xx? The Trinbagonian Calypso and Soca Experience

Kai Barratt, University of Technology, Jamaica; Alison Mc Letchie, South Carolina State University; Rae-ann Smith, University of the West Indies, Mona

This short documentary explores the philosophy underlying Trinbagonian soca music and carnival focusing on the late soca artiste Dexter "Blaxx" Stewart (1962-2022). It presents the carnival in Trinidad and Tobago as a space where dualities- celebration and resistance, tradition and modernity, revelry and reflection, chaos, and order not only exist but include the in-betweens. The result has

been an experience that makes it difficult to place soca artistes and their experiences in neat boxes that are typically used to define festivals and popular culture. Blaxx, as an artiste, faced being defined by standards that work in other cultural spaces, such as those in the global North. While praised as a brilliant artist, he was often confined by industry standards because of his appearance, particularly his Blackness and obesity. Blaxx's position in soca reflects the attempts to market carnival within the aesthetic of the global North as it pertains to skin color and ideal body type. Also brought to the fore are other issues of dualities that complicate the carnival space, such as music competition and collaboration, marketing and obscurity, and spirituality and commercialism. Blending primary interviews with scholars and practitioners in the fields of carnival and soca sourced from a 2023 symposium, alongside secondary footage, the documentary examines how these dualities shape the art, identity, and culture of Trinidad and Tobago as seen through Blaxx and his work.

“I ain changing meh dialect, meh patois...” Language change, attitudes and identity in the Carnival musics of Trinidad and Tobago.

Nicha Selvon-Ramkissoon, University of Trinidad and Tobago

Like in many postcolonial states, the indigenous and transplanted groups of people in pre- independence Trinidad and Tobago became victims of ‘linguisticide’ on account of colonial language policies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Out of the crucible of colonization however, formerly enslaved and indentured peoples engaged in the reconstruction of endonormative linguistic forms: Creoles, indigenized Englishes, pidgins, mixed-codes, (home) signs etc. (Ali et al, 2022). Each group of people that came to the region brought with them knowledge of their musics, including their accompanying instruments and dances, and they carried on their artistic practices in spite of ever-changing restrictions (cf. Cowley, 1996; Henry, 2008; Liverpool 2001; Rohlehr, 1990).

The musics most associated with Carnival are usually sung using Caribbean Creole codes and a main theme in a number of these songs is identity. This paper will first trace the linguistic history of Trinidad and Tobago and illustrate the concomitant development of the language of Carnival musics. It will then examine the theme of identity through various linguistic techniques in three songs: The Mighty Conqueror's (1962) Trinidad Dictionary; Riki Jai's (1989) Sumintra; and Bunji Garlin's (2021) Trini Lingo. These songs represent three different genres of Carnival music with two and three decades respectively between them, allowing for an examination of changes in attitudes toward Trinidad Creole over time as well as to discuss representations of social practices and constructions of identity between the persona in the songs and the intended hearers.

Afro-Dancehall: The Impact of Global Afrobeats on Ghanaian Dancehall

Nathaniel Ash-Morgan, University of North Texas

Afro-dancehall is a syncretized Ghanaian genre wedged between the mimicry of Jamaican dancehall and the embrace of Nigerian afrobeats - the first globally audible instance of African musical self-representation. African popular music has continuously

interfaced with diasporic genres since the emergence of highlife (a core ingredient in Fela Kuti's afrobeat, originally branded highlife-jazz) in response to Caribbean polyrhythmic grooves played in Gold Coast ballrooms. In the 1990s, hiplife injected an explicitly African aesthetic into hip-hop, as Reggie Rockstone and other innovators rapped in indigenous languages and sampled classic highlife and afrobeat songs. Soon after, dancehall became the more effectual musical vehicle to express the aspirations of Ghana's subaltern, with Jamaican artists like Vybz Kartel referring to a shared worldwide struggle as "Gaza," a meaningful symbol of global "ghetto youth" solidarity. Ghanaian dancehall was branded by many as afro-dancehall, with the prefix surging in relevance contemporaneously with the meteoric rise of afrobeats. Afro-dancehall artists like Stonebwoy have increasingly incorporated afrobeat elements to attract listeners with an appetite for afrobeats, while purists like Shatta Wale have eschewed such syncretization as betraying pure, authentic dancehall – two distinct approaches in a rivalry between the two artists that has dominated the Ghanaian music industry since 2014. Based on ethnographic fieldwork over the past decade, including interviews with top artists, producers, and early pioneers, this paper explores the nuances of afro-dancehall's crisis of authenticity as the genre continues to be massively popular domestically but struggles to attract dancehall and afrobeats fans on a global scale.

03C. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Grief and Memory

Chair: Matthew A. Haywood, Macau University of Science and Technology

When Death Sounds: Exploring the Sound-Death Relationship in the Mocoví, Abipón, and Qom Cultures of the Southern Chaco

Valentin Mansilla, University of Turin, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba

The conception of death among indigenous cultures of the Southern Chaco has been frequently explored in anthropology and ethno-history. From the pioneering works of Enrique Palavecino (1944) and Alfred Métraux (1946) to recent studies by Alejandro López (2009), Florencia Tola (2012), Silvia Citro (2016), and Agustina Altman (2017), it is possible to observe—albeit in a fragmented manner—that the act of dying and the very notion of death were linked to characteristic sonorities. However, despite mentions of the “sonic” dimension in ethnographic and historical studies, it has not been a central focus for examining Chaco indigenous societies. This presentation deepens the analysis of the sound-death relationship through three case studies: the Mocoví, Abipón, and Qom cultures of the Southern Chaco. Based on historical and ethnographic sources that cover an extended period of time, the discussion is structured into four sections. The first one (sounds in front of death) examines sound practices in mourning and funeral rites. The second one (sounds from death) explores sonic manifestations of the nequi'í (soul) in the realm of the living. The third one (sounds that warn of death) focuses on netanec (signals) that foretell death. The fourth one (sounds to prevent death) discusses sonic practices used for healing and avoiding demise.

By addressing these dimensions, this work argues that the sound-death relationship extends beyond funeral rites (the preferred event for analyzing the sonic aspect related to death) to encompass interactions among diverse ontological agents—humans, animals, celestial bodies, and powerful non-human entities.

Old Cairo’s Mourning: Nostalgic Pop’s Rise Over Mahraganat in Egypt

Omar Sobhy, Carleton College

Mahraganat, a rap-driven and EDM-based musical style that emerged in the late 2000s, has amplified subaltern voices in Egypt. Its dominant presence recently waned, however, in the face of rising nostalgic pop music featuring the “Spanish tinge” of flamenco guitar and rhythms, used by the likes of Amr Diab in the 1990s (Frishkopf 2003). This nostalgic turn often includes visuals of an idealized Cairo, featuring classic affluent neighborhoods like Zamalek rather than new, flashy modern suburbs, while strategically employing typography characteristic of mid-20th century Egyptian cinema. This paper argues that today’s nostalgic turn signals a musical and visual shift in response to socio-economic instability and anxieties surrounding the erosion of a much-beloved image of Cairo. Drawing on evidence from chart trends and audiovisual analysis, I detail how this turn involves two key dynamics: first, nostalgia adapts ‘90s-era Egyptian pop by integrating elements characteristic of the Spanish tinge, such as instrumentation, rhythm, mode, and harmonic progression. Second, it resists the perceived erasure of Egypt’s cultural identity by reinforcing the image of a traditional Cairo. Emerging artists like TUL8TE, known for absurdist humor and masked anonymity, use these elements to negotiate a new sonic identity, presenting nostalgia not just as a longing for the past but as a psychological resource for reclaiming cultural agency. Engaging with frameworks regarding nostalgia in music and culture (e.g., Shannon 2015; Williams 1976), this paper examines nostalgia’s evolving role as a mode of cultural discourse and identity formation in contemporary Egypt.

Nodes of Memory: Reconciling Individual Agency with Forces of Representation in Sephardic Song

Courtney Elizabeth Blue, University of California, Los Angeles

Sephardic Jews trace their linguistic lineage back to medieval Spain, prior to expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. Subsequently, many Sephardic communities found refuge in neighboring Muslim lands in North Africa and the vast Ottoman Empire of the Mediterranean. In this state of diaspora, they continued for hundreds of years to preserve Judeo-Spanish language and song through practices embedded into the fabric of daily life and ritual. In the 20th century, the centuries-old oral transmission of Judeo-Spanish song was interrupted and largely halted. However, a few rare folksingers retained this lore as part of a living culture amidst the challenges of colonialism, migration, and national pressures toward homogenization. These singers partnered with institutions to produce a multi-faceted array of representations of Sephardic lore, however these studies primarily focused on communities and groups. In contrast, the following article will illuminate the biographies of two prominent Judeo-Spanish folk singers who acted as nodes of memory for Eastern and Western poles of the Mediterranean: Alicia Benassayag de Bendayan of Morocco and Bienvenida

“Berta” Aguado of Turkey. Their stories expose a complex web of agents that have shaped contemporary notions of Sephardic song, touching upon the role of mentorship, patrimony in ethnography, the agency of songbooks and recordings, and the entanglements of national and colonial interests in folksong preservation. Understanding their roles as individuals invites larger questions into the forefront regarding the role of the archive, the nature of representation in ethnography, and the relationship of the individual to broader group identity formation.

Irish Sound Paintings: Belfast’s Palimpsestic Politics in the Aftermath of October 7th

Jessie Lee Rubin, Columbia University

This paper explores the critical role of music in the expression of solidarity with Palestine for Northern Ireland’s Catholic Nationalist Republicans (CNRs); this solidarity arises from shared experiences of settler colonialism and movements for national sovereignty. In the long shadow of the Troubles and the immediate aftermath of October 7th, I explore the sonic landscape of Palestine solidarity. I use the palimpsestic painting practices of Belfast’s mural artists as a template for investigating the broader processes of cultural layering—particularly the ways that local musicians rework existing songs (oftentimes, well-known “rebel” songs that narrate proud moments in Irish anti-colonial history) to celebrate Palestinian resistance. Because local audiences know the songs’ original stories, they engage in a palimpsestic listening in which the original texts, now written over, make their way back to the “threshold of visibility” (Daughtry 2013). I analyze representative songs from the Troubles-era to the present day, including Men of No Property’s 1971 song “Wee White Turban,” a reworking of “The Broad Black Brimmer,” “Fields of Palestine,” a recent re-write of Pete St. John’s 1979 “Fields of Athenry,” and bar chants of “Go on Home British Soldiers” which transformed into “Go on Home Israeli Soldiers.” I argue that for CNRs, palimpsests reflect a discursive tradition that conceptually links a particular past and an imagined future to artistic practice/praxis in the present (Asad 2009, 20). In a divided society where physical space remains highly contested, palimpsests radically combat the limitations that time and space so often impose.

03D. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Political Limits of Music and Sound

Chair: Matt Sakakeeny, Tulane University

As the political conditions under which ethnomusicologists conduct research are changing, this panel asks how the political claims made on behalf of music and sound must also necessarily change. To date, ethnomusicologists have largely affirmed the political potency of music and sound to express resistance to domination, fortify social identity and cultural recognition, produce sensations of healing and belonging, or model “otherwise” possibilities. Against this affirmative stance, the four panelists offer a more skeptical set of analytical questions. How do we evaluate “alternative” musical communities that reproduce male dominance? Why might activists

subject to state surveillance react with paranoia to a simple telephone ring from an unknown caller? What are the limits of music and sound when confronting conditions of domination, inequality, and suffering in Gaza? Indeed, can music actually *do* anything? Against the valorization of music and sound as inherently liberatory or counter-hegemonic, the papers confront instances of discomfort and abuse, impotence and uncertainty. These sticky realities came to light through research on the indie music sector in São Paulo, Indigenous and settler land defenders in British Columbia, media representations of genocide and dissent, and creative multimedia projects exploring music's radical ambiguity. As ethnomusicologists continue to wager on the political efficacy of music and sound, this panel grapples with their relative powerlessness to alter contemporary conditions that have profoundly narrowed political horizons.

The Normative Sexism of Alternative Music Economies: Brazilian Indie Rock's #MeToo Contradictions

Shannon Garland, University of Pittsburgh

Participants in alternative forms of music production often assert a correspondence between their activities and counter-hegemonic politics. In early 21st-century Brazil, actors in the indie music sector framed their performances and festivals as resisting conservatism, authoritarianism and the patriarchal Brazilian family. Yet during the same period a series of indie #MeToo stories began proliferating, with women accusing male musicians and promoters of sexual mistreatment and outright physical abuse. Participants sometimes pointed out the relation between this dynamic and indie's labor structure, dominated by men performing and receiving public recognition, while women took on the infrastructural organizing work to make such performances happen. Drawing on social reproduction theory and feminist economic scholarship, this paper fleshes out the ways indie political ethics not only papered over structural sexism, but reproduced it – despite this sector's efforts to organize “alternative” music economies and its self-image as a vanguard of the progressive, counter-hegemonic left. Instead, the very economic organization of this sector reproduced and affirms male dominance both materially and ideologically. Treating women not as full human subjects whose labor was vital to the sector's economic functioning and whose bodily integrity was sovereign, indie naturalized women's “carework” and sexual subservience, the epitome of the very patriarchal authoritarianism indie actors claimed to contest. As practitioners and music scholars alike have ample such cases of contradictions between the ideology of music practice and its real-world effects, the paper asks why music continues to be invested in as a site for counter-hegemonic politics.

“Music Can't Stop a War Machine”

Matt Sakakeeny, Tulane University

By tracking responses to the genocide in Gaza, this paper evaluates the limits of music and sound in confronting conditions of domination, inequality, and suffering. While the charity single “Rajieen” (“we're returning”) has been streamed over 30 million times since its release on October 31, 2023, it cannot be claimed that cultural recognition for Palestinians has altered the political calculus

determining their life and death. After chants of “Free Palestine” echoed across college campuses, only traces of sonorities of dissent remain now that antidemocratic forces have effectively silenced demonstrators. And in Gaza itself, any evidence of the healing properties of music appears overwhelmed by the scale of injury, loss, and devastation. As Tamer Nafar of the Palestinian hip-hop group DAM lamented, “music can’t stop a war machine.” In contrast to the more familiar and optimistic slogan “music is the weapon,” Nafar’s skepticism undercuts attachments to music or sound as a social good that can mitigate or counteract political problems. I draw out this skepticism by suggesting that the underlying faith in music and sound to make a better world rests upon a faith in participatory democracy that is no longer tenable. As Western democracies move increasingly toward *depoliticization* (the constraints placed on political participation), ethnomusicologists cannot take for granted music’s capacity for *politicization* (its entry into and effect on the sphere of normative politics). The Gaza example suggests, instead, that we must reckon with the limits of music and sound as the possibilities for political change have profoundly narrowed.

Sound and Silence in the Shadow of the Surveillance State

Lee Veeraraghavan, Tulane University

With the ability to be heard comes the possibility of being overheard. When secure communications are compromised, it can mean the difference between the success and failure of an endeavour. This is as true for insurgent movements as it is for business and military interests. My research grows out of activist ethnography with Indigenous and settler land defenders in Canada when the ubiquity of state surveillance in Anglosphere countries was becoming known. This paper begins from those moments when sound becomes a marker of danger—one that collapses distinctions between inside and outside, in-group and out-group. A phone rings and everyone in the room simultaneously knows without speaking that it is the police. Changing formations of officers at a blockade indicate that an activist meeting place has been bugged. Activists are tormented by auditory phenomena that may or may not be coming from outside. The epistemological uncertainty (let’s call it paranoia) to which these examples attest is a response to the massive collection of data (let’s call it positivism). Such an orientation toward the world of data, self, and others establishes conditions of possibility for a political program. And yet sound studies as a field, following the model of music studies, has tended to view sound and music as politically liberatory. This paper draws on existing studies of music and sound’s radical ambiguity, their manifestations as data, surveillance, and military intelligence, to pose questions for an uncertain sonic episteme.

Can Music Actually Do Anything?

Gavin Steingo, Princeton University

This paper begins with a deceptively simple question: can music do anything? I begin by reflecting on claims regarding music’s utopian transcendence, from Bloch to Muñoz and beyond, and then introduce a note of skepticism. Based on a careful review of the literature and supplemented by ethnographic research, I suggest that although music can and does promise an “otherwise,” it is

powerless to deliver on that promise. In other words, music can't really do anything—so, at least, is my claim. I then place debates around utopianism into conversation with the recent multimedia project “You Can't Trust Music” (YCTM). Hosted on the platform e-flux, TCTM brought together musicians, artists, and writers to explore music's ambiguity and slipperiness. I suggest that such creative multimedia products generated by music's radical ambiguity give testimony to the fact that, although music hardly “does” anything at all, its next-to-nothingness may indeed be worthy of our attention, and perhaps even our devotion.

03E. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Decolonizing “Black” Genre: Navigating Femininity and Queerness in Performance Spaces Across the Diaspora

Chair: Maureen Mahon, New York University

This panel explores the gender bias within sonically Black performance spaces, and offers innovative accounts of transcending such barriers. These four papers discuss the ramifications of normalizing patriarchally-centered musical environments, and pose unique interventions specifically in the genres of jazz, emo, women's Nigerian traditional music, and alternative R&B. The first paper navigates the jazz jam session as a gendered workplace, and the ways in which the masculine-coded social-professional setting allows for these biases to go unchecked. Following suit, the second paper describes alternative R&B as defying genre normativities both culturally and sonically, as the musical hybridity found in the alternative sound allows for a cultural hub of Black queerness to safely emerge. The third paper deciphers the authority around the Nigerian musical experience, and aims to center femme voices in musical narratives. Lastly, the fourth paper undrapes the utility of emo music community spaces for Black queer women, using resistance as a form of healing. Through the usage of feminist theoretics and queer studies, this research explains examples of sonic oppression and proposes a more fluid approach to musicking away from Western hegemonic structures in response. Within this international exploration, ethnographic accounts, each reflexive, observatory, and participatory, will contribute to the theoretical literature, garnering specific case studies contributing to the identity politicking of womanhood, maternity, and sapphism. This panel offers a multidisciplinary decolonial framework for understanding music and performance as dynamic, living practices that challenge rigid structures while centering marginalized voices and experiences.

Hang like a Man: Gender and the Jazz Jam Session

Rebecca F. Zola, Columbia University

Attending jazz jam sessions is a crucial extracurricular activity for individual musicians seeking networking opportunities. However, jam sessions operate in ways that normalize toxic, aggressive, and masculine-coded behaviors and attitudes, which may intimidate people of all genders. I draw on feminist scholarship on labor and the psycho-social norms of Western workplace practices to demonstrate that jam sessions operate similarly to casual work environments.

To elucidate my argument, first, I present an autoethnography to situate myself as a participant with first-hand experience in this toxic environment. Following this, I review previous research on jazz jam sessions to illustrate how scholars have historically approached this critical space for jazz performance. Third, I share field research conducted in 2019, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which I interviewed jam session leaders and attendees of all genders based in New York City. Subsequently, I provide a comparative analysis drawing parallels between the operation of jam sessions and extra-curricular social workplace settings in the corporate sector. Lastly, I present my recent field research that examines several alternative jam session spaces designed to offer an alternative environment distinct from the traditional jam session. I ask whether these alternative jam sessions address the larger issue of toxic gendered behavior that has become normalized, or whether they, in fact, permit traditional jam sessions to persist unchanged by providing an escape for those who ‘can’t hang’ in such environments.

Centering Blackness at the Margins: Embodying Queerness through Alternative R&B

Jordan R. Brown, Harvard University

There has been little exploration of how Black queer identity is expressed within industry-marketed African American musical traditions such as hip-hop, soul, and rhythm and blues (R&B); the sparse representation that has been granted thus far primarily focuses on sex and the body. This paper employs a phenomenological approach to examine Black queerness beyond its common framing around sexuality and struggle. Instead, I center the thoughts, feelings, emotions, and lived experiences of Black queer individuals as expressed through alternative R&B music. Ethnographic interviews with executives at the GRAMMYs’ Recording Academy inform my approach to current industry standards, genre classifications, and sonic barriers. Using works by Sara Ahmed, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Fred Moten, and Alexander Weheliye, I explore this Black popular culture phenomenon through cultural biopolitics, specifically the “flesh,” “viscus,” and “voice.” Sonically, this paper discusses genre hybridity cultivated beyond industry normativities as encapsulated in the term “alternative.” I argue that this musical experimentation has led to a decolonial orientation of resistance within the Black queer community and an exploration of musical identity that mimics lived reality (Crawley 2017). Exemplifying the lyrics, rhythm, timbre, and melodic choices of experimental artists Erykah Badu and Willow Smith will guide my approach. By describing the humanity in relationality in music, as opposed to solely the sexual objectification of Black queer bodies, I center the importance of what it means to realistically occupy such space under a Western hegemonic structure.

Her Beat, Her Story: Bridging Practice and Scholarship in African Musicology

Ruth S. Opara, Columbia University

As an African woman who is a music practitioner and music scholar, I often find myself questioning which voices to highlight in my work and navigating the complexities of authority and authenticity. Who holds knowledge in music performance spaces, or better put, who is learning from whom? By examining two ethnographic sites—one involving girl dancers and the other, involving women who

identify as mothers making music (both in Nigeria)—I juxtapose my experiences with theirs, reflecting on how musical knowledge flows within our communities. In these encounters, I confront the longstanding orality-literacy divide, a notion born from colonial constructs that often misrepresents and undermines African knowledge systems, especially women’s perspectives. By revealing unique and perhaps unusual insights gained from these practitioners, which are pivotal to my analysis, I aim to demonstrate that African Women’s music is a living, evolving practice that challenges these simplistic classifications. My experiences in performance spaces reveal how deeply rooted and complex these interactions are, teaching me as much as I teach others. I advocate for a decolonized approach to representing African musical experiences, one that respects and centers the voices of African women and girls. By sharing my experiences, I hope to contribute to a research methodology that honors and makes space for all voices involved in our shared musical knowledge.

We’re So (Emo)tional: Exploring Affect and the Erotic in Queer Black Women’s Participation in Emo Musicking

Victoria Smith, New York University

Where is the academic literature concerning black queer women emo fans? This presentation explores the intersections of Black womanhood, queerness, emo music, and the profound emotional landscapes that emerge within this genre, positioning emo as both a musical genre and an erotic utopia (Muñoz 2009). My research underscores the importance of emo as a site of belonging and resistance, where queer Black women find solidarity, empowerment, and the opportunity to reclaim narratives such as vulnerability and joy within a genre often characterized by its white male centrality (Ryalls 2013).

Drawing upon participant observation as an academic and fan, or “aca-fan” (Williams 2022) and qualitative interviews with queer Black women emos, I seek to elucidate how we access the erotic and utopic via emo musicking. I borrow the term “erotic” from Audre Lorde (1978), to move beyond queerness solely regarding sexuality, and posit queer Black women’s experiences with emo as a deep social practice, resource, and framework for emotional agency. With this presentation, I aim to foster an environment where the emotional resonances of Black women participants are foregrounded (Ahmed 2004), creating an active bulwark against the racist, classist and abelist tendencies of academia that have historically marginalized queer Black women’s contributions to this genre.

03F. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

The Magnetic Politics of Cassette Archives

Chair: David Novak, University of California, Santa Barbara

What sonic worlds are written on the reels of the audiocassette? For decades, most of the world’s musical content was tied up in the ribbons of the humble audiocassette. But despite being common objects, cassettes contain infinities of otherwise inaccessible content, and elicit alternative narratives of social production and economic exchange. Although the format is often described as obsolete (as we

will show, far from it), its ideological authentications continue to flow through contemporary digital networks and symbolize the erasures of migratory circulation and alternative forms of media distribution. Cassette archives house technological manipulations and unspool political imaginaries, holding hidden sounds that resonate with the counterpolitics of mediated memory.

In this panel, we consider contemporary cassette collections as personal curations of musical and sonic history, and analyze the effects and affordances of tape in creating and capturing social worlds. Beyond mere preservation, tape archives offer a materialization of sound as an adaptable, editable, and erasable past, which tell a truer history for and by its subjects. Our cases range from regionally censored Kurdish cassette networks crossing borders in Turkey, Iraq, Armenia and Syria, to community tape archives in contemporary multicultural Britain, to images of cassettes as a symbolic form for Punjabi truck drivers, to home tape recordings of a Polish American family that decenter the concept of field recording. Listening to both the collections and the collectors of these cassettes, we attend to the diverse voices that narrate tape-based practices, and elaborate a magnetic critique of diasporic history.

Unhearing Happy Birthday: A Cassette Deck in the Polish American Kitchen

Andrea Bohlman, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Theories of location recording have often figured the portable recorder as a prosthetic ear, reaching locations and staying attuned far exceeding the capacity of the normative human ear. While surveillance tapes loom large as an iconic example of this imaginary, many tape-based practices—and their successors—are framed around the desire to hear better and beyond. Even the vernacular practice of dubbing an ill-timed radio program for post-broadcast consumption fits this bill.

In this paper, I attend to a homemade cassette archive whose very production techniques and auditory narratives offer a critique of the ableism at the heart of this hegemonic formulation of field recording: an 18-cassette collection of recordings made by a Polish American woman, Gail Mary Killian (1953–88), who lived with Down Syndrome. Every year on her birthday, Killian would place a tape recorder in her family’s kitchen as community arrived to celebrate, sing, and organize mutual aid. Since the mic’s position was stable and the late afternoons are unedited, the tapes capture singing, overlapping dialogues, radio dubs, and kitchen activity. Multilingual conversations focus on the material concerns (employment) and delights (food) of the long-standing white Catholic working-class in Taunton, MA. After Killian’s passing her collection was passed to a nephew, the family’s informal archivist, who collaborated with Columbia’s Oral History Archives to ensure their preservation. My paper explores how we might hear the tape archive as Killian’s own theory of field recording, one that decenters itemizable sonic content to resonate practices and cacophonies of being together.

Anarchive in the UK: Tape Collections as Diasporic Recollections

David Novak, University of California, Santa Barbara

This paper considers three London-based audiocassette tape collections – the Palestinian Sound Archive, the Tape Letters Project, and the Syrian Cassette Archive - as “anarchival” sources of diasporic memory for migratory communities relocated to the United Kingdom from South Asia and the Middle East. Each of these emergent archives turns up new possibilities for understanding the impacts of residual media, both in recollecting migratory history and in generating new forms of sonic art and communication. Rather than focusing on the changes that cassette technology wrought on local traditions and stylistic forms, I am specifically concerned with the material interventions that generations of listeners bring to a juxtaposed framework of diasporic memory. How does the digital migration of analog sound collections into online archives both provoke and radically alter the construction of musical and cultural histories?

The media archaeological concept of an “anarchive” proposes an anti-canonical use of material memory as “a selective reactivation of past patterns of action” (The Future of Indeterminacy Project 2025, also Zielinski 2015, Zaayman 2023). These projects recognize the scrambled nature of diasporic recollection and the multiplicity of cultural memories at play in a mediated community, while refusing inscription into a state-driven politics of recognition and digital access. If cassette archives demand particular and personal levels of knowledge, this is not a bug but a feature of their technological affordances. Who better to unpack the burden of memory housed in cassettes than those who have taken the time to circulate and collect them?

Listening in Plain Sight: Kurdish Cassettes and The Absence of Visual History

Fidel Glitch, University of California, Berkeley

This paper examines the material surfaces of Kurdish music cassettes in Turkey, focusing on their covers—or more precisely, the absence of images and text—as a political and cultural space. From the 1970s to the 2000s, Turkish Kurdish musicians produced most of their recordings in exile, unable to return due to state-imposed censorship. Their music, carrying revolutionary messages, reached colonized Kurdistan—Turkey’s Southeast—through audiotapes. Kurdish songs, particularly those smuggled from the diaspora, were distributed clandestinely. In some cases, the cassette surfaces bore subtle inscriptions—small scratches, encrypted words or letters; in others, they were left entirely unmarked. The most secure method of hiding these recordings, however, was placing Kurdish music inside Turkish cassette covers, often repurposing tapes of original Arabesk or Turkish popular music.

During this period of prohibition, most Kurdish listeners in Turkey received the voices of diaspora musicians without visual references. They imagined the faces of artists purely through sound, and learned their names much later, if ever. This paper traces how sound and visual representation are strategically separated in the colonial repression of musical media. It investigates the political negotiation of cassette surfaces and magnetic strips in the Kurdish experience and how the resonance of sound transforms in relation to the visual. Addressing a community whose past - along with their musical and visual archives – have been erased in the production of history, the surfaces of the Kurdish cassette network reveal how the absence of images can manifest new imaginaries of political listening.

Punjabi Tape Nostalgia in Truck-Borne Obscenity, Village Anomie, and Ethnomusicological History

Davindar Singh, Harvard University

This paper examines how politicians, musicians, and ethnomusicologists have used Punjabi cassettes in both nostalgic narratives of bygone sociocultural unity and critiques of contemporary social breakdown. Although now digital, contemporary Punjabi media industries wax nostalgic for audio and video cassettes. Music videos use cassette imagery, and full-length musical films celebrate 1980s village VCR ownership and rental. Nostalgia for cassettes includes nostalgia for their surrounding social formations: purportedly more-cohesive Punjabi village society, and purportedly more-“folkloric” and authentically Punjabi musical culture, including cassette-circulated trucksongs. This cassette nostalgia adjoins critiques from politicians, scholars, and musicians decrying present-day rural drug addiction and undocumented American outmigration. However, in prior decades other musicians, politicians, and ethnomusicologists critiqued truckborne cassette circulations for spreading obscenity and eroding social cohesion, accusations which provoked assassinations of musicians. These critics heard modernizing anomie in the same recording and distribution formats within which many Punjabi listeners now nostalgically hear cohesion.

Despite their opposing stances towards Punjabi trucksong cassette circulations, listeners past and present have used tape and its obscene musics to express social theories opposing newly-gendered social decay to past village unity, thereby splicing anomie and nostalgia together. I argue that these jointly nostalgic and anomic narratives, both in classic ethnomusicological critiques of cultural commodification and in contemporary critiques of Punjabi rurality, begin with 19th-century colonial ethnographic theorizing about village unification. Building on anthropological analyses of “media ideologies” (Hull 2011), I trace how these oppositional tales of musical-social decay overdubbed structurally similar moral narratives upon the same Punjabi tape.

03G. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Voicing the Unheard: Lament as Memory, Resistance, and Healing

Chair: Andrea Shaheen Espinosa, Arizona State University

Georgia Curran, University of Sydney

Larissa Mulder, The Ohio State University

Grijda Spiri, University of California Santa Cruz

Felicia K. Youngblood, Western Washington University

Chuyi Zhu, University of Michigan

This roundtable examines grief and loss in gendered contexts, with a focus on their musicultural manifestations. Our discussion spans collective and individual memory practices (Frawley 2012, Casey 1987) and explores how women recover from trauma through

embodied practices in ceremonial spaces (Belloni 2019, McBride 2021). Across five cultures and geographical locations, our presenters ask how grief is navigated, how social oppression is addressed, and how communities recover from loss. The first roundtable presenter considers a Central Australian women's ceremony which is closed following a death and subsequently reopened, illustrating how this embodied collective activity facilitates transition from a mourning period. Our second participant explores how Irish song serves as a vehicle for communal lament, using cross-disciplinary approaches to examine its role in cultural memory, gendered resistance, and diasporic identity. Our third participant examines how the Albanian communist regime suppressed and co-opted traditional women's lamentation practices for propaganda, compelling women to modify their mourning behaviors to navigate societal repression and trauma. Incorporating Italian tarantism as a case study, our fourth presenter investigates how trauma survivors re-voice and embody grief to become autonomous in their own recovery. Our final participant explores how Chinese kujia lament enables practitioners to relive past memories and transforms remembrance into a cathartic and therapeutic engagement with the present. The roundtable will conclude with a discussion in which participants further outline their methodologies—including interviews, autoethnography, literary research, observation, and lyrical, sonic, and gestural analysis—while co-creating a multifaceted framework for studying grief and loss through gendered lenses in ethnomusicology.

03H. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM
Reflections on Sound and Movement in Ethnomusicology
Chair: Allan Zheng, University of California, Riverside

Holly Tumblin, University of Florida
Matthew Rahaim, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Shayna Silverstein, Northwestern University
Christina Sunardi, University of Washington
Corinna Campbell, Williams College
Allan Zheng, University of California, Riverside

Sound and movement are deeply entangled with each other. In response to an outgrowth of scholarship on choreomusicology over the past decade and multiple conference panels at SEM about dance and movement, this roundtable draws attention to these rich conversations about embodied praxis, musician-dancer interactions, spatial-temporal relationships in performance, and movement as a conceptual resource. While music and dance remain separate disciplines in the academy, this roundtable engages the intersections of music and dance studies, reflecting on current patterns and trends as well as the future of scholarship on sound and movement. Bringing together perspectives from early career and senior scholars, we plan to discuss each of our approaches to navigating these disciplinary challenges, including writing about embodiment and navigating institutional barriers. Roundtable panelists come with a

variety of perspectives from across the globe with differing relationships to their music-dance practice of study. Each panelist will share their provocation and response, drawing or diverging from the following questions: (1) How do you see your scholarship fit into the trajectory of the music and dance studies, scholarship on sound and movement? (2) In what ways does working along the intersections of music and dance begin to unsettle and challenge systemic issues in academic research? (3) How has your work presented issues with legibility in the academy and beyond?

03I. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Embodiment

Chair: TBD

“My Body is a Cage”: Genre and Embodiment in Heavy Music

Paige Carter Dailey, University of Michigan

Scholarship on musical genre (Fabbri 1982a; Frith 1996; Negus 1999; Holt 2007), though vast, has not accounted for the ways in which it is informed by embodied sensibility. This paper addresses this gap in the literature with an attempt at understanding genre through embodied experience, using hardcore punk [from here called “hardcore”] as a case study. While certain musical parameters are often used to delineate genre within aggressive music scenes, metal and hardcore (and related subgenres) are most often understood by participants as socially constructed entities which cannot be defined by sound alone. Though many bands who self-identify as hardcore play music more closely aligned with metal sonically, social factors at play render the hardcore label more accurate. In this paper, I build upon Waksman’s (2009) punk/metal continuum and Kennedy’s (2018) theory of generic symbiosis by examining the role of embodiment in the construction of genre in heavy music. I explore how subgenres of metal and hardcore interact and how fans create meaning in their physical experiences with the music. Based on fieldwork and long-term involvement in Toledo and Detroit, I argue that one of the main differences between hardcore and metal is audience participation through moshing, dancing, crowd-killing, and other physical movement. I assert that the element of physical danger at shows understood to be hardcore is distinct from that of metal shows. Ultimately, I show how genres are embodied, examining the sensory experiences that inform how people construct and understand genres in relation to each other.

Secularizing Social Identity Through Performing Khayyami

Hamidreza Fallahi, University of Texas, Austin

How does performing khayyami serve as a means of secular social identity formation in contemporary Iran? The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 leveraged political interpretations of Shi’a Islam as an essential arbiter for social and political control

(Nooshin 2009: 3). As a result, concepts of Iranian-ness have been debated up to the present. As a significant part of the daily lives of Iranians, music has been a “target of constant government scrutiny” (Lucas 2006: 79), as well as a tool for resistance and defiance. Originating in the port city of Bushehr, the regional genre of khayyami has become a locus for ideological debates regarding Iranian-ness. Characterized by its textual repertoire from quatrains by the poet Omar Khayyam, this genre synthesizes Khayyam’s secular ideas with local dance songs. As a deeply participatory musical practice, musicians and audiences collectively shape the performance through singing, clapping, dancing, and creating a holistic atmosphere of social and musical interaction. As such, khayyami expresses embodied joy and resistance in a political context where singing and dancing in public are politically and religiously prohibited. I will argue that through performing khayyami as a collective musical activity people confront the domination of political Islam from their social identity, and reconstruct it through performing Khayyam quatrains, as the secular symbol of the Persian poetry. Using collected fieldwork and digital platforms materials, I explore theories of race, affect, and national consciousness to illuminate the role of khayyami in representing alternative expressions of Iranian belonging.

Transportive Sensations: Historicity, Aura, and Embodiment in Sikh Musical Worship

Inderjit N Kaur, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Sikh Sabad Kīrtan (the singing of scriptural verses) is performed in a diverse array of musical idioms, broadly categorized into what are called “classical” and “light” styles, the former based on rāg (the South Asian melodic system), and the latter, free of this structure. Whereas the vast majority of Sikh worshippers find their deepest devotional experiences through the light Kīrtan styles, many hold a special affective regard for the classical styles. This is due to the presence of rāg-names in the song- and section-headings in the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib (1604|1704). A compendium of about 6,000 canonized sacred song-texts, authored mainly by the founding Sikh Guru (1469-1708), the scripture’s organization by rāg lends a sense of historicity and aura even to contemporary classical styles of Kīrtan. In this paper, I highlight the embodied aspects of musical worship in this heightened auratic context, focusing on what the devotees describe as feelings of proximity to the Guru and the Divine. Based on Sikh epistemology, and sensory ethnography attentive to the thick event, I analyze the spatio-temporal experiences of congregants during the course of a Kīrtan session, to argue for a transportive sensation in worshipping bodies that is a dynamic unfolding of somatic consciousness.

Cuban Lion Dancing: Embodying Alternative Cubanness

Edwin Porras, Haverford College

In the early decades of the socialist revolution, Castro declared Cuba an Afro-Latin nation to the dismay of those who embraced a White identity, via Spain, and at the same time obfuscating the cultural inheritance of minority groups, such as Cubans of Chinese descent. Further, the attempt to construct a homogenous national identity has left very little room for the local exploration or discursive expression of identities that fall outside the official narrative, which suggests, promotes, and naturalizes the idea and logic

of a perceived universal Cubanness. In this paper, I explore the role music plays in the creation of alternative spaces of being and belonging. I observe that the practice of lion dance embeds and is embedded with forms of knowledge that signal a less visible Cuban identity, and comments on the relevance of the White and Black binary upon which Cuban national identity is predicated. Such a claim for an alternative definition of who is Cuban is constructed and reenacted through rituals of movement, sound, and visual displays. I argue that the symbolic power of the Cuban lion-dance performance provides practitioners and community members with a form of non-textual discourse that needs neither to align, nor contest official narratives. Instead it allows to signal an alternative Cuban identity registered in the body through the performative process. My work is based on field research conducted in Cuba since 2016 and constitutes an effort to give visibility to a less known but significant element of Cuban culture.

03J. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Fieldwork Considerations

Chair: TBD

The Best and the West: Amateur Fieldwork in Early Twentieth-Century California

Matthew Gilbert, Stanford University

Throughout the 1920s–40s, various informally trained music enthusiasts and amateur folklorists scoured California, recording the musics of its inhabitants. Working idiosyncratically at the margins of musicology, anthropology, and folklore studies, they collected songs from migrant camps, immigrant settlements, and Indigenous communities. When the discipline of ethnomusicology began to be codified in the 1950s, much of this work was left behind in favor of research methods inspired by existing practices in musicology and anthropology: long-term ethnographic fieldwork, participant-observation, and scientific music and cultural analysis. Histories of the field tend to prioritize scholars who pioneered these standardized methods, relegating amateurs to the footnotes (Brady 1999; Nettl 2010). This paper recovers the work of these overlooked figures for what they can reveal about changing attitudes towards non-Western musics in the decades preceding the institutionalization of ethnomusicology. From the Bohemian poet, Jaime de Angulo, to Sidney Cowell, wife of modernist composer Henry Cowell, I show how their unorthodox methodologies were excluded from, but not unknown to the academic world. By engaging with archival materials, I trace an intellectual history of this undervalued sect who held a surprising amount of influence amongst the contemporary vanguard of music studies, from Charles Seeger to Mantle Hood. In doing so, I complicate received histories of the field by privileging the passionate and at-times problematic work of amateur music-ethnographers in the United States. As public scholarship assumes renewed urgency, ethnomusicologists may find new inspiration (or a reminder to take caution!) by returning to marginalized figures of the disciplinary past.

Data-Driven Ethnomusicology, AI, and Decoloniality

León García Corona, University of Southern California

Quoting Audre Lorde in their introduction to *On Decoloniality*, Walsh and Mignolo remind us that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” In recent decades, higher education has undergone a rapid commodification, reshaping the landscape of learning. In the humanities, emerging technologies—such as AI chatbots—are swiftly transforming the ways we teach and learn, both inside and outside the classroom. This paper examines the role of technology and AI in ethnomusicological work, particularly in teaching and content production. The rise of AI-powered chatbots has presented both faculty and students with a new technological paradigm—one that can serve as either a powerful pedagogical tool or a disruptive force in education. In this paper I explore how this evolving landscape can be harnessed to create an innovative, productive, and collaborative learning environment that remains mindful of copyright and ethical considerations. To illustrate this potential, I share insights from a decade-long collaborative project that enables educators and students to design customizable learning experiences, empowering them to craft their own educational paths. Additionally, I expand on the concept of conversing, which I introduced in *Voices of the Field* (Oxford 2021), emphasizing the importance of developing cross-disciplinary communication skills and engaging diverse audiences. This paper situates technology and AI within the broader context of higher education’s commercialization, reflecting on how we might navigate these structural constraints while advancing humanistic goals. Though such efforts may not dismantle the master’s house, they hold the potential to transform it in meaningful and constructive ways.

Beyond the Spotlight: Social and Methodological Considerations for Qualitative Research with Celebrity Musicians

Anneli Loepp Thiessen, University of Ottawa

Despite an emphasis on fieldwork with music makers, ethnomusicologists have rarely conducted fieldwork with celebrity popular musicians. In the field of celebrity studies, research methodologies have often been limited to textual analysis, related to celebrity portrayal in mainstream media (Driessens 2015). Celebrity musicians are hard to access and are often inundated with media requests, making them difficult to collaborate with for research (Aberbach and Rockman 2002). Scholars like David Pruett (2011) have modelled, however, that this type of research can be meaningful for artists and the larger scholarly field.

This presentation explores social and methodological concerns for conducting qualitative interviews with celebrity musicians, and suggests that this method can reveal truths about unstable or hidden aspects of a music industry. It draws on the experience of conducting 22 semi-structured virtual interviews with women celebrities in the Christian music industry, ranging from recording artists to megachurch worship leaders. Women are underrepresented in a range of roles in the Christian music industry (Loepp Thiessen 2022, Payne 2024), but it is difficult to understand their experience of exclusion without discussing their experiences directly. Personal and confidential correspondence can be a revealing way to understand the industry culture.

What are best strategies for interviews with celebrity artists? How can researchers respect anonymity with high profile artists? Is there the possibility for collaborative ethnography with celebrity interviewees (Lassiter 2005) despite limited accessibility? This presentation ultimately invites music researchers to utilize the qualitative interview as a tool to better understand industry power dynamics and hidden structures.

Registering Community: On Navigating and Translating the Multilingual Field Site

Rachel Horner, Cornell University

In February 2024, musical duo Estem Atabalats released “Som Valencians” (We Are Valencians) on YouTube. The song’s music video features a series of speakers who utter the word “we” directly to camera, seemingly demonstrating the Valencian community proclaimed in the song’s title. But while the speakers all use Valencian Catalan, the co-official language of the eastern Spanish region, the ways they deliver their one-word monologues differ: “natros,” “mohâtros,” “nosaltres,” “nosatros,” and “mosatros.” “Som Valencians” casts Valencian Catalan as a social-sonic practice around which a community coalesces, even if speakers vary in their engagement with the language. It also furthers debates about language’s material and sonic forces and its relationship to other sonic practices, musical or otherwise (Faudree 2012, Ochoa 2014, Samuels and Porcello 2015). In this paper, I situate “Som Valencians” as a jumping-off point to argue that ethnomusicologists must attune to the sonic factors that shape community members’ relationships with language and with one another, an attunement best framed through the sociolinguistic concept of register. Register names the ways speakers shift their language use in response to the perceived formality, neutrality, or other contexts of a communicative scenario, but it also describes the work of the ethnographer who registers these shifts in verbal and textual translations. Understanding ethnographic translational work in terms of register enables ethnographers to interrogate how language shapes communities through sound. More importantly, it positions ethnographers to treat language not as a neutral intermediary for analyzing sound, but as the grounds for reciprocity with community members.

03K. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Resounding, Unsilencing, and Amplifying Latin America: Global South Possibilities for Sound Archives in the Global North

Chair: Caio de Souza, State University of Amapá

Ethnomusicological research enabled a politics of sonic extractivism, where the Global North colonial frameworks captured and (mis)represented the sonic cultures of Latin America in sound archives (Ochoa Gautier 2024). The recent digitization of these collections has brought a different “social dynamic” (Hoffman 2015) and strategies for Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities to recast ethnographic sounds into new politics of audibility (Ochoa Gautier 2020). These “refigurations” (Hoffman 2015) and “recycling” (Ochoa Gautier 2020) of the archive open myriad doors to unearth (hi)stories of sound, (un)silencing, and facilitating

intergenerational sound exchanges. This panel explores the possibilities of digitized archives for resounding music production, unsilencing women's voices, and amplifying otherwise marginal stories through their transnational embodiment and re-enactment. The first paper examines the repatriation of Brazilian traditional music archives through a collaboration with a Capoeira group, proposing a performance-based ethnomusicological approach that integrates archival recordings and contemporary practice to challenge colonial legacies and enhance participatory research. The second explores the archival erasure and recovery efforts to amplify Afro-Colombian women's voices and challenge the hegemonic silencing through a combination of ethnographic research and sound restoration techniques. The third paper discusses how the re-enactment of archival materials can highlight the role of imagination in reclaiming hidden stories while advocating for improved accessibility to U.S. archives to bridge the gap between scholars in the U.S. and Latin America. The panel closes with a discussant building a thread across the papers and underscoring the imperial character of both sound archiving and sound recording.

Resonances of the Crossroads: Lorenzo Dow Turner and the Capoeira Angola Group Estrela do Norte

Caio de Souza

In recent decades, the sound archives of European and North American institutions have emerged as abundant research sources for ethnomusicologists, folklorists, and anthropologists, offering unique records of musical practices from the Global South. Although ethnomusicologists have explored the possibility of repatriating these archives to address their colonial legacies, certain aspects of this research approach diminish the agency and subjectivity of the collaborators involved in the repatriation process. This paper investigates past and present dialogues by collaborating with Mestre Iuri Santos' Capoeira Angola Group Estrela do Norte, based in Bloomington, Indiana, to create a capoeira music album. The study draws on capoeira sound archives produced by the African American linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner in 1940 and 1941 in Salvador, Bahia—stored in the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University—as well as interviews with contemporary capoeira practitioners. Based on two years of fieldwork, the study includes semi-structured interviews, participant observation of capoeira classes, “sound elicitation” (Lobley 2022) sessions with Lorenzo Dow Turner's sound collection, and close listening to the album's pre-recording, recording, and post-production processes. This paper proposes a novel theoretical-methodological approach to sound archives, offering an alternative mode of scholarship that interweaves the archive and the repertoire (Taylor 2003). By fostering a dialogue within performance-based ethnomusicology, it emphasizes sound-centered participatory research as an engaged practice. Likewise offers new perspectives on performing sound archives from the standpoint of the research collaborator.

Bullerengue Unsilenced: Reclaiming Afro-Colombian Women’s Voices in the Sound Archive and in Ethnomusicology

Manuel Garcia-Orozco, Columbia University

Bullerengue is a musical tradition and an epistemic site led and preserved by cantadoras (elderly women singers) in the Afro-Colombian Maroon Caribbean. Early researchers in the region—such as Guillermo Abadia, George List, and INIDEF—reveal different modes of disregarding Black women’s knowledge, resulting in misrepresenting bullerengue in folklore and the sound archive. Such “epistemic erasure” (Berman- Arevalo 2021) and “production of ignorance” (Fernández Pinto 2014) hail from the “colonial legacies of folkloristics” (Briggs 2021). However, List’s rigid archival practices allow us to transform the silencing archive into a medium of unsilencing. Hence, I build from Brooks’ idea of sound culture shaped by women (2021) and Ochoa Gautier’s concept of recycling sound archives as a decolonial strategy (2020) to unsilence cantadora Juana Garcia Blanquicet (1884–1965). Recent advancements in audio restoration and artificial intelligence allowed me to recover Garcia Blanquicet’s (in)audible voice from List’s archive and discuss its audibility with her granddaughter, Juana Rosado (b.1939). The ethnographic contrast of archival research with oral memories evidenced Garcia Blanquicet’s active force in her village’s bullerengue. Her resounding subjectivity reclaims bullerengue’s social significance for women’s resistance, epistemologies, and ancestrality. I argue that researchers who shaped the official discourse were instrumental in silencing cantadoras, given that, as outsiders, they were unable to grasp the agency and influence of Afro-descendant elderly women. However, cantadoras use bullerengue as a (re)sounding historical vehicle for the ancestresses and their heirs to communicate cross-generationally, overcoming the political silencing of hegemonic history and the ultimate material silencing of death.

El Palenque de Delia: Retracing Steps, Re-enacting the Archive, and Activating the Imagination

Amelia López López, Indiana University, Bloomington

In 2024, the Colombian dance, music, and theatre group Conjunto de Tradiciones Populares de Colombia, El Palenque de Delia visited Indiana University and Vanderbilt University, both institutions holding important archives of Delia Zapata Olivella, the group’s founder. Delia Zapata Olivella was a Colombian dancer, researcher, scholar, teacher, and activist renowned for being the first “MujerNegra” (Lozano 2017) to perform at the Teatro Colón in Bogotá - a colonial institution, as its name indicates. After Delia’s passing in 2001, her daughter Edelmira Massa Zapata assumed the company’s artistic direction, preserving, amplifying, and transforming Delia’s legacy. In their recent visit to the U.S., the company embarked on a series of events directly related to the collections held at the archives of both institutions. Through performances, academic exchanges, and visits to the archives, the group re-enacted part of the archive at multiple levels. This paper examines specific instances in which the seemingly fixed materiality of the archive, like notebooks and photographs, was brought to life by the company members through the “ephemerality of the repertoire” (Taylor 2003), giving a different meaning to the collections. I argue that the active use of the imagination was key for “conjuring” (Otero 2020) and “refiguring” (Hoffmann 2015) Delia’s archive, creating a sense of intimacy through space and performance. This

reading to the archive shows the interconnectedness of the Americas in a multisensorial way and sheds light on the need for better accessibility to these collections to unsilence more hemispheric (hi)stories.

Discussion:

Sergio Ospina-Romero, Indiana University, Bloomington

03L. October 23, Thursday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

New Modes of Resistance and Connection in Popular Music

Chair: Justin Patch, Vassar College

The roles of music in modernity are complex, especially as digital tools connect global and local communities in new ways. Music can be a lucrative commodity, a space for the solidification of new identities, a location for exchange, and a site of repression and homogenization, all at the same time. The papers in this panel, examining the roles of popular music in China, Japan, the Central American Caribbean and the US, examine different aspects of popular music as a site of complex engagement with structures of power, identity and remuneration. The first looks at the cite of a bookstore, music label and concert venue in Shenzhen, China, as a site of resistance to repression and space of learning and exchange. The second analyzes the open jam as a musical space of growth and self-determination that challenges the hierarchical teacher-student relationship. The third looks at ‘Anime Music’ as conceptualized by Spotify versus the musical tastes of Anime fans and listeners. The author uses the differences between algorithmic choices and fan behavior to critique popular music taxonomies created as commodities. The last paper sheds light on how Garifuna musicians, riding a recent wave of popularity in the World Music market, both participate in a new economy and embrace notions of individualism, but also resist neo-liberalism and embrace Garifuna modes of musical and communal engagement. Together, these papers provide theories and case studies for thinking about popular music as resistance and as a site for critical connection in modern political and digital cultures.

When the Underground Is Above Ground: A Public-Facing Record Store and China’s Curated Indie Music Scene

Diandian Zeng, University of California, Santa Barbara

Due to tightened regulatory pressure on cultural expression—most notably the 2018 censorship of hip-hop—China’s indie music scene has been significantly affected, compelled either to conform to mainstream culture or to retreat underground (Nie 2021). This paper examines an independent bookstore and record shop in Shenzhen that remains publicly visible while engaging the indie music scene through a range of adaptive strategies. As both a physical shop and a music label, Old Heaven Books sells books and records, publishes indie music, and hosts free performances and listening sessions featuring alternative music, including works by artists from

ethnic minority communities. Drawing on my 2023 fieldwork, I investigate how the store has both preserved and compromised the ethos of “independence” under regulatory oversight and censorship. Framing the store as a “sonic infrastructure” (Kielman 2018), I analyze how its physical setting, target audiences, and audio offerings blur boundaries between mainstream and subculture, sensitive and safe, and local and global. I also examine the store’s co-present, material engagements—vinyl, recordings, and live events—that create spaces for open conversation and transnational learning beyond China’s internet restrictions (Plovnick 2024). I argue that the independent scene that developed around the store represents a distinct form of subcultural practice, cultivated through collective listening, encounters with external voices, and musical engagement with histories obscured in official discourse.

In Search of Our “True Academy”: Reflections on Modern Band, Open Jams, and the Purpose of Popular Music Education

Thomas Zlabinger, The City University of New York

In 1959, Ralph Ellison stated that “the jam session is...the jazzman’s true academy,” referring to the legendary sessions at Minton’s Playhouse in Harlem during the early 1940s. Ellison explained that at the time, jam sessions were where jazz musicians learned “tradition, group techniques, and style.” Jam sessions continue to exist and have branched out into other styles, like blues, classic rock, and funk, now better known as “open jams.” But unlike jazz in the 1940s, musicians can now learn popular music at institutions. I have witnessed the powerful transformations that occur during open jams and believe they are fertile ground for musicians to hone their skills and talents. But recently, I wondered how current popular music pedagogies could benefit from lessons learned at open jams. How do we connect modern bands, open jams, and PME? This paper draws on my experiences as a frequent attendee of open jams and a popular music educator. I will describe where open jams and PME align, where they conflict, and suggest strategies on how they can complement one another to create a better “true academy.” If we hear jam sessions as, to quote Ellison, “some key to a fuller freedom of self-realization”, and “true academy,” can we apply his theory of the the jam session as a place where musicians learn from one another and develop their craft, and emphasize the pedagogical value of the jam session to find their “self-determined identity” as exemplifying Freire’s reconciliation of the teacher-student contradiction.

Scrambling the genre logic of Spotify in “anime music”

Garrett Groesbeck, Wesleyan University

In recent years, major music streaming platform Spotify has come under significant criticism for a number of issues including low royalty payments, ghostwritten tracks, and user surveillance. In this paper, I critique a more fundamental aspect of the platform: its commitment to popular music genre in user analysis and recommendation algorithms. While streaming music ostensibly reflects a watershed disruption to radio DJ and record label dominance of the twentieth century, significant continuities exist, perhaps most fundamental being the crucial role genre plays as a site for institutions to make sense of user identity and its relationship to listening practice. This is particularly evident in Spotify wrapped, a feature which repackages data collected through digital surveillance as

colorful, personalized, quasi-psychological informatic graphics. Ethnomusicologists are well-equipped to critique popular music taxonomies, particularly given longstanding debates in the field surrounding terms such as “world music” and “world beat” in popular music industries. Drawing on interviews with members of the Japan Composers and Arrangers Association (JCAA) and other figures in the Japanese music industry, I critique genre’s function in contemporary music streaming by examining the sonically transgressive category of “anime music,” a widely-used but nebulous term which overlaps in complex ways with both functional (theme song, soundtracks) and generic (J-Pop, J-Rock) musical identifiers. Highlighting Spotify’s recent “Sounds of Anime” campaign, I argue for the ways in which anime music orients users to listening practices at odds with the assumptions about musical genre at the heart of Spotify’s music recommendation algorithms.

The Wátina Effect: Kaleidoscopic Neo-Traditionalism in Post-2010 Garifuna Popular Music

Amy Frishkey, University of Texas, San Antonio

The success of the 2007 album *Wátina* (“I Called Out”) by Andy Palacio and the Garifuna Collective, followed shortly after by Palacio’s untimely death at age 47, significantly altered the musical landscape of the Afro-indigenous Garifuna of the Central American Caribbean coast and North American diaspora. By garnering international accolades and gaining Garifuna music a resounding audibility within the world music industry, it launched a new “Garifuna world music” (GWM) genre, which the Collective has sustained in Palacio’s absence under the continued direction of Belizean Catalan producer Ivan Duran. However, the album’s release also broadened the purview of the culture’s traditional musical practices to include popular music for the first time. Today, *Wátina*’s songs are performed in Belizean and Honduran Garifuna village drum-and-dance ensembles and religious services as often as in nightclubs and festivals, and the title track’s drum rhythm is being taught to locals and foreigners alongside rhythms over a century old. My presentation engages an important theme of ethnomusicological studies of Black American music – boundary-blurring between commercial and traditional – by examining the diverse takes on neo-traditionalism offered by Garifuna musicians ranging from Generations X to Z in the last decade. As confirmed by ethnographic research conducted since 2020, younger musicians increasingly seek to bypass Duran’s neoliberal route to Global North recognition while simultaneously expressing North America-influenced individualism, through personal branding and sound, and the Garifuna value of mutual dependence (*machularadi*), through regular joint concerts within Garifuna communities and the fostering of local and regional fandom and support.

04A. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

The “New Woman” and Popular Song in World War II China and Japan

Chair: Stella Zhizhi Li, RILM

The Pacific War of World War II (1937–45) and its aftereffects profoundly influenced popular culture in both China and Japan, particularly female-led popular music genres. Female singers navigated occupation, censorship, and changing political and cultural ideologies to practice their craft, acting as leading figures of the “new women” negotiating entrenched gender norms. This panel emphasizes the significance of women's popular culture in shaping the sociopolitical landscape on both sides of the East China Sea. The papers juxtapose case studies from multifaceted perspectives: Japanese performer Yamaguchi Yoshiko as a sonic chimera of Japanese and Chinese popular music through her role in friendship films under the pseudonym Li Xianglan; Shanghai singsong girls and their resistance against social stigmatization in the context of local colonial conflicts and cultural transformations; Japanese female jazz stars and their receptions among the female audiences amid the aftermath of Japan’s war defeat in the late 1940s. The authors draw upon voice studies, gender studies, timbre analysis, archival evidence, and reception history to provide a nuanced glimpse into the experience and agency of female performers during this tumultuous period.

Through this discussion, we encourage new insights into the development of East Asian music in the mid-20th century as well as the significance of East Asian women during political conflicts and historical changes in relation to broader questions such as modernity and transnationalism. Moving beyond their ongoing objectification and marginalization, we highlight their agency within local and transnational music scenes and their contributions to popular music and gender expression.

“When Will You Return?”: The Voice(s) of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere

Annie Y. Liu, Princeton University

During the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese government invested in propagandistic cultural production in China, including “friendship films” that promoted goodwill between the two nations. These films often included shidaiqu, or Shanghai popular songs, a genre that blended Chinese opera, jazz, Tin Pan Alley songs, and Hollywood film music. Under the pseudonym Li Xianglan, Manchurian-born Japanese performer Yamaguchi Yoshiko acted in many friendship films; her fluency in Chinese and Japanese and Western operatic training equipped her to become a major star.

Drawing on voice studies and timbre analysis, I illustrate how Yamaguchi's voice served as a sonic bridge between wartime Chinese and Japanese popular music. I compare Chinese songstress Zhou Xuan's famous 1937 recording of the controversial love song “When Will You Return?” (Heri jun zilai) to Japanese singer Watanabe Hamako and Yamaguchi's 1939 recordings. Visually and linguistically, Yamaguchi masqueraded as a Chinese performer, but her idiosyncratic timbre betrayed her Western training and her cross-cultural identity. Yamaguchi’s budding career as Li Xianglan mirrored the Japanese implementation of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” (GEACPS) ideology. A 1943 Shanghai fan magazine featured a cartoon of Li Xianglan wearing a qipao,

holding a suitcase, and walking across the continent of Asia labeled “East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” captioned “Li Xianglan, hurrying to and fro” (Stephenson 2002). By synthesizing Japanese, Chinese, and Western vocal styles, her voice acts as an ethnic and sonic chimera, comprehensible and compelling for multiple audiences yet deployed in service of Japanese propaganda to represent a unified Asia.

Reclaiming the Voices of Chinese Singsong Girls Beyond “Yellow” in 1940s Shanghai

Shuang Wang, Brown University

The term “female singer” or “singsong girl,” as discussed in many newspaper articles from 1940s Shanghai, was at the center of the controversy on the identity of female performers and the music they presented. In the 1930s-1940s, Shanghai was a hub of fusion music, like shidaiqu, born out of colonial local negotiations. This genre, often referred to as “yellow music,” carried somewhat vulgar connotations. As spokespersons of shidaiqu, singsong girls contributed to the diverse musical scene while continuously facing stigmatization. They were often accused of solicitation and were not considered equal to “singers”. Societal anxieties about modernity, morality, and gender are reflected in the attitudes toward them. While their performances provided unprecedented exposure to female artists, making them a symbol of the “new woman,” they also attracted harsh critiques.

This paper analyzes the debates surrounding the term “female singer” or “singsong girl.” Through articles and reports of 1940s print media from the Shanghai Library’s National Periodical Index, I elaborate on the perspectives of female performers from their own narratives and those influenced by various social forces. This research highlights the collective identity of singsong girls in historical narratives. By defamiliarizing the stars’ voices, I reexamine the depictions, partially moving away from viewing Zhou Xuan and Yao Li, and other stars as exclusive examples. I bring in the traces of lesser-known figures, like Dong Peipei, Du Jie, and Zhang Lu. Their struggles, resistance, and disidentification became the key that profoundly impacted the Chinese popular music industry and gender norms.

Jazz Queens in Women’s Magazines: Negotiating Femininity in Occupied Japan

Stella Zhizhi Li, RILM

“The Japanese, in a sense, have been castrated,” lamented the Japanese writer Takami Jun in his late 1945 diary, reflecting on the U.S. military occupation of Japan following the country’s defeat in the Pacific War. Despite a widespread sentiment of humiliation regarding Japan’s downfall and subservience to its former enemy, for women in Japan, the U.S. Occupation (1945–52) also sparked what Michael Bourdaghs described as an “intoxicating optimism” (Bourdaghs, 2011)—that is, a hopeful outlook on liberation characterized by the freedom of speech, gender equality, and financial abundance. In the popular culture produced and consumed by Japanese women during this time, the women jazz singers, including Kasagi Shizuko, Eri Chiemi, and the child star Hibari Misora, took center stage.

Drawing on magazines and newspapers published in Occupied Japan, this paper examines the various personas of these female singers and their reception, illuminating their central significance to the sociopolitical transformations of gender, economy, and national identity during this time. I emphasize the circulations of women's magazines, commentaries by female authors, and opinions attributed to female audiences, framing the personas of the female singers and the discussions among ordinary women as dynamic dialogues. Building on the work of scholars such as Bourdaghs, Hiromu Nagahara, and Christine Yano, I argue that the female voice and body as produced by the popular music industry was shaped by and in turn shaped Japanese women's negotiations of femininity, consumerism, and liberation in the light of sociopolitical transformations as well as their everyday lives.

04B. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

The 'Context' Argument: Three Musical Case Studies in the Instrumentalization of Context

Chair: Thi Lan Lettner, University of Maryland, College Park

In his 2023 monograph *On Music Theory*, music theorist Philip Ewell reveals how through "overcontextualization," scholars with an investment in the discipline's status quo can obscure its historical and contemporary racism and sexism. What makes Ewell's intervention so innovative is his assertion that more context is not necessarily positive. Indeed, too much context can complicate an obvious observation. This panel applies Ewell's ideas to (ethno)musicology, taking as its starting point the claim that context is neither intrinsically positive nor negative, but is added, withheld, or removed according to the agendas of social actors. Each paper discusses a different case study in which music, musical activity, or music scholarship has been overcontextualized, undercontextualized, or decontextualized in the service of a specific agenda. Paper 1 discusses contradictions between the scholarly overcontextualization of blackface minstrelsy and the presence of songs linked to this tradition in nineteenth-century binder's volumes. Paper 2 turns to the undercontextualization of the 2007 U.S. tour of the Venezuelan Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra. Finally, Paper 3 considers the academic decontextualization of the scholarship of Black American activist-musician Bernice Johnson Reagon. By addressing the narratives of over-, under-, and de-contextualization in disparate time periods and settings, this panel suggests the importance of further research into ways to continue and expand Ewell's project of making "music [studies] more welcoming for everyone," a goal that requires (ethno)musicology to reframe its understanding of context's potentials and traps.

Blackface Minstrelsy in Nineteenth-Century Binder's Volumes

Elizabeth Busch, University of Maryland, College Park

Alongside love ballads, technical piano exercises, and popular dances, blackface minstrelsy appears in half of the sixteen bound sheet music collections held in the University of Maryland's Special Collections in the Performing Arts. These volumes, which collectively contain music dating from 1829 to 1907, all belonged to women in northern or western US-American states, such as Pennsylvania,

New Jersey, and California. Blackface minstrelsy scholarship prior to the 2020s often contextualized this genre as a reflection of animosity towards the United Kingdom or class issues rather than anti-Black racism (Mahar 1988, Lott 1993). Binder's volume scholarship on Southern volumes has often argued that this genre would have been inappropriate for performance in respectable nineteenth-century parlors, especially when written in a mocking dialect (Meyer-Frazier 2015, Bailey 2021). Given the presence of minstrelsy in the books that I have examined, I draw on more recent work on this genre (Hartman 2022, Morrison 2024) to conduct close readings of selections tied to minstrelsy to better understand how these songs reflected and constructed white supremacy. Ultimately, I argue that while some books suggest abolitionist leanings, the majority of bound sheet music volumes upheld a culture of white supremacy. More broadly, the presence of blackface minstrelsy in these books reflects how anti-Black racism was integral, not incidental, to the ideals of white femininity in the nineteenth century.

Undercontextualizing a Musical Miracle: North America's Reception to the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra

Thi Lan Lettner, University of Maryland, College Park

In a November 2007 review of the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra's (SBYO) performance at Symphony Hall, Jeremy Eichler of the Boston Globe concluded, "What insights can be drawn from El Sistema and applied to the United States? Similar discussions are happening around the country... and in the meantime, this orchestra is the best possible emissary for the cause." El Sistema—a Venezuelan music education initiative founded in 1975 that seeks to address social inequality through intensive orchestral training—emphasizes collective musical excellence and discipline as a pathway to individual and societal empowerment. To understand the impact of the 2007 North American performances of the SBYO in relation to U.S. understandings of its relationships with Venezuela, I analyze reviews of this four-city tour from prominent newspapers. Overwhelmingly, the SBYO was lauded by critics across the country for their technical prowess, passion, and their ability to connect with diverse audiences with their inspiring messaging. However, in conversation with critical scholarship on El Sistema by Geoffrey Baker, I find this romanticized reception obfuscates the use of the SBYO as a tool in ideological and diplomatic messaging. I position these 2007 performances as a direct result of the Good Neighbor Policy (1933–1938)—a foreign policy championed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt that used music to improve relations with Latin American countries—in which performances of Western art music shaped mutual socio/political perceptions between the Americas. I argue that the SBYO has been under-contextualized within the broader history of music and cultural diplomacy.

Decontextualization and the Music Historical Scholarship of Bernice Johnson Reagon

Jackson Albert Mann, University of Maryland, College Park

Bernice Johnson Reagon was one of the most important Black American activist-musicians of the 1960s. While a university student in Albany, GA, Reagon joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1961 and co-founded SNCC's official musical group, The Freedom Singers. In 1973, after having moved to Washington, DC, Reagon founded the social justice vocal group

Sweet Honey in the Rock, which became an international sensation. A lesser-known aspect of Reagon's career was that she was a skilled music historian. Her still-unpublished 1975 dissertation, "Songs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1955–1965: A Study in Culture History," for which she received a PhD from Howard University, has become a cult hit among scholars of music and politics. Reading "Songs of the Civil Rights Movement," it's easy to see why: Reagon's work is a sophisticated historiographic intervention in which she argues that tactical changes in the use of music by political organizations should be taken seriously as a basis for the periodization of their internal history (Reagon 1975). Yet, "Songs of the Civil Rights Movement" is rarely referenced for this insight. Rather, Reagon's dissertation is cited most often for historical information presented in its initial chapters, which act as expository sections covering the origins of the Movement's musical canon and the social role of southern Black churches in its musical activity (Eyerson & Jamison 1998, Roy 2010, Redmond 2014, Spener 2016). This presentation will reveal how the near exclusive focus on these chapters has decontextualized Reagon's dissertation, stripping it of complexity.

04C. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
Musical Networks and Diasporic Communities in Chicago
Chair: Inna Naroditskaya, Northwestern University

This panel examines how musical traditions, religious spaces, and social networks shape diasporic identity in Chicago. A city deeply shaped by migration, Chicago is home to numerous neighborhoods strongly tied to distinct cultural traditions. As scholars based in Chicago from diverse backgrounds, we explore the intersections of cultural preservation, adaptation, and community-building. Through three case studies—South Indian Carnatic music, Ukrainian church choirs, and Black migration and resettlement—we consider how diasporic and immigrant communities negotiate tradition and cultural exchange within the city's dynamic urban landscape. The first paper examines how Carnatic music is taught, performed, and perceived in Chicago's Devon neighborhood, a historic South Asian enclave. Interviews with educators, performers, students, and temple musicians, reveal how pedagogy, performance spaces, and audience engagement evolves in the diaspora. The second paper explores the analogous traditions between Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Ukrainian churches in Chicago's Ukrainian Village, underscoring a hybridity of practices evident within the weekly liturgy and secular repertoire of the church choruses. The third paper takes a historical look at how Chicago's migrant communities affected burgeoning Black musical networks on the south side in the midst of the Great Migration. In all these communities, music serves as the location of cultural memory and by extension identity construction. This panel concludes that explorations of multivalent cultural practices within a specific diasporic context demonstrates a hybridity of practices and interwoven networks within the historic immigrant communities of Chicago.

Carnatic Music in the Chicago Diaspora: Tradition, Transformation, and Transmission

Anisha Srinivasan, Northwestern University

This paper examines the practice, pedagogy, and evolving transnational significance of Carnatic music, the South Indian musical tradition, within the Indian diaspora in the Devon neighborhood of Northern Chicago, as embodied in the neighborhood Carnatic music academies. With a population of approximately 240,000, Chicago is home to the second-largest Indian population in the U.S, and Devon Avenue, located in the West Ridge neighborhood and often referred to as “Little India,” is one of the largest Indian-American enclaves in the country, making it an ideal setting for this study. Through interviews with educators, performers, and temple musicians from four different academies in Devon, along with approximately 15 students (both children and adults), and religious performers and vaadhyars (priests) from a South Indian temple in Devon, I investigate how pedagogy, performance spaces, and audience engagement evolve in this diasporic setting and with contemporary learning models. Traditionally, Carnatic music has been transmitted orally through the guru-shishya-parampara (master-disciple-relationship), where knowledge is passed down through rigorous, immersive training. However, my findings reveal that Carnatic music academies in Devon have developed innovative approaches that blend American schoolchildren’s learning styles with traditional Carnatic training, preserving the art form’s discipline. They also go beyond solely musical instruction, imparting South Indian values to the newer generation of Indian-Americans in the community such as discipline, respect, and cultural and religious identity. While the community remains deeply committed to Carnatic music as a cultural anchor, learning environments increasingly incorporate digital tools and written notation alongside oral transmission, balancing accessibility with tradition.

Religious Hybridity and Musical Circulation in Chicagoland’s Ukrainian Community

Tanya Landau, Northwestern University

This paper examines the analogous traditions and practices between Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Ukrainian churches in Chicagoland through historical and musical factors that shape cultural identity within a diasporic context. Each of the two churches in this study have a dedicated congregation of parishioners despite a stark difference in attendance between the two, with the Greek-Catholic church seeing a significantly higher turn out each week than the Orthodox. To explore the potential reasons for this divide, I center the churches’ respective choruses as vehicles for connection and continuity between the two religious traditions. Based on historical analysis, interviews and digital ethnography, musical circulation between the groups underscores a hybridity of practices evident within the weekly liturgy and secular repertoire of the vocal ensembles. A closer look at St. Joseph’s Stavros men’s choir and St. Volodymyr’s mixed chorus demonstrates numerous religious and musical similarities between the choruses and their respective services. Going further, a cherubic song from ca. 1847 by Ukrainian composer Mykhailo Verbytsky, “Їже херувими” (“There are cherubs”), stands out as a specific point of connection with both choruses having sung the piece in services and carol festivals. My fieldwork demonstrates that the choirs are essential to the church communities they’re a part of, anchoring them in their worship and

providing Chicagoland with a shared Ukrainian soundscape. This paper seeks to provide a plural understanding of what Ukrainian identity could constitute—as both religious groups share a unified desire for independence and community.

04D. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Racial Capitalism and the Materiality of Value in Music

Chair: Esther Viola Kurtz, Washington University in Saint Louis

Eric J. Schmidt, Babson College

Deonte Harris, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Otto Stuparitz, University of Melbourne

In the literature on music, capitalism, and value, recent studies address musicians' labor conditions under neoliberalism and their struggles for economic justice. The presenters in this roundtable propose that greater attention must be paid to the material conditions of musicians' lives, including the money they (don't) make, funding structures, and their racialized lived experience. Participants argue that focusing on materiality exposes how musicians are (de)valued not only in economic terms, but also in other value regimes. Presenter 1 explores how jazz musicians in a flown-over midwest city confront racial and economic injustices by defining alternative value systems under capitalist constraints. Presenter 2 considers how professional artists in the Tuareg guitar scene navigate their material needs, global and northwest African racial structures, and tensions between state patronage and surveillance. Presenter 3 interrogates the rise, fall, and shift in post-2020 American politics from racial justice to anti-DEI as a distinct era of new racial capitalism and argues that a "radical revolution of values" in music and elsewhere is needed now more than ever amidst a rapidly collapsing republic. Presenter 4 examines the cultural production of archival value in postcolonial Java, focusing on changing labor conditions in audiovisual archives and the commodification of music made by Chinese Indonesian jazz musicians. These varied case studies should open a discussion on capitalism's global reach, musicians' creative tactics to negotiate it, future directions for scholarship on music, value, and racial capitalism, and how this work can inform ethnomusicologists' research, art, and labor practices.

04E. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Harmonizing Memory: Archives as Sites of Preservation and Resistance in Black Music

Chair: Eric Galm, Trinity College

Archives have long served as critical sites for preserving cultural memory, yet their role in shaping narratives about Black music remains contested. This presentation explores the dynamic interplay between archival practices and the lived experiences of Black music, interrogating how archives can simultaneously act as tools of preservation and instruments of erasure. Drawing on case studies ranging from early blues collections to contemporary hip-hop archives, the session examines how Black musicians, communities, and scholars have reclaimed and reimagined archival spaces to affirm agency and resist dominant cultural narratives.

Through an analysis of innovative approaches such as post-custodial models, oral history projects, and the integration of digital technologies, this presentation considers how archives can more authentically represent the polyphonic histories of Black music. Particular attention will be given to the role of performance, improvisation, and communal storytelling in challenging traditional archival frameworks. By rethinking the relationship between archives and Black music, this session seeks to inspire strategies for more inclusive, equitable practices in the documentation and celebration of Black musical traditions.

This contribution aligns with the conference's themes of resilience and transformation, offering new pathways for ethnomusicologists, archivists, and cultural practitioners to engage with the rich tapestry of Black musical heritage.

Preserving, Documenting and Expanding Access to Histories of Music at Historically Black Colleges and Universities through the HBCU Digital Library Trust

Andrea Jackson Gavin, HBCU Digital Library Trust, Harvard University

With a mission to digitally preserve and provide global access to archival collections at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the HBCU Digital Library Trust (HBCU Trust) is a collaboration between HBCUs, HBCU Library Alliance, Harvard Library and the Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library. This initiative will sustain institutional, cultural, and community memory, and ensure that stories of HBCUs are discovered, maintained, remembered and told through the HBCU Digital Collection repository. Within this Digital Collection, nearly 100 archival assets document musicianship at over 10 historic institutions.

Among the most recognized HBCU student ambassadors are institutional groups of musicians; in existence since the late 1800s when several HBCUs were founded. One of the most renowned ensembles featured in the HBCU Digital Collection is the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who primarily sang a cappella Negro Spirituals since 1871. Their legacy of excellence lives on today, including a 2021 Grammy Award, although they are not the only HBCU to uphold their institutions' profile. This presentation showcases several campus sponsored glee clubs, choral groups, orchestras, marching bands, and other ensembles which have been integral to HBCU culture. In preserving and digitizing archival holdings, the HBCU Trust is expanding access to photographs, audio, and visual recordings of these important organizations ranging from the late 1800s to the 1990s, at over 25 HBCUs. Insight into the process for

prioritizing the digitization of powerful imagery, compositions and documentation about the lives and works of many early, prominent music educators at HBCUs will also be featured in this presentation.

Post-Custodial Archiving and the Lloyd Best Archive: Decentering Custodianship in the Preservation of Caribbean Intellectual Traditions

Christina Bleyer, Trinity College

Post Custodial Archiving offers a transformative approach to archival practice, challenging traditional notions of ownership and control while fostering collaborative stewardship of cultural heritage. This paper examines the application of this model in the digitization of the Lloyd Best Archive, a collection of writings, publications, recordings, and personal papers of the influential Trinidadian economist and intellectual. By prioritizing community agency and ensuring that materials remain in Trinidad and Tobago, this project resists the historical extraction of Caribbean knowledge into foreign repositories.

Situating the Lloyd Best Archive within broader discussions of Black music archives, this paper explores how post-custodial methodologies intersect with Caribbean oral traditions, calypso's lyrical historiography, and the improvisational ethos of Black musical expression. The project not only preserves Best's intellectual legacy but also engages with the fluid, living nature of Caribbean knowledge production, challenging static archival frameworks. This case study demonstrates how post-custodial approaches can harmonize memory, affirm local epistemologies, and resist the erasures inherent in colonial archival legacies. By foregrounding community collaboration and digital repatriation, the paper contributes to ongoing conversations about more equitable and sustainable models of archival preservation in the Black diaspora.

Recovering Musical Memory in São Paulo

Eric Galm, Trinity College

In the 1950s, the São Paulo Folklore Commission conducted research and documented Afro-Brazilian music and dance practices in rural and urban communities throughout the State. According to Evanira Mendes, one of the commission fieldworkers, community participants were aware that all of these research materials were going to be “archived, where they would be remembered.”

Through participatory action research—observing, dancing, and engaging with practitioners, these documents were incorporated into the Folklore Archive at the Conservatório Dramático e Musical de São Paulo. This archive later developed into the Museu de Folclore Rossini Tavares de Lima, recognized as one of the first museums of folklore in the country. Unfortunately, this museum was closed in the late 1990s and its collection was divided and moved to various locations. Some of these materials continue to be inaccessible today. This paper presentation documents a 20-year process attempting to access materials within this collection and highlights approaches to search for alternative archival documents. These ancillary materials were used to affirm and supplement data acquired through ethnographic research that described individual experiences of those conducting fieldwork in the 1950s. It will also outline

strategies for developing partnerships with institutions to help advance material preservation, provide access to documents, and advance initiatives for dissemination.

04F. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Gendered Voices and Performative Visions of Transnational North India

Chair: Christian Morgan James, Indiana University, Bloomington

The voice is a powerful metaphor for mobilizing the political imaginary. Yet scholarship in music and sound studies increasingly shows how attention to literal, sounded voices complicates the metaphor's neat political expediency. This owes, in part, to the ways actual voices are ineluctably gendered. Because of its superlative emphasis on the voice, Indian music is a particularly generative field for understanding the complex interplay of voice, gender, performance, and political consciousness. Three case studies listen for the refractory nature of the gendered voice in performatively enacting transnational politics. The first paper analyzes Hindustani tappa, a genre inspired by folksongs from 18th-century Arab trade routes and sung from a first-person feminine perspective. Contemporary tappa singers navigate competing demands to preserve the genre and appease the rigid conservative nationalism of their patrons. The second paper turns to the Delhi-based festival Jahan-e-Khusrau, another manifestation of the tension between transnational origins and national appeal in Hindustani music. In part through the gendered voice of Abida Parveen, the music festival instrumentalizes Sufi ideals toward a vision of friendship between India and Pakistan. The final paper analyzes the Swara Mountain Arts Festival in Dharamshala. Under the auspices of a global feminist movement, festival organizers consciously supplant the religious communitarianism of both region and nation with a secular-liberal mode of vocal performance. In all three cases, singers operationalize a transnational vision of India in ways that both unsettle and enforce national and global power structures, illuminating the politically contingent potency of voices gendered through song.

Camels, Courts, and Contradictions: Reimagining Gender Performativity in Hindustani Tappa

Ali Hassan, University of Pittsburgh

The Hindustani tappa, a syncretic semi-classical vocal form, emerged in 18th-century Awadh through court musician Mian Ghulam Nabi Shori's reimagining of Punjabi-Sindhi camel drivers' folk songs. Shori's compositions formalized the tappa signature "undulating" melodic patterns, mirroring the rhythmic gait of camels traversing trade routes frequented by Arabic merchants. While scholarship has traced the tappa dissemination from Gwalior to Benares and Bengal, its lyrical content and gendered dimensions remain understudied. The tappa's verses, sung from a first-person feminine perspective, oscillate ambiguously between spiritual yearning and erotic longing, demanding a critique of its gender performativity. Performers, irrespective of gender, must embody a feminine vocal persona characterized by fluid ornamentation (khatka, zamzama) and emotive vulnerability, reinforcing historical and

colonial constructs of femininity as delicate and sensuous. This duality becomes politically fraught in contemporary India, where Hindutva ideologies increasingly police gendered expression while romanticizing “traditional” art forms. I employ historical, lexical, and intersectional analysis to interrogate how the tappa-prescribed femininity shapes the perceptions of performers and listeners. I also examine the genre’s role in perpetuating or subverting patriarchal norms through its codified lyrical and performative frameworks. Ethnographic interviews with tappa vocalists will illuminate how modern artists navigate tensions between tradition and sociopolitical change. By situating the tappa within postcolonial feminist discourse, I intend to reveal the interplay of cultural preservation, gender ideology, and power in India’s evolving artistic landscape.

In the Realm of Ecstasy: Sufi Diplomacy at the “Jahan-e-Khusrau” Music Festival

John Caldwell, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

One of the longest-running transnational Sufi music festivals in South Asia was the annual “Jahan-e Khusrau (The World of Khusrau),” founded in 2001 by Indian impresario Muzaffar Ali. Rising tensions between India and Pakistan led to a three-year hiatus from 2014 to 2016, but the festival resumed in 2017, albeit without Pakistani performers. This sudden shift in the festival was surprising because one of its essential goals was to celebrate the ascendance of Sufi values over geopolitics. Until 2013, this objective had been sonically amplified by bringing musicians from India, Pakistan, and other nations to perform together on the same stage at the Humayun Tomb complex in Delhi, just a stone’s throw from the Sufi shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya. In this presentation, I examine how the festival instrumentalized Sufi ideals—embodied acoustically by the voice of Abida Parveen—to promote India-Pakistan friendship. I then investigate the circumstances behind the elimination of Pakistani performers. To elucidate this historical moment, I examine the 2017 festival in depth, using evidence from fieldwork, concert promotional materials and recordings, as well as a video in which Muzaffar Ali discusses his vision for reviving the festival. I also analyze the intersections of space, place, community, and ideology at these festivals. Ultimately, I argue that the Indian government’s notion of music as a weapon of nationalism fatally undermined Muzaffar Ali’s sonic construction of an apolitical “realm of ecstasy.”

One Billion Rising on Stage: The Inclusive Festival as Resource for Feminist Mobilization in Himachal Pradesh

Christian Morgan James, Indiana University, Bloomington

In May 2022, the non-governmental organization Jagori Rural Charitable Trust (JRCT) welcomed guests from throughout India for the inauguration of its Swara Mountain Arts Festival. The now-annual festival hosts four days of educational arts workshops with nightly open-gate concerts at JRCT’s scenic campus in the Western Himalayan foothills, culminating in a final evening of performances at Dharamshala’s Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts by headliners of national repute. JRCT finances the festival with support from One Billion Rising (OBR), a global campaign to end violence against women, for which JRCT serves as India’s national secretariat. Likewise, JRCT affiliates the festival with OBR’s contemporary feminist vision, billing it as “an inclusive festival

celebrating multiple creative expressions” that encourages all, particularly those most marginal to patriarchal structures of power, to join and “rise for freedom.” Drawing on feedback interviews with a dozen of the festival’s organizers, artist-facilitators, and participants, alongside my own experience and audio-visual documentation of the festival’s 2023 edition, this paper investigates the discursive interplay of regional, national, and transnational fields of force in the festival’s bid for emancipatory artistic expression. Following my interlocutors, I interpret JRCT’s turn to festival hospitality in light of its emplacement in the Kangra Valley as well as its roots in the national women’s liberation movement of the mid-1970s. I argue that the Swara Festival completes a transformation in JRCT’s instrumentalization of cultural production toward a secular-liberal conception of the arts, the cultural and historical specificity of which local modes of performance serve to remind.

04G. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Island Listening

Chair: Adebola Ola, Boston University

Chronotopic Formulations: The Making of the Music and Musicians in Modern Samoa

Courtney-Savali Andrews, Oberlin College

This paper examines the distinctive social project of the native brass band and the making of the modern musician on Upolu Island at the turn of the 20th century. It considers the construction of the brass band as a status symbol and the emergent band leader as a modified kinship behavior within the context of strategic management of sociocultural capital amid the threats of Euro-American imperialism in the Pacific. The narrative traces how Samoans negotiated social cues in cross-cultural encounters as they sought to remain politically autonomous and agents of their own shifting identities in the age of modernity. Rather than starting with the narrative of colonial encounter, I introduce an origin of Samoan brass bands through the influence of the Native Hawai’ian naval band’s assignment throughout Samoa in 1887, finessing King Kalākaua’s attempt at forming a Polynesian Confederacy with the rival kings of the land. This history rewinds previous timelines offered by other scholars to suggest that the eagerness of Samoan women to have their sons trained as band leaders was propagated by the favorable impression that the large assembly of brown boys playing in an auxiliary of the Royal Hawaiian Brass Band made on them at home and abroad. An analysis of physical spaces where modern musical phenomena developed on Upolu will be examined through Agha’s concept of chronotopic formulations and kinship behaviors to articulate the negotiation of foreign status symbols of colonial power and how Samoans repurposed them to signal their road to national independence.

Excavating Alcina's *Codiapi*: Filipino Boat-Lutes in the Colonial Visayas

Isabella Mahal Ortega, University of Chicago

The *codiapi*, or the boat-lute, is a two-stringed zither from the Philippines. Although the instrument is still in use in the southern islands of Mindanao, it has entirely disappeared in the central island region of the Visayas. The only proof of its once wide-spread use comes from accounts of Spanish missionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The most notable and thorough of such accounts is found in Fransisco Alcina's *History of the Island and Indians of the Visayas* (1688). While Alcina's text has been used to reconstruct the organology of the *codiapi*, I will show that the text can also be used to infer how the instrument was played and sounded. By having retranslated the text and putting this new translation into conversation with more contemporary ethnographies on living boat-lute practices from Mindanao, I conclude that the music of Alcina's *codiapi* uses a pentatonic mode. Additionally, based on Alcina's text, I reconstruct how the *codiapi* sounded and speculate why its music could have been appropriate for courtship rituals. Used exclusively by men, when played along with its female counterpart, the *corlong* (raft-zither), the *codiapi* is described as enabling an extra-musical communication which induces both players to fall in love. Described as being "[deeper] in sentiment or sensuality...than if they were using words," this extra-musical power must nonetheless be deeply rooted in how this music sounded. This paper will discuss how mode and rhythm could have been used for this communication.

Girlhood on Stage: Navigating Girls' Ensembles in Trinidad and Tobago's School Panorama

Stephanie R.H. Espie, University of Pittsburgh

Trinidad and Tobago's national instrument, the steelpan, has a history rooted in masculinity. Early steelbands and panyards were understood as spaces where violence flourished, and young women and girls were discouraged from entertaining these spaces. Over the course of the instrument's seventy-five-year history though, women have made fundamental strides in the steelpan movement, and are now a central part of steelpan culture in the country (Munro Smith 2016). Despite growing academic attention to women in the steelpan movement, no attention has been given to girls' role and place in these spaces. School Panorama, the annual steelband competition sponsored by Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Education, is an apt stage to study understandings of girlhood in steelbands. A quarter of government schools in Trinidad are single-sex schools, bolstered by a large number of single-sex prestige schools (Blair 2013); as such, many of the schools that enter the School Panorama competition are single-sex; however, numerous schools combine efforts to create larger co-ed ensembles for the competition. Two notable exceptions are St. Francois Girls' College and Bishop Anstey High School Port of Spain, who, although invite a select number of boys from neighboring schools to fill their ensemble, purposefully choose to remain a predominately female ensemble. This paper examines the two schools' appearance in the 2025 School Panorama and their negotiation of girlhood on and off the competition stage. I argue that through the prioritization of girlhood, these young players challenge Trinidadian understandings of both the steelpan and of competition in general.

04H. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Digital Media in Iran

Chair: TBD

Broadcasting Ethnic Identity: Cultural Resistance, Hybridization, and the Invention of Urban Gilaki Popular Music in Mid-20th Century Iran

Arya Tavallaei, University of California Santa Cruz

Urban Gilaki popular music genre, from northern Iran, functions as a symbol of resistance against hegemonic musical cultures of the region and as a tool for expressing Gilaki ethnic identity within Iran's multiethnic society. Focusing on the music of Gilan in the mid-20th century—a northern province in Iran, near the Caspian Sea and the border of the former Soviet Union—I examine the important role of Iranian radio and the policies of its administrators in redefining local music and legitimizing the presence of ethnic cultures in homogenized Persian public sphere. I argue that the Soviet occupation of Gilan during World War II served as a catalyst for the invention of a hybrid Gilaki musical genre that functioned as a means of cultural preservation and resistance against both the Allied invasion and the marginalizing policies of the Iranian government, while ironically incorporating non-native musical elements—such as harmony, large orchestras, and Iranian classical melodies—in this process. This study examines the archives of Gilaki music that was broadcast on Iranian radio and analyzes ethnographic interviews with musicians and historical documents from an insider perspective. The strategic use of music and the role of radio broadcasting as a response to two dominant cultures, the Soviet influence during the 1940s and, later, the dominant Persian culture prevalent in mass media throughout the 1950s and 1960s, resulted in a musical practice that both participates in and resist against these forces.

Tradition, Modernity and the Rise of Music Industry in Iran

Mehdi Rezania, University of Alberta

The interplay between tradition and modernity is a critical topic in current Iranian society (Jahanbegloo 2004). As Reza Shah's policy (1920s) of "authoritarian modernization gradually changed Iran's traditional social as well as political setting" (Katouzian 2007: 49), the practice and performance of music changed accordingly. Modernity in Iranian music is typically attributed to Ali-Naqi Vaziri (1887-1979). Following Vaziri, his students continued to expand the idea of modernization with a variety of perspectives. In 1968, Dariush Safvat established the Centre for Preservation and Dissemination of Iranian music. The Centre has often been categorized as a 'revival' endeavour. This paper argues that the Centre only contemporized the ongoing interplay of tradition and modernity. By the late 1970s, a vital music industry had emerged. The 1979 Revolution and significant cultural policy alterations halted such advancement. The evolution of music, however, did not stop but continued in private spaces, and some of the masterpieces of art

music were produced in the first decade. Shortly after the Iran-Iraq war and especially following Ayatollah Khamenei's leadership, the restrictions gradually eased, and multiple schools of thought continue to expand. This paper, supported by recent fieldwork in Iran, argues that the interplay between tradition and modernity in Iranian music has been constructive rather than dichotomous, resulting in many schools of musical thought. Furthermore, it elucidates how, in the past decade, a musical industry has developed that surpasses that of the 1970s, despite ongoing restrictions.

Nuanced Neutrality: Iranian Musicians and Politics of Avoidance in the Social Media Era

Siavash Mohebbi, University of Virginia

Avoiding overt political engagement has historically been a means of navigating authoritarianism among Iranian musicians. However, in a context that severely limits political expression, music may inevitably be heard as an act of resistance or complicity, placing musicians in precarious positions. Social media has further complicated these dynamics, as users reframe, reshare, and debate musicians' actions, addressing public perceptions and political narratives.

A sentimental song by Alireza Talischi went viral during the Women, Life, Freedom movement after being used—seemingly without his involvement—in a commemorative video honoring a protester killed. Afterward, Talischi became one of the first artists to break the months-long silence in Iran's music scene and performed this song—some heard it as subtle resistance, others as exploitation of public sentiments or endorsing the regime's desire to normalize the situation. Since then, the song has held a central place in Talischi's repertoire without mentioning the protester's name. Meanwhile, he has achieved unprecedented commercial success, touring nationally and internationally.

This paper focuses on Talischi to open up discussions about the relationships between music career, authoritarianism, and social media. I use digital ethnography and online archival analysis to illustrate how Iranian musicians distance themselves from contentious politics by performing compliance with the regime's rules while subtly navigating public expectations. Drawing on the work of Nomi Dave, Laudan Nooshin, and Lisa Wedeen, I argue that by playing with the ambiguities of permissibility and accountability, musicians seek to craft careers that can endure within the intricate web of power, pleasure, and ideology in Iran.

04I. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Latin American Musical Experimentalisms in Public Space

Chair: Andrew Snyder, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

In contrast to the rarefied performance settings of conventional concert halls, performances of experimental music in public space can intervene directly on local communities and take a stake in their soundscapes. Aiming to provoke unsuspecting crowds and engage them in often subversive and confrontational performances, experimental artists cultivate symbolic and material dialogues with urban

sonic and spatial architecture, at times using the opportunity for social and political critique. Though public engagement has long represented a central dimension of musical experimentalism, publicly situated performances have been seldom examined, especially in Latin America, where artists often intervene directly on the distinct postcolonial legacies that structure public urban space. This panel explores three such instances, focusing on Latin American experimental music performance in the public spaces of the largest cities of three countries. Presenter 1 examines the outdoor sonic installations (1960s-1970s) by Juan Blanco in Havana, Cuba, showing how the composer engaged with leftist and anti-colonial values that resonated with the socialist regime's promotion of *el hombre nuevo*. Presenter 2 discusses São Paulo's Bloco Ruído, which makes use of carnival festivities and the bloco parading tradition to foster novel means of critically engaging with the city's distinct soundscape. Presenter 3 explores Brazilian experimentalism in the historical metropole of Lisbon, Portugal, examining Ernesto Neto's percussion installation, which, in taking the form of ship, articulated a decolonial critique of Portuguese coloniality in the Belem neighborhood where it was located and where nautical imagery memorializes Portugal's "Age of Discovery."

The Revolution Will Be Sonified: Juan Blanco's Utopic Soundscapes in Revolutionary Cuba

Marysol Quevedo, University of Miami

In 1968, residents and passersby on La Rampa were treated to *Ambientación sonora*, a 30-days-long 5-track sound installation of electroacoustic music amplified through loudspeakers placed along the urban avenue in the neighborhood of Vedado in Havana, Cuba. This was one of two public, urban sound installations of La Rampa by composer Juan Blanco, the father of Cuban electronic music. As I argue in this presentation, Blanco's experimental aesthetics and leftist political views fused in his public sound installations and resonated with the Cuban socialist regime's agenda of cultivating a socially conscious citizen, *el hombre nuevo*. His utopic designs involved the marriage of architecture or landscape and electroacoustic music through the sonification of public spaces and was frequently in collaboration with visual artists who contributed complimentary fixed media. His electroacoustic works and plans provide a window through which we can examine how a politically engaged artist theorized sound and its role in socialist Revolutionary society. In this presentation I examine the history of sound policing in Havana as a function of state control, and how sound functions as a way of knowing and being in the world for Cuban individuals. I then analyze Blanco's *Quinteto* (1956) as an example of his nascent interest in sound spatialization. This leads to a discussion of Blanco's exploration of electroacoustic composition in the first two decades of the Revolution through his writings, his role within state institutions, his compositions for outdoor spaces, and how these engaged with and contributed to ongoing socialist-revolutionary discourse.

An Experimental Carnival: Material Engagements with Space and Sound in São Paulo, Brazil

James McNally, University of Illinois, Chicago

On Ash Wednesday, 2016, a crowd of fifteen people assembled in front of São Paulo's Biblioteca Mário de Andrade to participate in the annual Bloco Ruído (Noise Bloco, or parading Carnival group). Each participant had spent the previous week constructing instruments from an assortment of household items, used electronics, and commercial kitsch in preparation for an extended parade through the city center. As the group marched through various notable and quotidian markers of the downtown cityscape, their instruments generated an industrial collage of glitches and feedback, garnering looks of bemusement from passers-by. In this presentation, I examine the distinct critical and creative possibilities of public experimental musical performance, focusing on the work of the Bloco Ruído. Drawing from the work of Lambrous Malafouris (2013) and Michel de Certeau (1984), I argue for understanding publicly situated creative initiatives such as the Bloco Ruído as material engagements with city space and sound. For the members of the Bloco Ruído, cultivating a material engagement with São Paulo fostered more direct and transformative engagements with urban space and sound than in conventional performance environments. In so doing, the bloco cultivated new interpersonal relationships across disparate social boundaries, in collaborative and sometimes confrontational ways. The presentation concludes with a consideration of the distinct context of the Brazilian Carnival, concentrating on the ways in which the Bloco Ruído inverted Carnival norms and opened new avenues of engagement with city space and sound not present in conventional Carnival contexts.

Our Ship Drum Earth: Decolonial Musicking in Ernesto Neto's Percussion Installation in Lisbon

Andrew Snyder, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Brazilian sculptor Ernesto Neto's gigantic artwork, "Our Ship Drum Earth," was featured in Lisbon for five months in 2024. Taking the form of a ship, the piece played on the hallowed and omnipresent nautical emblem of Lisbon's iconography, and particularly of the Belem neighborhood where it was situated, which celebrates the "Age of Discovery" as a foundational myth of Portugal. The installation contained percussion instruments from diverse cultures around the world, referencing the musical traditions that came into encounter as a result of colonialism. The ship also represented the earth itself, and Neto questioned in his commentary on the work where we might want to travel in this global vessel, interrogating the possibility for decolonial futures arising from the postcolonial present. Just as performance enacts the future through present action, a ship, Neto claimed, "points towards the future, but navigates in the present." In this aleatoric, participatory installation, the various acts of musicking in the ship reinforced the futurist and decolonial orientation of the work. In addition to receiving visitors to experiment with the percussion, the ship hosted several performance events, which protagonized Lisbon's diverse musical communities, featuring immigrant ensembles from ex-colonies of the Portuguese empire, Portuguese groups, and musicians from beyond the Lusophone world. In the final event, the musicians paraded from the museum into Belem's public spaces, intervening directly on its colonialist mythology. Through performance, the musicians

accumulated new meanings to the sculpture, experimentally and collaboratively answering Neto's question about how to musically construct decolonial futures for themselves.

04J. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Architectures of Knowledge: Jewish Music, Heritage, and Minority Agency

Chair: Jessica Roda, Georgetown University

This panel explores Jewish music as an “architecture of knowledge” (Amin/Cohendet 2009), focusing on the networks, institutions, and individuals that shape its meaning, transmission, and representation within specific contexts and its global implications. It examines the mechanisms through which Jewish music is produced, disseminated, and categorized, offering a framework to conceptualize Jewish music as a repository of both normative (expert) and experiential (folk) knowledge. By framing Jewish music as both a social category and a form of cultural heritage, we highlight how its study has often been confined to music theory, aesthetics, and identity politics. Instead, we foreground the infrastructures that sustain Jewish musical knowledge, scrutinizing how institutions, scholars, and cultural actors define, preserve, and transmit this heritage across generations and geographies. Drawing on Foucault's (1977) insights on knowledge and power, we argue that Jewish music is not merely an object of study but a dynamic field of knowledge production, shaped by specific pathways and networks that determine its interpretation and reception.

This panel seeks to map the diverse cultural, social, and political forces that influence Jewish musical heritage across different regions, including Europe, the USA and Canada. By incorporating perspectives from ethnomusicology, archival studies, and cultural history, we aim to reconceptualize Jewish music not only as a sound or tradition but as an evolving body of knowledge that reflects broader historical transformations and power dynamics. In doing so, we underscore the role of Jewish musical heritage as an active and contested space of cultural memory, identity negotiation, and intellectual discourse.

Alternative Architectures: Sounding Jewishness in Dead Spaces

Miranda Crowdus, Concordia University

This talk investigates the sounding of diverse Jewish musical heritage by living subjects to prompt a counter-heritagization process that reimagines and reforms conventional definitions of heritage, as well as different forms of hegemonic resistances to such soundings. This study explores “sonic interventions” of sounded Jewish prayer music at the Villa Seligmann in Hannover, Germany at which for some years the European Centre for Jewish Music (ECJM) was housed. Through a social, spatial, and musical analysis of Jewish sonic interpolations at a site designated “Jewish Heritage” by the German state, this talk shows how the sounding and hearing of living Jewish music has the potential to transform Jewish encounters – particularly the “haunted” encounters in heritage sites (Navaro-Yashin 2009). Sounding is investigated as both a positive embodied statement of Jewish communal identity and Jewish

diversity. The different forms of resistance in response to the “sounding” or “hearing” of diverse musics at the ECJM reveals tensions between minority agency and broader social norms and remembrance culture in German society characterized by an imposition of “acceptable” Jewish musical genres in the German landscape, and more broadly, a conflict between the normative promulgation of “anti-anti-semitic” discourse in German society (Lapidot 2020) and the agencies of Jewish subjects in response to it.

Transylvanian Fantasy: Jews, Revival, and Heritage in the Musical Landscape of Northern Romania

Jeremiah Lockwood, University of California, Los Angeles

This talk will explore the intertwined ethnic music revivals of the Northern Romanian region of Transylvania through an ethnography of the work of Jewish American klezmer revivalists who have worked in the area. Transylvania has historically been home to multiple ethnic groups, including Hungarians, Roma, Saxons (a German ethnic group), Romanians and Jews. Jewish Americans are among many groups who have sought to discover “roots” in the musical traditions of this region. Among the ethnic groups still living in the region (Jews and Germans are mostly absent from Transylvania in the present day), Hungarians and Romanians have mostly ceased to maintain music as a family trade, as was the norm until the mid-20th century, but were never the main professional musicians in the region. Roma musicians typically occupied this professional niche. But in the current folk music ecology of Transylvania, revivalists play a dominant role. Since the 1970s, musicians and activists in the Hungarian *táncház* folk music revival movement have established networks of music camps and venues of performance in Transylvania that are more or less accessible to American musicians. This paper will offer observations from the musical lives of American musicians Bob Cohen, Jake Shulman-Ment and Zoë Aqua and their Transylvanian interlocutors to explore strands of folklore, identity heritage reclamation movements, and localized political meanings that are invoked through the memory of Jews in the tapestry of Transylvanian musical memory.

04K. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Critical Biographies

Chair: TBD

A Biographical Portrait of the Professional Career and Influence of African American Band Leader Thomas E. Lyle

Derrick Reginald Smith, The University of Alabama

The stories of prominent African American band leaders and their contributions to music have historically been underrepresented in scholarly writings and historical narratives of the development of music education in the United States. The purpose of this study is to provide a record of the professional career and accomplishments of Thomas E. Lyle, his influence on the culture and development of predominately African American band programs in the United States, and contribute to the growing body of research on pioneering

African American band leaders at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Data was collected from primary and secondary sources, including newspaper articles, yearbooks, photographs, and memos from Alabama State University and Stillman College archives, scholarly publications, interviews, and archives from the Alabama Bandmasters Association and Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame.

Max Roach: Black Power Ideologies and Aesthetics

Maya Celeste Ann Cunningham, University of Massachusetts, Amherst,

This paper engages the 2024 centennial anniversary of jazz innovator Max Roach as an activist and Freedom Movement leader to explore how his music expressed his Black nationalist political ideologies that rose to prominence in African-America during the 1960s/1970s Black Power Movement. Roach is widely lauded as an innovator who created what the bebop cohort called ‘modern music’ in the 1940s, revolutionizing jazz hence forward, and as a Civil Rights Activist. While many of the 2024 centennial celebrations focused on Roach’s activist legacy, this paper will offer a deeper exploration of Max Roach’s Black nationalism that provoked his persecution by Euro-American music industry rulers who were aligned with the US colonial agenda for African-Americans. By placing Roach’s music in dialogue with ethnomusicological scholarship (Baraka, 1963, Ampene, 2012), Black political science (Dawson, 2001, Harris-Perry, 2004), and Africana Studies (Peniel, 2006, Bracey, 2014), I build on the work of Ingrid Monson (2007) to argue that Roach acted as an African-American Freedom Father who led the Black Freedom Movement using aesthetics that sounded a brand of cultural nationalism that focused on fostering kinship and pan-Africanist dialogue between African-Americans and Africans. Through extensive ethnographic interviews with Roach collaborators Charles Tolliver, Reggie Workman and others, oral history interviews and archival research in the Max Roach Papers and those of his musical partner Abbey Lincoln, I will elucidate how Roach used his musical aesthetics to express this liberation ideology and to usher in the popular era of Black nationalist thought that characterized the Black Power Movement.

Tracing the Barefoot Diva’s Path Through Repertoire: Cesária Évora’s Song Choices

Susan Hurley-Glowa, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Cesária Évora (1941-2011), a singer from Cabo Verde, West Africa with numerous award-winning albums and world tours, was a somewhat unlikely global superstar. When José da Silva became her manager in the late 1980s, she seemed past her prime and unmarketable. Nevertheless, Cesária became a beloved figure within the world music concert circuit and a musical ambassador for Cabo Verde. This presentation describes the communicative strengths, individual agency, and the emerging world music market that made Cesária into the iconic Barefoot Diva, but the primary focus here is her musical repertoire. How did Cesária and her management’s song choices shape the trajectory of her career? Which were favorites of international audiences and why? Cesária worked with several arrangers, composers, bandleaders, and band configurations over the years. How did those individual musicians

and styles influence her sound and success? While distinctive to Cabo Verde, Cesária's core repertoire of mornas and koladeiras utilize rhythms and musical structures common in many transatlantic and Iberian-based styles. Indeed, Fernando Arenas wrote of the cultural "indefiniteness" of Cesária's sound as a marketing strength (2011:69). As Cesária's career progressed, this ambiguousness allowed a smooth, successful expansion to new international repertoire, collaborations, and band members, while remaining firmly Cabo Verdean. New songs like "Bésame Mucho" in Spanish became part of her regular set lists. Just back from new research in Cabo Verde, I discuss Cesária Évora's successful career path through the lens of the songs she chose and the musicians that helped shape her sound and image.

04L. October 23, Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Considering Composition(s)

Chair: Clayton Dahm, Northwestern University

Performing Puerto Rican-American Identity in Luis R. Miranda's "Impromptu"

Julian William Duncan, Florida State University

On the evening of June 5, 1905, spectators crowded the Plaza de Baldioroty in Ponce, Puerto Rico, for a Monday night *retreta*. These public performances, held twice a week in city centers by municipal and military bands during the Spanish colonial period, continued after the island was annexed by the United States in 1898. They introduced audiences to popular and art music from the Caribbean, the United States, and Europe, as well as works by local Puerto Rican composers. On that June evening, the Banda del Regimiento de Puerto Rico delivered a diverse performance, led by Luis Rodríguez Miranda, a prominent local composer and U.S. Army bandleader. It included the premiere of his *danza*, "Impromptu op. 10," a genre tied to Puerto Rican patriotism, alongside American popular music like the foxtrot, European opera excerpts, and Caribbean music such as the *pasillo*. "Impromptu" demonstrates several distinguishing characteristics of the *danza*, including common-practice harmony, Afro-Caribbean *tresillo* and *cinquillo* rhythms, and the uniquely Puerto Rican "elastic" *tresillo*. The juxtaposition of culturally significant music from Puerto Rico with genres associated with US colonialism demonstrates the multifaceted nature of Puerto Rican cultural and political identity after US annexation. Within this musical ecosystem, encompassing early jazz as well as European and Afro-Caribbean music, "Impromptu" showcases hemispheric and transatlantic influences while maintaining a distinctly local presence through the *danza* idiom. In this presentation, I demonstrate how "Impromptu" and the *danza* idiom complicate genre and reflect Puerto Rican identity and transnational influence during this pivotal period.

Dichotomy of accordion and bandoneon in tango, China, and beyond

Lanxin{Nancy} Xu, Northwestern University

The accordion, invented in 19th-century Germany, now enjoys global popularity across Europe and pan-Asian regions, its versatility displayed in international competitions and in classical, folk, and popular repertoires. Tango performance, however, presents a special case. Though historically and sonically bound to the bandoneón—a German button accordion later adopted and reshaped in Argentina—tango is increasingly played on the standard free-bass accordion, even outside Argentina. In many contemporary settings, especially among emerging ensembles and young soloists, the bandoneón is replaced entirely, raising questions about instrument substitution, authenticity, and musical transmission.

This project investigates why the accordion has become a dominant voice in tango far from its Río de la Plata origins. I survey online performance recordings, competition repertoires, and instructional videos to trace how tango is taught and interpreted on the accordion today. Parallel interviews with accomplished accordionists who specialize in tango explore their artistic choices, training backgrounds, and genre perceptions.

My aim is to illuminate both practical reasons—availability, pedagogy, technique—and symbolic or aesthetic implications of performing tango on an instrument not traditionally linked to its cultural birthplace. By analyzing how tango’s identity is negotiated through the accordion, the study contributes to broader discussions of musical adaptation, cultural hybridity, and the dynamics of global instrumental performance.

Pulsation Non-Isochrony in Drumming Music of the Arabian Peninsula

Jim Morford, Western Washington University

Over the last quarter century, ethnomusicologists and music theorists have increasingly supported an interpretation of pulsation non-isochrony as a structural metric feature—and not merely an expressive one—in musics from parts of West Africa (e.g., Polak 2010), North Africa (e.g., Jankowsky 2010), and the Americas (e.g., Guillot 2022). This paper extends that work to the Arabian Peninsula, examining pulsation non-isochrony in three musical genres that are often associated with people of African descent and feature what performers sometimes refer to as “Khaliji swing feel” (Yamani and Afif 2017). A timing profile based on chronometric analysis of studio recordings of examples from two of these genres will be presented, demonstrating a superimposition or “nesting” (Polak 2025) of pulsation non-isochrony at binary, ternary, and quaternary levels of beat subdivision that is consistent with “Mode 2” performance in the Mandé region of West Africa (Morford and Davimotiond 2023). Extended attention will be given to analysis of Liwa, highlighting how pulsation non-isochrony and tempo change interact in processes of metric transformation.

October 23, Thursday, 9:30 PM - 11:00 PM

JAVEM Film Screening

Film Screening Organized by the *Journal of Audiovisual Ethnomusicology*

At this year's SEM Annual Meeting in Atlanta, the *Journal of Audiovisual Ethnomusicology* (JAVEM) will host a special film screening at the Limelight Theatre. Two recent works will be featured:

Mind, Hands, Work: Fidel Sambou Builds an Ekonting (dir. Scott Linford) — A portrait of Senegalese musician-sculptor Fidel Sambou, exploring instrument making as a creative, embodied process and highlighting his innovations in crafting the Jola ekonting. *Forbidden Sound* (dir. Meng Ren) — A vivid documentary on Hip Hop in China, examining its history, underground scenes, and the cultural and political challenges faced by artists working under censorship and social constraint.

The *Journal of Audiovisual Ethnomusicology* (JAVEM) is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed streaming journal sponsored by the Society for Ethnomusicology. Dedicated to advancing the use of multimedia as both method and medium in ethnomusicology, JAVEM provides a vital public platform for ethnomusicological films. By hosting screenings and multimedia installations, the journal creates opportunities for scholar-filmmakers to reach broader audiences, engage diverse stakeholders, and foster dialogue across academic and public spheres.

Join us for an evening of music, film, and conversation that showcases cutting-edge work in audiovisual ethnomusicology and reflects the renewed energy surrounding film as an essential ethnomusicological practice.

Friday, October 24

05A. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Academic Freedom Roundtable

Chair: Liz Przybylski, University of California, Riverside

Sponsored by the SEM Board

This discussion centers on how academic institutions, including universities, museums, and public organizations, can work together to respond to increasing threats to academic freedom, which are becoming more widespread globally. As anti-intellectualism rises, research- and education- focused institutions face escalating pressures through attacks on funding, accreditation, research resources, and nonprofit status. The conversation explores how scholars, particularly in fields like ethnomusicology, can collaborate across organizations and disciplines to protect intellectual freedom, and how institutions can learn from each other's strengths and

vulnerabilities in the face of these challenges. What is the role of SEM in a moment like the present? How can SEM members internationally work together to bolster intellectual freedom, and explore strategies for collaboration and mutual support, rather than competing for increasingly limited resources? What creative ways can we use to speak to public audiences directly? We invite panelists and participants to think expansively about preserving access to higher education, and the protection of public trust in research, even amid financial and political pressures.

05B. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Participatory Sacred Harp Singing and Discussion on Editing The Sacred Harp: 2025 Edition

Chair: Jesse P. Karlsberg, Emory University

David Ivey, Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association

Lauren Bock, Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association

Tom George, Sacred Harp Publishing Company

This workshop pairs a Sacred Harp singing from the new Sacred Harp: 2025 Edition, published in September 2025, with a moderated discussion with Sacred Harp singers who played key roles in the tunebook revision to explore how participants in this music culture understand this once-in-a-generation process of renewal. First published in 1844, The Sacred Harp has been sung from continuously and today sits at the center of a transnational music culture. The three workshop leaders are longtime Sacred Harp singers and include the head of the revision-music committee that oversaw the project, the author of the new “Rudiments of Music,” its pedagogical text, and a composer with multiple new songs in the revision written in tunebook’s dispersed harmony style. Panelists will provide practitioners’ perspectives on topics explored in ethnomusicological and related interdisciplinary literature on Sacred Harp singing including songbook editing (Stecker 2019; Karlsberg 2015; Hamrick 1995; Beale 1994), pedagogy (Malone 2009; Kelton 1985; Mitchell 1976), composition (Davis 2016; McKenzie 1989), and navigating Sacred Harp’s pluralistic global network in the twenty-first century (Lueck 2016; Clawson 2011; Miller 2008). After a 45-minute moderated discussion, SEM attendees, panelists, and Atlanta-area Sacred Harp singers will hold a 75-minute Sacred Harp singing from the new tunebook. Held just a month after the book’s publication, this session offers a unique opportunity to sing from the new Sacred Harp tunebook and hear from the people who created it.

05C. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Historical Soundscapes II

Chair: TBD

Thirteen Hundred Years in a Glance: Hani Harvest Song during the Kuzaza Festival

Ziwen Zhang, University of Iowa

Hani, one of the 55 ethnic minorities in the People's Republic of China who reside in Yunnan Province, trace their origins to migration from the Tibetan Plateau through the Sichuan Basin to the Ailao Mountains. This film mainly focuses on one of the Hani Haba repertoire during the Kuzaza Festival (砣扎扎节), also known as the Sixth Month Year (六月年), one of the three major festivals of the Hani people. Due to the lengthy narrative of ethnic musical epics, Hani Haba faces a challenging survival situation that serves as Hani's music and memory. By the end of the 20th century, Chinese scholars had completed collecting Hani folk music in Yunnan, establishing the Hani musical archives. Through interviews with the only Beima (clergy), Ma Jian Chang, and the villagers of Aichun Village, one of the soundtracks is a 10-minute Hani Haba, which can only be sung by Beima during the Sixth Month (Hani calendar), highlighting the dynamic nature of oral traditions in preserving cultural identity across generations. More broadly, this film aims to use music to convey oral narratives, maintaining the coherence and continuity of minority groups' culture in our rapidly changing world and within local intangible heritage dynamics.

Music, Our Empire: The Skopje 2014 Project and the Politicization of Roma

Paul David Flood, Eastman School of Music

In 2013, North Macedonia's national public broadcaster Macedonian Radio Television (MRT) selected Macedonian singer Vlatko "Lozano" Lozanovski and Macedonian-Romani singer Esmā Redžepova to represent the nation in the Eurovision Song Contest as a duo. Their song "Imperija" ("Empire") imagines the world as one large empire, united by the power of music. However, it was widely received by Macedonians as an endorsement of the then-ruling nationalist party VMRO-DPMNE's Skopje 2014 project, designed to give the nation's capital Skopje a classical aesthetic through the construction of new government buildings and erection of monuments depicting historical figures from the Macedonian region. In this paper, I argue that Redžepova, the singer and humanitarian known as the "Queen of the Gypsies" (Silverman 2012), aided the North Macedonian government in promoting their imperialist agenda by posturing herself, a famous representative of Europe's most impoverished racialized migrant community, as a figurehead of this "empire" united by music. Despite VMRO-DPMNE's complicated treatment of Roma, Redžepova endorsed their brand of Macedonian nationalism developed in opposition to European integration, and notably amid their candidacy for EU accession, through this collaboration. Moreover, "Imperija" was met with fierce criticism from Greeks and Bulgarians upset with North Macedonia's geopolitical claims regarding the region's imperial history. While ethnomusicological literature on Roma has focused on narratives of

resistance, acts of worldmaking, and formations of new subjectivities among Roma (Helbig 2023; Lie 2021; Costache 2018), I ultimately demonstrate how narratives of belonging among Roma have been commodified by national governments for nation-branding strategies targeting global audiences.

From Berlin to Teelin: Principles of WWII Radio Propaganda in Ireland

Maeve Carey-Kozlark, New York University

How does sound (mal)function to mediate, interpellate, and distribute authority and power? This paper expands on existing, albeit limited, scholarship to examine the strategic implementation of Nazi radio propaganda during WWII through Irland Redaktion, an Irish-language station founded and operated by the Schutzstaffel (SS). By analyzing a series of broadcasts that emphasized Ireland's colonial history and nationalist sentiment while avoiding overt Nazi rhetoric, the paper examines the nuanced, format-specific strategies used in an attempt to foster a sympathetic Irish neutrality untethered to Nazi social or race-based ideology.

This research underscores the complexities and challenges of sonically disseminating propaganda in a foreign context — especially, in Ireland's case, given the limited access to radio technology among the Schutzstaffel's target audience in the deeply anti-crown Gaeltacht — and offers insights into the broader implications of such efforts on national identity and political alignment in an otherwise “neutral” space. The paper additionally suggests avenues for further investigation into the long-term impact of sonic wartime propaganda on Ireland's political climate and collective memory, highlighting the delicate interplay between manipulation and resistance in the propagation of ideological narratives.

05D. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

AI and Ownership

Chair: Okon Hwang, Eastern Connecticut State University

AI vs. IP: Who Owns the World's Music Today?

David G. Hebert, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

At the 2025 Paris AI Summit, VPOTUS Vance declared to world leaders that “excessive regulation” harms the AI industry and will not be tolerated by the USA. His position contrasts with another VP, that of the world's largest music company (Universal), who denounced AI's “wholesale hijacking of the intellectual property of the entire creative community.” Indeed, as Suchir Balaji showed, the “fair use” doctrine cannot reasonably apply to the “training” of AI, whether in the form of text, images, or music, since the resulting synthetic products are designed to compete commercially with human-made creations. Law has arguably not kept pace with new technologies, including music AI, which flagrantly violates the spirit of copyright. How are ethnomusicologists to respond to AI

in ways consistent with our values? Currently, the US, China, and Europe are the main centers of AI innovation, and of these the EU most explicitly protects privacy and AI safety (e.g. GDPR, EU AI Act). The US is also one of the only major countries that is not a signatory to major international agreements for safe AI development. Since SEM is a US-based organization, its members must consider the impact these US policies will ultimately have on music ownership and music creation worldwide. Based on a decolonial approach to IP in the context of international law, this presentation will identify established ethnomusicological values, then outline the legal arguments (and counterarguments) for regulating AI to protect musicians, promote cultural survival, and even ensure the future of human personal identity.

What Madonna and Kraftwerk Can Teach Us about Music Copyright after The “AI Turn”

Matthew Day Blackmar, University of California, Los Angeles

Court decisions regarding Madonna and Kraftwerk might yet shape the AI music-copyright debate. Of late, copyright's legal balance between corporation and individual has shifted to occlude the author, even as fair-use provisions have been extended, in US and EU jurisdictions, to protect Silicon Valley corporations' practices of harvesting, caching, indexing, and thumbnailing public data online. This paper thus asks how we might better understand “data mining” as a fair-use exception in light of a landmark decision by the US Ninth Circuit, on minimal sampling, and a pending decision by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), on pastiche. Together, the two cases summon urgent questions regarding legal constructions of authorship, artistic agency, and fair use. While the decision in *VMG Salsoul v. Ciccone* (2016) promises a renewal of the *de minimis* doctrine pertaining to sampling of minimal length or extent, the pending CJEU decision, on appeal, in *Pelham GmbH, et al. v. Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider-Esleben* (2023) promises to rehabilitate the fair-use exception for pastiche. These cases might thereby clarify music-AI copyright: to what extent do training models “borrow” fragments of recorded music under copyright? And, to what extent do AI audio generators reassemble them in their outputs? While Sebastian Stober (2024) has argued that notions of borrowing and pastiche are technically incommensurate with AI audio generators, I argue that—whether or not jurists fully comprehend them—such decisions might yet deliver a legally binding understanding that will shape the direction of music copyright, creativity, and industry to come.

Can AI in the Music Industry Be Decolonised?: Notes from the Arabic Music Industry

Darci Sprengel, King's College, London

This paper explores what it might mean to “decolonise” AI in the music industry, drawing from case studies in the UAE and Egypt. AI in the music industry is used in music recommendation, to detect copyright infringement, and in music production, as only a few examples. Scholars such as Georgina Born have critiqued the Western centric nature of AI, with most dominant AI systems in the music industry developed by and for Western pop music. Using the Arabic music industry based out of the UAE and Anghami, a Beirut-based music streaming service, as a case studies, this paper demonstrates how the Arabic music industry operationalises AI in

ways that both challenge and uphold these relations of power within the region and beyond. Rather than understanding AI as an isolated and coherent object that can be decolonised, it questions whether AI, as a socio-technical assemblage always embedded in its larger cultural and historical contexts, might be better approached through the notion of the colonised coloniser. Developed by historian Eve Troutt Powell, the concept of the colonised coloniser expresses a position of duality in which one both liberates and dominates simultaneously, where the very drive toward liberation is justified through a logic of domination. Most broadly, this paper questions the possibility of decolonising AI, showing its limitations even when starting from the epistemologies of listeners and musicians in the global South. This paper is based on one year of fieldwork in the UAE and Egypt between 2022 and 2023.

Performing the Human: Artificial intelligence and popular music

Katherine Moira Miner, Boston University

This presentation will explore the phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-created popular vocal music in the years 2023 through 2025. Through examining both music creation and consumption, I will examine how AI softwares perform humanity-- the results of which purposely blur the lines between AI and human. I also delve into complications that arise when AI performs race and gender. The rise and fall of AI-rapper FN Meka will be used as a case study through which I consider the ethics of an AI software performing Black masculinity with goals of profit and commodification, and other case studies will be used as well. I will also provide potential future developments in the relationship between AI and music, and its impacts on human musicians and listeners.

05E. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Rethinking the Field in African Music Studies

Chair: Shirley Chikukwa, Columbia University

Recent studies of African music are challenging and expanding the way the field of ethnomusicological fieldwork has been constructed by including physical and figurative locations beyond traditional political, social and cultural boundaries. This panel reflects on the different ways ethnomusicologists working on topics in or related to Africa are redefining the field relative to how it has been constructed in the past and their impact on considerations concerning where knowledge about African music is held and being forged. The four field case studies included herein are Fesfop, a community-led cultural organization in Louga, Senegal, that challenges traditional conceptions of what, where, how and by whom African musical cultural heritage is maintained and preserved; business conferences taking place in the U.S., wherein African popular music is being discursively defined; an archive of Italian postcards and its use in exploring questions about how Tigrinya guayla music has been staged, documented and consumed through the colonial gaze; and nsadwase nnwom, or palmwine music, and how, through Akan cosmologies, it draws our attention to the field site beyond the anthropocene. By exploring these sites and the ways in which they transcend the traditional field in African music studies,

this panel seeks to not only consider the ways in which considerations beyond traditional field sites enrich ethnomusicological knowledge, but also the constitutive role African music plays in broader understandings of post-colonial, globalized, economic and ecological relationships well beyond the African continent's geographic boundaries.

Gifts From Nature: Akan Episteme, Palmwine Music and Galamsey in the Anthropocene

Josh Brew, University of Pittsburgh

During a 2022 community-engaged music project focused on the revitalization of nsadwase nnwom, or palmwine music, in Ghana, I witnessed severe environmental degradation. The River Pra, once known for its clear waters, had deteriorated due to illegal gold mining operations (“galamsey”), leading to murky waters, deforested banks, and serious health consequences. Drawing from ethnographic research with Akan elders, palmwine musicians, and individuals involved in mining, this paper explores what the field site becomes in ethnomusicological research when the Anthropocene is decentered; specifically, by privileging Akan cosmologies, where music and nature exist as ontologically interconnected divine gifts. Within this framework, I examine the relational ethics between music and the natural environment, particularly their reciprocity. What happens when humans and their musical cultures fail to reciprocate generous gifts from nature? Could music inadvertently contribute to the global ecological crisis? I investigate these questions through palmwine music, which depends heavily on natural resources in both its intangible and material forms—palm wine, made from palm tree sap, is consumed and used for libation during performances. Additionally, the tradition's storytelling mode, steeped in Akan philosophies and values, provides insight into music's relationship with environmental challenges. By examining how Akan cosmologies function within palmwine music, this paper contributes to ethnomusicological discourse on sustainability, advocating for a holistic approach that protects both music and the environment

The Business of Culture: Contemporary Field Sites and African Popular Music

Shirley Chikukwa, Columbia University

On a panel titled, “African Diaspora, Navigating Duality,” Kweku Amoako, CEO of Afropolitan Cities, described a shift in perceptions of Africanness from his young adulthood when, “Even Africans didn’t want to be African,” to the present, where “people are buying into the culture. People want to be African.” Amoako said this at Amplify Africa’s 2023 AFRICON, the—then— second annual conference, held in Los Angeles, aimed at bringing together African and Afro-diasporic professionals from various fields across music, education, business, and technology. Leveraging the explosive popularity of Afrobeats and Amapiano, nascent cultural businesses are dedicating themselves to promoting a vision of African culture that seeks to capitalize on this cool factor to promote a more contemporary image of Africa and African culture. Organizations such as Amplify Africa and Afropolitan Cities are mirroring trends in Fintech, where development-oriented visionaries are looking to private capital, entrepreneurship, and digital media to accelerate Africa’s economic and infrastructural growth and using this tidal wave of African artist visibility to do it. Conducting

fieldwork at business conferences such as AFRICON and networking events such as Afropolitan Cities raises significant questions about sites of investigation for this growing African popular music scene. This paper explores discourse surrounding African popular music as it is being conducted in business circles, or sites not traditionally seen as ethnomusicological. When these sites and “communities” are disparate and loosely defined network, how do we begin to capture the full picture of this cultural ecosystem?

Colonial Postcard Archives and Reimagining Music Fieldwork in Eritrea

Dexter Story, University of California, Los Angeles

Ethnomusicology has long privileged the field as a site of sonic encounters, yet what happens when sound itself is mediated through two-dimensional images? This paper rethinks African music field research by exploring the role of visual and material archives—specifically, a collection of early 20th-century Italian colonial postcards depicting Eritrean musicians—as a means of historicizing acoustic genealogies. The sepia-toned photographic moments, which capture musicians performing traditional instruments such as the kirar (box lyre), chira’wata (bowed lute), embilta (long flute) and keboro (drum), raise crucial questions about how indigenous music lived within the colonial gaze. Drawing on sound studies work by Steven Feld (1992), Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier (2014), Nina Eidsheim (2018) and Sylvia Wynter’s critiques of Western epistemologies that prioritize textual over embodied knowledge, the paper engages with the limitations and possibilities of imagining sound from silent representations. What methodologies—whether oral histories, deep listening, speculative analysis, or comparative ethnographic research—allow us to reinsert these lost sonic narratives, particularly Tigrinya guayla before its mid-century recordings, into contemporary understandings of Eritrean musical history? By bridging archival research with contemporary fieldwork, this paper also considers how scholars of African music navigate the tensions between presence and absence, sound and silence, visibility and erasure. The paper argues for a methodological expansion that embraces multisensory, interdisciplinary and non-traditional approaches, repositioning the field not only as a site of direct experience but also as a space where sonic memory, image, and imagination converge.

Fesfop and the Social Life of Material Cultural Heritage in Senegal

Althea SullyCole, Schulich School of Music, McGill University

Festival International de Folklore et de Percussions de Louga (International Festival of Folklore and Percussion of Louga), or “Fesfop,” is a community-led cultural organization founded in 2000. Over the course of its quarter-of-a-century history, Fesfop’s activities in the region have included the production of an annual festival of music and dance; management of a community radio station; presentation of various colloquia and applied workshops; organization of “solidarity tourism and discovery excursions”; and the maintenance of a museum of percussion and arboretum. As a community-led organization, Fesfop is one of several institutions local to West Africa that defies a false binary reproduced by recently renewed debates concerning African cultural heritage wherein the preservation of materials of cultural heritage is closely associated with Western cultures while the preservation of cultural heritage

through embodied practice is considered primarily the purview of non-Western cultures. Through interviews with Fesfop's president and founder, artistic director, radio presenters, performers and educators, this paper demonstrates how Fesfop and institutions like it embody autochthonous approaches to the preservation of material cultural heritage, and, specifically, how these institutions are active in the continued social life of material cultural heritage in ways that may be instructive for a variety of archives and museums with similar holdings in the West. This paper also considers how figuring such institutions, which have often been ignored by the ethnomusicological field, as important sites of cultural heritage and knowledge may impact the relational ethics through which knowledge concerning African music is produced.

05F. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Cosmopolitan Creativity in the Southern Balkans: Three Contemporary Responses to Folk Music Institutions

Chair: Donna A Buchanan, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

The southern Balkan nation-states of Greece and Bulgaria share a history of state-sanctioned investment in “national” folk music since their post-Ottoman founding. Yet, their contrasting 20th-century political conditions of a right-wing junta and authoritarian socialism gave rise to differing postnationalist cultural legacies amid shifting institutional landscapes. Since the 1990s, a revived urbanite interest in Greek traditional culture contributed to the institutionalization of folk music pedagogy, whereas in Bulgaria, the collapse of its socialist regime saw a decline in state support for folk music institutions. This panel considers how folk musicians respond to the challenges and affordances of institutional change through cosmopolitan creative strategies in performance and pedagogy. We thus strive for a synthetic approach to musical cosmopolitanism scholarship (Turino 2000; Stokes 2007; Collins & Gooley 2017) that considers institutional structure and creative agency together, to underscore the efficacy of cosmopolitan creativities within contemporary folk music scenes. The first presenter contrasts two variants of jazz cosmopolitanism among Epirote musicians in their musicality and self-image. The second presenter examines how leading figures in folk-revivalist music seminars in Greece transcend Hellenocentrism through a pan-regional conception of traditional music. The third presenter explores how two recent Bulgarian folk music recordings draw upon jazz and funk as a source of creative direction amidst the decay of the scene's folk music institutions. Collectively, these three contributions illuminate the utility of a cosmopolitan creative outlook in confronting the shifting presence of folk music institutions in the southern Balkans.

Parakalamos Blues vs. Pogonisio Jazz: Musical Creativity and Positionality Among Two Epirote Musicians

Gabriel Zuckerberg, Brown University

My paper compares the musical identities and aesthetic ideologies of two cosmopolitan-minded Epirote musicians, Yiannis Chaldoupis and Vasilis Kostas. As a participant-observer temporarily living in Epirus, I have been taking lessons and performing with

both musicians, and socializing among their peers to understand their reception. Chaldoupis is a clarinetist born and living in Parakalamos, the sole “Roma village” in the municipality of Pogoni. Yet, during a 17-year stint in Amsterdam, Chaldoupis found a love for blues and created his idiosyncratic Epirote “Gypsy jazz” style. Also with roots in Pogoni, Vasilis Kostas grew up in Ioannina and was educated in jazz guitar at Berklee College of Music, only through which he discovered his homeland’s lute, the laouto. Kostas quickly became internationally renowned for his melodic use of the laouto and modal ethno-jazz collaborations. While both musicians are united by their affinity for African-American music and the creative obstacles in developing idiosyncratic fusions, their communication of those fusion styles diverges in social life. The festival-goer and musician community praises and criticizes these musicians for a mixture of reasons, often conflating issues of identity, urbanization, “artistry,” and “tradition.” I argue it is most elucidating to compare these musicians by a dialectic between musical experimentation and aesthetic identity: their self-reported perception of musical affinities (Stokes 2004) with blues versus modal jazz and their public efforts to integrate those styles into their self-image. This dialectic is visible in their claims to stylistic rootedness, the repertoire they perform in presentational contexts, and their public reception.

Mediterraneanist and Balkanist Cosmopolitan Visions at Greek Summer Music Seminars: Two Case Studies in Pedagogy and Performance

Dimitris Gkoulimaris, University of Texas at Austin

In the context of the Greek folk revival movement, intensive music seminars have emerged as prominent pedagogical spaces that complement the traditional institutions of the conservatory and the university. Many seminar instructors take on explicitly cosmopolitan attitudes, framing their teaching and performance of diverse repertoires through notions of a shared Eastern Mediterranean and/or Balkan musical culture, and thus challenging the once-dominant Hellenocentric approach to the study of folk music. In this emergent post-nationalist paradigm, musicians may look for affinities and inspiration in two intersecting directions: eastward, in the modal traditions of the Islamic world, or northward, in the stylistically familiar repertoires of the Balkans. The present paper examines these parallel and overlapping Mediterraneanist and Balkanist visions for a cosmopolitan understanding of musical culture, as they manifest in the pedagogical and performance choices of seminar instructors. My study draws upon participant observation conducted at five seminars in Greece over three summer periods, while it also dialogues with existing literature on the Greek folk revival (Dawe 2007; Kallimopoulou 2009). My analysis focuses on two case studies: the makam workshops of Evgenios Voulgaris and the polyphonic choirs of Martha Mavroidi, in addition to these instructors’ performances within the seminar programming. I dissect the two teachers’ repertoire selection, as well as their aesthetic choices in teaching and performing this repertoire, specifically regarding modal and rhythmic vocabulary, harmonization, and arrangement. Ultimately, I argue that the seminar instructors’ creative choices inform and advance the cosmopolitan visions that continue to shape the Greek revival movement.

“A Crisis of Ideas”: Institutional Decay, Creative Stasis, and Musical Identity in Contemporary Bulgarian Folk Music

Nathan Bernacki, University of British Columbia

Professional Bulgarian folk musicians currently navigate a scene characterized by the post-socialist decline of state support for folk music institutions (Rice 1994; Buchanan 2006; Silverman 2012). This deemphasis of institutionalized music making has left professional folk musicians with the responsibility of creatively defining the future of their tradition in its post-socialist condition. Yet this effort is further hindered by a sense of creative stasis within the tradition following the groundbreaking virtuosity of wedding music from the 1980s-90s. This twofold dilemma has led to fusion with external styles as the only remaining creative direction for Bulgarian folk music. This paper explores how the stylistic choices of this cosmopolitan approach ground discussions of musical identity amidst post-socialist institutional decay and a perceived creative scarcity. I consider two recent recordings, “Pletenitsa” by Peyo Peev, and “Paidushko” by Zhivko Vasilev. Peev’s style of folk music, with dense extended harmony, mathematical reorderings of Bulgaria’s asymmetric dance meters, and funk-inspired arrangement, are creative decisions deployed to challenge listeners to hear his work as a departure from wedding music and institutionalized staged folklore. A younger Vasilev, the first folk musician trained abroad in jazz performance, finds inspiration in jazz greats, with his jazz-folk music fusion work entirely circumventing institutional restrictions. Fieldwork interviews with Peev, Vasilev, and other prominent folk musicians indicate that while there is general consensus concerning the necessity of this cosmopolitanism, disagreements remain around themes of audience-musician relationships, (in)appropriate degrees of fusion, and the shifting influence of folklore institutions.

05G. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Queer Worldmaking

Chair: Jordan Brown, Harvard University

Anglo-Catholicism in Atlanta: Musicking Queerness and Neurodivergence in Liturgy

Charles Hudson Moss, Mercer University

The Church of Our Saviour (COOS) is an Anglo-Catholic parish within the Episcopal diocese of Atlanta, GA. Founded in 1924, the parish has been an outlier for its preferences for historical liturgy, early music, and orthodox theologies. The mass style for the parish emphasizes a “high church” experience, pairing pre-tonal music with incense, Latin chant, and an East-facing altar. A significant portion of parishioners at COOS identify as queer and/or neurodivergent. Anglo-Catholicism has historically attracted gay men for its campy aesthetic and incarnational theology of the body (Stringer 2000, Bethmont 2006). Alongside queerness, neurodivergence is also prevalent among worshippers at COOS. Drawing from congregational interviews, archival materials, and music survey data, this paper argues that these worshippers have musical/liturgical preferences which are marginal outside COOS. Further, it demonstrates that

these preferences have drawn together an emergent community of worshippers that would otherwise be marginalized elsewhere. Taken together, these data suggest that the worshippers' attraction to the highly-ritualized mass at COOS demonstrates the convergence of multiple marginalized groups that would otherwise not have a worshipping home. Worshippers within the Episcopal Church and Roman Catholic Church honor queerness and neurodivergence in different ways; within both congregations, queer and neurodivergent people can be welcomed more both as separate groups and at their intersection. Ultimately, this paper offers insight for fostering musical communities of welcome for queer and neurodivergent people that would be marginalized elsewhere.

Land of the Rat Kings: Queerness, Romaniness, and Popular Music in the Slovak Periphery

Dominika Moravcikova, Institute of Musicology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University

In June 2023, a previously obscure young Roma singer named Vojtik broke into mainstream culture in Slovakia. Drawing on alternative pop and visual aesthetic of Ethel Cain, Lana del Rey, and Marina Diamantis, he stunned Slovak society with his explicit queerness, being a Roma teenager from the industrial Slovak town of Detva with a prominent neonazi scene. "I listen to the city radio, I lie there roaring until I fall asleep. I'm terrified of the future, born to perish..." he sings in *Detvian Dream*, the viral song that brought him to the limelight. After gaining public acclaim, he stated that he does not enjoy success and will always be "a Rat King". Based on ethnography and media analysis of Vojtik's performances and engagements with his audience, this paper will analyze the various elements of his emancipatory poetics, using frameworks of intimate politics (Stokes 2010, 2023; Stirr 2017), autonomous art (Ranciere 2006), and affective impropriety (Stover, 2020), arguing that Vojtik's interplay of Slovak and Romani folklore, American gothic, alternative pop and subversive appropriation of Slovak national and neo-Nazi references is employed to move beyond representational discourses and to stage a counter-discourse to both ethnonationalist and liberal narratives, the latter viewing Detva (where he developed his unique style and which he significantly never left) as a place of post-socialist decline, from which an outstanding queer pop singer, a Romani one at that, would be unthinkable to emerge.

Sounding Transness: 'Spliced Collage' and the Co-Creation of Trans and Queer Storyworlds in Drag Performance

Sarah Cooper, University of Bristol

This paper examines how 'spliced collage' serves as a transcoded tool in drag performance, constructing a trans and queer storyworld, demanding audience co-creation, and reflecting the ephemeral, fragmented nature of trans existence. Using ethnographic material from Bristol's drag scenes (U.K.), I build on queer ethnomusicological approaches (Barz & Cheng, 2020; Garcia-Mispireta, 2023; Maus & Whiteley, 2022) to explore how drag performers engage audiences in collective gender play, making them complicit in constructing a collective, temporary, storyworld. The technique I term 'spliced collage' pulls from multiple genres, sound bites, and pop culture references, fragmenting and reassembling them onto a core musical text. Contributing to scholarship on trans cultural production (Rosenberg et al., 2021; Stryker & Curran, 2014; Tourmaline et al., 2017), I explore 'spliced collage' as a distinctly

transcoded technique which demands audience co-creation for three reasons: Firstly, the compositional process emphasises DIY culture, fostering resistance and community. Secondly, its referential nature, which invites collaborative acts of recognition, interpretation, and play. Finally, it conveys a multiplicity of meanings, containing structural fragility through its bold, fragmented form. This requires audience participation to fill gaps, making worldbuilding a collective, co-authored experience. Using participant observation and interviews, I reconstruct a number deploying ‘spliced collage,’ analyse how musical texts compete and interact, and examine audience responses to the original performance, building on music and drag scholarship (Blackburn, 2024; Heller, 2020). ‘Spliced collage’ represents both individual and collective transness through the storyworld co-created during the performance, expanding discussions on trans methodologies in ethnomusicology and participatory performance.

Hill Country Gay Boy: Topophilia, Queer Embodiment, and Myself in the Music of Sufjan Stevens

Brandon Lane Foskett, University of Texas at Austin

The aspect of my queer disposition that I have struggled most to understand is not that of my categorical identity (“gay”) but rather how I make sense of myself geospatially as a homosexual living in Texas (Brubaker 2006, Cusick 1994). I feel conflicted by my attraction to the subtle beauty of Texan landscapes and my relative disdain for its politics. On camping and hiking trips, I frequently pair my surroundings (the Texas Hill Country) with the music of American singer-songwriter Sufjan Stevens—whose queering of genre, as a queer artist himself, sonically eases my turbulent relationship with Texas. In this autoethnographic project, I analyze some compositional qualities of three indie-folk songs by Sufjan Stevens to reveal their potential resonance with queer listeners. I draw on Yi-Fu Tuan’s (1974) and Leonieke Bolderman’s (2020) theories of topophilia and musical topophilia— affective relationships between people, places, and music. I conclude that the act of travel, in conjunction with Stevens’s music, provides a mental space and romanticization of a Texas where my queer self can flourish privately and peacefully. Effectively, these cathartic escapades have established a symbiosis between my consumption of music and experience of place, where each now inspires and enhances the other. I illustrate how playing with affect can foster an empowering and reconciliatory sense of queer embodiment and self-reckoning in a frequently turbulent twenty-first-century U.S. Musical topophilia has become the foundation of my ethics of care; I can now bolster my own everyday mental health through music—and this is my favorite way of “being gay.”

05H. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

International Rap and Hip Hop

Chair: TBD

Rhyme and Flow in Tamil Rap

Shiva Ramkumar, Harvard University

In this paper, I identify new approaches to analyzing flow in Tamil language rap, and through this analysis, argue for broader conceptions of flow and rhyme in rap music. Flow refers to rappers' lyrical delivery, particularly pertaining to parameters such as rhyme, rhythm, and vocal pitch (Adams 2009; Komaniecki 2019). The art of rap lies uniquely between speech and song, and theorizations of flow must therefore be grounded in rap's specific linguistic medium. Scholars have examined how rappers in languages other than English have creatively redefined flow and rhyme in accordance with the affordances and limitations of those languages (Manabe 2006; Park 2021). I bring this framework to the understudied body of rap in the Tamil language, which differs significantly from English in its syntax, phonology, and prosody.

I propose some important rhyming techniques that overcome the challenges of—and exploit the affordances of—the Tamil language in rap. These include: multisyllabic end rhymes, head rhymes, translingual rhymes, and phonetic rhymes. I contextualize these techniques within the phonology and syntax of the Tamil language and existent Tamil prosodic conventions, and illustrate their use in two songs by rapper Paal Dabba: “Kaathu Mela” (2024) and “170CM” (2023). This paper thus not only offers analytical techniques for Tamil rap, but an important lens with which to address the crucial issues of linguistic evolution, creativity, and hybridity in popular musics around the world.

Configuring Gender through Hip Hop: Subôï

Julia Catherine Santoli, City University of New York Graduate Center

Over the past 15 years, hip-hop has become increasingly popular within Vietnamese youth culture. One of the artists at the forefront is Suboi. I would like to present an article focusing on the representation of gender that Suboi puts forth in her work. As a famous female rapper within Vietnam, Suboi crafts contemporary images of Vietnamese women for a global audience. For instance, her music video for CONG (2018, Suboi Entertainment) philosophically deals with the subject of labor (cong) and plays with images of Vietnamese women factory workers, using lyrics, choreography, and staging to subvert conventional narratives. While there is a vast amount of literature on global hip-hops, hip-hop in Southeast Asia is undertheorized. I will draw from pre-existing literature on global hip-hop (Catherine Appert, Jason Ng) staging gender within hip-hop (Liz Przybylski, Noriko Manabe) and Vietnamese gender and aesthetics (Trinh T. Minh Ha, Martina Nguyen, Ben Tran). My research will analyze lyrics, music videos, and interviews, within frameworks of gender and post-coloniality in Vietnam. I ask: In what ways does Suboi engage with prior representations of Vietnamese women in

her work? How does Suboi create contemporary representations of Vietnamese women, and how are they presented to domestic and global audiences? How does Suboi appropriate gendered regional/national symbols and vocabularies in crafting her identity as an artist? I argue that in staging these images, Suboi offers a unique aesthetic of contemporary female Vietnamese identity, while navigating the neoliberal market demands of the music industry.

From Shima-uta to Hip-Hop: Okinawan Popular Music and the Global Echoes of Black Musical Resistance

Qifang Hu, University of Texas at Austin

In Okinawa, hip-hop has emerged as a powerful site of cultural resistance, where young rappers gather weekly in cyphers at American Village, near the U.S. military base, transforming public spaces into arenas of political expression. A cypher—a freestyle rap session where MCs take turns improvising verses—has long been a cornerstone of hip-hop culture, fostering community, competition, and social commentary. Drawing from the global tradition of cyphers rooted in Black musical resistance, these gatherings serve as a disruption of Okinawa’s contemporary political landscape, challenging the lingering effects of Japan’s neocolonial policies and the enduring U.S. military presence. This paper explores how hip-hop in Okinawa—both through independent grassroots movements and the work of prominent artists like Awich and OZworld—interpolates traditional shima-uta melodies, creating a sonic bridge between Okinawa’s past and its contested present. While hip-hop serves as a medium for young rappers to voice their frustrations and reclaim their identity, it has also been strategically embraced by local politicians seeking to engage young voters. Through an ethnographic study of street-level cyphers, independent labels, and mainstream artists in Tokyo and Okinawa, respectively, this paper examines the ways in which Okinawan hip-hop negotiates racial, cultural, and political tensions, positioning itself within a larger global network of resistance. By tracing the intersections of hip-hop, race, and political agency in Okinawa, this study highlights how local artists disrupt dominant narratives and use music as a force for social change, asserting Okinawa’s autonomy within the broader framework of Japanese and U.S. geopolitical negotiations.

“Honour Your Mother and Father, Ya Bastards”: The New Masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand Hip Hop

Susan Ashley Jacob, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

When hip hop music and culture reached Aotearoa New Zealand in the mid-1980s local youth quickly adapted the genre to reflect Māori and Pasifika aesthetics and values, resulting in a hip hop environment rooted in Indigenous cultural revitalization and resistance to colonial oppression. Although Aotearoa hip hop artists embraced these aspects of the culture, many also displayed the hegemonic masculine behaviors and traits often expressed in mainstream American hip hop, such as overt misogyny, homophobia, competitiveness, and emotional suppression. Women and LGBTQIA+ individuals bear the brunt of the negative effects of hegemonic masculinity; however, this social construction also places substantial limitations on cisgendered heterosexual men who often struggle to cope with the trauma it causes. Notwithstanding its pervasiveness, I came across a number of hip hop artists during my fieldwork in

Aotearoa (2024-2025) who are pushing back against the restrictions and damages of hegemonic masculinity in large part by becoming the role models they needed during their youth. I argue that through music and community engagement these artists reconstruct Aotearoa hip hop to reflect the new masculinity; one that embraces vulnerability, encourages empathy, makes space for others, and uplifts peers. This research is based on observations at live performances, cyber ethnography, and interviews with artists currently active in the cities of Wellington and Auckland on the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. In this presentation, I expand upon extant studies on resistance strategies in Aotearoa hip hop by providing an in-depth analysis of how gender expression contributes to this discourse.

05I. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Music and the Commons: The Lost Resources and Infrastructures

Co-Chairs: Ana Hofman, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts; Ioanida Costache, Stanford University

Global concerns over the rapid extraction of natural, economic, and cultural resources call for a critical examination of the concept and practices of the commons from an ethnomusicological perspective. This panel contributes to discussions on music and the commons by examining transformations in structures of ownership in the nominally socialist or post-socialist countries of former Yugoslavia, Romania, and China. In this panel we trace the complexities surrounding a historical shift in the material conditions for music performing and listening; moving from an emphasis on collectivist, state regulated and public domains toward individual, market-oriented and private ones. We theorize this shift as a telling example of the contested interrelationship between music and the commons. Drawing on scholarship that shows how a politics of infrastructure should not only concern itself with the structures or networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people, objects and the allocation of resources, but also the ideas, practices and distribution of patterns of connectivity, movement and flow (Ong and Collier 2005)—this panel broadens ethnomusicological inquiry and theorization of the commons. We argue that understanding the social purposes of music-making requires careful attention to the infrastructures and public goods that sustain the social nature of music making. We ask: what does a focus on musical commons bring to wider debates about social divisions/ equalities, the production of value and social justice? What are the points of intersection or overlap with related notions (or definitions) of the 'global commons,' 'digital commons,' or 'creative commons'?

Resonances of the Commons: The Yugoslav Railway and the Infrastructures of Collective Music-Making

Ana Hofman, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

The dissolution of the state socialist project in Yugoslavia has not only profoundly reshaped the multiethnic notion of “our music” toward the ethno-national musical selves, but has also transformed the understanding of “our” in terms of material resources for music making. This paper investigates the “tragedy of the (musical) commons” (Hardin 1968) from the (post-)socialist perspective

that put forward the processes of socialization of the means of production. My case study focuses on the Yugoslav Railway, which was a significant enterprise in facilitating new forms of collective musical activities following World War II through an extensive network of railway culture associations across Yugoslav urban centres. These societies served as crucial conduits for musical exchange and community development based on a form of social ownership central to Yugoslav self-management. I explore how activities grounded in the principles of the musical commons—encompassing access to musical instruments, rehearsal spaces, and the production and transmission of musical knowledge—enhanced individuals' capacities to practice the ideas of social equality. This process contributed to the destabilization of class and urban/rural divisions, as well as the dichotomies between state and citizens, professional and amateur musicians, and various music genres, including classical, popular, and folk. Furthermore, I discuss how the historical project of Yugoslav socialism, which reinforced social ownership of the means of musical production, can inform our contemporary understanding of the politics of musical commons as a formative element of the emancipatory subject engaged in the struggle against class-based social fragmentation.

The Romani Commons: Extraction and Transformation

Ioanida Costache, Stanford University

This paper examines the intersection of Romani musical traditions and the commons by focusing on the historical transformation of ownership structures and modes of production in socialist and post-socialist Romania. By analyzing the extraction of Romani musics within the framework of the socialist culture industry, I explore how state-regulated, collectivist infrastructures shaped musical performance, transmission, and listening practices, and how these practices were later supplanted by market-oriented, privatized models. This shift not only redefined the musical landscape but also disrupted traditional ways in which cultural resources were shared and maintained within communities. Building on José Esteban Muñoz's (2019) concept of the "Brown commons," I argue that Romani musicians actively navigated and subverted these systemic changes through embodied knowledge and performance. Their practices offered subtle yet potent forms of resistance against both state control and subsequent neoliberal commodification. Drawing on Moten's (2003) notion of fugitivity, I position Romani music-making as a practice of resilience that sustains communal sonic spaces, despite extensive cultural extraction and erasure. In doing so, I highlight how these embodied practices challenge dominant epistemologies and state-imposed logics of ownership, calling into question established definitions of authenticity and value. Ultimately, this paper contributes to a broader ethnomusicological inquiry into music as a social and public good, urging a reconsideration of the complex interrelations between music, ownership, and communal identity.

Leisure Legibility, Bad Faith, and Ecologies of Musical Expertise: Contesting the Commons

Ruard William Absaroka, University of Salzburg

Drawing on examples from the People's Republic of China, this paper identifies a distinctive nexus of infrastructures, politics and expectations concerning collective interests and what can be deemed "the cultural commons." Building on Wang (1997, 2001) I argue that one measure of the extension of the state's "indifference zone" has been precisely the vitality and variety of leisure activities. But, in a process that continues in an era of ubiquitous digital culture, the capacity of the "state capitalist" political-economic system to affect the agenda of popular culture, especially at the discursive level, has, if anything, been rejuvenated. I contend that ideas and practices related to music and the commons persist but are also contested against a backdrop of hyper-consumerism, newly pressured leisure routines and the shattering of some forms of musical authority through the emergence of digital knowledge practices. Of interest to wider ethnomusicological debates are both bottom-up subcultural attributions of ownership and excellence by "hidden musicians," and the top-down focus of cultural patronage that I term "musicking like a state." In the PRC, both these vectors may function as a "redemption of the mundane" (Biancorosso 2004), a sort of societal-level positioning gesture validating the amateur musical tastes and moral unassailability of particular demographics. But what kind of music-making and whose knowledge is valued, and by whom? What contradictions arise when governmental arts policy meets long-held grassroots practices of self-cultivation, auto-didacticism, and local expressions of musical citizenship?

Discussion

Eric Drott, University of Texas at Austin

05J. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Operatic Horizons

Chair: Loneka Battiste, University of Houston

Contemporary Latinx Immersive Opera

Alberto Varon, Indiana University, Bloomington

This paper looks at Latinx opera as a Latinx counterpublic in which joy and optimism take center stage. The history of opera largely coincides with the history of colonization, dating back to the sixteenth century. As European culture spread across the western hemisphere over four and a half centuries, opera's cultural force directly and indirectly asserted white superiority, and later, became associated with the elite and class difference. Yet, in the twenty-first century, opera's cultural force is radically different and—quite

counterintuitively— Latinx artists are turning to one of the most traditional musical forms associated with whiteness and class privilege to express changing class and culture in the Americas.

In this paper, I address how the intersection of Latinx avant-garde and activist art and the operatic mode enable new possibilities for public address. Here, I examine several examples of contemporary Latinx opera to describe how the form stages an intervention into cultural hierarchies and makes possible a new form of political agency. These operas vary in musical style, from traditional orchestral instrumentation to Afro-Caribbean rhythms and beats. Historically excluded from artistic institutions historically credited with taste making, Latinx artists, musicians, and performers turn to opera's emotionally-laden performance to create new affective structures that better resonate in our current social milieu. In particular, I focus on the emerging practice of immersive opera as both continuation and rupture of traditional operatic form. The practice of immersive opera stages the shifting cultural and class meaning of twenty-first century opera.

The Subtle Role of Cantonese Opera in Rethinking Hongkonger Identity

Matthew Antony Haywood, Macau University of Science and Technology

When Cantonese opera performers and fans in Hong Kong discuss Cantonese opera, they rarely describe it as having any connection to their identity. This relative silence is reflected in the academic literature on Hongkonger identity where Cantonese opera is seldom mentioned. Indeed, most studies focus on textual readings of Cantopop, film, and television. Among the few studies that have explored the connection between Hongkonger identity and Cantonese opera, most do so by analyzing explicitly political themes. However, the majority of performers today deliberately avoid political content in their productions, which may explain why the opera is widely overlooked in Hongkonger identity discourses. In contrast to these omissions, this paper argues that Cantonese opera performances play a role in shaping Hongkonger identity but do so through a subtle means of discoursing on authenticity. Whilst performers avoid political themes, they often assert that Hong Kong has preserved various “traditional” Chinese performance elements that signify the authenticity and uniqueness of Hong Kong Cantonese opera. This discourse differs from the dominant frameworks in studies on Hongkonger identity which tend to define the uniqueness of Hong Kong as located in its cosmopolitanism rather than its preservation of Chineseness. By highlighting this subtle process of identity construction, this paper positions Cantonese opera as an important yet overlooked cultural force in shaping Hongkonger identity. In doing so, it also offers a more diverse perspective on Hongkonger identity beyond the conventional portrayal of it as uniformly conflicted by its Chineseness, oriented toward cosmopolitanism, and explicitly politicized.

“Mediating Gender Beyond the Arja Stage: Comedic Cross-dressing and the Contemporary Balinese Liku”

Meghan Hynson, University of San Diego; Wayan Sudirana, Institut Seni Indonesia, Denpasar

Some of the most sought-after artists in Bali are performers who cross-dress as the female Liku, a historically comedic character representing the crazy princess in the Balinese dance drama arja. Also known as “Balinese opera,” arja has long been a site for contesting and reproducing local and national values concerning gender through its cross-dressed roles (see Kellar 2003 and Collier 2022). This gender commentary has recently begun to expand beyond the arja stage, as many Liku dancers now have lucrative careers performing as freelance MCs, Instagram influencers, and YouTube music video stars. As a result, the visibility and influence of these performers has expanded to millions of viewers in Bali and internationally. Drawing on interviews with famous Liku dancers and analyses of their performances, this paper explores how contemporary Liku performances have become critical spaces for localized and globalized ideas of gender and sexuality to circulate. Focusing specifically on the social media and music videos produced by these performers, we invoke Sarah Sharma’s (2022) feminist extension of media studies and the ways in which technology serves as a bridge between culture and power, to examine how the media produced by Liku dancers is influencing the social experience of gender and sexuality in Bali. This paper has significant implications for ethnomusicology, as although gender and sexuality have been a major topics of discussion in Indonesian music and dance, more research is needed on the impact of modern technology and mediated expressions of gender and sexuality in the arts.

“Three Pre-dawn Scenes” (“Choumo Yinchu”), a Peking Drum Song: A Case Study of Formulaic Composition in Chinese Music

Xi Lu, University of Florida

As far as I can remember, every time I listened to Peking Drum Song (Jingyun Dagou) or some other kinds of Chinese operas, I found the musicians’ abilities to perform from memory fascinating. Regardless whether they performed for thirty minutes or three hours, they played without looking at any musical scores. Why do they have such “super power” is a question that I always wonder and want to find out. As I studied the phenomenon, I found out that the singers had been trained with the method of formulaic composition/performance, a method that has been used for a long time and for many Chinese music genres, including folk songs, Chinese opera, and folk instrumental ensembles, which called “chengshihua”(程式化).

Formulaic composition/performance means musicians use formulaic music elements to facilitate their music composition, memorization, and performance. Formulaic composition/performance is not an unique method of Chinese music. It also appears into other world musics, literature, calligraphy, and other forms of art. What and how musical formulism work? This thesis examines “Three Pre-dawn Scenes”(“Choumo Yinchu”丑末寅初), a Peking Drum song, as a case study. My research aim is to investigate how literary, linguistic, melodic, rhythmic and other compositional elements and strategies constitute formulism in traditional Chinese music.

05K. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Encounters in Sound Studies

Chair: TBD

Why They Pressed Record: Musical Field Documentation in the Huasteca Region of Mexico

J.A. Strub, University of Texas at Austin

The history of field recording in Mexico's Huasteca region reflects shifting intellectual paradigms, technological advancements, and evolving motivations behind musical documentation. Over the past century, recording projects in the Huasteca have been driven by three primary impulses: an anthropological draw, which seeks to document and archive expressive culture for research; an aesthetic draw, which foregrounds artistic appreciation and sonic qualities; and an entrepreneurial draw, emerging in the digital era, in which recordists leverage online platforms for visibility, audience engagement, and revenue.

This paper traces the evolution of regional field recording practices through key case studies, from the institutional work of midcentury researcher-recordists such as Raúl Hellmer, Thomas Stanford, Arturo Warman, and Irene Vázquez Valle to the independent documentation efforts of Eduardo Llerenas, Baruj Lieberman, and Enrique Ramírez de Arellano in the 1970s and 80s. The 21st century has seen a new wave of DIY documentarians—including Gabino Vera Benito (GavBroadcast) and Hector Manuel Delgado Flores (QuerrequFilms)—who use YouTube and social media to distribute field recordings in real time, engaging with audiences in ways that previous generations could not. Through the analysis of multiple renditions of the sones *El Sacamandú* and *La Huasanga*, this paper examines how shifting recording priorities result in distinct sonic representations of the same repertoire. Ultimately, I argue that tensions between institutional, independent, and platform-based approaches to documentation continue to shape the mediation, performance, and circulation of the Huasteca's musical practices in the present.

Invisible Sonic Agency of Ethnographic Photos in the Study of Protest Soundscapes

Sara Fazeli Masayeh, University of Florida

In ethnomusicology, fieldwork often focuses on capturing the sounds of culturally critical or eventful moments. However, in studying the soundscapes of social movements, photographs—through colors, signs, banners, bodies in motion, and tears—also narrate sonic experiences. Protest images function as sensory archives, evoking the invisible presence of sound and reactivating sonic memories (Howes 2005; Voegelin 2014). The “silent” Iranian protest photos in the diaspora can be differentiated from those of Iran and amplify different political soundscapes regarding the same movements. Despite sonic exclusion in the ethnographic studies of these photos, they still unite our sensorium and cause affective responses based on our individual lived memories (Hofman 2015; Stirling 2018;

Drott 2023). This paper draws on interviews with a professional protest photographer, fieldwork in the U.S., and digital ethnography of Iranian protest scenes following the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. I examine how images provoke the sensorium, allowing viewers to “hear” the past, narrate stories, and experience a transnational sense of solidarity. By interrogating the interplay between sound and image, I discuss that protest photography serves not only as documentation but as an active medium for sonic imagination and political resonance. How do these visual representations empower our sonic memories? To what extent do ethnomusicologists need photographs to expand their discussions of soundscapes in social movements? How are the visuality of protest photos and the aurality of their stories intertwined in the sound study of social movements?

Islam, Grief, and Beauty: The Temporal Aporia of Grief in its Aesthetic and Temporal Dimension

Hani Ahmed Zewail, University of California, Santa Barbara

The words that typify the quintessence of the experience of grief in the Qur’ān were uttered by the Prophet Jacob upon hearing of the death of his son, he proclaimed ‘Patience is Beautiful’ (al- sabroon jamil) (The Qur’ān, 12:18). The pairing of beauty and patience articulates a profound principle in Islamic ethics (takhalluq) and roots that conceptualization in aesthetics. Furthermore, one can deduce that by necessity experiences of grief in Islam submit to time, as being patient in grief can nearly be approximated as an experience of suffering, endurance, or forbearance through duration. This paper endeavors a demonstration that Qur’ānic recitation provides the grounding for an authentic experience of grief. Artistically, this is achieved in terms of the aesthetic profile of ideal recitation which places an emphasis on the pathos of grief (huzn) (Nelson, 1989). Additionally, that melody gives authentic intuitive knowledge that a coherent unity can be experienced sequentially through time (Husserl, 1905). Following Levinas (1993), I will argue that death is a trauma that strikes (daraba) against time to sudden-ness and there emerges patience as length of time, where time is deferred and transferred up to the Infinite (God). Furthermore, that deferred patience transforms into existential ethical responsibility to our neighbors (ibid). In this paper, I explore the social activity of Qur’anic recitation as a macrocosm of the prophetic debt reflected in a being-toward-others, re-collected (dhikr) in communal memory. Phenomenologically, the activity approximates the telos of recitation ‘as God’s ‘gathering’ us or re-collecting our distended souls.’ (Begbie, 2000).

Reclaiming the Voice: The Nazi Metal Fusion of Five Penalties and the Sonic Subversion of “Authentic” World Music

Ruxin Li, No.2 High School of East China Normal University

As bone-rattling Dongba chants collided with jarring guitar distortions at Wacken Open Air 2023, Five Penalties' performance projected a public display of musical rebellion. The band infuses glottal vibrations and microtonal lamentations into distorted, aberrant riffs, openly subverting Eurocentric expectations of Chinese “folk” music and creating a powerful, eerily surreal clash of cultural contexts. Moreover, while dressed in bone-adorned Dongba attire, performing on an industrial stage surrounded by mosh pits, they strive to redefine cultural representation through a bohemian performance. This study explores how Five Penalties challenges and

confronts both traditional approaches to cultural preservation, which emphasize “authenticity” in world music, and China’s state-driven “museumification” of ethnic cultures, which often reduces music to a static, archival form. By fusing metal’s transnational energy with Nazi heritage, the band disrupts dominant cultural narratives through an empirical, theoretical strategy of anti-essentialism—rejecting fixed, narrow definitions of “authenticity” to produce a more fluid, dynamic, and novel expression of culture. This study explores whether this hybridization promotes cultural agency or risks co-optation, using the genre’s perceived “foreignness” to defy cultural commodification. Through textual analysis of live recordings and ethnographic interviews, this paper illustrates how the band’s sonic practices confront the commodification of heritage, positioning their work as a decolonial act of cultural resistance. Five Penalties offers marginalized communities a dynamic model for preserving and reinterpreting heritage through music, actively resisting global homogenization. This case highlights music as a site of cultural reclamation, redefining heritage as an evolving, insurgent force rather than a static artifact.

05L. October 24, Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Writing Jazz Encounters: Questions of archives, affect, and transculturation

Chair: Katherine Brucher, DePaul University

This panel offers new perspectives on theorizing jazz encounters both in and outside of the United States. From diplomacy (Von Eschen 2006) to cross-racial musical collaborations (Roberts 2016) to white voyeurism (Monson 1995; Heter 2022), jazz, as a musical genre, functions as an imagined space where social identities are negotiated and cultural meaning is constructed (Jackson 2012; Teal 2021). Extending this scholarship, the four panelists prioritize the affective and political affordances of jazz to ask: how do we as scholars write about moments of encounter? Working across ethnographic, archival, and music-theoretical methods, we theorize encounters in various times and places including: the contentions of insider and outsider-ness between Creole of color and Black American communities in early jazz formations; American women jazz musicians’ contributions to U.S. Cold War diplomacy; Charles Mingus’s sonic disruption and interactions with white audiences; and Lester Bowie’s cross-racial collaborations with the Polish “yass” band Miłość. Although these case studies differ historically and geographically and span several subgenres, collectively, we focus on moments of encounter to understand how musicians and listeners feel in space together, how cultural hybridity shapes genre, and the ways in which dominant jazz narratives flatten the nuances of these interactions. Our research highlights the complexity and often contradictory nature of these encounters. By challenging one-sided analyses, we orient ourselves toward the multi-faceted and intertwined structures of feeling that have emerged throughout jazz history.

When Outsiders Become Insiders: Riffs in the Creole of Color Community at the Birth of Jazz

Hannah Krall, Shaw University

In jazz histories, the Creole of Color community of New Orleans during the late-nineteenth century is depicted as monolithic with a shared cultural agenda including language, politics, religion, and the arts. The Black American community, who came to New Orleans after the Civil War, is often pitted against them due to differences in culture. For many scholars, it is their musical and cultural interactions with one another that led to the creation of jazz. Recent scholarship by Travis A Jackson, however, suggests that there was some cultural overlap between these two seemingly opposed communities. I argue that with close attention to primary resources, such as oral histories and meticulous ancestral research, this assertion remains true. Through two case studies, I delineate the outsider status of “Big Eye” Louis Nelson (Delisle) and Jimmie Noone, two clarinetists from what I call the second generation of jazz musicians in New Orleans, largely considered Creole in scholarship. My research reveals that they did not have the established history in New Orleans at birth, but they were more or less accepted into the Creole community due to familial and geographical connections. It is clear that the Creoles were generally tight-knit and wary of outsiders, but Nelson and Noone were able to cross the boundaries set up by the Creole community with differing levels of success due to colorism. This phenomenon suggests a reevaluation of what it meant to be Creole or Black in New Orleans at the turn of the century.

Women College Musicians Take on the World: Gender in Cold War Jazz Diplomacy and Collegiate Jazz Programs

Kari Lindquist

In U.S. Cold War jazz diplomacy, a focus on women as student musicians reveals how they were relating to their audiences while promoting jazz worldwide. Because they were not as famous as other high-profile professional musicians who also toured with the State Department (Von Eschen 2006; Fosler-Lussier 2015), these college jazzwomen are harder to find in the historical record because of their place in the institutions they represented, but important nonetheless. Drawing on archival materials from university archives, the National Archives, and Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, I reveal the ways collegiate women jazz musicians contributed to diplomatic efforts despite archival limitations. Following scholars like Sherrie Tucker, this paper fills in details about these women’s experiences from interviews and oral histories to counter the historical record kept by the institutions that limited their participation and its documentation. Through case studies of academic jazz diplomacy tours through the 1960s, I argue that collegiate women jazz musicians operated within and pushed beyond social constructions of gender at the time period, and in doing so they made a distinct and unacknowledged contribution to U.S. cultural diplomacy. While institutions controlled the dynamics of their performances, these women expanded the types of people that were reached across gender, racial, and national divides on the tour. They facilitated meaningful and affective interpersonal connections with international jazz musicians and audiences, revealing their overlooked but influential impact on Cold War musical diplomacy.

The Angry Man of Jazz: Jazz, Coolness, and the Cultural Politics of Emotion

Varun Chandrasekhar, Washington University in St. Louis

Charles Mingus was often called “the Angry Man of Jazz.” To some extent, this accurately describes the bassist’s temperament; Mingus’s explosive flare-ups were infamous. However, such an analysis discounts the complex work anger plays in Mingus’s performance of what Nichole T. Rustin-Paschal (2017) terms “jazzmasculinity.” Rustin-Paschal uses this term to explicate the emotional labor that jazz musicians are required to perform to be accepted by audience members. Rustin-Paschal builds her theoretical framework upon Ahmed’s (2004) conception of emotions. Ahmed argues that emotions are not internally but are cultural signifiers. To be emotional is to be defined as emotional through hegemonic distinctions of power. I argue Mingus used his anger to overcome the racialized expectations of the performance of coolness (which I treat as an emotion). By drawing on studies of coolness (Dinerstein 2017, Monson 1995), I argue that Mingus exaggerated his anger to highlight how white fans expected a detached performance of “coolness.” Dinerstein argues that there were two brands of jazz cool in the 1950s, one white and one Black, but they had a complex convergence. Critically, white cool (à la Norman Mailer) was predicated on a fetishistic view of Blackness. Hipsters like Mailer defined jazz musicians as cool as a way to justify their own hipness, which becomes a form of cultural capital. If Mailer can call a jazz musician cool, then he is cool for knowing the cool jazz musician. These discourses caused white fans to expect Black male musicians to perform “cool,” limiting Mingus’s expressive potential.

“We’re Freaks like You”: Lester Bowie’s Sojourns in Poland (1994–1997)

Jenna Przybysz, Stanford University

In a 1996 review, a critic from *Jazz Forum* magazine noted how sparingly Lester Bowie played during his first concert with the Polish band *Miłość*, a band that sowed the seeds of the ‘yass’ movement in Poland during the late 1980s to 2000s and critiqued the status quo of Polish jazz institutes. Bowie’s sparse playing is also evident on the album *Live in Gdynia* (2022), which was recorded during the same tour. His silences prompt the following question: why does Bowie refrain from playing despite his central role as guest of honor at these concerts? In this paper, I engage with the silences found within Bowie’s playing to examine the (re)production of jazz histories, specifically outside of the U.S. (Trouillot 1995; Hartman 2008). Bowie’s encounter with *Miłość* is well-documented in Polish newspapers and magazines, in a documentary about the band, and in the autobiographies of band members. However, their collaboration has been overlooked outside of Poland. Utilizing interviews that I conducted with musicians who knew Bowie, I address this source imbalance to explore the American trumpeter’s perspective of this musical collaboration. From these interviews, a broader picture of Bowie as a musical bridge emerges, suggesting further insight into his various cross-cultural musical exchanges such as his collaboration with Nigerian Afro Beat artist Fela Kuti, and the Norwegian band the Brazz Brothers. In doing so, I reveal how Bowie’s silence—both physical and documented—challenges dominant jazz narratives that often oversimplify cross-cultural exchanges as one-sided.

06A. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

President's Roundtable (Board)

Chair: Melvin L. Butler, University of Miami

06B. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Engaging Citizenship through Musical Communities: Three Different Approaches in Puerto Rican Music

Co-Chairs: Juan Eduardo Wolf, University of Oregon; Hugo R. Viera-Vargas, Universidad Albizu, PR ; Jaime O. Bofill-Calero, Conservatorio de Música de Puerto Rico

Following Kay Shelemay's call to approach the idea of community "in action" (2011), this panel explores how musical practices shape communities into groups that espouse an ideology that may inspire political action. We consider three cases in which we do not assume a community's characteristics but illustrate how different genres and features of music associated with Puerto Rico point to different ways of identifying (Brubaker 2006), whether on a local, national, or diasporic level. In turn, drawing upon Martin Stokes's recent theoretical discussions about music and citizenship (2023), we demonstrate how these ways of identifying suggest an ideal type of musical citizenship, whether that be in the form of affective belonging, neoliberal resistance, or decolonizing efforts. The first paper examines how Los Pleneros de la 23 Abajo, a renowned plena ensemble deeply rooted in their neighborhood, employed their musical practices to unite local residents into a community of resistance against the threat of displacement posed by planning policies prioritizing industrial development. The second paper offers the example of how the use of Taíno musical and lyric imagery in nueva canción, música urbana, and Neo-Taíno movement attempts to invoke a broader community of indigeneity of the Américas to provoke widespread decolonial action. The final paper scrutinizes how community affect for a local version within the national drum-based bomba practice was revitalized through diasporic experiences. Each of these studies contributes to the growing discussion of how different versions of citizenship can be promoted through the process of creating musical communities.

Los Pleneros de la 23 Abajo: Music, Community and Resistance

Hugo R. Viera-Vargas, Universidad Albizu, PR

This presentation examines how the socio-musical performances of Los Pleneros de la 23 Abajo during their formative years in the 1970s served a dual function that exemplifies Shelemay's (2011) theorization of musical communities and Stokes' (2023) conceptualization of musical citizenship. On one hand, their music expressed discontent and resistance against the displacement of communities surrounding the Martín Peña water channel. On the other hand, it laid the foundation for what can be called "musical

citizenship,” demonstrating how musical practices can generate spaces for citizen participation that combine the political with the affective. Drawing on the concept of music as both agent and image of citizenship, this case study analyzes how Los Pleneros de la 23 Abajo's musical practices not only represent forms of resistance and enable a fragmented yet collective identity but also develop emotional and affective dimensions of participatory citizenship through shared musical experiences. The study is grounded upon an in-depth interview with Roberto Cipreni, the group's composer and director; an analysis of the lyrics from the group's original repertoire, which demonstrate a strong political commitment; and archival research on the community presentations of Los Pleneros de la 23 Abajo. This analysis reveals how the expressiveness of plena served as a mechanism to cultivate a socio-political awareness and articulate an affective, cultural citizenship that, in addition to resistance, generates new avenues for civic involvement, political acknowledgment, and social transformation.

Reimagining the Taino Past: Music, Indigeneity, and Colonialism in Puerto Rico

Jaime O. Bofill-Calero, Conservatorio de Música de Puerto Rico

In this paper I will analyze significant examples of Puerto Rican music inspired by the Taíno, the first inhabitants of the island. To compare and contrast the political and artistic motivations behind this indigenous-inspired music, I draw upon the work of other scholars who examine composers' use of indigeneity in art and popular music (Madrid 2010), explore popular music as a form of resistance (Quintero 2006), and critique the Eurocentric values underlying modernity (Mignolo 2011). I pay specific attention to the socially engaged nueva canción of Roy Brown, the defiant música urbana of Residente and the revivalist efforts of the Neo-taino. I will argue these musics, as “musical reconstructions,” connect Puerto Ricans to their ancestral past and serve as sonic portals through which they create a community with a broader Indigenous identity in Latin America. Ultimately, I will explore the ways in which imagined Taíno music has shaped present notions of Puerto Rico's indigeneity (Ochoa 2016) and its relationship to colonization, resurgent Indigenous epistemologies, the natural world, the Anthropocene (Bofill Calero 2019), and the mystical dimensions of life. This research provides an alternate lens from which to re-envision Puerto Rico's past and ongoing colonial history, a topic that has been largely neglected in academic research.

Building a Local Community in the Homeland through Diasporic Experiences: The Case of Bomba Mayagüezana

Juan Eduardo Wolf, University of Oregon

In 2001, Félix Alduén Caballero appeared on the television documentary, *Raíces*, an installment of the well-known Banco Popular Christmas specials. *Raíces* specifically focused on the related but distinct Afro-Puerto Rican national genres of bomba and plena. Alduén's appearance established him as the key representative of bomba from the western city of Mayagüez, a historical center of bomba practice, but one that had not received as much attention as other regions of the island. Alduén's performance, together with his subsequent album release, helped foster a community of both descent and affinity (Shelemay 2011) through the revitalization of

bomba in Mayagüez, complete with defining subgenres and claims to a unique style. The lack of detail in the documentary implied that Alduén played bomba mayagüezana continuously since his youth, when he actually spent decades living in New York. At least one interviewee claimed that, prior to leaving for New York, Alduén was primarily a plena performer, and that he learned many of the skills that he would later use in bomba performance by playing in informal rumbas in Central Park. In this paper, I examine the formation and legacy of this legendary bomba figure, focusing on his time in New York through interviews and archival data. My intent here is to explore how Alduén's family's heritage plus his personal experiences in New York worked to revitalize Mayagüez's bomba community. My findings resonate with the literature that insists that diasporic experiences can be key to community building in locations back in the homeland.

06D. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Transgressive Terrains

Chair: TBD

“Así Chiflamos”: Whistling Cadences in the Oaxaca City Garbage Dump

Kristen Leigh Graves, University of Toronto

To pierce through the overwhelming soundscape of Oaxaca, Mexico's garbage dump, the local workers' union, Los Pепенadores, developed a system of communicative whistle cadences. As frontline recyclers from 1980 to 2022, they navigated and sifted through the materials that arrived in the dump, collecting items to sell for their livelihood. This system of cadences—practiced and understood by all 130 union members—served as an intergenerational, union-wide, communicative tactic. Drawing on my fieldwork data and interviews, I argue that these whistling cadences were highly effective due to union members' virtuosic listening and sound-making daily practices, their deep communal bonds, and their shared ancestral heritage as Zapotec descendants. I situate my findings within scholarship on deep and active listening (Oliveros 2005; Kapchan 2017), community sound and music practices (Higgins 2012), and linguistic assertions of tonal nuance present among Spanish-speaking Zapotec descendants (Sicoli 2015). This paper presents Los Pепенadores as a case study of how a deeply bonded community, navigating a hazardous environment, developed and sustained a sophisticated communication system. Their whistling cadences not only ensured safety and facilitated financial gain but also functioned as a cultural and social practice that reinforced their communal bond and collective identity. By framing these cadences within the union's 42-year working history in the dump, I demonstrate how this sound-making system sustained and reinforced this community's survival, solidarity, and cultural preservation.

“We All Suffered as One Nation”: Nagorno-Karabakh War, Voice, and Martyrdom

Polina Dessiatnitchenko, Waseda University

Martyrdom has become a central theme in Azerbaijani music in the aftermath of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh war (27 September 2020 – 10 November 2020). Relying on ethnographic research, comprised of interviews with war veterans and mourners, I investigate how local people experience the idea of martyrdom through music. I focus on the composition “bayati shiraz” sung by Tajir Shahmalioglu, which has become the main soundtrack of war and the ongoing post-Soviet conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Juxtaposing recent discussions of voice as liminal, affective, and relational (Eisenlohr 2018; Feldman 2015; Meizel 2020) with frameworks from the anthropology of death (Engelke 2019), I argue that the efficacy of this composition lies in the qualities of its singer’s voice to enact emotional work necessary to make sense of death. In addition to the patriotic poetic text used in “bayati shiraz,” the specific timbre of a child’s voice with its high melismatic register serves as a powerful symbol of the contested region, poignantly evoking themes of loss and sacrifice. I discuss how this voice gives a sense of continuity, as it transcends boundaries of time, space, as well as physical and spiritual realms, providing a chronotope (Bakhtin 1981) to encounter martyrs in one’s imagination and understand loss as sacrifice for the nation united in suffering. The voice, in other words, performs a type of transaction and exchange, marking martyrdom as “good death” that is essential to the nation’s regeneration.

Negotiating Geo-Cultural Identity Through Contemporary Urtyn Duu Across Mongolia and China: A Tale of Two Singers

Conny Zhao, New York City, New York

Though separated by national borders, the sovereign country of Mongolia and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in northern China share urtyn duu or long-song as common cultural heritage. Among Mongol communities in both Mongolia and Inner Mongolia, the tradition of long-song is intrinsically connected with nature: the songs illustrate the landscapes, animals, nomadic lifestyle habits, and local legends of specific regions through their melodies, vocal techniques, and lyrics. Mongol clans historically cycled their migratory patterns around a particular region, and thus long-songs—which illustrate a sonic map—have become an avenue for singers to perform ethnic and regional identity.

In this paper, I argue that because of long-song’s deep connection to place, Mongols from both Mongolia and Inner Mongolia are able to use the tradition to navigate their complex regional identities and maintain a connection to a nomadic past, present, and future in the face of colonization and loss of traditional culture. I analyze the intrinsic relationship between long-song and place before highlighting two long-term case studies of two contemporary professional long-song singers with contrasting backgrounds: B. Nomin Erdene, a Khalkh singer from Bayankhongor, Mongolia who currently resides in Ulaanbaatar, and Amgalan, a Khorchin singer from Inner Mongolia who primarily works in Beijing. I explore the two singers’ repertoire, training, and personal thoughts, examining how they incorporate modernity into long-song traditions to perform and negotiate Mongol identity. Finally, I contend that professional singers use staged long-song to maintain a connection to nomadic culture and navigate their shifting identities across different audiences.

06E. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Digital Sounds in Communities

Chair: TBD

Ready Player Two: Embodiment and Social Play in Multiplayer Virtual/Augmented Reality Rhythm/Dance Games

Ashley Ann Greathouse, University of Cincinnati & Marshall University

The year 2020 marked a turning point in virtual/augmented reality (VR/AR) technology consumption. On October 13, Meta released the Oculus Quest 2, a standalone VR headset with an accessible base price of 299 USD. By the first fiscal quarter of 2023, Quest 2 sales had reached approximately 18 million units, vastly outperforming previous VR/AR systems and significantly expanding mainstream adoption. The marketplace continues to diversify, with Meta and other companies unveiling ever-evolving systems. Rhythm and dance-based games constitute a major sector of the VR/AR gaming industry. Catering to diverse musical tastes and gameplay motivations—including dance, fitness, socialization, and competition—these games reshape boundaries between physical embodiment and digital performance. Multiplayer modes create dynamic virtual spaces where players can interact in real time, forming self-selected communities around musical preferences, skill levels, and gameplay styles.

Building on discourse surrounding social play in non-VR rhythm games, this paper demonstrates how multiplayer VR/AR rhythm/dance games complicate notions of public and private performance, enhance machine evaluation and feedback mechanisms, and expand the possibilities for embodied co-presence in digital spaces. Examining *Beat Saber* (2019–) and *Synth Riders* (2019–) as case studies, this paper integrates insights from digital ethnography (Tom Boellstorff et al.) with ludomusicological perspectives on participatory digital performance (Kiri Miller), social gaming (William Cheng), and game sound (Karen Collins). I argue that these games not only reflect but actively shape new paradigms of musical interaction and social connectivity in the metaverse, positioning player actions within a (meta)diegetic framework where gameplay mechanics and self-expression become mutually reinforcing.

Collective Musicking in the Digital Age: Participation, AI-Singing, and Virtual Community on Bilibili

Zixuan Wang, University of Texas at Austin

Social media has fundamentally reshaped musical practices, fostering new forms of community, participation, and engagement. This paper explores emerging modes of collective musicking on the Chinese video platform Bilibili, expanding Christopher Small's (1998) concept of musicking to digital contexts. While Small positioned musicking as a countermeasure to the dominance of Western classical music, this study argues that collective musicking on Bilibili challenges the hegemony of offline music by facilitating participatory, interactive, and decentralized musical experiences.

Three key dimensions of digital musicking are examined. First, Bilibili's unique danmu (弹幕, "overlaid commentary") transforms seemingly solitary acts of listening, viewing, and remixing into highly participatory and community-driven engagements. Second, the paper investigates the role of AI-driven voice synthesis, particularly Sovits, as a case study in human-nonhuman musical collaboration. AI-singing technologies allow users to generate and manipulate vocal performances, blurring distinctions between performer, listener, and creator. Third, collective musicking on Bilibili transcends temporal and spatial constraints, enabling asynchronous yet interactive musical experiences that reconfigure traditional notions of liveness and co-presence. Drawing on long-term participant observation and digital ethnography, this study situates Bilibili's musicking culture within broader ethnomusicological discussions of virtual communities, digital co-creation, and participatory music-making. By analyzing how users engage with AI and platform-specific affordances, this research highlights the shifting dynamics of agency, authorship, and musical sociality in online spaces. In doing so, it underscores the significance of digital musicking as a transformative force in contemporary ethnomusicology.

There Are No Dwellers, Only Buyers: Gentrification, Touristification, and the Urban Aural Sphere in Medellin, Colombia

Juan Fernando Velasquez, University of Houston, Moores School of Music

A combination of urban planning and new social and cultural policies have significantly transformed Medellín, Colombia, during the last two decades, distancing the city from the image it had as "the World Capital of Drug Trafficking" and "the Colombian Capital of Murder." Local authorities and international media enthusiastically named this transformation "Medellín's miracle," presenting it as an example of how holistic urban planning and social action through the arts can transform citizens' lives positively. However, this narrative also positioned the city as a premier destination among tourists, digital nomads, and migrants who self-described as "expats." The consequent changes in consumption patterns and increased demand for goods and services skyrocketed the cost of living. Thus, Medellin became the ground zero of gentrification and touristification in Colombia and one of the best examples of the impact of both phenomena in Latin America. Music and musicking have been instrumental in such a process, but they have been absent in debates about gentrification and touristification. By contrasting Karol G.'s reggaeton song "Provenza" and "Medellinificación," a song by the rap band Alkolirycos, this paper analyzes Medellín's case to examine the auralities resulting from accelerated gentrification and touristification processes, suggesting that music can play different roles within them. Music can be a factor that contributes to touristification and gentrification by fostering expectations that shape the listener's affective memory, promoting the commodification of urban spaces. However, music and musicking also can become a means for expressing dissent while denouncing gentrification to encourage civil resistance and political action.

06F. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Border(lands)

Chair: Jared Holton, University of Georgia

On the Borders of ‘Music’: A Freshman Music Ontology

Gavin Douglas, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Recent calls to confront the epistemological and ontological biases upon which normative American music education is based are plentiful in our discipline. In this presentation I will share my attempts to engage these issues through a freshman music ontology course called ‘Speaking of Music’.

What counts as music, who says so, in what settings, and by what parameters are favorite starting points for any world music class. But they are equally relevant to all types of musical training (in a composition, appreciation, studio lessons, etc.) as they forefront the social and aesthetic boundaries that each sub discipline creates. Designed for first-year undergraduate students, this class deploys novel assignments that engage the peripheries of the music concept, translation of sound into visual, tactile, or choreographic modes, multi-species sonication, and the social and biological positionality of listening. This course is an attempt to mark the unmarked structures that guide university music education and open such conversations to students. It infuses ethnomusicological and sounds studies ideas into a foundational first year experience. The class aims to reassess what counts as music rudiments (Ewell 2020), to embrace multiple epistemologies (Robinson 2019), to confront ideological supremacy (Kajikawa 2019, Brown 2020), and to foster a more inclusive music curriculum. The class is an experiment... with successes and failures to be reviewed and shared for those interested in new pedagogies. This presentation will outline the class goals and assignments and will also share some strategies for politicking such a course into the undergraduate music curriculum.

Sounding Across and Against Borders at the East German Festival of Political Songs in the Global Cold War

Jesse Aaron Freedman, University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music

Between 1970–1990, the Festival of Political Songs took place annually in East Berlin, the former capital of the German Democratic Republic (GDR; East Germany). During these events, artists, activists, and scholars from dozens of countries around the world descended on the city for a week of cross-cultural exchange and connection. While ostensibly functioning as a site of free and unmediated interaction, all forms of cultural and political activity occurred within an environment that relied heavily on notions of political, racial, and geographic difference. With the majority of activities occurring just a few hundred meters from the lived, physical realities of Berlin Wall, as well as within the broader philosophical and ideological nexus between the East and the West in the twilight of the Cold War, this paper takes the festival as stage upon which a variety of bordered expressions were articulated. Drawing on ethnographic and archival research, this paper examines the various ways that borders were enacted, reified, and challenged on

musical stages in the former capital. Rather than arguing that the festival operated as either a site of political contestation or as a device for political propaganda of the East German state, this paper aims to frustrate the binary logic of Cold War geography by considering the musical manifestations of both realities and the ways they interacted within both the real and perceived experiences of borders during the Cold War.

Art and Desolation: The Practice of Art in Tbilisi's War-Initiated Communities

Christopher Paul Troutman, Dallas International University

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the city of Tbilisi, Georgia received a sudden influx of over 200,000 Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. At present, while a few articles have been published about the overall demographic trends and political beliefs of these rapidly-formed communities, there has not been any literature published about their practice of arts. To that end, this paper draws on the researcher's two years of fieldwork with these war-initiated communities, including in-depth interviews with more than a dozen displaced artists. It looks at the stories and experiences of these artists in exile, asking how they adapted their practice of art to respond meaningfully to their new reality. Artistic form analysis is performed on several artworks and enactments, looking at how their culturally-formed systems of artmaking continue to be meaningful in the artists' new context. Rather than considering only professional artists, it includes community-centered practices such as folk choirs, sacred arts, and underground punk concerts. These are then analyzed with theoretical concepts such as Peircean semiotics, liminality and social drama, and the stability-malleability theory of cultural change.

This paper is a summary of the author's dissertation research, which will be defended in March 2025. It will present a brief introduction to the communities and a summary of the research findings. Photographs and short video clips characterizing the city and artistic practices being described will be integrated with the paper.

06H. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Pop Protests

Chair: Andrew Mall, Northeastern University

Somos Mexicanos, No Somos Criminales: Sounding Resistance Through Chican@ Ska

Andrew Vogel, University of Florida

Under direct orders from the President of the United States, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) intensified its raids and targeted deportations in 2025, terrorizing Mexican American communities in cities including Los Angeles. This wave of state violence ignited resistance within the local Chican@ ska scene. In response, bands like 8Kalacas have used their music and public

presence to challenge these crackdowns. Through social media, musicians and fans situate themselves and the music within this resistance by posting images of their participation in protests while wearing band apparel alongside use of imagery signifying Mexico and Mexican social movements like the Zapatista uprising. Additionally, activists have incorporated lyrics by 8Kcalacas into their signs and song recordings into videos posted from street demonstrations, using ska music as a visual and sonic declaration of defiance. My discussion engages with theories on music as a social movement tool (Manuel 2019), sonic activism in digital spaces (Danaher 2018), and the role of cultural memory in resistance (Melucci 1989, Eyerman and Jamison 1998). Drawing on digital ethnography and interviews with artists directly involved in social protests, I address the questions: how does the Chican@ ska scene frame its protest message through music and performance? How are these targeted political attacks directly felt within the Los Angeles ska community? In what ways does digital activism shape perceptions of artists' political resistance? How are these current protest practices informed by other social justice movements in the United States and Mexico?

Islamic Disco: Protest and Cultural Remix in Iran

Saman Montaseri, University of California, Los Angeles

In this presentation, I explore the emergence of a novel performance space within the Islamic Noha (a ritual lament) tradition among Iranian Muslims, which I term “Islamic disco.” Traditionally, the combination of dynamic rhythmic elements and dancing is forbidden. However, to engage youth and attract them to Islamic ideology, the Islamic government inspired a new wave of Noha performances that have deviated from conventional forms by incorporating rhythmic patterns derived from EDM genres with other contemporary innovations, such as the release of professional music videos and the imitation of melodies of Tehrangelesi pop music (inspired by Iranian diaspora). I argue that this reconfiguration is not just a stylistic shift; it is a deliberate strategy aimed at engaging youth and recasting Islamic involvement. As an example of this, I will examine a Noha song, “Che Yali Bah Bah.” In January 2025, this performance drew significant online attention; while the state harnessed modern technology to promote its innovation, many young Iranians appropriated the performance on Instagram to mock the state-endorsed version, thereby transforming it into a tool of protest. Drawing on Homi J. Bhabha’s scholarship on cultural hybridity, I examine how the interplay of religious ritual, popular music, and social media disrupts established norms and exposes deeper tensions between state power and youth dissent. My analysis reveals how a totalitarian regime, in its fervor to promote a narrow religious ideology, oversteps the very red lines it has drawn on Iranian music.

Playlisting the City: “City Pop,” Alienated Listening, and the Aural Politics of Belonging in Postcolonial South Korea

Cody Black, Vanderbilt University

As South Korean youth confront new formations of musical pasts through the ongoing newtro (new retro) trend, the popular emergence of City Pop destabilizes genre boundaries (Bauman & Briggs 1990), not merely reviving but actively reconfiguring

musical categories through listening, (re)historicization, and material circulation (Bitter 2023, Feld 2012, Ochoa Gautier 2014). Initially associated with 1980s Japanese pop music and retroactively codified online (Sommet 2020, Wajima 2022), City Pop gained popularity among Koreans in the late 2010s. This revival became politically charged during Seoul’s 2019 Japanese Product Boycott demonstrations, where anti-Japanese sentiment (Ching 2019) spurred a reimagined “Korean City Pop,” crafting a post-authoritarian music history independent from Japanese influence. Yet, the continued appeal of intersecting “City Pop” variants amid this politicized sentiment unsettles nationalist listening frameworks. Drawing from fieldwork across Seoul’s LP bars, I foreground how aural relations between vinyl DJs and precariously employed Koreans foster the generative formation of personal playlists, which become an aural practice to navigate (un)belonging amid their broader alienation from the politics of everyday life in Seoul (Berardi 2015). Eschewing organizational—and national—constraints of City Pop-as-genre, I examine how everyday acts of playlisting, as both an analog archival practice and smartphone-based digital extraction, underscore relational intimacies that challenge reductive political narratives of contemporary Korean listening cultures—whether as national (anti)consumption (Kendall 2001) or an aural fetishization of the colonial Other (Robinson 2021). Writing through the (dis)organizational and (non)relational form of the playlist, I trace throughlines illustrating how these listening practices rework frameworks of sonic belonging in Korea.

06I. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Queer Temporalities

Chair: TBD

Reframing the Utility of Nostalgia in Gay Chorus Singers’ Recollections of Painful Pasts

Kevin C Schattenkirk, Longwood University

Scholarship on nostalgia examines the sometimes adverse impact of romanticizing and longing for a past that existed differently from our memories (Geniusas, 2024). Working with gay choruses, nostalgia appears to emerge as a necessary component in recalling painful memories — for instance, the AIDS crisis. As communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), choruses are entertainers, activists, and de facto families for their membership. Since the late-1970s, LGBTQ+ choruses have contended with social, cultural, and political factors sustaining homophobia, impacting singers collectively and individually. As the singers in these groups work to effect change for the queer community, their recollections of navigating periods of turbulence, the pain of loss and the frustration in countering homophobia are often accompanied and tempered by nostalgic memories. These memories are exemplified by positive, loving, and affectionate reminiscences of specific songs, rehearsals, concerts, events (such as touring politically “red” locales), interactions with one another, and more. Drawing from interviews and fieldwork, I argue that nostalgia, in this case, isn’t merely a romanticized longing for the past. Rather, nostalgia here acknowledges the painful realities of the past and becomes a necessary part of choruses’ and individual singers’ stories of survival and transcendence. Nostalgia frames memories with a multidimensionality,

providing stories that can guide LGBTQ+ choruses in navigating a current socio-political climate riddled with homophobia and transphobia. Where choruses and other similar communities of practice are concerned, such studies carry strong implications for ethnomusicology.

Trans and Queer Religious Expression in Brazil: Music, Mission work, and Queer-Indigenous Temporalities

Cahlia A. Plett, University of California, Riverside

Ventura Profana (Unholy Venture) is an Afro-Indigenous Brazilian performance artist, missionary, pastor, and advocate for trans and queer Afro-Brazilian individuals. In this paper, I will discuss how queer religious futurities are enacted through photomontage, music, and mission work. I argue that Ventura Profana uses both their religious background and the teachings of contemporary Christians to situate themselves as portraying the “devil” in liberatory ways. Engaging in both necropolitics and nihilistic futurities, Profana’s music and teaching offer a sexually reimagined religious reality, that encourages disobedience and disorientation. In confronting religious colonization, I argue that Profana’s textual analysis offers an opportunity to both use and decolonize religious-colonial projects through expressions of self, sexuality, and spirituality based in queer Black, Brown, and Indigenous futurities.

Creating narratives of refusal borne from their interpretations of “recolonized” text, Ventura Profana addresses coloniality through biblical interpretation. Profana missionizes to their followers and community the divinity found in transness, based on reinterpretations of neo-Pentecostal biblical texts and teachings. Following the model of evangelization and missionary work, they hope to spread a message of anti-colonial anti-capitalist knowledge. By analyzing their music like in the co-written and performed “Python”, I argue that Profana preaches resistance, sex, sensuality, and decoloniality using neo-Pentecostal and contemporary Christian stylizing. Carefully critical of liberation theology, Profana does not discard prospects of Christianity but uses theological arguments to provide a critique of the capitalist, cis-heterosexual, and white narratives within the Bible.

“I Ain’t Livin’ Life My Mama’s Way”: Reframing Nostalgia in Bluegrass through Queer Songwriting

Emily Williams Roberts, University of Chicago

Bluegrass lyricism is well known for a consistent set of tropes: love, loss, home and religion. Prominently written from the perspective of a man who has left his rural home to work in the urban city, traditional bluegrass standards enact what Boym (2007; 2008) terms “reflective nostalgia” through a heteronormative lens; the writer reminisces and romanticizes their past life in comparison to their current perspective, recognizing that the past cannot be fully recreated or relived either due to the passing of time or changes in society. Only through the possibility of a heavenly reunion can said past be restored. However, bluegrass is not a static genre, and the songwriters of today blend their current experiences into the tropes of the past. Through both lyrical analysis and ethnographic interviews, I examine the songwriting of today’s queer bluegrass artists who reframe reflective nostalgia, recognizing that the “old home place” is not always a place of acceptance, love and loss is influenced by discrimination, and religion can be a topic of hurt

rather than hope. Nostalgia, rather than abandoned, is queered. Examining this queering of nostalgia in bluegrass through the analysis of local songwriting, I demonstrate that these queer songwriters extend and expand on the traditional bluegrass canon, rather than separating from it.

06J. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Community, Collaboration, and Cohesion

Chair: TBD

Community Collaborative Participatory Musicking: A Tool for Fostering Community Empowerment, Community Well-Being, and Cultural Sustainability

Subash Giri

Christopher Small (1998) views musicking not just as musical work but as a social act and human activity where everyone has a natural involvement, and he posits, through this action, better relationships can be developed between individuals, societies, and humanity. Michael Frishkopf (2021) believes participatory and flexible music-making can create socio-sonic resonance within a communicatively connected social network and that resonance “transmutes social network into social fabric” (49). Like Small and Frishkopf, Thomas Turino (2008) argues participatory performances contribute to social interactions where a participant equally engages with the act of their performance and with other participants “for the processes of personal and social integration that make us whole” (1). Building on ideas of “musicking” from Small, Frishkopf, and Turino, this paper examines how a Community Collaborative Participatory (CCP) Musicking can contribute to stimulating community empowerment, community well-being, and cultural sustainability. In reflecting on results from a CCP Musicking initiative with minority Nepalese immigrant musicians in Alberta, Canada, this paper argues that CCP Musicking can foster community empowerment through enhancing capabilities and reinforcing confidence and self-esteem (Harrison 2020; Lewin 1946); community well-being through positive mental, emotional, psychological, social, and physical advantages (Acquah 2016; Armstrong 2016); and cultural sustainability (in a diasporic context) through tracing roots, evoking history and collective memory (Bohlman 2002; Cohen 2008; Safran 1991), and linking one to their homeland’s culture, tradition, and heritage (Bohlman 2002; Naroditskaya 2019; Stokes 1997). Further, the paper underscores how the CCP model can be a viable tool in community-based research in ethnomusicology.

Learning to Arrive: Reimagining Ethnomusicology through Community-Driven Documentation

Emily Silks, University of Washington

As the academic landscape shifts—marked by budget cuts, the shrinking of humanities programs, and the precariousness of tenure-track jobs—many ethnomusicologists are rethinking their role within and beyond the university. Historically positioned as collectors and archivists, ethnomusicologists have long worked within institutional frameworks that prioritize preservation and scholarly publications. Yet, in an era where communities increasingly document, share, and write about their own music, there is a growing need to reconsider how scholars engage in their research. Rather than reinforcing institutional hierarchies, how might ethnomusicologists work in ways that center community priorities, redistribute institutional resources, and foster long-term relationships of accountability?

This paper explores these questions through two Seattle-based projects: Carangolo, an album of Capoeira music recorded in collaboration with Mestre Silvinho and the Seattle chapter of the International Capoeira Angola Foundation (ICAF), and the on-going revitalization of the Northwest Folklife archive, which houses recordings spanning five decades of community music-making in the Pacific Northwest. Inspired by Carolyn Landau, Janet Topp Fargion, Michelle Caswell, Jade Power-Sotomayor, and John Vallier's work on collaborative archiving and equitable scholarship, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions in ethnomusicology about how scholars can engage meaningfully in cultural sustainability efforts while navigating the changing realities of academic and public scholarship.

06K. October 24, Friday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Black Keywords In Sound

Co-Chairs: april lashan graham-jackson, University of Chicago; Allie Martin, Dartmouth College

We introduce Keywords in Black Sound—a collaborative and interdisciplinary project that highlights a diverse set of concepts that shape Black sound studies broadly constructed. Our project broadens the mandate of Keywords in Sound, a critical text analyzing the significance of sound through a range of essays that argued for interconnected concepts, including acoustemology, resonance, deafness, echo, and silence. Black sound studies is a theoretical, conceptual, and methodological framework that centers sound as a mode for thinking through the racialization of the human experience. For this panel, we diagram a growing set of keywords such as scale, sampling, and timbre that outline a series of philosophical, cultural, and placed-based debates for analytical engagement with Black sound. We argue that sound is racialized through social, geographic, political, cultural, and economic processes that have significant implications for understanding the everydayness of racialized living with sound studies as a conduit. Currently, our geopolitical climate calls for suppressing dialogue about race and engagement with racialized experiences from varied positionalities, which silences Black life and its sonic expressions. We call for attuning ourselves to sound as a racialized process both historically

and in our contemporary moment through sustained attention to the nuance of Black life and its sonic textures across time. By journeying through the chord progressions of Black sound, we amplify the sonic knowledge, practices, and livingness of Black people as a locus of deep inquiry that advances sound studies.

Sampling With Critical Intention

Allie Martin, Dartmouth College

The practice of sampling is a pivotal cornerstone in Black sonic life. While best known as a part of hip-hop's repurposing of funk, disco, and soul music, sampling draws on rich histories and genealogies, carrying the potential to help us imagine new worlds. In this paper, I outline a framework of sampling with critical intention, a mode of sampling that prioritizes listening to Black life ethically and intentionally. Drawing on soundscape compositions made from collections at the American Folklife Center within the Library of Congress, I argue that activating a practice of sampling with critical intention disrupts a violent mishearing of Black people. Specifically, I engage a collection called "Voices Remembering Slavery" that features audio interviews from 22 formerly enslaved Black people in the United States. By sampling these interviews, I have created soundscape compositions from the collection, offering interventions that amplify the stories being told while bearing witness to the violence that surrounds them. With the rise of AI, deepfakes, misinformation, and the continued advancement in the manipulation of audio and video, this project offers sampling as a way to address contemporary and futuristic questions about what it means to engage archival sounds and silences. These rapid changes in technological possibility are directly harmful to Black people because of the continued manipulation of Black sounds and voices without consent. This paper works towards an intentional fabulation of the fullness of Black sonic life, engaging past collections to disrupt the future mishearing of Black people.

From Root to Route: Scaling Black Sonic Life Across Black Chicagoland

April I. Graham-Jackson, University of Chicago

This paper foregrounds scale as a critical keyword for Black sound studies, illuminating the sonic fluidity and relationality of Blackness and Black life through various spatial formations. I introduce "Roots and Routes," a sound installation that narrates multiple scenes of Black life in the Chicago Metropolitan Area known colloquially as Chicagoland, highlighting how Black Chicagoland residents reproduce an urban-regional identity through the sounds of their everyday lives. As a geographic concept, scale denotes nested hierarchies; the level upon which we observe social phenomena and how it is represented geographically; as a facilitator of racial capitalism and how it transforms our environments; and as the in-between process from which a space becomes a place or political economic unit. Sonically, scale also has a variety of definitions, which, for this paper, tends to an arrangement of tones that form an identifiable sonic identity. I weave together geography and sound or what I term "geosonicology" to consider how scale illustrates the complexities of Black sonic life and its orientation to a medley of spaces that function as racialized soundmarks recognized by Black

people in places marked as Black through the sonic racialization of urban-regional space. Black folks utilize geographic and sonic scale to take up space through sound and as a necessary component to Black placemaking that makes a place feel and sound Black. I argue for scale as a central concept in Black sound studies that reflects how the sonic interconnections of Black life function as both root and route across Black lifeworlds.

Timbral Tidepools and Tales of The Tidewater Trio

Danielle Davis, Florida State University

Timbral Tidepools and Tales of The Tidewater Trio is a listening session considering the craft of “timbre” and “orchestration” in the record production of N.E.R.D and The Neptunes. Each track from the fourth mixtape chapter of The Tidewater Trio Project (TTP) exists as a distinct sonic biome, a space where timbre and orchestration shape how histories are heard. The experience unfolds through interconnected narratives, tracing Southern Hip-hop’s Afro-Filipino musical connections, the resonance of production choices, and the way sampling operates as sonic fictive citation. In this listening session, I share sonic scenes and acts of listening to Black American and Filipino American diasporic life in Southeast Virginia. Telling tales of the Alternative Hip-hop band N.E.R.D and the production duo The Neptunes, I reveal a sonic lineage of Afro-Southeast Asian interracial musical connections while honoring ethnomusicological interventions in Black sound studies. Timbral Tidepools and Tales of the Tidewater Trio is an ethnomusicological encounter where record production is a method of inquiry, timbre is an archive, and orchestration becomes a historiographical tool. Moving through these sonic ecosystems, listeners are invited to immerse themselves, hear the histories embedded in sound, and consider where the currents of timbre may lead next.

07B. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Sound and Sociality in Modern Markets: Three Perspectives on Music and Commoditization

Co-Chairs: Duncan William Reehl, Boston University; Brian Barone, Berklee College of Music; Carlos Cuestas, City University of New York Graduate Center

Across cultures and since at least the nineteenth century, commodities and markets have stalked music and musicians. The various ways of commodifying music—and the markets this commodification creates—puts pressure on and reshapes sonic practices, even as it opens new possibilities for practitioners. Thinking with the concept of the commodity implicates technology, from print to streaming apps. Considering the market opens up issues of circulation and the production of meanings. Explicitly and otherwise, such topics have been of longstanding interest in ethnomusicology, especially of the overlapping subjects of the “World Music” and music technology industries (e.g., Feld 1988; Théberge 1997; Meintjes 2003; Greene and Porcello 2010; Taylor 2014). This session returns attention to the commodity and the market as basic concepts, asking how they might serve economic ethnomusicology today. With

three papers and a response, it highlights different perspectives for understanding commoditization and the market. The first paper addresses how commoditized spiritual goods affect religiosity when Japanese Buddhist priests—more or less ambivalently—participate in New Age spiritual marketplaces as an “experimental” practice for finding new parishioners as their temples face looming economic and demographic instability. The second paper addresses how son jarocho practitioners navigate the challenges of the music’s commodification—not least that a reputation for anticommmercialism has become a trope of its marketing. The third paper lends a historical angle by using the case of nineteenth-century Cuban contradanza to suggest ways of thinking beyond the commodity in theories of music and value under capitalism.

Sounding Japanese Buddhism in the Attention Economy and Spiritual Marketplace

Duncan William Reehl, Boston University

Scholars such as Jonathan Nelson and Anne Allison have examined how Japanese Buddhist priests adapt to social and technological shifts through innovative practices such as establishing temple cafés and restructuring mortuary rites. While sound surfaces peripherally in such studies, its role in mediating religious change remains under-theorized. This paper asks: How do shifts in sounding, musicking, and listening within Buddhist revitalization efforts illuminate broader transformations in religiosity? I argue that Japanese Buddhism’s blending with transnational “spiritual marketplaces” (Roof 1999; Shimazono 2007) via commodities, technologies, and discourses tied to New Age spirituality (Heelas 1996) and the “California Ideology” (Barbrook and Cameron 1995) reveals how cybernetic systems modulate affective processes of transcendence. Through ethnography with experimental Buddhist practitioners and a case study of an event called Zen 2.0, I trace phenomena such as healing music, sutra NFTs, meditation apps, and sound baths that align institutional Buddhism with techno-spiritual self-optimization. These sonic phenomena actively reconfigure religious experience. By examining how sound articulates Buddhist traditions with neoliberal discourses of privatized spirituality and techno-utopianism, this paper demonstrates: (1) the rise of algorithmic soteriologies, where priests rebrand transcendence as passive, palliative “healing”; and (2) the unintended neoliberalization of Buddhist affect, shifting soteriology from communal self-effacement to individualized emotional management. While traditional practices persist intergenerationally, the valorization of techno-spiritual palliation risks naturalizing a future where transcendence is untethered from communal ethics. In short, this paper shows how sound plays a role in institutional innovation, and how the circulation of commodities produces religio-spiritual meanings in the 21st century.

Strumming Against Capital: Decommoditizing Son Jarocho through Radical Collectivities

Carlos Cuestas, City University of New York Graduate Center

“Why do you play son jarocho?” asks Sael to son jarocho practitioners (jaraneros) willing to engage in conversation. Sael is a senior member of the Colectivo Altepee in Acayucan, Veracruz. His question implies the common yet unspoken knowledge of son jarocho’s

commoditization. Common because many jaraneros use this genre to form bands, record, tour, and earn money. Unspoken because son jarocho's discourses of resistance, community, and anticapitalism are often used as marketing.

Sael's question is a confrontation. It critiques how son-jarocho-as-genre coopts its capacity for community organizing through sounding in exchange for participating in the music market toward individual gain. It recognizes how the commoditization of son jarocho infiltrates the collective consciousness of the practice, defanging its political potentials. Through ethnographic research, this paper analyzes how the Colectivo Altepee in Veracruz and the Jarochicanos in Chicago answer Sael's question. I argue that these two collectives deliberately and outspokenly work to decommoditize son-jarocho-as-genre through resignifying its collectivity. By eliminating the commercial telos from their positioning as collectives, I explore how their approach to son jarocho's communal episodes (workshops, fandangos, rehearsals) are turned into a gateway toward larger political consciousness. Such consciousness, I argue, stems from integrating into their practice Indigenous knowledges, Zapatista values, affective attachments, the ethos of labor organizing, and a reconfiguration of relations between the human and natural worlds. In sum, this paper demonstrates how the Altepee and Jarochicanos forge radical collectivities through a practice of son jarocho that eschews commoditization in search for transcending political and communal possibilities.

Domesticating Cuban Contradanza: Music, Social Reproduction, and the Value Form

Brian Barone, Berklee College of Music

Any answer to the puzzle of music's value under capitalism would seem to run through an analysis of the commodity form. However, recent work on music and value has taken different approaches: from arguments that the value of musical commodities is ambiguously connected to "music" per se (e.g., Beaster-Jones 2016, Marshall 2019) to analyses that build from anthropological, ecological, and other theories of value (e.g., Steingo and Moreno 2016, Morcom 2020, Taylor 2024). This paper contributes to these discourses via a case study at the dawn of Cuba's popular music industry. In that context, it argues, music's relationship to value was less about commoditization than it was about music's role in the social reproduction of the hierarchies of class, gender, and race that sustain the value form in the first place. This argument unfolds through a study of contradanza: a dance form originating in the social life of colonial Cuba's black and mixed-race artisan class, but which, starting in the 1830s, became strongly associated with the domestic pianism of white, bourgeois young women. This "domestication" of contradanza answered elite anxieties over public dancing as an opportunity for class, gender, and race mixing. And although the process was largely mediated by printed sheet music, such scores rarely circulated as commodities, more often functioning as advertisements or tokens of social relations. Thus, this paper ultimately argues for a theory of music and value that integrates music's role in social reproduction with its relation to value through production and circulation.

07C. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Reassessing the Musical Legacy of the Ottoman Empire

Chair: Denise Gill, Stanford University

This panel brings together scholars exploring several aspects of Ottoman musical legacy that reflect the imperial hybridity and its post imperial continuity. In particular, the panel seeks to emphasize the historical significance and contemporary relevance of Ottoman music within the study of ethnomusicology.

Ottoman makam music is an outcome of musical practices developed in a multicultural environment in Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa over centuries. By examining archival material, ethnographic studies, oral traditions, and performance, we are challenging the Eurocentric narratives to reassess the place and enduring effect of Ottoman Turkish music as a global musical tradition.

We will present three papers followed by discussant comments on the following: the musical narratives in Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatnâme in order to challenge Eurocentric accounts that bifurcate "Western" and "non-Western" theoretical traditions; on Yorgo Bacanos, an ethnic Greek oud master in the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic, whose virtuosity embodied the empire's rich cosmopolitanism, where makam music was a shared tradition among Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and other communities; and on gazel, an Ottoman vocal improvisational form, tracing its twentieth century trajectory as a living tradition through the rupture and continuity in Turkish classical music.

This panel contributes to critical studies in ethnomusicology, reconsidering the historical importance of Ottoman music and its role in intercultural dialogue, and present-day musical identities and resistance through sound. Particularly, we aim to reassess the Ottoman musical legacy as a living tradition that continues to inform global musical exchanges.

Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatnâme and Ottoman Music Theory: Mythmaking and Textual Ethnography

Lara Balikci, University of Chicago

This paper re-examines the musical narratives in Evliya Çelebi's 17th-century Seyahatnâme (Book of Travels) to explore how the Ottoman traveler engaged not only in documenting musical practices but also in constructing theoretical frameworks and mytho-historical lineages. Recent scholarship by Jacob Olley (2023) focuses on Çelebi's account of a courtly musical gathering under Murad IV (r. 1623-40) and emphasizes Çelebi's role as an ethnographer: a "creator of social worlds through textual inscription." This study shifts focus to sections of the Seyahatnâme that reveal Çelebi's participation in transregional music-theoretical discourse. Specifically, the paper analyzes his invocation of Pythagoras as a form of intellectual mythmaking that bridges Hellenistic and Islamicate epistemologies. By foregrounding Çelebi's narrative about Pythagoras's invention of musical instruments, alongside his descriptions of Quranic recitation, this paper argues that the Seyahatnâme operates as a site of theory-building, blending legend, acoustical speculation, and spiritual hermeneutics. Drawing on methodologies from critical musicology and ethnomusicology, the analysis

situates Çelebi's work within broader debates about the role of travel writing in shaping musical knowledge. The paper engages with recent decolonial critiques of music historiography to challenge Eurocentric narratives that bifurcate "Western" and "non-Western" theoretical traditions. By illuminating Çelebi's synthesis of Quranic chant practices with Greco-Roman theoretical tropes, this study contributes to ongoing reappraisals of early modern Ottoman thought and its entanglements with global music histories.

Virtuosity as Resistance: Yorgo Bacanos and the Cosmopolitan Legacy of Ottoman Music

Adem Birson, New York University

Yorgo Bacanos (1900–1977) was one of the most influential oud players of the twentieth century, revolutionizing the instrument's technique and shaping the modern Turkish oud style. As an ethnic Greek musician in the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic, Bacanos's virtuosity embodied the empire's rich cosmopolitanism, where makam music was a shared tradition among Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and other communities. His artistry was not only a testament to personal brilliance but also an assertion of cultural resilience in an era when nationalism threatened the multiethnic fabric of musical life in Türkiye.

This paper provides a technical analysis of Bacanos's oud technique, particularly his use of *çarpma*, a hammering-on effect that became a hallmark of the Turkish style. Unlike the Arabic oud tradition, which is heavily plectrum-based and often defined by tremolo, Bacanos's playing emphasized left-hand ornamentation, creating a florid and rhythmical incisive sound. His approach to phrasing and articulation contributed to the Istanbul style's distinctiveness, blending rapid chromatic runs, dynamic expressivity, and intricate embellishments.

Despite being a member of an ethnic minority, Bacanos became a central figure in Turkish music, influencing generations of oud players. His legacy underscores how makam music was a shared cultural language of the Ottoman world. His innovations ensured the preservation of diverse musical voices within Türkiye's evolving national identity while solidifying the oud's role as a bridge between past and present traditions.

Gazel: Rupture and Continuity in Vocal Improvisation in Ottoman Turkish Classical Music

Ahmet Erdogdular, Makam New York, Inc.

Gazel has the most esteemed position in the vocal performance of classical Ottoman music, where the performer exhibits their knowledge of music and textual articulation, their virtuosic performance, and richness of musical and poetic repertoire they interpret. Gazel refers to vocal improvisation in Ottoman Turkish music as well as a poetic form of Ottoman classical Divan poetry, testifying to the intense relationship between poetry and music. The first recordings from the beginning of the twentieth century give us an insight into the performance and the Ottoman aesthetic that continued to reverberate into the post-Ottoman period, although under different conditions.

Those conditions reflected the social and political changes in the Turkish Republic, and in particular, understanding of modernity as Europeanization when it came to cultural and musical production and performance. The most severe was certainly the official ban on gazel radio broadcast, but it was largely reflected in the way in which this musical performance and expertise was perpetuated and taught throughout the twentieth century.

This paper will focus on the importance of gazel as a classical form and its deep relationship with poetry, emphasizing the relevance of makam, meter, and rhythm. Further, it will consider gazel throughout the twentieth century to analyze the continuities and ruptures in its performance, teaching, and role in classical music. Finally, it will assess gazel's most recent revival and its twentieth century trajectory as a living tradition, by analyzing the historical recordings, ethnography, and performance.

Discussion

Denise Gill, Stanford University

07D. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Sounding Activism and Resistance

Chair: TBD

Activism and Social Awareness in Afro-Brazilian Music: Antiracist Performances in Northeastern Brazil

Luis Ricardo Queiroz, Federal University of Paraiba

Brazil faced one of the most extensive official slave trades in the world. This process forcibly brought around 5.8 million Africans to the country between 1500 and 1850. This historical trend has substantially impacted the Brazilian music scene, especially in the context of musical expressions created and performed by Black communities (Lucas, 2002; Queiroz, 2023; Sandroni, 2001). However, although structural racism is still intense in Brazil, the fight against the oppression of black people and their culture have increased considerably over the last two decades. Considering both the reality of the exclusion that characterizes Afro-Brazilian culture and the reaction of these people to this reality around the country, this paper analyzes how Black communities have promoted music performances focused on activism and social awareness to surpass racism in Brazil (Moraes, 2024; Santos, 2022). This research project encompasses a qualitative four-year ethnographic study (2020-2024) in four Black communities in Northeastern Brazil, highly immersed in diverse Black music culture expressions. The results show how these people live in a vulnerable social situation and have historically faced a trajectory of inequality and exclusion. However, their music practices and critical performance initiatives have expanded enormously over the last two decades, incorporating awareness and strategies of resistance, antiracist attitudes, and the construction of collective Black identities in contemporary society. The paper brings out some essential ideas and propositions to

reflect on how ethnomusicology can create dialogues among these musical actions built outside the universities and the academic initiatives focused on combating racism, prejudice, and exclusion.

Musical Micro-Resistances: Late-Night Sessions at the Irish Music Festival Afterparty

Tadhg Ó Meachair, Indiana University, Bloomington

Irish music festivals in the Midwestern United States are a key component of the annual migrations of touring musicians in the Irish traditional music scene. Oftentimes, outside of the official time-space of the festival and after paid duties are completed, musicians gather, away from larger audiences, and play in “sessions” late into the night. Against a backdrop of more commercialized and commodified performances of traditional music on festival stages, I suggest that these afterparty sessions deliberately foreground a sociality and being-in commune. In particular, audience-performer boundaries are blurred, and melodies are heterophonically sounded in productive dissonance with the commercialized ideals of polished unison and harmony (Taylor 2024; Kaul 2013). In a musical tradition where a loss of the principles of collective stewardship and common ownership are lamented by practitioners and scholars alike (Ó hAllmhuráin 2017), I draw on extensive ethnographic fieldwork to argue that the afterparty session re-asserts a communitarian orientation—“reclaiming the commons” (Smith 2006)—in an environment where it is most roundly criticized for ignoring such values—the highly-commodified US Irish festival. This paper underscores the importance of recognizing how musicians' public performances and more privately facing musical practices can sound in mutually constitutive ways, in turn leading to richer ethnographic data. Further, drawing on Cashman (2016), this study explores how some of the wider conventions and norms of a collectively maintained musical genre can potentially impact one’s way of being in the world.

Raving in Ukraine: A Restoration Effort

Kim Kattari, Texas A&M University

Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Within months, Repair Together was founded, a grassroots organization that mobilizes volunteers to rebuild areas impacted by the ongoing military conflict. One of their signature work programs, Project Toloka, shuttles 150-300 volunteers each weekend to affected areas, where they collectively clean up rubble from homes, cultural buildings, and youth centers while deejays spin electronic dance music. Donating their time and services, the deejays sustain the volunteers through two days of back-breaking work with the energizing beats of Ukrainian techno.

This presentation explores the impact of the ongoing military conflict on the Ukrainian rave scene and the ravers’ impact on restoration efforts. As a scholar of electronic dance music (EDM) scenes, I consider how this commitment to volunteerism manifests the EDM community’s values of peace, love, unity, and respect. Drawing on Jill Dolan’s theory of utopian performances, I suggest that these clean-up raves are important ways of imagining and actively working towards a better world, even in the midst of a dystopian present. While volunteers have been criticized for raving in a war-torn country, I argue that these embodied responses to the

ongoing violence are meaningful cathartic experiences during which participants celebrate life, recovering a small sense of normalcy, enjoyment, and fulfillment. With evidence from interviews with Project Toloka volunteer workers and deejays, I demonstrate how raving is helping Ukrainians restore their homes, their culture, and themselves during this crisis.

The Ballad of Janek Wiśniewski: For Bread and Freedom and a New Poland

James Deutsch, Smithsonian Institution

On December 17, 1970, shipyard workers from Gdynia, Poland, demonstrated against the Communist government to protest food shortages and price increases. In response, government militiamen opened fire, killing perhaps three dozen workers, one of whom was 18-year-old Zbigniew Godlewski. Protestors carried Godlewski's blood-stained body through the streets of Gdynia on a wooden door covered with a Polish flag—an image that immediately inspired Krzysztof Dowigałło to write a stirring poem, “Ballada o Janku Wiśniewskim” (“The Ballad of Janek Wiśniewski”), using a generic Polish name because authorities had not yet identified the victim as Godlewski. Ten years later, during the August 1980 strike at the nearby Gdańsk Shipyard, Dowigałło's poem reached the singer Mieczysław Cholewa, who composed accompanying music and reproduced the song on bootleg cassettes. In July 1981—during a brief thaw in Communist censorship—filmmaker Andrzej Wajda released *Człowiek z żelaza* (Man of Iron), which concludes with a rousing rendition of the song by Polish actress-singer Krystyna Janda. The Communists imposed martial law in Poland on December 13, 1981, and banned *Man of Iron*, but Janda's version of “The Ballad of Janek Wiśniewski” continued to circulate surreptitiously throughout Poland, serving as a symbol of democratic resistance, particularly its final stanza that Wiśniewski fell for bread and freedom, and for a new Poland. The song's fascinating history notwithstanding, its significance remains little known outside Poland—a lacuna which this paper seeks to correct, thanks to selected secondary sources and thanks also to interviews with Poles who remember the song's inspiring words and music.

07E. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

An Insistent Call and Response: Exploring the work and legacy of Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon

Chair: Dwandalyn Reece, Smithsonian, National Museum of African American History & Culture

Maya Cunningham, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Tammy Kernodle, Miami University

Krystal Klingenberg, Smithsonian, National Museum of American History

Maureen Mahon, New York University

Stephen Stacks, North Carolina Central University

Portia Maulsby, Indiana University, Bloomington

This roundtable discussion is focused on the work and legacy of Georgia native and SEM Honorary member Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon (1942-2024). Founding member of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Freedom Singers, the Harambee Singers, and Sweet Honey in the Rock, Reagon was a musician, composer, song leader, activist, historian, professor, curator, innovator, and creator whose life experiences informed her philosophical and methodological approaches to Black music research and practice in cultural spaces and academe. Her blend of art, scholarship, pedagogy, and activism inhabited multiple domains that will be explored in the panelists' remarks. Topics include Reagon's heritage ecologies, the legacy of Black female orality, Reagon's work at the Smithsonian, the SNCC Freedom Singers, and Reagon's theorization of the impact of Black singing and Black sound on the Freedom Movement, Reagon's collaboration with Anne Romaine and their musical advocacy for the acquittal of Joan Little, and an exploration of how Reagon's pioneering methods and programs facilitated the research, broad exposure and validation of the work of emerging Black scholars and practitioners of Black music and culture. We envision a robust discussion of Reagon's life work, how her contributions challenged and extended the field of ethnomusicology, and what we can do in our research and practice to continue her legacy.

07F. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Hearing Heritage

Chair: TBD

Listening for India: The Sonic Politics of Hindu Heritage in Indo-Caribbean 'Madrasi Religion'

Stephanie George, City University of New York Graduate Center

In Guyana, Trinidad, and North America, "Madrasi Religion" is known by Indo-Caribbeans to consist of relatively unrestrained styles of Hindu goddess worship. "Madrasi" was an appellation for South Asian indentured laborers who embarked for the New World via the southern port of the Madras Presidency of the British Empire between 1838 and 1917. Despite the prevalence of Kali worship in the Caribbean among different groups and similarities with obeah, "Madrasi" reemerged in Hindu reform efforts to hierarchically categorize and differentiate North Indian-derived orthodox Hinduism from South Indian-derived ecstatic worship. Like Afro-Caribbean religions, the identification of spirits and deities who "manifest" people is central to Madrasi Religion and facilitated by sonic practices of tappu and udkay drumming, animal sacrifice, alcohol and cigarette offerings, and fire oath-taking ceremonies. And yet, Madrasi sonic practices remain a source of anxiety and ambivalence. Throughout colonial and post-emancipation plantation indentureship periods and post-migration North American contexts, Madrasi sonic practices have been negatively associated particularly by Indo-Guyanese with blackness, obeah, superstition, and sorcery. Given a genealogy of listening practices rooted in West Indian British Orientalism, "correct practices" and narratives about the "ancient Tamil" origins of Madrasi Religion produce

prestige as “sound knowledge” (Kapchan 2017) that capitalize on notions of purity within “representational economies” of Hindu heritage (Inglese 2024). Despite a disavowal of mixing, I argue Madrasian maneuver within Tamil sonic diasporas via transformative performances of the sounding spirits and an ontology of vibration to transduce and transcend being derivative, imitative, and instead known through sonic presence.

Reviving Xiansuo Beikao: Historicity, Temporality, and the Construction of Social Strata

Yang Yao, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

“Xiansuo Beikao,” a compendium of musical notations in Gongche notation from Beijing, was compiled by the Mongolian scholar Rong Zhai in 1814 during China’s Qing dynasty. This manuscript meticulously documents thirteen suites for string ensemble featuring the Huqin, Pipa, Sanxian, and Zheng, providing an historically important record of the era’s popular music among the elite and literati. Once widely appreciated, this musical tradition gradually faded amidst shifting social transformations. From the perspective of cultural heritage preservation and transmission, ‘Xiansuo Beikao’ holds a distinctive historical connection with the Prince Gong’s Mansion in Beijing. In the 1950s, musicologists Anhe Cao and Qihua Jian translated these works into Western staff notation, leading to their publication. By 1984, a Central Conservatory of Music research team began reconstructing this music. Today, efforts continue to reintroduce it to modern audiences, exploring new models that adapt to contemporary society while maintaining its authenticity. This paper investigates how ‘Xiansuo Beikao’ transcended hierarchical divisions among the imperial aristocracy, literati, and public life within historical social strata. It examines the challenges of reviving this repertoire in contemporary paradigm of “authenticity.” Drawing from theories of cultural memory (Assmann, 1995), music revival authenticity (Haskell, 1988), and heritage studies (Schippers, 2015), it interrogates how competing authenticity narratives influence its reintegration into modern Chinese musical discourse. Additionally, it investigates how conservatories, state-sponsored heritage initiatives, and the music industry mediate its reception, adaptation and recontextualizations.

Seoulizing Provincial Sound: Purification, Standardization, and Cultivation in the Aesthetic Practice of the State-driven Korean Folk Instrumental Ensemble

Sunhong Kim, University of Michigan

Since Park Chung Hee’s 1964 address on revitalizing minjok munhwa (ethnic-national culture), the state has funded the establishment of the National Gugak Center (NGC), with the aim of the promotion and preservation of traditional performing arts of Korea. In 1979, the NGC founded a folk music ensemble, underneath the pre-existing ensemble for court and literati music. While folk repertoires were less canonized than court music and marked by improvisation rather than rote performance, folk instrumentalists mobilized to Seoul, contrived musical suites based on folk singers’ melodies to validate their work ethic to the director.

Borrowing on Chakrabarty's concept of "provincializing" (2008), this paper examines the process of purifying folk music within a state-led, urban, and institutionalized system (Howard 2016) and its impact on the ecology of elite Korean musicians. Despite folk music's rural origins (Maliangkay 2017; Kwon 2024), vernacular music has been standardized to the point where timbre is the primary personal musical attribute that distinguishes individual artistry (Pilzer 2012). My ethnography of urban-based folk instrumentalists engages with the "schizophonic" (Feld 1994) environment in hyper-globalized South Korea (Kwon, *ibid*) where contemporary folk music ensembles are separated from quotidian rural life. I argue that the privileging of Seoul-centered sonic practices constitutes a form of "triumphant negligence"—a condition in which instrumental techniques featured in Seoul have attained disproportionate authority, as musicians who "successfully" settled in or acquired the cultural capital of this key node have come to define and represent the sound of folk music in *kugak* (traditional-national Korean music)'s entirety.

Demonstration Performance by Uweti Tsalagi Dininogisgi, the Cherokee Language Repertory Choir

Sara Hopkins, Western Carolina University

In 1892, Eastern Cherokee traditionalist Will West Long wrote a list of tunes and page numbers in his Cherokee language journal. Amid surrounding pages of Sequoyan script, the list of English tune names stands out. At the bottom of the list, Long wrote, "this is Christain [sic] Harmony." The seven-shape Christian Harmony tradition of shaped note singing, already becoming anachronistic in 1892, nonetheless persists today as a historical cultural practice across the American Southeast, particularly in the lower Appalachian region. Eastern Cherokees in Western North Carolina engaged in shaped note singing in the Cherokee language, taking texts from the 1831 Cherokee hymn book. Currently, only a very small number of Cherokee elders know or remember the practice of shaped note singing. In 2023, Uweti Tsalagi Dininogisgi, the Cherokee Language Repertory choir, was established in partnership with Western Carolina University and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to revitalize and expand historical and contemporary Cherokee language singing practices. The choir's repertoire includes shaped note tunes, hymns, gospel tunes, secular popular songs, and newer compositions. With fewer than 140 first-language Eastern Cherokee speakers still living, the choir contributes to Cherokee language persistence even among non-speakers. In this performance demonstration, the Cherokee Language Repertory choir will perform songs from their repertoire accompanied by discussion of performance practices, language-specific variations for shaped note singing, and historical and contemporary cultural perspectives on group singing in the Eastern Cherokee community.

07G. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Asian/American Women in Performance: Trauma, Erasure, and Resilience

Chair: Yun Emily Wang, Duke University

Women musicians teach and perform at the intersection of gender and race. What are the consequences and fallout from oppression, and how do women of color work through, respond, refuse, and sometimes transmit their conflict to future generations? The presenters propose new approaches to observe and address historical traumas embodied in the performance. The panel offers four case studies of how Asian/American women performers have addressed the lingering trauma of containment and erasure, with papers tackling issues such as “yellow woman” stereotypes; the display and popularization of Asian stereotypes in theater; Japanese American incarceration survivors’ legacies; the racialization of Asian/American women’s bodies on stage; and a literal loss of voice signaling larger themes of absence. All four presenters take an intersectional and historically-situated approach to how Asian/American women have been seen and heard, and how their agentic responses sometimes redirect the very terms for memory. The presenters draw from critical Asian Studies, Asian American and feminist of color critique, and abolitionist thought to view these performers differently and to position Asian/American women’s subjectivities as methodological sources for historical and ethnographic research. Using Asian/American cases and critical questions, the papers spotlight long-lived stereotypes that fuel the oppressive histories of Asian/American women, noting the real and also metaphoric absence or involuntary silence of women over time. What productive, liberating methodologies for cultural work in these communities emerge from Asian/American women’s responses to containment and silencing? How is Asian/American presence and erasure recast through performance by women?

Asiatic Femininity and the “Yellow Woman” in Western Classical Music

Shelley Zhang, Rutgers University

This paper discusses Asian women performers and the haunting legacy of the “yellow woman” stereotype as it impacts the contemporary musical stage. As cultural theorist Anne Cheng notes in her groundbreaking book, *Ornamentalism*, the figure of the “yellow woman” is at once invisible and everywhere, “suffused with representation” to the point that she washes into the Western subconscious (2019: xi). I engage with Cheng’s work and others in critical race and music studies to interrogate an incident in 2020, where Canadian authorities detained and harassed the acclaimed Chinese pianist Yuja Wang before her solo recital and during a surge in anti-Chinese xenophobia. I connect this event with the archival traces of Afong Moy, the first-known Chinese woman in the United States who was exhibited as a foreign “curiosity” beginning in 1834. I do not, however, discuss Wang or Moy as a “yellow woman;” as Cheng notes, this is a racialized figure that must not be conflated with actual Asian and Asian diasporic women whose lives are complex, diverse, and full of meaning. Rather, in this transhistorical lineage of stage performance, I argue that we see the continued intersections between the Western stage and colonial legacies of conquest, erasure, and racialization of Asian women. This paper

addresses this issue to show the continued traumas of the concert stage and the Orientalist histories that structure how Asian musicians must perform in circumscribed ways consistent with Western imaginations of the Other.

Beyond Release

Tomie Hahn, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

When Japanese American internment camp survivors relocated after the war, a range of Japanese sensibilities endured and were transmitted to future generations. While valuable research has been undertaken about the lives of Japanese American (JA) detainees within internment camps and after their release, little has been written about the survivors' legacy transmitted to and embodied by the next several generations. This presentation traces some of the Japanese sensibilities that specifically enabled JA women's psychological and physical resilience to survive the traumas of detainment and how these sensibilities persisted within JA communities in the 80 years since internees' release. Many aesthetic and conceptual sensibilities persisted in the camps through various arts practices. Sensibilities that have endured in some form in the diaspora include *gaman* and *mottainai* (respectively, the Japanese practice of enduring the unbearable with dignity; and the belief that objects have intrinsic value and spirit that must not be wasted but instead creatively repurposed). How have these and other sensibilities endured in the diaspora as a continuation of camp resilience and activism? How have such practice arts influenced the community spirit, wellbeing, and the transmission itself? Examples drawn from women performers' lives trace how such sensibilities have shaped and situated these women's legacies. This presentation includes perspectives on the impact of containment and the transgenerational historical trauma that influenced generations forward in difficult yet also uplifting, positive ways.

are we ready?

Lei X Ouyang, Swarthmore College

On February 29, 2020, TaikoArts Midwest presented "HERbeat: Taiko Women ALL-STARS" at the Ordway Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. Billed as a "revolutionary lineup of women rock star Taiko players from around the globe," the concert "put women center stage" in an historically male dominated tradition. Reclaiming the stage, the production stands in stark contrast to the prior four decades of Asian/American girls and women on the Ordway stage. Through auto/ethnography and interviews with Minnesota based activist artists, I offer an Asian American feminist activist critique of four musical productions at the Ordway since its founding in 1985. The domination of imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, as bell hooks writes, is maintained through acts of violence "primarily enacted on the bodies of women and children"; a domination that separates us from our bodies (2013). And yet, "Love begins with the body...The act of loving our bodies as women of color is itself an act of resistance and decolonization. But then what do we do? Where do we go? How do we live in a world that isn't ready for us?" (ibid). How might "HERbeat" be considered as an act of resistance, a reclamation, and a reconnection to the body for Asian/American women? Engaging concepts of the racial

mundane (Kim 2015) and racially ambiguous (Ho 2015), I contextualize Asian American racialization and racial performances of Asian Americans (Lee 2016) and the historic “feminist process of musical collaboration” (Wong 2024) of HERbeat to help us prepare for ongoing reconnection and resistance.

No Voice

Deborah Wong, University of California, Riverside

Nobuko Miyamoto lost her voice for a year. She was sixty years old and an established singer-songwriter. She never got a conclusive diagnosis from either the western medical complex or holistic practitioners. Her voice eventually returned but was different: she now has a head voice quite distinct from her former chest voice. I explore how ideologies linking voice to agency and presence create overdriven approaches to Asian American subjectivity. What is the/a voice to Miyamoto? In her memoir, Miyamoto repeatedly cites the importance for Asian Americans of having a voice, and she describes how she and Chris Iijima famously wrote their songs to generate an Asian American voice. I reach into my own experience of having no voice for a terrified month after thyroid surgery. I refocus my ears on the vocal cords that won't vibrate and on the breathy whisper of a voice understood as soundless. For Miyamoto – and for me – relearning a voice alongside other Asian American women was both fraught and powerful. Not-being-heard is quotidian for Asian American women; not being able to speak thus has a distinct doubled horror. The voice that emerges out of involuntary silence is shaped by the dreadful familiarity of not being heard. This presentation is based on long-term, sustained conversations with Miyamoto; on close readings of her memoir (in early drafts and as published); on the new voice studies; and on experience-near ethnography. How does the ideal of the voice rub up against its own materiality?

07H. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Film as Ethnography: Reflections from Colombia's Sibundoy Valley, Hurricane-Ravaged North Carolina, and Bloomington, Indiana

Chair: Rebecca Dirksen, Indiana University, Bloomington

This session brings together four separate short films made in close conversation during Fall 2024 that variously explore filmwork as fieldwork, ethnographic “slow cinema,” film as cinésensory reflexive autoethnography, and film as nonlinear documentary. From Colombia's Sibundoy Valley to hurricane-ravaged North Carolina to Bloomington, Indiana, each filmmaker brings an inquisitive regard to sensing sound, space, history, memory, tradition, ambiance, and environment. The first film, *Tabanok* (2024, 25 min, Spanish, Kamëntšá, and Inga/Quechua with English subtitles), addresses social and ecological change in Indigenous territory in southwest Colombia while interpreting the ethnographic filmmaker as a liminal actor. The second film, *(Re)Building: Crafting Relief for Victims of Hurricane Helene* (2024, 25 min, English), documents a midwestern luthier's art and act of care in making a mandolin

for relief efforts from an eco-organological perspective. The next film, *How I Hear the Blues: The Oral & Aural Narrative of Black America* (2024, 15 min, English), presents a living archive of history, identity, and resilience through the lens of the filmmaker, a noted bluesman dedicated to honoring the blues as storytelling. The final film, *Walk Over Here: Walkover Sounds and Stones and the People Who Love It (Part 1)* (2024, 24 min, English), immerses the viewer in the ambiance of a local record shop, shaped by those who patronize, meet, and pass through. Together, the filmmakers will reflect on their experiences engaging with film as ethnography, elaborating on the themes depicted in the films and discussing the affordances of multimedia research-creation in a historically text-based discipline.

Tabanok

Rowan Glass, Indiana University, Bloomington

Tabanok is a visual ethnographic short film addressing processes of social and ecological change in the Sibundoy Valley, an Indigenous territory in southwest Colombia. As an exercise in filmwork as fieldwork, Tabanok represents an attempt to interpret several local manifestations of liminality—including change and continuity in Indigenous sociocultural traditions (particularly musical production), processes of ecological change inflicted by settler colonial land use systems, and forms of resistance enacted by the Indigenous communities—through the camera lens and editing suite as method and medium rather than the research paper. In so doing, the ethnographer also becomes a liminal actor, walking the line between academically established conventions of ethnographic knowledge production, resulting in more immediate if less academically valorized forms of seeing, listening, and knowing. Beyond its ethnographic particulars, Tabanok thus asks how liminality might be treated in an audiovisual ethnographic medium, and whether experiences of liminality might be better communicated filmically rather than textually.

(Re)Building: Crafting Relief for Victims of Hurricane Helene

Robert McCormac, Indiana University, Bloomington

There are moments, fleeting and seemingly random, when one might experience a present reflexivity, a sense that ‘in this very moment life is changing forever.’ Countless people in western North Carolina encountered this sensation the morning of September 27, 2025, as Hurricane Helene ravaged the turf we call home. (Re)Building, an ethnographic short film shot in Bloomington, IN documents how a midwestern collective—an instrument builder, a cultural diplomacy organization, and a graduate student—worked together to respond to this natural disaster from a distance, in craft and in friendship.

(Re)Building is an eco-organological film combining influences from ecomusicology, environmental studies, and the ‘slow cinema’ style of Anna Grimshaw, which emphasizes narrative development from long, slow takes and limited dialogue. Following Dylan Robinson’s work on refusals in *Hungry Listening* (2020), this project attempts to limit the perpetuation of trauma porn in visual scholarship on environmental and climate crises. This ethical mandate is supported by the manipulation of opacity, palimpsestic

imagery (Huysen 2003; Daughtry 2013), and extensive use of montage. With these devices, the film allows for coexistent timelines and emotions—the then and now, past and present, despair and hope, destruction and construction—bound together by a singular grounding location: luthier Tyler White’s workshop.

(Re)Building tells the story of Mandolin #50, built by Tyler White, which, through a collaboration with the cultural diplomacy organization The Bluegrass Ambassadors, continues to support disaster relief through the NC Arts Disaster Relief Fund.

How I Hear the Blues: The Oral & Aural Narrative of Black America

Lamont Jack Pearley, Indiana University, Bloomington

How I Hear the Blues is a cinènsory reflexive autoethnography of how I receive sonic and visual cues expressed through one of the most significant cultural expressions of Black America, which functions as a living archive of history, identity, and resilience: the blues. Rather than interviewing another community member, as a practitioner and folk group member myself, I document my original songs and the social and racial events that inspired them, while giving context to Black life in the tradition of the post-slavery American South. Shot through the lens of a post-civil rights society, How I Hear the Blues: The Oral & Aural Narrative of Black America documents the blues as a way to preserve stories, conserve cultural memory, and pass down the lived experiences of Black Americans across generations.

Blues lyrics often tell personal stories of hardship, migration, love, loss, protest, and family folk belief. By sharing these experiences, through this visually sonic medium, the short film creates a collective narrative that resonates with the struggles of Black communities across the South and beyond. The intention behind this cinènsory film is to honor both oral and aural aspects of the presentation.

Walk Over Here: Walkover Sounds and Stones and the People Who Love It (Part 1)

chloë noelle fourte, Indiana University, Bloomington

A study of people and place, Walk Over Here: Walkover Sounds and Stones and the People Who Love It (Part 1), is a nonlinear documentary that considers a slice of the Bloomington, IN music scene and community sprouting out of a local record shop, Walkover Sound and Stones. Guided by the presence of shop owner, Wil Bewley, Walk Over Here places the viewer in the middle of the sonic space of the record shop, effecting a type of “meeting” wherein the musicians, music lovers, and friends who regularly convene inside become less distant—even as no distance is traveled nor meeting initiated by the viewer.

Moving beyond the observational mode to perform an active participation-with, akin to what Luc de Heusch termed the “participatory camera,” Walk Over Here is guided by a logic of conversation, bouncing in and out of time in a topical and rhythmic relation. Rather than defining the record shop with an objective thesis, Walk Over Here evokes the presence of being within the sonic and social space of Walkover Sounds and Stones, allowing the viewer to decide their own relation to the musical community and shop.

07I. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Non-Human and More Than Human Connections

Chair: TBD

The Songs of Cicadas: The Dong People's Diverse Imaginaries of Cicadas in Dong Music

Jerry Hu, Hong Kong

This article dissects the Dong people's diverse imaginaries of cicadas in Dong music, and further seeks to show how the sonic features of cicadas help construct Dong people's ecological consciousness and mediate their own personal sentiments. The analysis mainly draws on one-on-one interviews conducted with Dong-ethnic interlocutors of various professions and age groups, complemented by ethnographic observations as part of field trips to the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture of Guizhou, China. In this paper, I analyze various ways in which cicadas are imitated and contextualized in the Dong songs with musical analysis. Moving beyond the focus on transcriptions, I document how cicadas are perceived in the folk tales of the Dong people, depicting the indexical/iconic nature and sonic ubiquity of the cicadas from a macro-perspective. Lastly, through a micro-perspective, I demonstrate the Dong people's diverse imaginaries of cicadas and draw similarities between them. Based on this analysis, I argue that the cicadas provide terms of knowledge that are significant to the Dong people's life, and also, are perceived as creatures of humanistic sentiments that strengthen the ethnic identity and preserve the culture of the Dong people.

Listening to the Bees: Enhancing the Sound-Based Language of Apiology

Adriana Helbig, University of Pittsburgh

Beekeepers listen to the sounds of bees to understand beehive health and monitor ecosystem biodiversity. Bee sounds indicate to the beekeeper when bees are dissatisfied, when they might swarm, and when honey flows (a phenomenon known as "the song of increase"). Bees recognize the voices of beekeepers and communicate with each other through sonic vibrations and dance patterns. The globally declining bee population adds urgency to listening to bees and comprehending their sounds. This study positions the bee as a central figure struggling against the effects of war, ecological pollution, and climate change. It draws on ecomusicological fieldwork among Ukrainian beekeepers who have lost their hives due to Russia's war in Ukraine, Mayan beekeepers whose bees have perished from pesticides in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, and American beekeepers in the southeastern United States whose honey yield is affected by drastic weather changes. By placing the bee at the center of discussions on war, ecological pollution, and climate change, this study explores what musicians can do to assist bees, whose beeswax has significantly contributed to musical developments like the early wax cylinder. Bees can detect sound frequencies up to 500Hz and are attracted to music ranging from 250-

500Hz, which resembles the sounds they produce in their hives. This presentation argues that bee-focused ethnomusicological scholarship can positively contribute to apiology, the study of beekeeping, by enhancing sound-based language and analysis among apiologists working to save the bees.

Atmospheric Sovereignty: Reclaiming Multi-Species Relations in Hawai‘i Exotica

Jade Conlee, University of Virginia

In the years leading up to Hawai‘i statehood (1955-59), jazz musicians in the hotel bars of Honolulu created a genre of music marketed as “exotica.” With birdcall vocalizations and diverse global percussion instruments, exotica provided a soundtrack for touristic fantasies of tropical jungles. While exotica seems to emblemize the extractive designs of U.S. empire on Hawai‘i and the anthropogenic climate change it has wrought there, this paper tells a different story. Drawing on ethnographic and historical research, I demonstrate that exotica’s birdcalls grew out of Native Hawaiian and Hawai‘i-Puerto Rican musicians’ reciprocal sonic relationships with Hawai‘i birds and animal life. Even while working within a tourist-facing genre, musicians Arthur Lyman and Augie Colón used performance to establish anti-colonial cartographic relationships to Hawai‘i, emulating longstanding Kanaka Maoli strategies of “sonic sovereignty” (Reed 2019). As Renee Pualani Louis (2017) shows, ancient hula lyrics and choreography chart atmospheric networks of beings, environmental processes, and relationships in Hawai‘i in extreme detail. From the 1980s to the present, Lyman and Colón’s son, Lopaka Colón Jr., have incorporated the calls of endangered and extinct forest birds from around the Pacific in their performances, reimagining exotica as a conservation tool. Building on Hi‘ilei Hobart’s (2022) concept of “ambient sovereignty,” which asserts the Kanaka Maoli right to determine the thermal infrastructures of Hawai‘i, I argue that Lyman and Colón Jr. practice “atmospheric sovereignty” by claiming control over the affective and vibrational dimensions of Hawaiian space and multi-species relations.

The Human Scale As Ethnomusicological Template

David W Samuels, New York University

Ideas of “the human scale” have inspired (or hidden behind) research in ethnomusicology for some time. When John Blacking (1973), for example, defined music as “humanly organized sound,” he tied that insight to an ideal of music that could not include the rhythmic sounds of machinery, because “their order is not directly produced by human beings.” The human scale in that regard, frequently centering ideals of restraint, individuality, modesty, and a recognition of limits in contrast to the gargantuan facelessness of urban industrial modernity. As with work in early music and folk music, for example, the concept becomes a benchmark to calibrate and value musicking as an expression of the human community in its most presumptively significant state: the small-scale, face-to face interactions of intimate collectivity. In this paper I explore the history of this concept and its influence on thinking about musical activity. I trace the notion to three sources: the philosopher George Santayana (1916/1998), sociologist Helmuth Plessner (1924), and

political scientist Leopold Kohr (1956). From there, I explore some ways in which notions of the human scale have drawn upon musical ideals in support of the concept's empirical materiality. Vocabularies of ratio, balance, and "harmony," for instance, bound approaches to architectural space and together with approaches to music, with appeals to the common mathematics of the harmonic series and Fibonacci numbers. I conclude with a discussion of some examples that erode the human scale's emphasis on the miniature, the modest, and the self-contained as music's natural predisposition.

07J. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM
Yogic Traditions and Sacred Sound Practices in the U.S.

Chair: Brita Renée Heimarck, Boston University

This panel offers an introduction to and discussion of the new edited volume *Yogic Traditions and Sacred Sound Practices in the United States* (forthcoming in 2025 from SUNY Press). Several chapters will be introduced by their authors, and a discussant will comment on the volume as a whole. This book brings together diverse but related disciplines that have long remained exclusive – Sanskrit studies and Ethnomusicology – to illuminate yogic lineages, thought, and philosophies underlying sacred sound practices in the American context. In addition, this volume helps to define the emerging scholarly domain of sacred sound studies, as well as music, religion, and spirituality. Many chapters exhibit an ethnomusicological bent, utilizing participant observation to document the devotional practices of different yogic lineages to better understand the meanings they offer to modern practitioners. The volume examines a broad range of yogic communities from local groups to global networks, spanning cloistered communities to yogic lineages and societies that have become highly revered and widely recognized in the American landscape over the last century. This volume examines how Indian yogic concepts of sound and musical devotion are translated into contemporary sacred sound practices in distinct ethnographic communities in the United States. While previous studies have been published on the theme of sacred sound in the context of established religious traditions, none of the prior publications deal extensively with the sacred sound practices of a wide array of Indian yogic traditions disseminated within the United States.

Yoga, Sacred Sound, and Indian Music in the North American Context

Guy Beck, Tulane University

The 1960s exposed young American seekers to Hindu religion and culture brought directly from India, including Yoga and Indian classical music. While visiting Gurus and Yoga teachers taught simple chants and songs in the form of Mantra and Kīrtan to disciples, celebrated maestros taught Rāgas (melodic patterns) on musical instruments such as the sitar and sarod. By the 1990s the close connections between these two lines of endeavor, namely Yoga and Sangīta (classical music), were established with the aid of Sanskrit texts and advanced vocal music training. As such, the philosophical concepts of sacred sound (Śabda-Brahman and Nāda-

Brahman) that were discussed in the Upanishads and Yoga literature were seen to permeate the musicological literature. The ancient practices of OM recitation and Mantra chant became the object of meditation as well as a focus of sacred music practices. Drawing upon relevant textual sources and music examples, this chapter presentation will establish a direct historical line of continuity between ancient and medieval notions of sacred sound and the current Indian classical and devotional music: from Vedic chant, to Yoga philosophy, to Indian music. It will also demonstrate how this knowledge contributes to a deeper understanding of the music and chant encountered in present-day Yoga organizations, such as Shivananda Ashram, Ramakrishna Mission, and ISKCON, in the United States.

Archaeologies of Sacred Sound: Exploring the Sound Body of God

Brita Heimarck, Boston University

Mirroring a deepening historical lens, this chapter reverses a chronological time frame to move from present ethnographic insights to medieval Indian yogic philosophies. Utilizing in-depth interviews with sacred sound practitioners in the Siddha Yoga lineage, this chapter identifies several key concepts within the sacred sound practices of yogic traditions in the North American context. The practices include inner and outer mantra repetition, chanting of the Name in namasankirtana, and long-text chants known as svadhyaya. Sound concepts described by practitioners include an area or force field of sacred sound, and sound energy or vibration experienced within the body. Ethnographic interviews provide stories about sound based on individual experiences; these experiential concepts of sound are then related to published teachings within the same or related traditions. Finally, these sacred sound practices and overarching sound concepts are connected to philosophies of yoga as documented by Surendranath Dasgupta (1924/70) and Bina Gupta (2003) in several important studies. This methodology of tracing backwards from ethnographic experiences and contemporary views to ancient sacred sound concepts draws upon Appadurai's interest in "genealogies of the present" (1996, 209), reframed here as archaeologies of sacred sound.

Contemporary Musical Expressions of Bhakti: The Kirtan Rabbi and the Changing Kirtan Culture of Los Angeles

Meghan Hynson, University of San Diego

The past several decades have seen a dramatic rise in the popularity of yoga and kirtan in the United States and internationally, revealing an evolution far beyond the call-and-response singing of Sanskrit chants to a popular and eclectic practice. Kirtan sung in English and accompanied by drum set and guitar or played in the style of rock, reggae, bluegrass, or techno is a departure from traditional practice, yet has drawn considerable attention for its musical innovation. This new flexibility has transferred over to creative artists such as the Kirtan Rabbi, an international performer who sings Hebrew kirtan in Jewish synagogues, and indicates how kirtan is no longer contained by denominational boundaries. The popularity of kirtan and its dissemination through CDs, television, YouTube, and large-scale festivals such as Bhaktifest (the "Woodstock of Devotion") testify to a commodification of spirituality,

which capitalizes on the universalist narratives pervading contemporary spiritual culture. This chapter provides a case study of the musical creativity and fervor of the kirtan culture of Los Angeles. Citing interviews with international and Los Angeles-based kirtan performers, and through analyzing events at some of Los Angeles' most popular kirtan venues, this chapter untangles the intricacies behind these contemporary musical expressions of Bhakti.

Discussion

Francesca Cassio, Hofstra University, NY

07K. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Unsettling Settler Colonial Sonic Spaces

Chair: Maxwell Hiroshi Yamane, University of Oklahoma

Inspiring a contemporary crosspollination of anticolonial theory and praxis, Haunani-Kay Trask (Kānaka Maoli) (2004) and Patrick Wolfe (2006) advocated for a now widely recognized conceptual shift, framing colonialism as an ongoing process rather than a singular event. Settler colonialism transforms space by replacing Indigenous inhabitants with settlers and colonizers. In the realm of music and sound, Dylan Robinson (Stó:lō/Skwah) (2020) expands this understanding by introducing space as a component in the tripartite intersubjectivity between listener, sound, and space. Building on Robinson's model, this panel examines how settler colonial soundscapes sustain and reinforce settler colonial regimes. We intentionally disrupt the normalization of settler colonial agendas—genocide, dispossession, and erasure—by interrogating the role of acoustics, sound, music, and silence in constructing settler colonial sonic spaces. Conversely, we highlight the ways in which Indigenous performers unsettle these sonic spaces in ways that are decolonial. The first panelist analyzes how the silence of sonic modes of Indigeneity in the soundscapes at the Idaho State History Museum contribute to Indigenous erasure. The second panelist provides a close listening of Indigenous sonic protocols enacted at federal government events, including the Pentagon and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The third presentation opens space to listen for pop music production as process rather than product in order hear the intergenerational relationships musicians bring forward, as well as to respect the bodily sovereignty of Indigenous artists and their family histories. This panel contributes to ongoing discourses of sound and decolonization in ethnomusicology and sound studies.

Sonic Erasure in Idaho: The Land and Its People

Kimberly Marshall, University of Oklahoma

In 2015, the Idaho State History Museum re-opened after eighteen months of remodeling, to reveal a new set of permanent exhibits to teach Idahoans and visitors alike about the history of this state using the most contemporary technological and ethical museum

practices. At the opening ceremony, tribal representatives complemented the re-design. Largely thanks to the best-practice integration of feedback early and often from a Native Advisory Committee, the story of the “Five Tribes of Idaho” was now integrated throughout the exhibition of Idaho’s history, rather than relegated only to the opening gallery. Museum experiences, however, are multi-sensorial, and the exhibition space in this state-of-the-art history museum is loud. Thunder crashes over the opening mountainscape, the sound of a wildfire rages through Northern Idaho, outdoorsmen talk about guiding rafts through the “River of No Return” wilderness, and a 1950’s style reel-to-reel narration tells the adventurous story of parachuting beavers air-dropped into central Idaho wilderness. Through dozens of hours of participant observation as a museum volunteer, I experienced both repeating loops and guest-activated sounds: environmental, narrative, and musical. And I found that while Native American stories are depicted throughout the museum, their voices, music, and narratives are notably absent, except in the opening gallery “Origins.” In this paper, I argue that despite efforts to correct the representational mistakes of the past, the new exhibitions of the Idaho State History Museum continue to perpetuate Native erasure by sonic means, suggesting a potential incommensurability.

Sounding Indigenous Resurgence in Nacotchtank: Unsettling Settler Colonial Sonic Spaces in the U.S. Capital

Maxwell Yamane, University of Oklahoma

Nacotchtank is the Piscataway place name for what is now commonly known as Washington, DC. DC sits on the homeland of the Piscataway and is the heart of the American settler colonial nation-state that promotes the occupation of Indigenous lands and spaces. Indigenous Peoples have and continue to unsettle settler colonial spaces through various means, including through music and sound. This paper examines the strategies in which Indigenous performers reclaim space and soundscapes in the federal government. My paper provides a close listening of powwow performers at a Native American Heritage Month Celebration on November 20, 2024, held in the Pentagon, as well as Indigenous performers at public federal conferences in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during the pandemic. As both an allied participant and observer, I argue that Indigenous performers engage in acts of resurgence through sound and music in ways that amplify Indigenous cultural practices and protocols, rectify narratives, and assert Indigenous sovereignties. I describe how these musical and sonic acts of resurgence amplify Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies enacted by Arikara, Hidatsa, Kānaka Maoli, Kiowa, Mandan, and Omaha performers to collectively reclaim sonic space. Given the scant literature on Indigenous musical and sonic practices in the nation’s capital, this paper provides an interdisciplinary contribution to ethnomusicology, Native American and Indigenous studies, as well as DC studies. This paper suggests that music and sound scholars should closely examine sonic space in the federal government as a critical component in unraveling the normalization of settler colonialism.

Sonic Sovereignty and the Tactile Body: Contemporary Indigenous Storytelling

Liz Przybylski, University of California, Riverside; Tara “T-Rhyme” Campbell, Independent

This presentation asks what happens when, in the words of two-spirit Chumash/Esselen scholar Deborah Miranda, the “Body is the Archive.” When attending to the tactile body, how do listeners ethically respond to the bodily sovereignty of storytellers, and carefully hear histories of embodied experience? Connecting Miranda’s poetic responses with popular music practice, this presentation focuses on cyphers, notably Tribe Called Queenz, that cultivate participation by Indigenous women, girls, nonbinary people, and two-spirit people. Interviews with Nehiyaw/Denesuline rapper T-Rhyme, a founding member of Tribe Called Queenz, reveal how hip hop storytelling shifts when presented in spaces that foreground the experiences of Indigenous women. Because sonic sovereignty comes into being through relationships, hearing the body as archive allows for a shift in listening posture in which audiences focus on hip hop as a sound practice enacted together. In T-Rhyme’s recent music, that “together” involves traces of others through sampling as well as directly through in-person collaborative creative work. I argue that many of T-Rhyme’s songs, notably “Pressure” and “Revitalize,” carry forward the legacies of people who are never physically on stage but whose voices, music, and stories shape the sound and message of her music. This echoes through the work of other cypher participants, and beyond: by drawing on the legacies of musical and familial ancestors and contemporaries, hip hop artists craft messages about becoming resilient together. In this presentation, we will listen for multiple and conflicting legacies of colonialism and resilience as they echo through contemporary Indigenous hip hop music.

Discussion

Beverley Diamond, Memorial University of Newfoundland

07L. October 24, Friday, 1:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Juntas Llorando: Radical Empathy, Collective Mourning, and Singing Grief Across Fronteras in América Latina

Chair: Hannah Snavelly, Stephen F. Austin State University

This panel explores the musical manifestation, performance, and archiving of grief and suffering among Latine/x and Latin American communities. We are especially interested in how sounded and embodied forms of collective mourning transcend geopolitical, linguistic, temporal, and cultural fronteras (borders). We introduce multilayered definitions of grief to interrogate how humans process sorrow to invoke remembrance of loss, incite witnessing, and invite diverse audiences to participate in “radical empathy” (Lowry 2019). In gathering scholars who engage with music traditions across the Americas and U.S. migrant communities, we propose nuanced methodologies for exploring individual and communal grieving, contributing to ethnomusicological approaches to the study of how experiences of loss and mourning intersect with themes such as nostalgia, displacement, intercorporeality (Sumera 2020), and

relations of the living with the dead (DeNora 2012). The first presenter offers a methodological framework of attentiveness for researching amongst individuals still mourning the passing of Chilean folklorist Margot Loyola. The second presenter analyzes the testimonial reinterpretations of a 1920s Mexican song as it has resounded across the U.S.-Mexico border, tracing the loss of homeland(s), transgenerational sorrow, and collective grief for immigrant and post-migrant women. The third presenter examines individual improvisation of grief-singing in the collective space of indigenous ritual of Q'eros, Peru, underscored by concepts of intercorporeality and lending insight into an indigenous theory of musical expression of loss. The final presenter examines the role of restorative and reflective (Boym 2001) Cuban-American nostalgias in musical works depicting loss associated with Operation Pedro Pan.

Towards an Attentive Ethnomusicology: Affective Relationships and Griefwork in the Field

Hannah Snively, Stephen F. Austin State University

Ten years after the passing of Chilean folklorist Margot Loyola (1918-2015), students and friends grieve and remember her passing in culturally specific ways. Based on fieldwork conducted in Chile between 2022 and 2024, this presentation posits a methodological framework of an “attentive ethnomusicology” for how to connect with interlocutors still mourning. Expanding decolonial and feminist literature across ethnomusicology, anthropology, geography, and public-facing thinkers, I argue that attentiveness, compassion, and vulnerability are key components for cultivating trust and opening space for healing amongst those experiencing loss. Throughout research, I engaged in open-ended discussions with over fifty individuals who were close with Margot, establishing rapport quickly to ask questions pertaining to their relationship to her and her personal impact on their musical lives. I prioritized attending – being present for, caring for, nurturing – over the ethnomusicological pillars of participant observation and semi-formal interviews. I developed this form of relationship building, one that remains highly feminine in the Chilean cultural context and was practiced by Margot herself, throughout fieldwork, as I learned how to extend empathy in culturally appropriate ways. I frequently engaged in griefwork, allowing for open-ended conversations to provide space for informants to remember, cry, and process a deeply personal loss. The affective relationships that I fostered emphasized the quality of the social connection over the information obtained. I ultimately argue for the need to understand the sociocultural norms of remembrance and mourning in order to create space for interlocutors to feel compassion across lines of cultural and linguistic difference.

Cántame la canción de la Mariquita: Performing and Embodying Grief, Homeland, and Immigrant Womanhood in UndocuAmerica's SALSA Lotería

Teresita D. Lozano, University of Texas Rio Grande Valle

In October 2024, Rosy Valle and I sat together in Mexico City, wiping away tears as we reminisced about our experiences as members of the Latina cast of SALSA Lotería, part of Motus Theater's UndocuAmerica Project autobiographical series that premiered in 2015.

Rosy made the difficult decision to return to Mexico after living undocumented in Colorado for two decades, while others from the mixed-status SALSA cast remain in the U.S. After sharing about her complex grief in leaving her adopted “homeland” and family to return to her “true home,” she asked me to sing “Adios Mariquita Linda.” During SALSA’s premiere, I sang this 1920s Mexican song as part of the closing act, encapsulating the profound emotional and intergenerational impact of leaving homeland within the Latina migrant experience. The song – whose lyrics relay a sorrowful farewell to unrequited love – quickly transformed into an anthem for the production. Building on my prior analysis (2022), I argue how reinterpretation of the lyrics parallel to the movement and expressions on stage serves as a vehicle for “vicarious grief” (Sparling 2023) and “radical empathy” (Lowry 2019), inviting audiences unable to relate directly to migrant experiences to participate in emotional display and validation of collective grief. Based on prior and ongoing ethnographic work, I interrogate how performing “Adios Mariquita Linda,” combined with participants’ reflection ten years after SALSA’s premiere, continues to demonstrate musical “intercorporeality” (Sumera 2020) of grief, nostalgia, and “posthumous survival” (Nussbaum 2024), further compounded by the second Trump administration’s mass deportation raids.

The Song Above, the Sorrow Below: Musical Expression of Loss and Grief-Singing in Animal Fertility Ritual, Q’eros, Peru
Holly Wissler, Texas State University

Families of the Quechua community of Q’eros, Peru seasonally gather their llama and alpaca herds to vigorously give abundant offerings of songs, food and alcohol to the animals' specific mountain protectors in ayni (reciprocity) for the health and fertility of the herds. Because these rituals are about vitality and life, they are also about loss and death, with the “implicit recognition that the cycle of reciprocity is ever liable to rupture” (Mannheim 1991,19). Expanding on previous studies of ritual blowing for communication with supernatural forces in the Andes and Amazon (Uzendoski 2005, Allen 2002, Olsen 1996, Guss 1989, Butt 1956), the Q’eros’ unique aysariykuy - expulsion of air in singing and flute playing – is intensified to ensure that the song “arrives” to the mountain gods, and they are “made to hear” the musical offerings. The saturation of symbolic actions, shared consumption and musical production merges with the intercorporeality of people with their animals, environment and mountain spirits, thereby engendering the expected singing of grief. Weeping individuals spontaneously insert personalized text into the prescribed fertility song, which then becomes the vehicle for unconstrained singing of intimate grief in shared community. The people’s perception of necessary aysariykuy, the anticipated grief-singing and subsequent healing, lend insight into an Indigenous theory of musical expression of loss. Responses to and use of returned audio-visual archives of recorded grief-singing (Author 2018), and the impacts of the now disrupted and diminished celebrations due to road arrival, modernization, and outward migration, are also explored.

ReSounding the Lost Apple: Operation Pedro Pan and Communicating Grief Through Performance

Elisa G. Alfonso, University of Utah

From December of 1960 to October of 1962, over 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban minors arrived in the United States as part of a covert airlift known as Operation Pedro Pan (OPP). Because of its association with the Cold War, the memory of OPP became entrenched in a polarizing political rhetoric that obscured the lived experiences of the young migrants. Though their visibility as “symbolic children” (Dubinsky 2010) in the Cold War’s ideological battle faded over time, the grief many Pedro Pans associate with the simultaneous loss of homeland, family, culture, language, and childhood remains potent. To process this grief, many have turned to the arts to depict their exodus, including Willy Chirino, Mario Ernesto Sánchez, and Ana Mendieta. Musical works commemorating OPP often center nostalgic pre-Revolutionary genres and artists, as nostalgia remains an important expression of exilic grief for Pedro Pans, their families, and the broader Cuban-American community (e.g. Pérez-Firmat 2012; Laguna 2017). Drawing on Svetlana Boym’s delineation of “restorative” and “reflective” nostalgias, I note a distinction between “restorative” works that depict a unified, shared utopic past and “reflective” works that underscore loss through the conversion of the familiar to the strange. Through analyses of Pedro Pan created musical works, I expose the divergent ways in which these artists both process their own grief through music and how they attempt to incite witnessing for it in their audiences.

08A. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
BFE Panel (Board)

08B. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
Divergent Listening
Chair: Winnie W. C. Lai, Dartmouth College

Infusing the Khushboo in Diaspora: Exploring the musical soundscape of the Namdhari child in the UK
Janice Protopapas, Punjabi University, Patiala, India

This ethnographic study explores how the khushboo (fragrance) of music functions as a central mechanism in the musical enculturation of Namdhari Sikh children in the UK, specifically in the diasporic communities of Birmingham and East London. Using Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, the research examines how various environmental factors such as family, local community, transnational ties, and parental biographies shape the children’s musical development.

A key component of this process is the languaging around Namdhari music. The study argues that the language used to describe and engage with music, imbued with spiritual, emotional, and doctrinal significance actively influences the children's connection to their heritage. Terms such as khushboo (fragrance), khushiya (joy), and rasa (emotion) create a semiotic framework that transforms music into a sacred and spiritual practice rather than a mere aesthetic experience. This languaging fosters affective attunement, deepening the children's emotional bond to the music and its spiritual dimensions.

Additionally, the study examines the semiotics of Namdhari music, focusing on how elements such as lyrical themes, rhythmic patterns, and tonal qualities reinforce cultural continuity and emotional expression. Through interviews, participant observation, and analysis of intergenerational transmission, the research demonstrates how these semiotic practices preserve traditional music while enabling adaptation to hybrid identities in the diaspora.

Ultimately, this study highlights how language, semiotics, and music intersect to preserve and adapt Namdhari cultural heritage within diasporic communities.

Decolonial listening across Offa's Dyke: English Music, Colonialism, and Cymru/Wales

Nalini Ghuman, Mills College at Northeastern University

English musicians' connections with Wales/Cymru have received little attention, perhaps because Wales/Cymru's coloniality is obscured by the lack of a dividing sea between it and the metropole (Bohata, 2004), while the term "Britain" masks the UK's inherent power relations (Young, 1995). My research maps a history of early-20th-century transnational musicking, individuals, institutions. Drawing on Welsh cultural theorist, Raymond Williams's critique of metropolitan perceptions of the periphery, I examine archival materials (recordings, manuscripts, newspapers), the Welsh folk-song society's dissemination of community-based oral traditions, and the music festivals (Aberystwyth, Gregynog) which attracted musicians to cross Offa's Dyke (Welsh-English border).

Through bicultural analysis and readings of correspondence, I demonstrate that "Welsh" compositions by English composers, long marginalized/misinterpreted in the vested interests of imperialist historiography, do reveal roots in Welsh traditions. I trace the pivotal role of folk singer Dora Herbert Jones in English-Welsh musicking – her collaborations with Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan-Williams, who delighted in her erudite London lecture-recitals (given at their invitation), and who composed for, and conducted, her choir in Gregynog (Vaughan-Williams's Welsh folksongs have recently been discovered, along with Holst's late part-song, "For Gregynog"). Through an analysis of Holst's Welsh folksong arrangements (1930-31) grounded in indigenous musico-poetic practices (cynghanedd, penillion), I contest dismissive claims made by a century of scholars.

Finally, what is at stake in the history of trivialising/denying this transnational Welsh creativity? Decolonial listening plays a vital role in the mutual reconstitution of, and inseparable act of rewriting, English music history through the music-making of formerly-colonised countries.

Relics of Freedom: Resounding Hong Kong's Muted Voices in Transnational Protests

Winnie W. C. Lai, Dartmouth College

Dissent in Hong Kong has been muted since the enforcement of new security laws following the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Protests in 2019. However, the voices of freedom still resound among Hong Kong migrants worldwide, and diasporic groups have continued to demonstrate for Hong Kong's democratization. In 2019 alone, global rallies connected Hong Kong with 22 cities (June 12), 36 cities (August 17-18), and 65 cities (September 29) (Ho 2023). These transnational protests express a feeling of urgency, an intensified desire to protect Hong Kong's freedom and maintain the Hongkonger identity (ibid.)—a sense of localism that constitutes a “political consciousness” (Hung 2022) that has motivated cross-generational migrant communities through their “emotional responses” (Ho 2023) to escalating authoritarianism. Diasporic rallies incorporating practices borrowed from earlier Hong Kong demonstrations, such as chanting banned slogans and singing protest songs, recreate the energies and affect of disappeared local protests. This growing transnational “affective solidarity” (Tang and Cheng 2021) toward Hong Kong localism has become a source of global Hong Kong identity through collective memories, musicking, ritualistic performance, and symbolic objects. This paper argues that the “diasporic subjectivity” (Yip 2021) of the Hongkonger identity is articulated and strengthened in the collective public presence that performs (banned) vocal utterances and music in transnational protests and Tiananmen commemorative candlelight vigils. Focusing on the 2019–2025 protests and June 4 vigils in the northeastern US, this paper studies how musicking and symbolic objects build an emerging sense of collective affect and “long-distance nationalism” (Fong 2021).

08C. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Soundscapes of Sports

Chair: TBD

The Sounds of Aguante: Necropolitics, Acoustemology, and Soccer Fandom in Chile

Luis Achondo, Memorial University

Drawing on three years of ethnographic research in Chile, this paper examines how sound mediates necropolitical relations among hinchas (soccer fans). These men belong to the communities most viscerally affected by the neoliberal deterioration of working-class life in the country. Through carnival sounds and contrafacta of popular music, hinchas not only cheer for their teams but also construct hyper-masculine imaginaries and make audible their precarious social conditions. However, their hostile vocalizations, aggressive movements, and necrotic songs—filled with death threats, stories of combat, and discriminatory slurs—also radicalize subjectivities and hostilities within and between fanbases, making death the defining marker of a necropolitical reality.

This presentation argues that fan violence has given rise to a necropolitical acoustemology. A source and expression of necropower (Mbembe 2019), hinchas deploy sound not only to represent material violence but also to enact it. Sound operates as a means of disrupting neoliberal inequalities while simultaneously reinforcing internal hierarchies and exerting social control. Mediating the political and social relations of fanbases, sound enables hinchas to navigate deadly conflicts in which force serves as the primary mode of resolution. Engaging theories on the productive nature of violence (Benjamin 2021; Clastres 1994; Fanon 2004) and ethnomusicological perspectives on musical performance as both violent and culturally generative (Daughtry 2015; McDonald 2013; Meintjes 2017; Millar 2020; Ochoa 2006), this paper reconceptualizes violence as not merely destructive but as a creative and transformative force—the social engine of a vibrant soundworld.

Aya Nakamura, Language Ideology, and Francophone Afrobeats at the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics

Sarah Politz, The City College of New York

The French-Malian singer Aya Nakamura stirred a revealing controversy leading up to her performance at the opening ceremonies of the 2024 Summer Olympics Games in Paris. Those on the French right criticized Nakamura's inclusion on the program on the basis that she was nothing more than a "rapper," saying that she sang in "who knows what" language and that her participation would "humiliate" the French public. Nakamura, whose music blends together contemporary Afrobeats, zouk, pop, and r&b, responded on social media, in brief, "You can be racist but not deaf," and went on to deliver her Olympic performance in front of the Académie Française, the state institution responsible for governing matters pertaining to the French language. In this paper, I analyze Nakamura's performance with a focus on her music's use of "sound and sense" in the context of postcolonial language ideology. Drawing on virtual ethnography, I focus on her 2018 song "Djadja" (Liar) and her use of vernaculars such as Nouchi from the Ivory Coast; and verlan, a French street slang which reverses the order of syllables to create new words. I show that Nakamura's poetic use of language is part of the song's complex sonic texture, deepening its semiotic impact and expanding its audience. I situate Nakamura's music in conversation with a revived interest in language ideology in linguistic anthropology (Woolard 2020, Cavanaugh 2020) and related research in ethnomusicology (Berger 2003, Perullo 2003) to analyze new contexts where Afrobeats is challenging national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries.

Affective Economies, Excitation Transfers, and Sonic Atmospheres in Argentine Soccer Stadiums

Eduardo Herrera, Indiana University, Bloomington

From the roar of the crowd after a goal to the chanting and drumming of hardcore fans, from the players' grunt while fighting for position to the whistle of an exasperated referee, sound is a conduit for the circulation of emotions in Argentine soccer stadiums. Sonic events mediate experience through an affective economy that conjures collective memory, shapes behaviors, and intensifies or dulls the stadium's atmosphere. These are not discrete affective events but episodic dramas. Each string of plays, game half, match, season,

and club's history establishes an affective disposition that grounds the appraisal and expression of emotion. This paper uses phenomenology and (auto)ethnography to expand the notion of sonic affective economies within sports by bringing together two bodies of scholarship: emotion-enhancing excitation transfer theory (EEETT) and the concept of affective atmospheres. EEETT explains how sound's affective value increases through circulation (Ahmed 2004) within short spans of time (Zillmann 2008; Cummins and Berke 2017; Cummins, Wise, and Nutting 2012). The concept of sonic affective atmospheres (Abels 2022, Eisenlohr 2022; Ashmore 2017; Jack 2021; 2024) shows how acoustic events connect bodies through vibrational materiality and "energetic flows that affect felt-bodies while allowing for the mediation of the sonic through auditory cultures, semiotic ideologies, and other historically and social embedded traditions" (Eisenlohr 2018, 51). This work adds to recent ethnomusicological studies showing how sonic practices in sports and fandom operate as meaningful sites of political and social life (Jack 2013; 2021; 2024; Herrera 2018; 2024; Achondo 2022; 2024; Wells 2023).

08D. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Challenging Capitalist Realism in Ethnomusicology: Sound Praxis for an Anti-Capitalist Future

Chair: Ana Hofman, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Juliana Catinin, The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Pedro Fadel, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

Agustina Checa, Lehman College, City University of New York

Falina Enriquez, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Anaar Desai-Stephens, The Graduate Center, City University of New York

This roundtable brings together graduate students, early-career scholars, and established researchers to critically examine the intersections between ethnomusicology and late capitalism. We explore how sound, movement, and musical practices actively engage in resisting and transforming neoliberal structures of oppression—racism, sexism, homophobia, and labor precarization—and the rationalities that shape both academia and global societies. Grounded in ethnographic and historical studies from a historical materialist and dialectical perspective, we challenge the ideological naturalization of capitalism as the sole social paradigm, engaging with Mark Fisher's concept of "capitalist realism." The discussion will critically assess ethnomusicology's ideological and historical limitations while proposing new theoretical approaches and, more importantly, contributing to sound praxis—the articulation of discourse, actions, and practices around sound—to confront the global order and imagine anti-capitalist and socialist futures. Panelist 1 examines the rapper as an organic intellectual in Rio de Janeiro's hip-hop scene, analyzing the limits and possibilities of counter-hegemonic praxis in neoliberal contexts. Panelist 2 explores the intersections of race, class, and musical practices in Brazilian Pentecostalism, focusing on its expansion among working-class Black communities. Panelist 3 analyzes Argentine independent labels

using cassettes to resist neoliberalism and foster collective engagement during economic crises. Panelist 4 explores studies on music in Brazil and Latin America that illuminate the intersections between labor and precarity in late capitalism, while pointing toward new social, political, and aesthetic possibilities. Panelist 5 considers musical fantasy in Bombay as a lens for neoliberalism's fissures, proposing attention to the implausible as an anti-capitalist ethnomusicological method.

08E. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Contemporary Black Music in Southern Europe

Chair: Deonte Harris, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

This panel brings into conversation the multifaceted expressions of contemporary Black music cultures across Afrodiasporic communities in three countries in Southern Europe: Portugal, Spain, and Italy. Amidst the rise of Europe's far right alongside continuing challenges of discrimination, marginalization, and anti-immigrant sentiment against Europe's Black populations, panelists respond to calls for the sustained study of Black cultures in European nation-states (Hine et al. 2009), offering new perspectives on the diversity of Black European musical contributions. Moving across geographic, aquatic, socio-cultural, and methodological boundaries, this panel examines how Black artists in Southern Europe from a variety of genres deploy Afrodiasporic consciousness, whether it be by musically and culturally reimagining the metropole, making themselves audible and visible in the digital age, or connecting to global struggles of oppression. The first panelist explores how a monthly Afro-electronic dance music party in Lisbon, "Noite Príncipe," becomes a political space where the city's Afro-descendant communities re-imagine and perform a new Lisbon. The second panelist examines the impact of Black-led music collectives on the Catalonian cultural scene, arguing that these collectives reconceptualize what it means to be Black in Spain. The final panelist explores how Black-Italian artists connect Southern Italy to the Global South, in ways that complicate earlier Southern Italians' claims to Global Southernness, and, by extension, Blackness. From Europe's Atlantic coast to its northern Mediterranean shores, this panel ultimately asks "Where does the Black Atlantic meet the Black Mediterranean?", expanding the scope of traditional studies of the Black diaspora.

Príncipe Discos and the Sonic Politics of Afro Lisboa

Jacqueline Georgis, College of the Holy Cross

This year, four former Portuguese colonies in Africa—Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde, and Mozambique—commemorate 50 years of independence. From the wars of independence onward, African migrants have turned to the colonial metropole in search of economic and political stability, and better job and educational opportunities. As they reshaped the contours of Portuguese society, these waves of immigrants also gave way to the emergence of an "Afro Lisboa", an expression used to mark the presence of large populations of African descendants living in and around Lisbon's Greater Metropolitan Area, and recognize how the

cultural productions linked to the city's Black spaces have become strategic actors in Lisbon's rebranding of the old metropole into a cosmopolitan space (Garrido & Raposo, 2020). Turning my attention to Lisbon's independent record label, Príncipe Discos, my talk examines Afro Lisboa's relationship to the artistic output of one of the label's cultural projects, Noite Príncipe, a monthly dance night featuring batida and other Afro electronic dance musics. In so doing, I ask: what sort of sonic politics organize and characterize the social hierarchies of Afro Lisboa? How is this space meant to be heard? Seen? Based on ethnographic research, I seek to tease out these tensions, demonstrating how Príncipe Discos and its monthly Noite Príncipe party navigate a nighttime politics of Afro Lisboa, one made visible in the highly public, highly participatory, and highly performative sphere, where music is meant to fall within the confines of an accepted, respectable Black expressive culture.

Espacio Afro: Music, Community, and the Politics of Belonging in Catalonia

Genevieve Allotey-Pappoe, Brown University

Prior to 2010, Afro-descendant communities were largely absent from Spain's cultural scene due to exclusion, discrimination, and the paucity of Black activism networks. In recent years, however, Spain has witnessed the blossoming of a new set of spaces and the emergence of new Black-led music collectives in response to the current popularity of African popular music, a global awareness of racial politics facilitated by social media networks, and the digital interconnectedness of the diaspora. A nascent Black community in Spain is developing alongside these cultural activities (historically, Afro-descendant communities in Spain were fragmented by nationality and ethnicity). The new generation also draws on the resources and experiences of the Afro-descendant communities that have been in Spain for decades. This paper explores the strategies of audibility and visibility collectives such as Voodoo, NEO, and AfroBrunch are employing. These collectives are addressing and tackling marginality within the nightlife scene and culture industry, while simultaneously fostering spaces for Black people and maintaining a network with the broader Black diaspora. As a result, inclusive social formations centered on diverse Afro-diasporic cultures are emerging. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in Barcelona, I argue that these collectives are reclaiming Black sound and reshaping the lived experience of being Black in Spain against the backdrop of discriminatory attitudes and prejudice. I interpret the impact of these collectives within the frameworks of "doubling reality" (Steingo 2016) and "alternative public spheres" (Gilroy 1987). This impact serves as a means of forging "alternative social futures and richer individual lives" (Turino 2008).

Nero a metà, in realtà: Black-Italian Musicians Sounding the Global South

Clifton Boyd, New York University

Since Italy's unification in 1861, the country's North/South divide has elicited an anti-Southern Italian sentiment, in which Southerners were considered an inferior and barbaric race in comparison to Northerners, with the region even referred to as "Italian Africa." In the late twentieth century, Southern Italian artists leaned into this association with Africa by producing countercultural

music that sought to connect Southern Italy to the Global South, with questionable claims to Blackness (Patriarca 2021). Beginning in the 2010s, however, Black-Italian artists began to release music that connected these two geographies by drawing on their multiracial backgrounds. In this paper, I explore how these Black-Italian artists draw parallels between Southern Italy and the Global South, going beyond their white Italian predecessors to invoke lived and embodied experiences of Blackness. I draw on three case studies: first, Sardinian--Congolese vocalist Vhelade's 2017 album *AfroSarda*, which combines Sardinian dialect and Bantu rhythms to guide listeners to understand both Africa and Sardinia as colonized lands (Hawthorne 2022). Second, the multiracial musical collective *Terroni Uniti's* (united Southerners) 2017 single "Gente do sud" ("People of the South," in Neapolitan), which draws on the members' similar experiences of oppression and resistance across (and crossing) the Mediterranean. Third, the Sierra Leonean-Italian rapper *Laïoung's* 2017 song "Fuori (Je so' pazz)" ("Out [I'm Crazy]," in Neapolitan), which riffs on Pino Daniele's 1979 "Je so' pazzo" and recasts Daniele's claim that Blackness and Southern Italianness are coterminous. Ultimately, these musicians contribute to larger efforts toward anti-racism and civil rights for Black Italians.

08F. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

South Asian Artistic Pedagogy in Transnational Perspective

Chair: Sarah Morelli, University of Denver

This panel explores the pedagogy of the South Asian classical and classical-derived arts, specifically Carnatic music, Hindustani music, Bharatanatyam, and Tamil kirttanai, in the context of their transmission within the United States. How are traditional South Asian pedagogical practices adapted in their diasporic context, and to what ends? Each of these papers discusses challenges faced by transnational instructors of South Asian music and dance in their efforts to make these traditions accessible to an American student population, as they must contend with the institutional norms and political ideologies of the United States while also working to preserve the classical South Asian heritage on a global scale. This results in localized translations of traditional South Asian pedagogy, including a renewed emphasis on sensorial and embodied experience, inductive rather than deductive pedagogy, and participation in broader socioeconomic and political narratives of liberation. Diasporic practitioners also work to subvert the gendered, classed, and casteist norms emphasized by traditional practice through their pedagogical innovations, in service of expanding the accessibility and inclusivity of the South Asian arts from a global perspective. Crucially, however, as all three of these papers demonstrate, the translation and modification of traditional practices in diaspora is not seen as a rupture with tradition but as a means of sustaining a global community of practitioners who are active participants in these genres' ongoing transnational development.

Guru-Sisya Parampara in the U.S. Diaspora

Varshini Narayanan, University of Chicago

This talk emerges from the experience, after nearly three decades of study in the Carnatic tradition, of becoming a guru myself, and of having to contend with the artistic and pedagogical conventions that inform musical study in the United States compared with the South Asian classical tradition of guru-sisya parampara. I present ethnographic interviews with three second-generation American teachers of South Asian classical music, as well as autoethnographic reflections on my own experiences as a guru. Our conversations reveal a twofold understanding of guru-sisya parampara as a cultural institution. On the one hand, the title of guru reflects a presumed mastery over one's art form, as well as the authority to serve as a culture-bearer and mentor for the next generation of South Asian American musicians. On the other hand, this very authority places us in an uneasy position of power that we must take careful steps to mitigate. Indeed, scholar-practitioners of South Asian music including Amanda Weidman and Dard Neuman have argued that the very methodological foundations of guru-sisya parampara reinforce a power dynamic that positions the guru as a gatekeeper of knowledge and the sisya as an empty vessel with limited agency over the learning process. As my paper demonstrates, many of the innovations second-generation gurus make in our pedagogy, such as favoring inductive rather than deductive methods and a student-driven learning trajectory, are out of a desire to unsettle these built-in power dynamics as well as to better serve the unique learning needs of our American students.

Re-Rooting the Art, Re-Routing the Body: Unlearning to Learn the T. Balasaraswati Dance Tradition in the United States

Bianca Iannitti, Wesleyan University

To “unlearn” something can imply the correction of a behavior; to improve or to fix. What was once considered a habitual action, is now ruptured. This state of “rupture” serves as a powerful space of conceptual and creative practice, and reveals unlearning's power as an effective tool to transcend such ruptures whether it be cultural, religious, and/or kinesthetic. Unlearning rings particularly relevant to the 20-year relationship fostered by internationally-acclaimed bharatanatyam dancer, Smt. T. Balasaraswati, and her dedicated group of American disciples. Although America provided a conducive environment to re-root Balasaraswati's art, challenges emerged both inside and outside of the classroom. In turn, Balasaraswati unlearned a series of pedagogical, socio-cultural, and personal shifts in order to remedy such conflicts. This demonstration of adaptability was not unilateral. The students also underwent an unlearning process in order for their bodies and minds to receive their teacher's precious art. What can the unlearning process inform us about the transitional process of planting a performance tradition, like Balasaraswati's, into a different socio-cultural context? To what degree does the concept of unlearning have a place within bharatanātyam and the broader discipline of ethnomusicology? In relation to the current generation of American students and instructors, what does the unlearning process look like today? Drawing from my experience as a bharatanatyam dancer in this tradition, theories of unlearning, embodiment, and memory, along with interviews from

Bala's American students and others within the tradition, this presentation will highlight a number of cases in order to address these questions.

Pathways to Tamil Diaspora Worship through Ragam Education in the U.S.

Rachel Schuck, University of North Texas, West Chester University of Pennsylvania

As the number of Tamil Christian musicians working in kirttanai idioms in the U.S. has increased since 2020, diasporic kirttanai educators have sought out pedagogical techniques that sustain their active musical participation in political and historical narratives of exile theology. Over the past few years, the pedagogical focus toward these ends has shifted from an emphasis on text translation and application to an emphasis on the Carnatic ragam system. These educators rely on the exploration of Carnatic melodic frameworks - such as integration of gamakam and application of embodied emotional states to biblical narratives - as platforms of vocal agency (Rahaim, 2022; Weidman 2021, 2006; Gautier, 2015). Reclaiming these melodic frameworks recasts bi-musical Tamil Christian kirttanai educators' musical and spiritual priorities in the American milieu and facilitates engagement from diasporic youth. In this paper, I draw on ethnographic interviews with Dr. C. Victor, an educator, clinician, and content creator of Tamil Christian music in South India and the diaspora, and Mr. Freddy Diwakaran, co-director of the American College Choir; both based in Madurai and trained in Carnatic and Euro-American hymnody idioms. I position my case study of ragam education in the U.S. within the broader discourse of Carnatic music pedagogy's mobilization by Dalit communities towards social, economic, and spiritual liberation (Sherinian 2024, 2014).

08G. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Studies in Aging

Chair: Heather MacLachlan, University of Dayton

“Much Too Young (To Feel This Damn Old)”. An Ethnography of Busking, Well-being, and Aging

Melanie Ptatscheck, New York University

Busking, i.e., street performance in public spaces for donations, has been associated with cultural activities and urban life for centuries. While some buskers play for fun, acknowledgment, practice purposes, creative self-fulfillment, and the realization of an alternative and romanticized lifestyle, others are in constant struggle for survival. For the latter, the most lucrative places, the attention of the fleeting public, and the ability to earn their living through busking are of existential importance. The situation for buskers is becoming increasingly complicated as public spaces worldwide have been transformed under rampant neo-liberal conditions where market-driven policies dominate. These conditions also more directly affect buskers' living conditions through ever-rising rents and

the lack of insurance – especially in times of crisis, as the (after)effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have shown. This paper illustrates that older artists are particularly affected by these transformation processes. Based on online ethnography, participant observation, and narrative interviews conducted with buskers in New York City, this paper focuses on the realities and well-being of older buskers. Using a narrative-biographic approach, it provides insights into their life paths and associated self-concepts; it identifies their individual physical and psychological challenges associated with these transformations and examines the (stress) factor aging itself and its effects on musicianship and artist performance practices. Rooted in Ethnomusicology and Public Health, this paper forms the basis for an effective debate on the deficits and challenges musical life in urban spaces faces and highlights buskers' dependence on governmental and societal support to maintain their well-being.

Streaming the Streets: Pumba, Digital Fandom, and the Politics of Aging in South Korea

Jeong-in Lee, University of Southern California

This paper explores pumba performance as a site of negotiation between class, gender, and digital economies in contemporary South Korea. Once associated with itinerant performers and working-class survival strategies, pumba has been increasingly performed by elderly artists. While state-supported silver culture promotes senior participation in cultural production, pumba remains an overlooked genre within this institutional framework. Beyond its marginal status, pumba is also undergoing a transformation through digital platforms, where livestreamed performances, fan-driven economies, and online donations reshape performer-audience relationships. While pumba's improvisational humor and vocal exaggeration resonate with elements of K-pop fan culture—such as direct engagement with audiences and the proliferation of fancam-style videos—its aesthetic and sociopolitical position remain distinct. Drawing on Butler's (1990) performativity and Berlant's (2011) affective labor, this study examines how elderly pumba performers construct alternative forms of celebrity that challenge dominant imaginaries of aging and artistic legitimacy. Additionally, informed by Bourdieu's (1984) notion of cultural capital, I investigate how pumba negotiates hierarchical distinctions between 'high' and 'low' performance cultures, particularly as its visibility grows in digital spaces. Through ethnographic research and performance analysis, this paper situates pumba within broader discussions of sonic labor, digital economies, and performative labor, arguing that it disrupts binaries of tradition and modernity, street performance and online entertainment, marginality and mainstream recognition. Ultimately, this research contributes to ethnomusicological discourses on the evolving intersections of performance, technology, and aging in late capitalist societies.

Rejuvenation through Remembering: Sonic care at night clubs for the aging in northern Mozambique

Ellen Hebden, Syracuse University

In northern Mozambique's coastal provinces, veterano (veteran) night clubs are a pillar of social life for the 50+ demographic, and in particular, the generation of Mozambicans who came of age in the 1960s and 70s and lived through the civil war. On weekends and

holidays, elders dance to popular music from their youth, and host events with other clubs where dancers show off their skills, while also forming and maintaining relationships. For many participants, listening and dancing to old songs with friends “kills nostalgia” for the past, and in so doing, rejuvenates the body and emotional wellbeing. In this paper, I draw on ethnographic research in veterano clubs and interviews with DJs and dancers in the coastal district of Pebane to examine how, in night club spaces, music is a “technology of care” (Sykes 2018) that heals and uplifts, and is central to how aging people mediate relationships with others, the self, and those who have passed on. I analyze how musical care is enacted within two relationships central to dance-floor activity: first, in the relationship between the DJ and audiences during song selection; and second, as dancers care for their aging bodies by ‘playing ’at being young on the dance floor. Bringing together anthropological theories of care with scholarship on elderly social dance cultures, I argue that in the absence of formal care institutions for the elderly, veterano participants engage in musical care to imagine and prepare for their futures by revisiting their pasts in night club settings.

08H. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Research Tools for Ethnomusicology: Navigating Bibliography, Historiography, and Ethnography

Chair: Russell Skelchy, RILM

Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM) will offer a 90-minute workshop on research techniques with focus on bibliography, historiography, online databases, and research tools relevant to ethnographers and practitioners in the field of ethnomusicology, especially graduate students and junior scholars. Depending on participants’ interests, the workshop may include discussions on navigating databases and online resources, dictionaries, encyclopedias, popular music primary resources, and reference works and conducting research in languages other than English. The topic of abstract writing may also be covered. Through short research project presentations, guided discussion, breakout groups, and other activities, the workshop offers a unique setting to engage in global dialogue and exchange and expand critical debate on recent research within the field of ethnomusicology while acquiring or bolstering solid research techniques. The workshop will be led by RILM staff. Those wishing to participate should send an abstract summarizing their research interests and a short bio via Google sheet that will be sent out on 1 October 2025.

08I. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Collective Convergences

Chair: Obianuju Njoku

The Las Cruces International Mariachi Conference: Redefining Performance Hierarchies on the Student Showcase Stage

Melissa Michelle Rios, University of New Mexico

The annual Las Cruces International Mariachi Conference, established in 1994 with the additional name “Festival de las Américas,” was once one of the highest attended mariachi conferences at the turn of the twenty-first century. Although attendance has waned due to multiple cancelations from 2014 to 2016, the first two decades of the conference were co-sponsored and hosted by New Mexico State University—a public, land-grant university founded in 1888 and is New Mexico’s oldest institution of higher education. The events hosted included the conference workshops, the student showcase concert, and main concert. The concerts both took place at the Pan American Center, Las Cruces’s 13,140-seat arena, which New Mexico State University uses, primarily, as a sports and entertainment facility. Drawing from my experience as a participant-observer from 2002 to 2008 as well as archival research and utilizing Christopher Small’s concept of musicking and Josh Kun’s idea of audiotopias, I argue that by holding the student showcase concert and the main concert on the same stage and making them both ticketed events, the hierarchy of expert validation was obscured effectively redefining the performative space for semi-professional and student mariachi groups and vocalists. Additionally, I explore how the reinscribing of space through music both affirmed and subverted audience expectations and became a site where local, young musicians were granted prestigious visibility within their own city, thus also becoming a place for identity building.

From Salon to Stage: The All Bengal Music Conference and the Public Life of Hindustani Music

Pramantha Mohon Tagore, University of Chicago

This paper examines the All Bengal Music Conference (ABMC), initiated in 1934 in colonial Calcutta, as a site of both continuity and rupture, foregrounding its role in redefining musical sociality. This event was not merely a gathering of musicians but a crucial turning point that signalled a shift in the spatial and social dynamics of Hindustani music—from the intimate, private spaces of the salon (sangeet baithak) to the public, performative arena of the music conference. Drawing on archival materials and personal narratives, I interrogate the sociality and spatiality of the conference, juxtaposing it with its predecessor, the salon, to argue that the move from private to public spaces was not merely logistical but symbolic. The conference also marked a negotiation of power, where musicians reclaimed agency within modernity’s cultural framework, reflecting the tensions between a hereditary elite of performers, who shaped their identity through lineage and tradition, and a newly emerging public, which comprised a more diverse and nationalistically charged audience. Musicians not only adapted their art to these shifting dynamics but actively sought to shape their audiences through curated repertoires and the performance of mood (rasa) that resonated with the aspirations of a modernizing Bengal. My paper

concludes by situating the ABMC within the broader context and culmination of Bengali musicology's modernist moment, contending that the conference epitomised the intersection of music, space, and sociality, offering insights into how colonial modernity reconfigured artistic traditions and their publics.

Singing in Times of Crisis: Collective Singing, Social Trust, and Cultural Resilience in the Scandinavian and Baltic Regions

Lea Wierød Borčak; Katrine Frøkjær Baunvig

Collective singing has long played a central role in fostering social trust, reinforcing cultural identity, and navigating crises in the Scandinavian and Baltic regions. This study examines how collective singing has contributed to both social cohesion and exclusion during periods of upheaval. From Denmark's WWII resistance songs and Norway's post-2011 terror attack musical responses to the Baltic Singing Revolution and contemporary Ukrainian refugees using song to navigate displacement, this research interrogates the complex relationship between music, trust, and crisis.

While ethnomusicology has long examined the unifying and identity-shaping potential of musicking, this study emphasizes its role in shaping social trust—both in terms of inclusion and exclusion. Singing can create a sense of belonging, yet it can also serve as a mechanism for delineating cultural boundaries and reinforcing social divisions. Through ethnographic fieldwork, archival analysis, and computational methods, this study investigates how collective singing has been mobilized in different historical and contemporary contexts to foster trust while also defining cultural “insiders” and “outsiders.” A key innovation is the integration of digital ethnomusicology, employing large-scale textual analysis and neural word embeddings to trace shifts in song-related discourse over time.

By incorporating contemporary case studies, including the role of singing in refugee integration, this research contributes to broader discussions in ethnomusicology about how musical practices shape social trust during crises. It offers new insights into the power of collective singing to negotiate belonging, resilience, and exclusion, providing a comparative perspective on its enduring role in shaping cultural memory and social relationships.

08J. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Sound, Identity, and Resistance: Music and Sonic Practices in Marginalized Communities in Iran

Chair: Azadeh Vatanpour, Emory University

This panel explores the role of sound and music in shaping communal identity, religious practice, and political resistance among minoritized communities in Iran. By examining the ritual music of the Yārsān, the sonic legacy of Kurdish singer Hasan Zirak, and the sacred soundscapes of Yārsān spirituality, these studies collectively explore how musical and vocal practices become sites for cultural expression, social cohesion, and defiance against hegemonic forces. The first paper analyzes Yārsān ritual music through Thomas

Turino's participatory performance framework, demonstrating how Jam ceremonies foster spiritual ecstasy and reinforce communal solidarity. The second paper investigates Hasan Zirak's vocal aesthetics and their deep association with Kurdish identity in Iran. It explores how his distinctive vocal style serves as an auditory marker of Kurdishness and as a rejection of state-imposed cultural assimilation. The third paper examines the Yārsān sacred soundscape, applying R. Murray Schafer's concept of soundscape and Edward Said's antithetical discourses to explore how sound is both a spiritual medium and a form of resistance against dominant auditory hegemony. Together, these papers illustrate how sound—whether through participatory music-making, iconic vocal timbre, or sacred soundscapes—functions as a powerful tool for identity formation and political resistance. This panel contributes to broader discussions on music, sound, and power, demonstrating how minoritized communities reclaim their sonic spaces to assert cultural and religious autonomy.

Music, Ritual, and Community: Participatory Performance in Yārsān Religious Practice

Sirvan Manhoobi

This study investigates how participation in the ritual music of the Yārsān, an ethno-religious community in western Iran, within the sacred space of the Jamkhānah, continuously redefines their collective identity. As a faith in which music is central to spiritual expression and social cohesion, the Yārsān tradition offers a rich case study for understanding the interplay between collective musical practice, religious devotion, and community building. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Kerend-e Gharb, Sarpol-e Zahāb, and Gahvāreh, this research explores how Yārsān musical traditions shape communal life and spiritual experience, emphasizing the transformative power of participatory performance. Central to Yārsān practice is the performance of kalām, sacred texts recited with tanbur, a lute-like instrument believed to bridge the material and spiritual realms. The Jam ceremony, a key communal gathering, exemplifies participatory music-making through cyclical melodies, repetitive structures, and collective engagement. Participants of varying musical proficiency contribute through singing, clapping, and instrumental accompaniment, fostering inclusivity and reinforcing spiritual ecstasy (sarkhowashi) and social solidarity. Applying Thomas Turino's framework of participatory music to the Jam ritual, this study challenges the assumed boundaries between performer and audience. The findings position Yārsān music as a model of participatory performance, illustrating its role in sustaining religious devotion and strengthening community bonds. This research deepens understanding of Yārsān spirituality and contributes to broader discussions on the role of music in fostering inclusivity, collective identity, and transcendent experiences across cultures.

Sounding Kurdish, Singing Kurdishness: The Cultural Connotation of Hasan Zirak's Voice in Iran

Kajwan Ziaoddini, University of Maryland

This study examines the relationship between the timbral qualities of Hasan Zirak's voice (1921-1972) and the imaginaries of Kurdish identity in Iran. Whether heard as background music in teahouses, accompanied by the rattling of teaglasses, or emanating from the

speakers of shared taxis and minibuses, Zirak's voice remains a defining feature of the Kurdish soundscape, extending into radio dramas and films produced in Iran. More than fifty years after his death, his voice continues to serve as an index of Kurdish identity and is actively imitated by those who want to sound more "Kurdish" in Iran. This study explores the meanings that musicians and cultural actors attribute to Zirak's vocal timbre and investigates why his vocal quality has been so closely associated with Kurdish identity. I employ ethnographic methodology and draw on ethnomusicological theories that examines how voices are heard, used, and imagined in various discourses (Weidman, Harkness). I argue that, by building his career in Iraqi radio, Hasan Zirak's vocal aesthetics diverged significantly from those of assimilated Iranian-Kurdish radio singers—a divergence interpreted as a rejection of state-driven hegemonic identity politics imposed on Iranian Kurds. These interpretations drive musicians to imitate Zirak's vocal quality when they seek to sound more Kurdish. By situating Zirak's voice within broader discursive ideologies, this study illustrates how seemingly authentic musical aesthetics may be shaped by these discourses and how music can serve as a powerful site for the practice of identity politics.

Sounding the Divine: Yārsān Sacred Soundscapes and the Politics of Sonic Resistance in Iran

Azadeh Vatanpour, Emory University

This study examines the sacred soundscape of the Yārsān, an ethno-religious minority in Iran, and its role in fostering a sense of belonging while resisting state-imposed hegemonic forces. In Yārsān cosmology, sacralization extends beyond the physical landscape to encompass the aural environment, where sound—particularly music and tanbur performances—bridges the spiritual and material realms. By invoking divine presence through sound, the Yārsān construct a sacred soundscape that reinforces their communal spiritual identity and amplifies their marginalized voices within Iran's sociopolitical landscape. Drawing on R. Murray Schafer's concept of soundscape, this study argues that the Yārsān actively shape their aural environment rather than passively inhabiting it. Through the invocation of divine beings and the performance of sacred maqāms on tanbur, Yārsān music serves as both a medium for divine communication and a repository of communal memory. Methodologically, this research employs semi-structured interviews and textual analysis to examine how these sound practices sustain Yārsān identity. Furthermore, this study applies Edward Said's theory of antithetical discourses, which examines how marginalized voices construct counter-narratives in response to dominant ideological frameworks. The Yārsān's sacred soundscape, in this context, functions as an auditory form of resistance against the state's cultural and religious hegemony. By analyzing the relationship between divine sound, musical performance, and identity formation, this research illustrates how the Yārsān soundscape not only preserves cultural heritage but also reclaims auditory space as an act of defiance against hegemonic structures.

08K. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Coloniality and Vocality

Chair: Byron Dueck, The Open University

Pathway of the Chants: Transported Soundscapes across the Austronesian World

Chun-bin Chen, Taipei National University of the Arts

The Austronesian world refers to the geographical and linguistic realm encompassing Taiwan, insular Southeast Asia, and Oceania. Do the speakers of these languages share not only linguistic but also musical markers? I suggest an examination of Austronesian chants as a starting point for considering this question, as chant is closely related to speech. Drawing from my studies of Austronesian chants among Taiwan's Indigenous groups, I will explore possible connections among chants across various Austronesian regions from two perspectives: parallelism and cognates. Principles of parallelism are manifested in Taiwanese Indigenous chants through common features such as couplet formats and dualities between vocables and lexical lyrics, call and response, and syllabic and melismatic singing, features that mirror chants or ritual speeches across the Austronesian world. Cognates referring to Austronesian chants, such as olic (Taiwan), oli (Hawai'i), and oriori (Aotearoa), suggest that chanting traditions in these regions may derive from a common lineage. To examine these connections, I will employ a "transported soundscape" framework, inspired by Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith's "transported landscapes" theory. Matisoo-Smith argues that Austronesian ancestors constructed "transported landscapes" through introducing "culturally and economically important plants and animals" to the islands they settled, thereby facilitating the dispersal of Austronesian-speaking peoples (2015). By examining how chant, as a culturally and economically important component, relates to Austronesian transported soundscapes, I aim to shed light on little-known aspects of Austronesian musics and facilitate a deeper understanding of the relationships between music and language.

Work Songs and Aura: We can take the song out of the field, but can we keep the meaning in the song?

Sally Mehreteab, New York City, New York

This paper examines the song Jump Down, Turn Around, Pick a Bale of Cotton as an American work song using Walter Benjamin's concept of Aura. Investigating field recordings from prison farms, Fannie Lou Hamer's childhood experience of singing the song, Huddie Ledbetter's commercial recording, its subsequent success in popular entertainment and use as a pedagogical tool, we see a clear delineation of the song's trajectory at the point of commercial reproduction. Before market success, the song, tempo and lyrics were fluid, however once recorded became fixed. Indeed, the embrace of a cheery version of this work song fits the historiography of American slavery. Additionally, in researching music of the enslaved, I also suggest that this song likely originated well after 1865 in penal colonies, given the popularity of African American songs composed by laborers enslaved in antebellum America. I argue utilizing the established, upbeat version of Pick a Bale of Cotton not only undermines the contribution of labor and skill of enslaved,

diminishes the importance of the cotton industry to the national economy, but romanticizes the conditions under which cotton was produced. Finally, implications for ethnomusicology are the importance of historical context when using music as a pedagogical tool, even when ethnologically authentic, and that by broadening the scope of research we can present a fuller picture of any creative work.

Decolonizing Ethnomusicological Practice: Power Relations and Representation in Ugandan Court Song Research

Damascus Kafumbe, Middlebury College

Power relations fundamentally shape the study and translation of culture in ethnomusicology. Drawing on Philip Ciantar's observation that collaborative processes remain bound by societal power dynamics (Ciantar 2013, 30), this paper examines how colonial frameworks continue to influence ethnomusicological research. Beverly Diamond's analysis of missionary accounts of Indigenous North American music (Diamond 2013, 158–159) and Kofi Agawu's critique of Western interpretations of African musical practices (Agawu 2016, 36) demonstrate how colonial perspectives distort cultural understanding and documentation. Using my forthcoming book *Interpreting Court Song in Uganda: Musical Meaning, Power Relations, and Political Life* (University of Rochester Press, 2025) as a case study, I analyze how contemporary scholarship can actively work to dismantle colonial practices in ethnomusicology. I argue that conventional academic methodologies often obscure and misrepresent the priorities of studied communities. The privileging of certain authorial voices frequently marginalizes research collaborators' perspectives and renders scholarship inaccessible to broader audiences. This paper not only identifies these colonial legacies in current methodological approaches but also presents concrete strategies I have developed to advance decolonial practices in ethnomusicological research.

08L. October 24, Friday, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

New Approaches in Music Studies

Chair: Kevin Holt, Stonybrook University

On the Global Study of Timbre

Jason Reid Winikoff, University of British Columbia

Since the turn of the 21st century, timbre has emerged as an important research topic in various music disciplines. This has been demonstrated through the creation of the multi-institution ACTOR Project, societal special interest groups, three iterations of a timbre summer school, at least four specialized academic conferences since 2018, two seasons of an Afrological timbre speaker series, and a noticeable uptick in publications with a timbral focus. The characteristic global scope of our discipline challenges conventional claims of timbre scholars while also presenting ethnomusicologists with numerous issues. For example, since semantic descriptors have existed in various communities for generations, is the widespread claim that timbre is difficult to describe (Dolan 2013, Fales 2002,

Fink et al. 2018) accurate? For what reasons do scholars believe we lack a timbral vocabulary and how do global case studies counter this? Does the development of analytical terminology for timbre risk supplanting these emic vocabularies or does their employment help sidestep problematic ethnotheories (Agawu 2023, Diego Díaz 2024)? How do we benefit from embracing a less rigid definition of what constitutes timbre terminology and theory? Might our approach to “throat singing” essentialize Tuvan music as solely timbral akin to our invention of African rhythm (Agawu 1995)? And how are we to grapple with the fact that timbre, unlike meter and tonality, is present in every music? While ultimately embracing an ethnomusicology of timbre, in this paper I consider these theoretical quandaries, ruminate on their implications, and advise those looking to navigate this academic inquiry.

Incorporating Experiential Learning through Public (Ethno)Musicology

Reba Wissner, Columbus State University

It is no surprise that universities are becoming increasingly driven to provide students with transformative and experiential learning opportunities. For music programs, traditional career training has focused on performance and/or teaching opportunities. But what about those students who want to pursue other paths in music, including those with public-facing roles? Providing students with practical training in public and applied ethnomusicology and musicology, grounded in the ideas presented in the 2019 SEM Action Plan for Career Preparation in Public and Applied Ethnomusicology, can aid in helping students to obtain real-world training and experiences while still students. One solution for providing this training is to create courses and programs that teach students the fundamentals of transferring their knowledge about music and culture to other contexts in which students produce material that is immediately used by partner organizations and interact with practitioners. This presentation examines the incorporation of public-facing, experiential learning into music courses and how they can prepare students for careers related to public ethnomusicology and musicology. To demonstrate how this can be done, the presentation will use the only public musicology program to date in the United States as a case study, demonstrating how the program’s students obtain real world experience in various areas through partnerships with musical organizations worldwide. Attendees will take away strategies for connecting with partner organizations as well as ideas and tips for incorporating public-facing work and experiential learning into their music curricula on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Echoes from the Bengal Tiger: Towards a Transcultural (Micro)historical Musicology

Samuel B. Cushman, University of California, Santa Cruz

Beginning with the immigrant-owned restaurant as a site of everyday musical encounter, this paper reimagines the soundscape of interwar New York City through the activities of early-twentieth-century musicians from colonial India. Biographies of American composers, including Johanna Beyer (1888-1944) and Henry Cowell (1897-1965), and so-called Oriental dancers, including Ruth St. Denis (1879-1968) and Ragini Devi (1893-1982), contain scattered evidence of professional relationships with the first generation of

Indian working musicians to settle in the United States. Yet these individuals and their engagements with the American public have been relegated to the footnotes and margins of conventional historiography. Drawing from my dissertation research and building upon critical interventions in postcolonial studies (Guha 1983, 2002; Spivak 1988; Trouillot 1995) and microhistory (Ginzburg 1976; Muir and Ruggiero 1991), this paper argues for a transcultural historical musicology “from below.” By centering the stories of marginalized historical actors, I illuminate a complex interplay of cosmopolitan artistic practices, restrictive U.S. immigration and naturalization policies, and the fetishism of the early-twentieth-century Orientalist economy. Amplifying this history frames early modernism in American music as a transcultural project forged, in part, through global migrations and migrant labor. In reconstructing this microhistory, I discuss methodological advances—particularly in digital archiving and text-scanning technologies—that enable this type of (micro)historical (ethno)musicological research. Where the fragmentary archive falls silent and traces of marginal lives retreat into the shadows, I consider how attending to everyday encounters and experiences allows us to study, and hear, the past with renewed rigor and sensitivity.

Saturday, October 25

09A. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Historical Sites in Ethnomusicology

Chair: Donna Kwon, University of Kentucky

Music, Power, and Agency in the 16th and 17th Century Kingdom of Kongo

Janie Cole, University of Connecticut

Early modern courts employed musical spectacle, instruments and ceremonial practices as displays of agency, identity, power, and conspicuous consumption, and the royal court of the kingdom of Kongo was no exception. Yet detailed research on indigenous musical practices in early modern West-Central Africa is still scarce in ethnomusicological studies. Many challenges disrupt the study of early modern African music due to problems with traditional methodologies limited by Western paradigms, traditional academic disciplinary orientations, the nature of sources available, and disciplinary conventions that largely privilege written evidence and sources emanating from the elites and powerful, while casting suspicion on oral histories and traditions of knowledge that emerge ‘from below’. Drawing on new 16th- and 17th-century documentary narratives containing both textual descriptions and illustrations, together with local oral traditions, this paper reconstructs early modern indigenous Kongo musical practices in the wider context of Kikongo spirituality, social hierarchies, political power, and cultural identity in Afro-European encounters. It provides significant new insights into local representations of Black performance and their articulations of local power dynamics and Kongo worldviews that

transform our understanding of early West-Central African music, spectacle, and cultural representation, musical encounters with foreign powers outside of a colonial context, and their substantial contributions to the multifaceted identities of the early modern musical world. By excavating these African voices in the colonial archive that holds a plurality of voices, we can direct a decolonial lens that opens the possibility for more nuanced counter-hegemonic interpretations of musical production in the early modern African world.

Tuning to Fit In: The Reform of the Miao Lusheng and the Construction of Modern Chinese Soundscape in Post-1949 China”

Zhishan Cai, Department of Sociology, Zhejiang University

This paper examines the reform of the Miao lusheng, a traditional reed instrument that plays a central role in the music and cultural identity of the Miao ethnic group in southwest China. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, archival research, and a historical analysis of state policies, the paper explores the state's ideology and discourse behind the lusheng reforms, the power dynamics between the state and the Miao, and the ways in which Miao musical elites participated in these reforms to negotiate ethnic identity and contribute to the shaping of national musical modernity. It argues that, in the process of constructing a modern national identity, the state imposed European musical principles, such as the twelve-tone equal temperament, onto traditional instruments. This approach, which positions Western music as the standard of modernization, emerged from the colonial modernity of the twentieth century. In response, Miao musicians actively engaged in the reform to redefine Miao music and secure a voice in the development of China's modern soundscape. By situating the lusheng within the broader context of national music reform, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions on state-minority relations and the intersection of music modernization and state building in China.

Bezmara's Fate: Why the Ottoman Early Music Movement Never Took Off

Mehmet Ali Sanlikol, New England Conservatory

The European Early Music movement has flourished since at least the mid-20th century, gaining widespread popularity in the United States and Europe through numerous festivals, educational programs, and active practitioners. In contrast, a similar movement for early Ottoman/Turkish music, despite efforts beginning in Turkey in the late 1980s and early 1990s, has not been able to establish itself. One of the most notable efforts in this vein was made by the Bezmara ensemble, which emerged in the early 1990s attempting to mirror the European model, particularly in the reconstruction of period instruments and performance practices. However, despite these and other similar efforts, a lasting early Ottoman/Turkish music movement never took root. While classical Ottoman/Turkish music has a rich history, with sources dating back to at least the 17th century, the movement's failure to gain traction is puzzling. This paper will analyze the potential sociological, musical and cultural reasons behind the failure to establish an early Ottoman music movement in Turkey while including interviews with key practitioners of both European early music and classical Ottoman/Turkish

music. As a result, this paper aims to uncover why the early Ottoman/Turkish music movement, despite its potential, failed to establish itself in Turkey, while early music has thrived in Europe and the U.S.

Music Crosses Time and Space: From Ancient Chinese Poetry to Modern English Song – A Study Case of SU Shih’s “Prelude to Water Melody”

Gene Hsu, VerseVoice.org, UK

Song lyrics are translated from the source language into the target language to help target audiences understand songs. In song translations between English and Chinese, some are done by translators and songwriters while others are done by internet users. However, few translations were “singable” lyrics and research in “singability” of “translated” English songs from ancient Chinese poetry is uncommon. Using cross-sectional analysis, this paper attempted to explore strategies and methods used to achieve “singability” in song translation into English. The methodology is based on a case study of song translation and singing performance. The study case is an ancient Chinese poem, SU Shih’s “Prelude to Water Melody”, and its singable English version. Interdisciplinary methods were used: songwriting, song analysis, composition and poetry translation as well as “singable” principles. A variety of factors were taken into consideration when rendering the ancient Chinese poem into an English song, to illustrate, song structure, melody, cultural and linguistic gaps, rhythm and poeticity. Furthermore, the author proposed new terms, “understandability” and “listenability”, should be considered when translated lyrics are used for a singing purpose. Research findings showed that English lyrics not only achieved “singability”, but “understandability” and “listenability”. This research explored the strategies used to achieve poeticity and singability in song translation. It is pertinent to produce performable songs in a language other than the original language in singing performance for both target audiences and target culture. Hopefully, the research would contribute to research and practice of rendering songs into English.

09B. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Organology

Chair: TBD

Instrument Making and Sound Design in Son Jarocho: A Multispecies Eco-Organology

Jay Michael Loomis, Brown University

This paper introduces “multispecies eco-organology” as a theoretical framework that integrates approaches from multispecies ethnography (Silvers), ecomusicology (Allen), and critical organology (Dolan) to examine the ecological entanglements of musical instrument making in son jarocho circles. Drawing from ongoing fieldwork in southern Veracruz, I explore how the crafting,

decoration, and sounding of son jarocho instruments reflect human and non-human intersubjectivity and environmental precarity. Focusing on the jarana jarocho, I examine the work of luthiers such as Pablo Campechano, Héctor Campos, and Edson Roca, who employ adaptive strategies to navigate ecological constraints while maintaining sonic and aesthetic traditions. For example, specific material choices, like using young, locally salvaged cedar instead of high-end tonewoods, demonstrate the ecological awareness that guides local making practices. Additionally, the intricate animal motifs and symbolic carvings that adorn these instruments, as seen at fandangos, suggest that non-human entities are not just represented, but actively woven into son jarocho musicking contexts. Building on recent literature in ecomusicology and critical organology, I move beyond sustainability discourses to explore musical instruments as active participants in multispecies assemblages. This perspective challenges anthropocentric models by centering the agencies of materials, ecosystems, and local sound worlds. I argue that musical instruments are more than cultural artifacts; they are dynamic sites of negotiation between humans, forests, animals, and generations-old sonic practices. By foregrounding the entanglements of craft, sound, and ecology, this paper examines son jarocho instruments as vibrant, relational entities within a multispecies sonic sphere.

The ‘Cantonisation’ of Violin and Hawaiian Guitar: Instrumental Adaptation and Performance Practice in Early Twentieth-Century China

Tsz-ching Tung, The University of Hong Kong

Examining a unique localisation process in musical style called “cantonisation,” this paper explores the endangered performance techniques of the violin and Hawaiian Guitar in Cantonese music from the 1920s. Although these Western instruments have played a significant role in Cantonese music for almost a century, the loss of transmission between generations poses a serious threat to their distinctive performing styles. I suggest that, despite the scarcity of written documentation, the combination of historical recordings and oral accounts from remaining elderly practitioners provides critical evidence for reconstructing these traditional performance techniques. This research examines and theorises the complex adaptation processes these instruments underwent through the examination of historical recordings and in-depth interviews with senior performers. Building upon existing scholarship on Western instruments applied in Cantonese opera (Yung 1989; Chan 2012) and widely discussions of musical hybridity in twentieth-century China (Jones 2001; Lau 2008; Yang 2017), this study reveals how local musicians developed distinctive technical innovations to accommodate Cantonese musical aesthetics. By presenting previously unexplored early Cantonese performance styles, providing fresh insights into Chinese musical modernisation that go beyond the typical Westernisation narrative, and offering in-depth case studies of instrumental adaptation in early 20th-century urban China, this study advances ethnomusicology.

The Charango in History. Between Reification and Symbolic Reduction

Julio Mendivil, University of Vienna

The history of the charango has been the subject of intense political and cultural controversies, particularly regarding its possible Bolivian or Peruvian origins (Centellas 2000, Baumann 2004, Cavour 2010). However, little attention has been paid to the assumptions underlying these historical constructions, which have fostered the proliferation of unreliable narratives in popular media, digital platforms, and even ethnomusicological literature. This presentation examines these histories by analyzing the methodologies that sustain them. Building on previous studies (Mendivil 2002, 2018, Turino 1983, 2008, Stobart 2009) and aligning with the narrativist philosophy of history from the late 20th century (Danto 2014 [1985], White 2001 [1978], and Koselleck 2012), I will focus on two dominant strategies in historical discourse about this small Andean chordophone: (1) the reification of the term “charango” and (2) the symbolic reduction of the instrument in historical narratives. Reification refers to a “phantom objectivity” (Lukács 1971) that transforms a term originally used to describe various instruments into a fixed and paradigmatic concept within specialized literature. Symbolic reduction, in turn, involves a metonymic shift (White 2001 [1973]), reducing the vast diversity of charangos in Bolivia and Peru to a single type—one with a concave resonator made from an armadillo shell—despite ethnomusicological evidence to the contrary. I argue that these strategies have led to a persistent contamination of historical data, hindering source verification. Finally, I propose alternative research methodologies to refine our understanding of the charango’s past beyond nationalist or exoticizing discourses.

Decolonizing the Classical Saxophone Field: Operating Within “Otherness” as a Singaporean Saxophonist

Yun Qu Tan, University of Georgia

This paper is an attempt to decolonize the field of classical saxophone which, at present, still functions within Western-centric paradigms that continue to confine saxophonists and saxophone works outside of the western sphere as the delegitimized “other.” As a Singaporean classical saxophonist studying in the US, I discuss how this impacts Singaporean musicians working in the classical saxophone field by detailing an account of Singapore-based New Meta Saxophone Quartet and their commissioning of three Singaporean composers to compose a work each to premiere at the 2025 World Saxophone Congress. Through the lens of Titon’s music-culture model, I will perform a contextual analysis of the compositions with insights from ethnographic interviews with the performers and composers. Using Rice’s framework of asking how we historically construct, socially maintain, and individually create and experience music, this research answers the following questions: What are the tensions that arise in the process of attempting to disrupt the current aesthetic and social boundaries determined by the western hegemony of the classical saxophone scene? According to Wade, “People make music meaningful and useful in their lives,” how do the musicians involved dynamically negotiate what this project means to them in both their immediate and global contexts? How does this empower them to operate outside of the western hegemony? This paper acknowledges the deep-rooted biases within western-trained musicians but also recognizes the agency that

these musicians have to resist these boundaries through creating nuanced visibility of the unique works and performances of saxophonists outside of the western sphere.

09C. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Embodiment

Chair: Randella Jones, The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Secular Trance in Cultural Context: The Dynamics of Body, Emotion, and Entrainment

Tasaw Hsin-chun Lu, Associate Professor, Graduate Institute of Musicology at National Taiwan University

The study explores the interplay between emotions and the experience of music and dance in trance states. By highlighting the unique and significant role that music plays as a catalyst for stimulating empathy, it examines how the body's senses are engaged during these experiences while illustrating the subtle distinctions of emotions. It revisits the theoretical frameworks presented by Judith Becker and Martin Clayton concerning "trance" and "entrainment," respectively, through the lenses of biology, psychology, and neuroscience. Focusing on the folk dance "Dage" from a Thai-Myanmar immigrant community in Taiwan as a case study, the research utilizes concepts from gene-culture evolution and enactivism to investigate the trance experience elicited by the body's movement in "dage". The study examines the materiality of sound and the environment, combined with body movements, to explore how this trance process reflects the coordination between the body, brain, and environmental systems. Additionally, it elucidates the dynamic interactions with social and cultural contexts and delves into the actively immersive emotional expressions involved. Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the embodied nature of emotional experiences in cultural practices and provides a framework for further interdisciplinary exploration of music and emotion.

Maqsum Rebranded: Affective Colonial Remaking of Rhythm in White Feminist Spirituality

Sinem Eylem Arslan, University of Toronto

This paper explores how maqsum—a foundational rhythm in Middle Eastern music—is adapted within predominantly white, feminist spiritual drum circles across North America. In these settings, maqsum is recontextualized as a "universal" rhythm, often detached from its cultural origins and reframed to fit Western pedagogical and spiritual paradigms. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Ontario, Canada, the study asks: (1) How is maqsum rhythmically and pedagogically simplified to align with North American learning styles, thereby severing ties to Middle Eastern traditions? (2) What ethical and epistemological tensions arise when facilitators who promote feminist ideals assert spiritual authority over a rhythm drawn from historically marginalized contexts?

Engaging scholarship in ethnomusicology, affect theory, and decolonial critique (Ahmed 2004; Arewa 2006; Mignolo 2020; Stoeber 2016), the paper theorizes this process as sonic reterritorialization: the absorption and transformation of non-Western forms within colonial frameworks of meaning and value. Facilitators often invoke affective language—describing maqsum as “healing,” “intuitive,” or “viscerally familiar”—to justify its use while obscuring its cultural embeddedness. The conversion of complex rhythmic structures into standardized 4/4 time increases accessibility but also reflects a logic of extraction rooted in colonial pedagogies. Ultimately, the paper argues that such affective framings universalize and abstract maqsum, transforming it into a tool for individualized spiritual expression. In doing so, they reproduce epistemic erasures that echo colonial histories of cultural appropriation, even under the guise of inclusive and feminist spiritual practice.

From Maqām to Makam: Syrian Musicians and the Cultural Dynamics of Forced Migration in Türkiye

Dunya Habash, University of Cambridge

Since the Syrian conflict began in 2011, Türkiye took in the largest number of Syrian refugees in the region, with over 3.6 million currently residing in the country. This large-scale displacement has reshaped many facets of Turkish society, including rising anti-refugee sentiment. Against this backdrop, this research explores how Syrian musicians navigated displacement through cultural production, asserting 'aesthetic agency' (Bohlman 2011) to confront challenges such as racism, economic marginalisation, and cultural assimilation. Drawing on multi-sited ethnographic research conducted in Istanbul and Gaziantep from 2020 to 2022, I explore diverse musical spaces—from street performance and music schools to cultural organisations and the lived experience of individual musicians—highlighting how musical creativity functions as a vital form of resilience amid increasing hostility. This study builds on recent scholarship on the politics of Syrian music and displacement, including Silverstein's (2024) work which examines how embodied musical practices articulate shifting socio-political realities. By reinterpreting Philip Bohlman's conceptualisation of 'aesthetic agency' to center the musician's subjectivity (not just her musical output) in the transformative and challenging process of displacement/emplacement, this study expands theoretical discourse in ethnomusicology by integrating analytical frameworks from forced migration studies, particularly theory related to agency and the politics of belonging. Although conducted before Syria's recent political shifts, this research remains vital as some Syrians begin returning to an uncertain homeland. The evolving dynamics of migration do not erase the cultural transformations of the past decade; rather, they underscore the enduring impact of displacement on artistic practices and diasporic belonging.

Embodied Cartographies: Choreographic Tools For Place-Making

Autumn Eckman, Kennesaw State University

Choreographic methods enhance our understanding of place by engaging bodily memory, environmental rhythms, and community narratives. This movement-based workshop explores the intersection of music, dance, environmental narratives, and site-specific

choreographic inquiry. Drawing from interdisciplinary approaches integrating music, dance, and film, participants will investigate how movement-based practices serve as tools for spatial and cultural exploration.

Building on site-specific performance studies (Kloetzel & Pavlik, 2009) and ethnomusicological perspectives on embodied knowledge (Sklar, 2000), this workshop introduces (a)shore (2024), a cinematic short dance film, as a model for exploring the intersections of movement, environmental narratives, and interdisciplinary collaboration. (a)shore utilizes shorelines as liminal spaces between land and ocean, and between progress and preservation. Through movement, the film serves as an interpretive tool, revealing layered histories and contemporary concerns tied to specific geographies.

Using (a)shore as a framework, the workshop unfolds in four phases:

Conceptual Foundations: Participants engage with embodied ethnography and site-specific methodologies, exploring how movement responds to environment, history, and cultural narratives.

Video Screening & Reflection: Excerpts from (a)shore prompt reflection on movement choices, spatial relationships, and the dancer-environment interaction.

Guided Discussion: Participants reflect on how movement and setting shape meaning and emotions.

Embodied Exploration: Participants engage in guided exercises exploring bodily communication and environmental rhythms, culminating in collaborative movement creation.

This workshop demonstrates how choreography bridges dance, sound, and spatial practice while advancing performative research methodologies. By foregrounding movement as embodied ethnography, it contributes to interdisciplinary discourse on environmental justice and the role of the body in knowledge production.

09D. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Discrimination and Violence in the United States

Chair: Lara Diane Rann

The Rise of Anti-Fascist Black Metal: Combatting White Supremacy in the US Metal Scene

Meghan Creek, Minneapolis, Minnesota

In 1994, Jan Axel “Hellhammer” Blomberg, drummer of the notorious Norwegian black metal band Mayhem, professed in an interview that “Black metal is for white people.” This sentiment speaks to how and why the genre of black metal has become an international hotbed for neo-Nazi activity and propaganda. An associated sub-genre, National Socialist black metal (NSBM), began with a handful of bands in Europe and the United States in the early 1990s, with a steadily growing presence ever since. Despite this growing foothold, NSBM’s impact on the metal scene often goes unacknowledged or unrecognized by many of its participants.

In recent years, however, several anti-fascist black metal (AFBM) bands have formed in response. This paper analyzes these burgeoning oppositional voices in black metal as a form of contestation against the metal scene's "white racial frame" (Feagin 2009). To examine this phenomenon, I draw on public discourse in the metal scene among music critics, bands, and fans, as well as interviews that I have conducted with members of the Anti-Fascist Black Metal Network. I also explore AFBM's sonic characteristics and lyrical themes to shed light on the ways in which these bands manipulate black metal conventions to subvert its white patriarchal order. This paper reveals how members of a music scene with diametrically opposing political ideologies navigate these tensions and, in some cases, work to reconstitute the genre to make it more inclusive for its otherwise marginalized participants.

Revenge Anthems: Violence and Gender in Country Music

Alexis K Baril, University of Alberta

Women in country songs are often represented as one of a myriad of hyper-feminized characters. Since the late-1990s, women have responded to these tropes via an unnamed category of angry country music that stands apart from earlier songs about revenge by telling explicitly violent stories that speak to the real experiences of many women. Artists such as The Chicks and Miranda Lambert tell stories about being victims of abuse and infidelity via songs that sound much harsher than their more "ladylike" counterparts. In this paper, I argue that the stories that are told in what I refer to as revenge anthems draw clear boundaries between what is and is not acceptable within the confines of idealized behavior in North American country music (Pecknold and McCusker 2004; Hubbs 2014; Leap 2020). Building on conceptions of authenticity and sincerity in the genre (Goldin-Perschbacher 2022; Peterson 1997) I perform brief narrative analyses of three revenge anthems: "Goodbye Earl" (The Chicks, 1999), "Gunpowder and Lead" (Miranda Lambert, 2007), and "Martha Divine" (Ashley McBryde, 2020). I argue that when the man in these stories deviates from the ideal masculine archetype, his bad behavior provides the woman license to behave outside the norm, an opportunity they then take full advantage of. Working within this framework, I demonstrate a possible line of thinking that moves away from the woman-as-victim trope that arises in other violent song types, and towards a way of thinking that highlights women's agency as they loudly and violently reclaim power in song.

Black Opry's Radiophonic Alternatives

Fiona Boyd, University of Chicago

This paper explores how musicians and media workers contend with contemporary radio and make it their own. I focus on how Black artists respond to the virulent discrimination they face in country radio (Watson 2021, 2023) and ask how musicians whose sounds, life experiences, and identities sing their countryness, but who are nevertheless deemed unworthy of the genre's label, contend with radio's exclusion. I explore this question primarily through the genre-redefining efforts of Nashville-based country music collective Black Opry. Drawing from four months of ethnographic fieldwork in Nashville, at Black Opry Revue shows in the southern and

northeastern U.S., as well as ongoing digital and in-person ethnographic research, I explore what radio means to Black country artists and how its materialities, practices, and aesthetics are sounded in their songwriting and performances, orientation towards fans and industry, and community building. I argue that Black Opry responds to radio discrimination by forming collective physical and digital spaces independent of mainstream industry, by exploring radiophonic alternatives, and by sounding the medium in their music. This work is inspired by contemporary literature in radio studies that seeks to expand and deepen definitions and conceptions of the medium (Fisher and Bessire 2012; Lacey 2008; Hilmes 2022; Bottomley 2020). Through an exploration of radiophonics in Black Opry's sounds, performances, and social framework, this chapter brings attention to how musicians contend with radio in their everyday lives, finding meaning in a medium often deployed to further segregate American life.

School Shootings, Cultural Action, and the Arrival of an Unnerving Musical Tradition

Daniel Vidales, University of California, Riverside

Fifty mariachi bands gather in a rural Texas town to play corridos. Twenty Florida students write songs and release an album. Teenagers across the country reimagine Katy Perry's "Teenage Dream." Separated by geography and genre, tying these performers together are their musical responses to school shootings. In recent years, musicians impacted by school rampage shootings have invoked singing, performing, and recording to cope with the aftermath of firearm catastrophes, revealing how expressive cultures unified by action can form a social network of mutual aid and advocate for change. In this space, people sound a resistance against violence and counter institutional and political inaction with song. While these musicians have clear reasons to invoke art for collective coping, healing, and recovery, understanding how to document and theorize these events as a community of practice is important. Here I attempt to frame the growing collection of songs and performances addressing school rampage shootings as a distinct and emerging musical tradition. Rooted in applied epistemologies and disaster studies that foreground expressive cultures as tools for coping, this paper argues for the field to archive and critically explore these sonic enactments. Towards realizing that concept I reflect on the robust musical responses staged by the communities of Uvalde, Texas and Parkland, Florida, where defiant acts of hope answered firearm catastrophe. Through conceptualizing a cultural practice tied to school shootings, this paper strives to show the transformative capabilities of music as cultural action and its potential to center an unnerving yet crucial discourse.

09E. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Music and Publics in Emerging Democracies in Africa

Chair: Charles Lwanga, University of Michigan

Among African democracies where the "postcolonial incredible" has emerged as a regime of normalized crisis and morbidities that are "too improbable, astonishing, and extraordinary to be believed" (Olaniyan 2004), music serves as a crucial site for assembling publics

who exchange information, debate ideas, and advocate for change in a variety of spaces –virtual and physical. This panel examines the nature of musical publics throughout postcolonial Africa, where the search for the meaning of democracy is ongoing in the face of challenges, including histories of trauma, dominant and subordinate linguistic regimes, neo-colonial foreign interventions, and entrenched autocratic governance. The first paper discusses how Nigerian youth are assembled through musical practices to reflexively negotiate daily permissibilities –as an avenue of evoking transformative social change. The second demonstrates how the “people power” movement and counterpublic of Ugandan youth employs Bobi Wine’s music as a site for reflecting upon and participating in civil society. The third paper reflects on the overlapping or nested character of musical imaginaries, exploring how musicians in central Cameroon attempt to create space for underrepresented languages and sounds in dominant or mainstream musical publics. The fourth paper examines how an emerging didacticism in Senegalese hip-hop responds to decades of “policy capture,” a phenomenon where critical areas of national-level decision-making are taken out of the public's hands and given to international institutions and local elites. Collectively, we engage with questions of how music is used as a site for negotiating identities, mounting political opposition, and transforming social change in contemporary Africa.

Japa Syndrome: The 'Postcolonial Normal', Popular Music, and the Precarities of Youth Social Movements in Fourth Republic Nigeria (1999-)

Joshua Kerobo, University of Michigan

Following the #EndSARS Movement (2020), Nigerians continue to advocate against political and economic marginalization within youth social movements (Honwana 2019). In the months preceding Nigeria's 2023 elections, youth formed the Obidient Movement supporting the non-establishment Labour Party (LP) and the presidential campaign of Mr. Peter Obi, the former governor of Anambra State. While the party lost elections mired by voter suppression (Nathaniel 2023), they won one-third of states including Lagos and Abuja (FCT) through youth support. Youth organized once again in the #EndBadGovernance protests against economic hardship and corruption in the first weeks of August 2024, where 24 protestors were killed and 1200 jailed throughout the country (Amnesty International 2024). As traumatic experiences have become commonplace occurrences, popular music has played an integral role in Nigeria's youth-led social transformation of the relationship between individuals, publics, and the postcolonial state. In this paper, I discuss the sociopolitical circumstances that continue to inspire Nigerian youth social movements considering the cultural imperatives of the 'postcolonial normal', which refers to the material normalization of traumatic experience as the postcolonial state physically and socially decays. By examining interview data from time spent with students at three universities in Lagos State, Nigeria (January-April 2024), I contend that popular music discourse illuminates various youth responses to the postcolonial normal. Addressing the traumatic normalities of decay in the postcolony, Nigerian youth reflexively use popular music to negotiate permissibilities daily, discursively forming diverse and respondent publics capitalizing on shared precarities to provoke transformative change.

Music and Bobi Wine’s ‘People Power’ Counterpublic in Uganda

Charles Lwanga, University of Michigan, University of Michigan

“People Power”, Uganda’s strongest opposition movement has since 2017 employed music to assemble counterpublicity—a mode of subordinate participation shaped by the interaction of material and expressive components. As a counterpublic, “people power” is characterized by “relations of exteriority,” at once allowing segments of the movement to be unplugged and plugged into a different public or whole. Also, its counterpublicity is at once shaped by “territorialization” and “deterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), stances which illuminate the movement’s fluidity and complexity. Uganda’s “people power” movement is traced back to Ugandan Afropop musician and politician Robert Kyagulanyi (a.k.a Bobi Wine) whose music has been critical of President Yoweri Museveni’s ruling party, beginning before Wine’s explicit involvement in politics as a Member of Parliament in 2017, continuing to his bid for the highest political office during the 2021 presidential campaigns, and currently as president of the National Unity Platform (NUP), Uganda’s strongest opposition party. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in Uganda since 2010, and the work of DeLanda (2006) I analyze “Tuliyambala Engule” (We Shall Wear the Crown)—an Afropop song by Bobi Wine—to demonstrate how music enhances publicness, thereby rendering the “people power” movement subordinate to Museveni’s ruling party. I propose a theory of musical assemblage in which the interaction of heterogeneous parts shaped by material and expressive components engenders counterpublicity. I argue that “people power” is at once a music-political movement and counterpublic, the intertwining of which gives rise to authority and sonic antagonism as emergent properties in Wine’s shadow government.

Musical Publics and Counterpublics in Central Cameroon

Dueck Byron, The Open University

Two musical practices with roots in local traditions are especially prominent in the Center Region of Cameroon: a genre of popular music called bikutsi, and a form of Catholic liturgical music accompanied by a xylophone ensemble known as the m̀ndz̀aŋ. These practices are closely associated with the Ewondo language and culture, and beyond this with a broader group of related Beti, Bulu, and Fang peoples who together exert considerable influence in Cameroonian politics and society. Given this context, bikutsi and m̀ndz̀aŋ-based liturgical music might be characterized as dominant or hegemonic forms of musical publicness in Cameroon. But they are simultaneously sites for the articulation of counterpublicity—modes of publicness that understand themselves as in some way subordinate, oppositional, or stigmatized (Warner 2002). Drawing on fieldwork conducted in central Cameroon since 2009 and engaging with work by researchers including Anja Brunner (2021), Essele Essele Kisito (2017), and Basile Ndjio (2005) this paper explores the nested or overlapping nature of musical publics through a number of short case studies. The first considers the challenges of communicating elements of an underrepresented musical style in a studio environment where the aesthetics of bikutsi dominate. A second looks at responses to the dominance of the Ewondo language in Catholic liturgical music. A third examines how a form of

musical publicness that is dominant at one level may be subordinate at another, with respect to the place of some of the aforementioned styles in international representations of African music.

Sweating the Details: Policy Capture and Protest Music in the 2024 Senegalese Presidential Election

Brendan Kibbee, University of Maryland

The 2024 election of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye represented a clear victory for Senegalese civil society, with musical artists like Gunman Xuman, Thiat, and Dip Doundou Guiss leading the charge against incumbent President Macky Sall. On one hand, these artists can be seen through a fifty-year legacy of popular African musicians and social movements that have stood against autocratic misgovernance. But such resistance narratives also carry the danger of reinforcing a “pathological view of the African state as entirely failed, violent, and predatory, to which citizens can only rise up” (Croese 2019). Furthermore, international prescriptions for African misgovernance have consistently left the door open for elite capture of natural resources and policy spaces, from Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) beginning in the 1980s to more recent moves toward “decentralization” (Reidl 2024). Analyzing two new tracks from rapper Gunman Xuman and personal conversations with the artist, this paper demonstrates how recent protest music in Senegal mixes global signs of musical resistance with didactic rapping that “sweats the details” of policy stakes, from constitutional law to monetary independence. In doing so, I argue that much recent government opposition in Senegal also seeks to reverse the tide of “policy capture” (Mkandawire 1999) in which both civil society and elected officials are shut out from critical national decisions.

09F. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Jazz Stories

Co-Chairs: Maurice Restrepo, City University of New York, Graduate Center; Tracy McMullen, Bowdoin College

The research presented in this panel explores some of the complex narratives and power dynamics that underlie the jazz tradition, examining how jazz musicians, past and present, negotiate issues of identity, community, and cultural heritage. From the role of women in early jazz to the experiences of junior musicians in contemporary jam sessions, these works provide glimpses into the intricate web of social relationships and cultural norms that shape the jazz world. Exploring the intersections of power, music, and storytelling, these four papers offer nuanced insights into how jazz reflects and refracts its broader social and cultural contexts. Focusing on distinct aspects of the jazz tradition, “Jazz Stories” presents a multifaceted exploration of complex interplay between musical performance, social identities, and cultural narratives.

Jazz as Storytelling: Musical and Linguistic Metaphoricity in Jazz

Juwon Adenuga, University of Pittsburgh

Jazz is a narrative art form that expresses profound emotions, preserves historical stories, and transmits and adapts cultural values across generations. By examining both instrumental and vocal jazz, this essay argues that jazz's storytelling power lies in its dual capacity for musical and linguistic metaphoricity, which facilitates its globalization as a medium for diverse cultural narratives. Fumi Okiji describes jazz performance as a palimpsestic narrative, where each rendition reinterprets personal and historical stories, showcasing jazz's ability to reflect individual identity within a shared cultural memory. Sven Bjerstedt notes jazz's dual metaphoricity—the language about music is metaphorical (linguistic metaphoricity), and the music is perceived as metaphorical (musical metaphoricity). This duality allows jazz to convey complex stories beyond verbal communication, promoting its global reach as a storytelling medium. This flexibility enables various cultures to weave their narratives into the adaptable framework of jazz, transforming it into a vehicle for local tales. However, this dual metaphoricity is more subjective in instrumental jazz than in vocal works, as vocal performances anchor the narrative through lyrics, creating a more directed storytelling experience. This distinction influences audience engagement and cultural adaptation, as seen in Oscar Brown's "Signifyin' Monkey," where the lyrical content guides the interpretation, contrasting with the abstract storytelling in instrumental jazz. This essay explores the storytelling metaphor in instrumental jazz, arguing that its capacity for subjective interpretations fosters a narrative openness that drives jazz's global adaptability in contrast with the narrative specificity of vocal jazz.

Looking Back, Moving Forward: Archie Alleyne and Black Placemaking in Toronto

Keisha Bell-Kovacs, York University

During the antebellum period, Black freedom seekers from the United States settled in St. John's Ward, later known as The Ward, in Toronto. After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, many refugees returned south, and the remaining Black community gradually saw their freedoms eroded. The Ontario Common Schools Act of 1851 established separate schools for Black students, while restrictive covenants allowed landowners to prevent individuals deemed 'undesirable'—Blacks, Jews, and Asians—from purchasing property. The 1939 Supreme Court case *Christie v. York* entrenched merchants' right to discriminate based on race. Black Canadian jazz musician Archie Alleyne (1933-2015) enjoyed a career that spanned over 60 years. He performed with legends like Billie Holiday and Lester Young and became the first Black musician to work at the CBC. The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded in 1920, played a significant role in Alleyne's early life. In 1928, the UNIA purchased a building at 355 College Street which became a hub for dances and jam sessions, fostering both community life and generating revenue. Later, Alleyne formed Band 355, featuring alumni of the UNIA, recalling its vibrant history. Their performances from the late 1990s to the early 2000s compelled audiences to bring the UNIA into contemporary discourse. The Archie Alleyne archives contain photographs of Black musicians at

The Hall between the 1940s and 1960s. This paper will utilize these sources to theorize placemaking as resistance to the erasure of Black presence in Canada.

Jam Sessions, Vibing, and Hegemonic Masculinity in the New York City Jazz Scene

Maurice Restrepo, City University of New York, Graduate Center,

Jam sessions function as important sites of social reproduction in New York City jazz culture. Through intergenerationally transmitted and relationally (re)constructed forms of socialization, jam sessions help set, instill, and perpetuate expectations around common knowledges and practices—both musical and socio-cultural—in jazz. Vibing—a phenomenon that occurs both on and off the bandstand—may manifest as a behavior in which musicians are perceived to test, undercut, or safeguard one another’s musical knowledge, performance abilities, and social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986). Vibing upholds jazz's high standards while simultaneously perpetuating exclusivity, potentially limiting opportunities for junior musicians and reinscribing unequal power relations. Drawing on jazz musicians’ lived experiences of vibing through ethnographic interviews, oral histories, social media discourse, and (auto)biographies, this paper examines the multi-dimensional ways in which vibing is performed and interpreted, and the meanings it holds for jazz musicians. With an eye on racial and gender dynamics, I suggest vibing serves to both preserve the cultural codes of the jazz tradition while also being a significant conduit for hegemonic masculinity in jazz (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). By analyzing musicians’ accounts of these behaviors in jam sessions, this paper sheds light on the ways in which hegemonic masculinities are intertwined with other forms of social reproduction in jazz (Hall and Burke 2023). These gendered dynamics are encoded, reinforced, and contested within complex and often contradictory forms of musical and social interaction that produce both negative and positive effects in jazz culture and among jazz musicians.

The Women Who Started Jazz: Gonzelle White, Count Basie, and the Variety Stage

Tracy McMullen, Bowdoin College

Jayna Brown writes that “the messy worlds of the cabaret, the nightclub, the variety stage, and the dance competition...are places where dance, song, and improvisational comedy all together made ‘jass’” (Brown 2008). Nonetheless, mainstream histories of jazz in the first decades of the 20th century continue to focus on male instrumentalists like Sidney Bechet, Louis Armstrong, and Fletcher Henderson winnowed from the dancers, comedians, vocalists, and women bandleaders with whom they performed at the time as equal parts of a whole. In attempting to offer a more robust history, I trace the early career of Count Basie, examining his work with vocalist, dancer, alto saxophonist, actor, and bandleader, Gonzelle White. Basie joined White’s Big Jamboree Company in Harlem in 1926 and toured on the TOBA circuit, eventually landing the entire band in Kansas City. Gonzelle White had been working as a professional musician and dancer since at least the age of fifteen, entering the profession as Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Valaida Snow (and Count Basie) did—through variety show work. A nationally recognized performer, White mentored Basie and he credits her

throughout his autobiography. Even so, her contribution is not a “story with legs” and her role, along with other roles and activities later deemed “not jazz,” are lost as elements that are important to what jazz is. I argue these elements are important to what jazz was and, in some minds, is: a practice of inclusivity that is less about genre and hierarchy and more about spirit and care.

09G. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Listening for Place

Chair: Stephanie Choi, University of Colorado, Boulder

Straining to Hear Palestine: Al-Khalidi’s Radical Act of Listening During British Mandate

Kira Gaillard, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

In his prison diary on January 17, 1938, Dr. Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi, mayor of Jerusalem, lamented, “We have been straining our ears, I and Fuad, tonight to hear Palestine.” In his diary entries, al-Khalidi often complained about his inability to hear his beloved homeland, which at the time was experiencing a period of popular uprising marked by escalating violence, mass imprisonment, and martial law. During their fourteen-month exile in the British-colonized Seychelles, al-Khalidi and his fellow political prisoners would often tune into Arabic music programs from the BBC London, propagandized news bulletins from the Italian Radio Bari, and occasionally, snippets of Palestine Broadcasting Service PBS programs, which betrayed their distance with the agonizing noise of “atmospherics.” He also described listening for more intangible connections—the beat of the daff (tambourine), the rage of a snowstorm, and on one day, the “resounding voice” of Arab justice. This paper considers what it meant for al-Khalidi, a diligent public servant and ardent supporter of Palestinian self-determination, to strain to listen in exile. Martin Stokes notes the Arabic word for “vote” is sawt [voice]. Drawing on musicological scholarship about aurality as a political act (Ochoa Gautier 2014) and musical citizenship (Stokes 2023), I explore what the radical act of listening has to teach us about political community for a people denied the criteria for nationhood. I ask, how might we reframe the aurality of political belonging when the voice is suppressed, and the act of resistance is instead choosing what to listen to?

Listening to White Supremacy: Race, Space, and the Canadian Sonic Imaginary

Gale Franklin, Carleton University

While often framed as an invisible and violent structure, white supremacy is also an audible force, shaping how we listen, whose voices are heard and listened to, and what sounds are deemed legitimate. Building on ethnomusicological (Harris 2022; Mahon 2019; Martin 2021; Roberts 2016) and sound studies scholarship (Eidsheim 2019; Stoeberl 2016), my research explores the sounds of white supremacy through what I call “the Canadian sonic imaginary,” a normative framework of listening and sounding that is mutually

constituted by white supremacy and settler colonialism (Kheshti 2011). I argue that the Canadian sonic imaginary orients listening practices and mediates perceptions of difference within representations of Canadian national identity and idealized forms of citizenship (Giroux 2021; Ochoa Gautier 2006; Robinson 2020). Drawing on recent ethnographic fieldwork in Ottawa, Canada's capital, I employ an anti-racist feminist listening methodology to consider how the Canadian sonic imaginary is constructed, reproduced, and resisted on Parliament Hill, the home of Canada's federal government. By analyzing grassroots protests and state-curated events, I trace the resonances of white supremacy, from the implicit background hum or "white noise" of white supremacy to the explicit thunderous roars of whiteness that demand attention. I ask: How can we listen to white supremacy? How might the register of sound provide alternative pathways to resist and dismantle white supremacy? Through this paper, I explore how an anti-racist feminist listening methodology might contribute to practices of anti-racist resistance within and beyond the academy.

Localism and Nationalism: The Politics of Cantonese Music in Hong Kong

Kai Sze Jessica Fung, Saint Francis University

In Hong Kong, localism and nationalism are on the opposite ends of a widening spectrum. Localism has been reinforced by the contrasting values between Hong Kong and China. Nationalism, meanwhile, is the idea of incorporating Hong Kong into one Chinese nation. This paper provides an overview on current Cantonese music communities in Hong Kong as compared to that of mainland China to understand how Cantonese music can be both local and national and what dynamics are at stake.

There are mainly two approaches to Cantonese music. The first approach, emphasizing the accuracy on stage performance, is national. Musicians are required to be compatible in sight-reading staff and cipher notation because they usually perform arrangements. This approach can be traced back to the Cultural Revolution, when traditional music was banned, and pieces had to be rearranged and renamed before they could be played. The second approach, to play in an improvised way, is more local. Members in the ensemble follow a music leader to perform the same melody and embellish it with ornaments. This approach has been adopted in the Cantonese music communities in Hong Kong since the early 20th century. Whereas in mainland China, it has been gradually fading since 1949, and it is currently seen only to a limited extent.

In this paper, I discuss how individuals and groups represent Cantonese music through different approaches. I argue that the notion of Cantonese music being both local and national, is a sonic counterpart to existing political situation in Hong Kong.

Silenced voices, resilient sounds: Devadāsī songs in the periyā mēḷam temple repertoire

William Tallotte, Institut de Recherche en Musicologie (IReMus), CNRS - Sorbonne Université

The periyā mēḷam, an orchestra of shawms, drums and cymbals, is today the last ensemble to perform a repertoire of Karnatak (classical South Indian) songs and instrumental pieces during religious services in high-caste Hindu temples. In Tamil Śaiva temple complexes, such as those of Chidambaram, Madurai or Tiruvarur, this repertoire is strictly codified and passed down through

generations. Each piece, whether adapted from a song or not, corresponds to specific ritual actions or sequences, thus providing a vibrant and contrasting soundtrack to both daily rituals and seasonal festivals. While these codifications seem stable over time, a systematic and well-contextualized study reveals their ongoing adaptation – whether by force or necessity – to aesthetic, socio-economic and political changes. This is particularly evident in a set of ritual songs absorbed into the periya mēlam repertoire but formerly performed by the devadāsīs – the hereditary courtesans, dancers and musicians who, in the wake of vociferous social reforms, were officially banned from Hindu temples in the first half of the 20th century. Through a sonic, musical, and performative analysis of these songs in their contemporary instrumental forms, this paper explores how the present can illuminate the past and enrich our still fragmented, historically driven understanding of the devadāsīs' artistic and ritual function within the Hindu temple. It also aims to reassess their auspicious nature and social status, highlighting the injustice of their erasure by colonial authorities and sections of the South Indian elite.

09H. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Digital Sound and Data

Chair: Whitney Slaten, Bard College

Working with the Algorithm: Surveillance Capitalism, Digital Labor, and Crises of Value in Online Virtuosity

David VanderHamm, Johnson County Community College

This video will blow you away. Anyone who spends time online has encountered some version of this message, whether in a friend's post, a corporation's advertisement, or a video's own description. When the promise is fulfilled, we experience virtuosity: skill made apparent and socially meaningful. This paper combines first-person phenomenology with critical voices from music and media studies to explore how streaming platforms in general (and YouTube in particular) structure mediated encounters with virtuosic bodies. Navigating between techno-determinism on one side and an over-emphasis on individual agency on the other, I examine how digital architecture and the algorithms operating within it exercise a social power that we regularly experience, even if their technical workings remain opaque. Drawing on phenomenology's description of the ways that values and judgments are already temporally "on all sides" of experience, I argue that algorithmic recommendations increasingly replicate these subjective contributions to experience in the media objects themselves, leading to overlapping intensifications and crises of value. Their power is "soft" but extraordinarily strong; in surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2019), algorithms effectively produce and monitor conduits for viewer's attention, which functions simultaneously as leisure and digital labor. The very intimacy of the encounter—platforms provide individualized recommendations for content that we stream in our homes on devices that serve as constant companions—frequently turns listeners' concerns back on themselves. Our everyday being is at once the reality we escape through streaming entertainment, the engine of the economic environment, and the experience's interpretive focus.

Precarity of Virtualization: Layered Displacement in the Kurdish Exile Museum's Audio Collections

Ashley Nicole Thornton, The University of Texas at Austin

On May 16th, 2024, the Kurdish Exile Museum in Stockholm, Sweden received a three-month lease termination notice following the sale of their unit's building at Dalagatan 48. The grassroots museum spent its remaining days experimenting with digitizing the spatial configuration of its collection at Dalagatan 48 with hopes of rebuilding the museum using virtual reality and artificial intelligence technology to help mitigate difficulties in finding an affordable location. However, the process of digitization and maintaining open access to the museum online brings a new set of economic challenges in maintaining data storage on servers. Drawing on in-person and digital ethnographic research conducted in Stockholm, I analyze how the abrupt physical displacement of the museum's audio collections mirrors the experience of the museum founder's displacement that initially brought the museum and the audio materials into virtualized being outside of the Kurdish borderlands. The audio collection itself contains a substantial amount of music written by exiled Kurdish musicians who routinely highlight their own experiences of displacement. Additionally, many of these audio materials have physically moved in and out of the Kurdish borderlands, maintaining sonic cultural connections between displaced and home communities (Reigle 2013 and Aksoy 2006). I argue that rather than ensuring Kurdish cultural survival against political and economic odds, the virtualization (Deleuze 1966) of the Kurdish Exile Museum's displaced audio collections through digitization reflects and adds to multiple layers of displacement within Kurdish cultural memory.

Pluralising Bias in Music AI: Specialized Data Architectures for a World of Musical Idioms

Jonathan Benjamin Myers, University of California, Santa Cruz

This paper illuminates how frameworks and repertoires rooted in Western musical practice—e.g. staff notation, keyboard instrumentation, the MIDI format, and the canonical corpus of musical works (as embodied in scores and recordings)—constitute a self-reinforcing dominant system that limits the analytical and creative scope of both human and AI musical praxis. The underlying logical structure shared by these frameworks—their implicit data architecture—is taken as the lingua franca when encoding musical data for training AI models and for computational music research more broadly (Savage, 2022). Inevitably, systems trained on a dataset incorporate remnants of the cognitive frameworks used to structure that data, effectively forming the “environment, the world that it navigates” (Miller, 2022). As scholars of diverse musical cultures know, many traditions are based in non-notated yet idiomatically precise theoretical paradigms that are incompatible with this Western-centric model—a notion echoing longstanding debates over the limitations of staff notation in transcribing diverse musical practices (Seeger, 1957; Hood, 1971; Ellingson, 1992). This misalignment leaves these traditions vulnerable to underrepresentation—or exclusion—in the AI systems that increasingly shape how music is created, disseminated, and consumed in the 21st century (Drott, 2018; Shin, 2024). In highlighting this representational gap, this paper calls for a reimagining of music data architectures tuned to the unique structures of diverse traditions. As a case study,

it discusses how the dominant model is ill-suited to Hindustani music and presents the Interactive Digital Transcription and Analysis Platform (IDTAP)—software developed to fit the logics of Hindustani music—as one such intervention.

The Disruption of Encoded Gender in Pop Music—A Comparative Study of Technology, Sound Design, and Female Agency in U.S. Pop and Mandopop/C-pop

Adai Song, University of Virginia

Pop music is a site where gendered expectations are often reinforced yet can also be subverted. My research draws parallels between the U.S. and Mandopop/C-pop industries, examining how music technology, particularly electronic sound design, has enabled female producers in both industries to reclaim creative agency, challenge entrenched norms, and blur traditional gendered sonic boundaries. Tools like DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations) and synthesizers empower women to disrupt stereotypes tied to historically gendered associations of sound, reshaping the production process.

Using ethnographic insights, the study examines how women leverage electronic production to explore bold, synthetic textures that defy sonic conventions. By comparing Mandopop producers like Lexie Liu to U.S. pioneers such as SOPHIE, the research highlights how both challenge gendered sonic traditions in their cultural contexts. SOPHIE’s hyperreal soundscapes and manipulation of synthetic textures created a gender-fluid sonic identity, questioning conventional binaries. Similarly, Lexie Liu’s use of glitchy beats, layered polyrhythms, and pitch-shifted vocals straddles and subverts “masculine” and “feminine” sound.

While both industries demonstrate disruptive potential, China's platformized ecosystem, dominated by interactive platforms like QQ Music and NetEase Cloud, adds excessive algorithmic pressures and audience scrutiny, complicating female producers' navigation of creativity and agency. This comparison reveals how globalized music technologies empower women to redefine identities, experiment with electronic arrangements, and challenge long-standing gender norms while presenting unprecedented obstacles in their navigation of the audience-led industry environment driven by algorithm and AI in the near future.

09I. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Transnational Perspectives in Música Urbana: Music Production, Style Hybridity, and Cultural Resonance in Contemporary Reggaetón and Reparto

Chair: Kaleb Goldschmitt, Wellesley College

Practitioners and fans have highly criticized the commercial category of urban music in the US. However, diverse localized communities in Latin America have accepted and embraced the Spanish concept of música urbana. What is understood under this frame changes depending on places and generations, yet some genres have been coined inside this broad category, such as reggaetón, trap, and reparto. In today’s transnational contexts, música urbana emerges in a collision of cross-cultural aesthetics, technology, and

social and sonic flows due to migration and online movements between different continents. By centering producers, DJs, and performers across diverse geographic realities, this panel engages with *música urbana*'s production, circulation, and reception as dynamic processes shaped by cultural, technological, and economic forces. The first panelist examines reggaetón producers in Puerto Rico, highlighting timbre as central to the genre's creative and social dynamics. Staying in the Caribbean, the second presenter investigates *música reparto*, a hybrid of Cuban timba and reggaetón, which formed as a response to cultural tensions in Havana's working-class neighborhoods. Moving south, the third proposal focuses on Chilean producers' use of sampling and "reverse beat-making" to link local practices to Puerto Rican roots (*la mata*). Far from the Americas, the fourth panelist explores reggaetón's reception in Japan, where intermediaries and event spaces foster cross-cultural musical exchanges. These studies illuminate *música urbana* as a global phenomenon, reshaping notions of sonic flows, production, and cultural connectivity.

“Estos son los códigos”: Musical Creation and Sonic Value in Producing Reggaeton

Jorge Luis Mercado-Méndez, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In the last decade, reggaeton has emerged as a focal point for scholarly inquiry, generating discussions on its historical foundations, development, and intersections with critical race studies, gender, and resistance. (Pacheco-Muñoz 2023; Powell 2022; Bofill-Calero 2022; Rivera-Rideau 2015) These studies often focus on music videos, lyrical analysis, or the cultural impact of prominent artists. However, the producers -key architects of reggaeton's sonic identity- remain largely absent from this discourse. This paper investigates the creative processes of reggaeton by producers from Puerto Rico to understand how their work shapes both the genre's musical essence and its social meanings. Drawing on an analysis of production videos from the YouTube channel Insulation Producers and interviews with producers, this research examines the significance of sound and timbre in reggaeton music. I argue that sound design, particularly the manipulation of timbre, is not only a technical element but also a critical descriptor of reggaeton's creative value. Nevertheless, producers' interactions with artists during the production process reveal various social dynamics that are embedded within the music's creation. By centering the lived experiences of producers, this research not only highlights the technical and cultural dimensions of sound design but also positions reggaeton production as a vital lens for understanding broader social and cultural narratives in contemporary music. Finally, this paper contributes to the broader conversation in timbre and sound studies that take into consideration how timbre and sonic values are always cultural (Dolan and Rehding, 2021) while placing them in Puerto Rico's economic and political context.

“Va a tener que cantar reparto”: Money, Community, the Clave, and the Tresillo

Mike Levine, Christopher Newport University

In this paper, I discuss the emergence of *reparto*—a product of timba (a Cuban variant of salsa) and reggaetón—as revealing a complex story of cultural change in Havana during the 2010s. During this period, both timba and reggaetón represented alternate

modes of representation for young residents of repartimiento districts (under-resourced areas located in the outskirts of Havana and primarily occupied by working-class, Afro-Cuban residents). Timba originated in repartimiento districts and closely represents its local culture and music traditions. Reggaetón, meanwhile, constitutes a transnationally popular musical style recognized by emerging artists as a potential avenue for financial gain, or at least of mitigating difficult economic conditions. To challenge their circumstances, artists in repartimiento communities creatively re-imagined the boundaries of both musical styles, the consequences of which were so controversial that artists relied on an underground trade of USB sticks to share their new musical practice. Instead of situating reparto's growth as a musical hybrid, I instead position it as an aural response to tensions between local and global practices. What frictions arise when musical styles of local and global origin come together, and why, in the case of reparto music, did global practices ultimately subordinate to a local music tradition? I address these questions using theories of borders (Madrid), hybridity (Canclini), and friction (Tsing). Through ethnography, digital archaeology, and close readings of soundscapes in repartimiento neighborhoods (2000s–2010s) I ultimately position the musical style's development as a sonic articulation of cultural frictions in the face of Cuba's stunted engagement with global capitalism.

Everything Comes From La Mata: Musical Genealogies and Creation in Chilean Reggaetón

Ana María Díaz-Pinto, University of California, Davis

Reggaetón, as a sample-based art form, has been shaped by the creative process of borrowing materials from some of the genres that inspired it—dancehall and hip-hop (Marshall 2008). In post-2020 Santiago de Chile, practitioners understand sampling, manipulating, and replicating sound as the center of their creation, yet how do musicians conceive their localized practice of sampling beyond the borrowing act? Applying analytical frameworks of digital music production (Brøvig-Hanssen and Danielsen 2016; Zagorski-Thomas 2014), this paper analyzes the composition craft of Chilean reggaetón producers in tandem with their relationship and involvement with technology. Based on ethnographic work with local producers and DJs since 2019, I endeavor to explain how local musicians developed distinctive DIY art forms based on layers of listening to fulfill their creative needs while navigating the scarcity of resources and daily violence. I argue that by framing a compositional and pedagogical technique—what I call “reverse beat-making”—producers and DJs collectively reflect on their practice as a transnational phenomenon, centering music creation as the core of regional belonging ideals. By doing so, producers and DJs conceive and place themselves in a genealogy of reggaetón musical knowledge directly tied to an idealized root—la mata—in Puerto Rico. As a result, instead of explicitly articulating verbal local stories, they use creation and sonic performance to offer historical local narratives and connections. I place this paper in conversation with sensory ethnographic approaches (Pink 2023) and sound scholarship (Feld 2021; Fiol-Matta 2017) to provide a transnational understanding of music circulation in the Americas.

Bad Bunny, Yonaguni, and Japón: Japanese Perceptions of Latin American Popular Music

Kelsey Milian-Lopez, City University of New York

The rise of Latin American and Afro-Caribbean music in Japan during the 1970s-80s was led by groups such as the Tokyo Cuban Boys and Orquesta de la Luz, which created spaces where Japanese musicians and listeners may experience and interpret Latin American music. As De la Peza's (2006) and Hosokawa's (1999) research suggests, central themes centered on cultural authenticity and replication intersected broader discussions of Latin American aesthetics, language, and affect in the Japanese context. This paper investigates how Latin American reggaeton has been integrated into contemporary Japanese cultural spaces. Through fieldwork in Osaka and Tokyo, I identify three primary channels of music dissemination: cultural enclaves, spectacles, and community events. I examine how cultural intermediaries—primarily Latin American and Japanese-Latin American DJs, event organizers, and dance instructors—facilitate cross-cultural musical exchange while managing dual cultural identities. This research builds upon Pablo Borchi's analysis of Latin American music in Japanese pop culture, complemented by Darío Tobón Montoya and Rafael Reyes-Ruiz's historical investigations of cultural exchange—from the emergence of tango in 1920s Japan through the transformative influence of Latin jazz in the post-war era. My findings reveal that these musical spaces serve two purposes: providing cultural connectivity for Latin American communities in Japan and creating opportunities for Japanese engagement with Latin American culture. Traditional boundaries between Latin American and Japanese cultural expressions have become increasingly fluid, contributing to our understanding of global music circulation and its role in fostering inclusive environments where music transcends linguistic and cultural barriers.

09J. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Sonic and Affective Spirituality in Caribbean Music and Rituals

Chair: Vicky Mogollón Montagne, University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music

This panel interrogates the dynamic interplay between music, sound, and spiritual practice in the Caribbean, drawing on ethnographic research and historical inquiry to reframe our understanding of spiritually-powered political endurance. Building on previous work on the transformative potential of musical performance, we argue that Caribbean music functions not only as an aesthetic but also as a dynamic arena where the spiritual sonopoetics of ritual practice produce experiences of collective belonging that contest dominant power dynamics and monolithic national identity discourses.

Based on case studies from Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba, our contributions explore several interlocking themes. First, we analyze fuerza (strength/force) as a spiritual technology that redefines espiritistas marialionceros' endurance to violence and (in)humanity through sound. Second, we explore how Dominican bachata, through amargue (romantic bitterness), operates as a form of velación (funeral rites), mirroring Black sociability from plantation ecologies. Third, using sonic gestures (Herrera Veitia & Levine,

Forthcoming), we examine the public and private character of urban Afro-Cuban music as a historically situated spiritual, affective, and territorial emplacement. Lastly, we consider the mind-body split of African forced migrants and highlight the enduring legacy of African rhythms in the reclamation of Afro-Cuban identity through Abakuá music specifically.

Through an engagement with ethnomusicology, postcolonial discourse, affect theory, Africana religions, and social anthropology, our discussions call for innovative methodological approaches that embrace the fluidity of bottom-up political endurance and use sound and music to upset assumptions of legibility in traditional notions of power and the sacred.

Fuerza: Music and (In)Humanity in Venezuelan Espiritismo Marialioncero

Vicky Mogollón Montagne, University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music

This paper discusses fuerza (strength/force) as a Espiritismo Marialioncero technology for possession that redefines endurance to violence and (in)humanity through sonic engagements with more-than-human entities. Similarly to practitioners of other Caribbean religions, espiritistas marialionceros in Venezuela are labeled “agents of violence” (Barreto 2020, Ferrándiz 2004, Taussig 1997) because our spirit possession practices challenge legible notions of what humans can do and what humans are. Examining the role of fuerza in Espiritismo Marialioncero’s spirit possession rituals distances us from “modern liberal Western” (Crosson 2019) ideas of proper subjectivity to highlight espiritistas’ “becoming with” (Yusoff 2013) affective entanglements among subjects, spirits, objects and other forms of intensity. As such, I show how espiritistas also defy long-standing scholarly paradigms for the study of violence that rely on derivative ideals of personhood, individual autonomy (Scarry 1985), and agency. Methodologically, I rely on ethnographic encounters in spiritual sessions, songs and playlists shared in espiritista social media (primarily of Afro-Venezuelan tambor and salsa), as well as interviews to delve into the sonic aspect of fuerza. Ultimately, I argue that fuerza in spirit possession constitutes an “intermaterial vibrational” (Eidsheim 2015) sonic technology that nurtures spiritual endurance and our capacity to “inhabit a wounded everyday” (Das 2014).

Bachata as Velación: Amargue’s Afro-Dominican Spiritual Praxis

Wilfredo José Burgos Matos, Lehman College

This paper explores how Dominican bachata, through its defining feeling of amargue (romantic bitterness), operates as a form of velación (funeral rites of the 21 Divisions/Dominican voodoo), mirroring Black sociability from plantation ecologies. In Afro-Dominican confraternities, a velación is a musical and spiritual mourning ritual that honors deceased members, blending collective grief with resistance. Similarly, in the urban peripheries of Santo Domingo, where bachata’s amargue flourished, bachateros and their audiences gathered in circles or semi-circles to lament their exclusion from national discourses that erased poor and Black or dark-skinned citizens. These gatherings became spaces for mourning symbolic deaths imposed by narratives of modernity and progress.

Central to these rituals is *amargue*, an affective expression of sorrow, heartbreak, and disillusionment—an auditory archive of displacement, racial erasure, and economic hardship. In the social context, *bachata* functions as a *velación*, where marginalized voices transform personal and collective pain into sonic testimony by singing in unison, mimicking and gesturing loss through dance steps, and falling into a mourning trance inspired by *bachata* lyrics of heartbreak, displacement, and loss. Grounded in ethnographic research conducted in brothels on Santo Domingo’s outskirts and Bronx bodegas, this paper traces how *bachata*’s *amargue* shapes understandings of Blackness and racial belonging. Across these transnational spaces, *bachata* becomes a diasporic ritual, carrying the echoes of Afro-Dominican confraternities into new urban landscapes on and beyond the island, where communities confront racialized narratives of exclusion and displacement.

My body is in Cuba but my mind is in Africa

Ivor Miller

First-generation African forced migrants in Cuba experienced dissociation of mind and body, with the mind remaining in Africa while the stolen body was trapped in plantation labor, as expressed in the Cuban *Abakuá* phrase: “My body is in Cuba but my mind is in Africa” (Miller 2009, 37). Nevertheless, as part of the cultural syncretism in the American colonies that Ortiz called *trans-culturación*, African words remained in fixed ritual phrases, while the African ‘mind’ was virally communicated in clave-driven musical patterns and nonverbal, scatted syllabic phrases in street processions and ballroom shows, composed and performed with African folkloric elements by, and for, Cuban and Boricua immigrants. While commercial interests mined these treasures as “*Fania salsa*,” a counter-movement of *salsa consciente* refocused dancers on historic oppressions and liberations (Espinoza 2021). Through this dialectic of mind and body, the social/cultural/political spark of *afro-latinidad* spread throughout the Americas in the form of popular music and associated community-building rites, through which “the historical memory of a bad colonial inheritance... embedded in the leisure-form... [was] continually exorcised” (Brennan 2008). Musical examples include *Abakuá* performances recorded in the USA, such as “*Abasí*” (Chano Pozo), concluding with segments of *Okobio Enyenisón*, a 2009 recording led by *Abakuá* musicians inspired by their encounter with African members of *Ékpè*, the main source of *Abakuá* heritage. In the *Abakuá* language, *Okobio Enyenisón* means “our brothers from Africa,” identifying these performances as a solution to the mind/body separation.

09K. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

International Musical Entities in the 21st Century: The Impacts of Global and Transnational Flows

Chair: John Phippen, Colorado State University

This panel features ethnographic case studies that examine how trendsetting contemporary musical establishments such as international music festivals and music conservatories are continually shaped and transformed by accelerating currents of

globalization and transnational politics. By focusing on four geopolitically distinct localities from the U.S., Europe, and Central Asia, the presenters of this panel demonstrate how global and transnational forces inform the development of these localities' diverse cultural practices, values, and identities. Drawing on ethnomusicological methodologies, the panel underscores the complexities that underlie the convergence of locally-determined traditional attitudes and personal and institutional efforts to attain cosmopolitan ideals. In "African American Jazz in Diaspora," the author illustrates how jazz conservatories in Denmark serve as preeminent sites to observe one confluence of racial strains and ethical principles that guide the institutionalization of African American jazz in diaspora. Similarly, in "See Local, Listen Global," the author presents a case in which an internationally acclaimed, locally-organized music festival in East Tennessee capitalizes on traditional Appalachian aesthetic parameters to achieve its cosmopolitan aspirations. "The Colorado City Music Festival" represents the clash between religious creeds of an orthodox Mormon community in Southern Utah and secular ideals of a cosmopolitan world. "Zamanvi or Emruzi Music," a twenty-minute, ethnographic documentary, showcases how traditionally-trained musicians in the geopolitically isolated countries of Iran and Tajikistan strive to gain global status by participating in international music scenes and by creating music that adapts their traditional repertoires to globally accepted musical criteria.

African American Jazz in Diaspora: The Case of Denmark's Rytmisk Musik Conservatories

Leslie C. Gay Jr., University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Scholarship following Gilroy's work contends with longstanding questions about the role of the Americas in shaping African diasporic musics, like jazz. Models of diaspora range from ideologies that privilege the U.S. as a site of origin (Atkins), to others that decenter Black American musicians in favor of transglobal networks (Johnson), to those that emphasize patterns of emigration and homecoming (Flores). These debates highlight questions of race, racism, national identities, and global flows. Through ethnographic and historical methods, I consider these questions with respect to an under-explored case study—the institutionalization of American jazz into the national identity and educational agenda of Denmark, as pioneered by Astrid Gøssel (1891-1975) and Bernard Christensen (1906-2004). Known for embedding jazz within Danish educational institutions, Gøssel and Christensen were musicians, scholars, and educators who promoted Black music as intellectually and musically meaningful, and as a pathway to alternative sounds and practices. The establishment of jazz conservatories under the rubric of *rytmisk musik* in the 1980s—led by musician-educators Lief Falk, Astrid Elbek, and Erik Moseholm—crystallized Gøssel and Christensen's ideals in celebrating jazz for its musical freedoms and social consciousness. How does a sense of Americanness persist into this diasporic context? In part, Denmark's educational ideology connects deeply with African American musicians, many of whom emigrated to Denmark and toured there. However, Danish advocacy of jazz established a cultural-racial tension of diasporic articulations that, following Edwards (2003), translate across explicit gaps of difference, that opened doors for Black musicians and jazz, but within problematic stereotypes.

See Local, Listen Global: Perceiving “Knoxvillian” at the Big Ears Festival

Nicholas Horner, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Nestled in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, the Big Ears Festival transforms Knoxville’s downtown into a cosmopolitan center. I argue in my paper that Big Ears nurtures perceptions of a distinct “Knoxvillian” creative culture while promoting the city’s Southern Appalachian identity to support festival branding within a global music market. In March 2025, the Big Ears Festival featured internationally acclaimed artists such as Rufus Wainwright, Anoushka Shankar, and Bela Fleck. Within this diverse lineup, Festival Executive/Artistic Director Ashley Capps integrated performances by Knoxville musicians as well as collaborations between visiting artists and local ensembles such as the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, Knoxville Opera Gospel Choir, and St. John’s Episcopal Choir. The Big Ears Festival featured local performers within carefully curated historic and non-traditional venue spaces that enhanced their appeal for a cosmopolitan/international audience. Big Ears’ strategic programming highlights Knoxville’s forward-thinking sensibilities and promotes the multicultural character of the city. Informed by ethnographic data collected during my multi-year engagement as a festival contractor, I explain the ways in which Knoxville’s progressive attitudes intertwine with traditional local values and aesthetics. Moreover, my paper sheds light upon the juxtaposition of local and cosmopolitan values within the festival’s program and its engagement with citywide issues of gentrification, inaccessibility, and class divide. This paper contributes to the ethnomusicological literature that focuses on the intersection of identity and festivalization of local values, exposing the role skillful staging of musical acts can play in shaping public perceptions of identity.

The Colorado City Music Festival: Mormonism, Intercultural Hospitality, and Secular Ideals

Mehrenegar Rostami, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Collectively known as Short Creek, the twin towns of Colorado City and Hildale have been host to the annual Colorado City Music Festival (CCM) in Southern Utah since 2015. Drawing on twelve months of ethnographic research on the Mormon community in this region, I argue that an ethos of intercultural hospitality that emerges through the CCM festival marks a key point in secularizing Mormon cultural practices and reviving musical activities. The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS) had banned music for decades. Adherents of FLDS split from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) in the mid-nineteenth century over leadership controversies concerning the practice of polygamy. Located within the isolating walls of the Canaan mountains, the FLDS community remained hidden from the prying eyes of the outside world. A noticeable number of Short Creek residents continued to follow the FLDS’s principal tenets after the U.S. government arrested their controversial leader Warren Jeffs in 2006. Others who were cast away or had voluntarily left the church sought to engage with the world through intercultural exchanges. Organized by a transplanted West-Georgian, country-blues musician Tom Bennett, CCM offered an avenue to achieve this objective by promoting the ethos of intercultural hospitality. This ethos enables the Short Creek community to host a wide range of

musicians and audiences from across the U.S. Moreover, it contributes to an ethnomusicological understanding of how this community negotiates secular ideals to preserve aspects of their traditional Mormon identity in an increasingly globalized world.

Zamanavi or Emruzi: Music as a Gateway to the World

Hiwa Hawaii

Zamanavi or Emruzi is a short documentary that features how local and traditional musicians in Iran and Tajikistan attempt to make their music globally relevant. Iran and Tajikistan are two countries in central regions of Asia that have been relatively isolated from the international community due to their geographical location and authoritarian politics. Hence, musicians have had limited opportunities to readily travel to different parts of the world or engage with the global music industry. Yet, the ethnographic interviews I made between 2015 and 2018 with the help of my partner reveal that they have become increasingly conscious in engaging with educational and musical activities that can make their music more appealing to a global audience and garner them global recognition. Employing the term zamanavi (заманави: modern), Tajik traditional musicians in Dushanbe relentlessly emphasize the significance of composing or producing music that can fit the Zeitgeist of their time. To make their music zamanavi or modern, they perform at festivals that are typically modeled after their European or North American counterparts, they integrate Western popular instruments such as synthesizer and guitar into their traditional ensembles, and they employ electric or amplified versions of their traditional musical instruments. Similarly, in Iran, local musicians proactively look for opportunities through which they can develop their craft as emruzi (امروزی: contemporary) to an audience outside the national borders of Iran. This documentary highlights important ethnomusicological issues such as how global exchanges can lead to the creation of new identities among musicians.

09L. October 25, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Sonic Care Work

Chair: Patricia Vergara, University of California, Merced

Culture Work as Care Work: Music Education and Refugee Resilience at the Simrishamn Kulturskola

Carrie Ann Danielson, Florida State University

This paper explores the intersection of community-based music programs and care for Syrian refugee children and youth in Sweden, focusing on the Simrishamn Kulturskola, a public arts school in the Skåne region that has been uniting refugee and local youth for the past decade. Since Sweden's 2015 refugee influx, which brought over 200,000 asylum seekers, including many unaccompanied minors from Syria, community-driven arts programs have become essential emotional and social support systems, complementing

national policies that primarily address material needs. Through fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork over the course of seven years, including work with participants, teachers, and policymakers, this paper examines music education—particularly group guitar and songwriting for Muslim girls—as both culture work and care work.

Drawing on frameworks from applied ethnomusicology, feminist care ethics, and community music, this paper argues that the music programs at the kulturskola serve as vital spaces for resilience and healing. Using Joan Tronto’s (1993) ethics of care—attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness—it demonstrates how these programs create emotional support and social solidarity for refugee youth. Additionally, the paper engages with the concept of “culture work” (Cederström & Frandy, 2022) to explore how these programs foster a sense of belonging, agency, and cultural adaptation. In a climate of rising anti-immigrant sentiment, Simrishamn’s music education exemplifies the transformative power of culture as care, offering refugee youth a space to navigate identity and belonging in the face of displacement.

Rehearsing Community: Queer Choral Musicking and the Politics of Care

Charlotte Olivia Stewart-Juby, Carleton University

Community-based queer choirs have become popular fixtures in various cities across North America since the 1970s. In Canada, Ottawa has played a key role in the queer choral movement, as it is home to three of the country’s first queer choirs, including In Harmony, a lesbian-founded choir that has been active since 1991. While much research on this movement considers the political and personal impact of these choirs’ performances (Balén 2017; Cockayne 2019; Steers 2021), this paper shifts focus towards the space of the rehearsal room. Using a queer-feminist approach, I examine the tensions between utopian narratives of the movement and its associations with homonormativity and institutionalism (MacLachlan 2020). Drawing on recent ethnographic fieldwork and participation with In Harmony, I build on recent theorizing of queer musicking (Lambe 2021; Jennex & Marsh 2021; Klotz 2021) to conceptualize the rehearsal room as a potential queer site of temporal distortion (Munoz 2009) where members may rehearse community, collaboration, and resistance. In the context of the ongoing existential threats to queer and trans rights and lives, I ask if the queer choral rehearsal room has the potential to offer transformative care for its members in times of crisis.

From Ethnomusicology to Health Sciences Research: The Importance of Lived Experience in the Design of Patient-Oriented Interventions

Theresa Allison, University of California, San Francisco

The health sciences have become increasingly interested in mixed-methods study design, particularly in the areas of implementation science and community-engaged research. Early studies used only limited qualitative methods, such as post-intervention interviews or focus groups. More recently, however, scientists have begun to recognize the value of lived experience to the design of patient-centered and relationship-centered interventions to support social well-being and other aspects of quality of life. In ethnomusicology,

we have long understood the importance of centering lived experience in our studies of music. In this paper I argue for the importance of ethnomusicology in the design of scientifically rigorous studies of social well-being. To illustrate the power of music ethnographic study design, I focus on older adults living with dementia and their care partners. Dementia, a life limiting syndrome caused by Alzheimer's or other neurodegenerative diseases, is associated with significant loneliness and social isolation. Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk of multiple medical issues including increased mortality. Music opens a window to understanding deeper issues of identity, relationships, and sources of meaning even when people living with dementia can no longer speak coherently. Longitudinal ethnographic attention to music as part of daily life enables us to identify which activities impact social well-being and which are feasible for care partners. Drawing on four music ethnographic studies conducted in a nursing home (2006-08) and home settings (2018-2020, 2021-2024, 2024-present), I demonstrate how music ethnography yields the foundational knowledge needed to design feasible and effective interventions to support social well-being.

Aztec Dance Spaces: Healing and the Ethics of Scholarship in a Fraught Moment

Kristina Nielsen, Southern Methodist University

Aztec dance has gained popularity since the 1970s in the United States. Though it draws on the Aztec and popular imagery of pre-Hispanic culture, contemporary Aztec dance took its present form through nationalist projects in Mexico City in the twentieth century. In the United States, Aztec dance has become connected to broader conversations about Indigenous identities and border experiences, and its growth at the end of the Chicano Movement in the early 1970s linked it to political activism in the US. As I explore in my forthcoming book, there are significant lines of nativism and indigenismo within Aztec dance that complicate narratives that portray it as a vehicle of Indigenous liberation. That said, despite the many warranted critiques of nationalism and indigenismo in ethnomusicology and anthropology (Brading 1989; Tarica 2016), the rallying nationalism of Aztec dance has provided tangible community benefits to many dancers, pointing to fine lines that must be navigated in contemporary critiques—especially in light of a new round of threats. In this paper, I reflect on the challenges of writing about the border and border trauma at a time where the threats of state violence towards individuals in the Aztec dance community have escalated precipitously. In particular, I consider the ethical questions of writing about nativist strategies within Aztec dance at a moment where communities are in the crosshairs of governmental entities. How does one balance intersectionality, including the nationalist erasure of Indigenous Mexican identities, in this moment where nativist strategies easily gain appeal?

10A. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM
The Current Crisis and the Future of Ethnomusicology
Chair: Matt Sakakeeny, Tulane University

Alan Burdette, Society for Ethnomusicology
Shannon Garland, University of Pittsburgh
Amelia López López, Indiana University, Bloomington
Alejandrina M. Medina, University of California, San Diego
Gabriel Solis, University of Washington

This roundtable is organized as a response to threats to universities and granting institutions that have narrowed opportunities in education, research, and employment for ethnomusicologists. In the U.S. today, budget and staffing cuts to the NEH, NEA, NSF, the Smithsonian, and other institutions have deeply impacted SEM and our membership. The universities that train and hire ethnomusicologists have imposed austerity measures in response to a general reduction in funding and the exclusion of specific research topics. The elimination of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and targeting of “gender ideology” has undermined the very foundations of ethnomusicology’s core values of fostering cultural understanding through music. And international students are facing particular challenges in the revocation of visas, travel restrictions, surveillance, and even deportation. How will these economic and ideological shifts impact the prospects for graduate education and the job market for ethnomusicologists? How do the recent changes in U.S. politics relate to a global shift to “far-right” governments? How should we contextualize the current crisis within a longer history of struggle for those without employment, contingent faculty, and underfunded students. And what unique insights can be gained from ethnomusicologists in the public sector witnessing and experiencing the hollowing out of higher education? In addition to reviewing potential impacts, the roundtable will offer suggestions on how SEM might help mitigate the challenges facing members. The panelists include graduate students, faculty, university administrators, and non-profit workers each with unique knowledge how the current crisis might reshape the future of ethnomusicology.

10B. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM
Alliances and Intersections on the Margins of the Sinophone
Chair: Charlotte D'Evelyn, Skidmore College

This panel explores intersectional identities, alliance building, and transnational networks on the margins of Sinophone popular music worlds. We look to musical practices as sites of social articulation in Stuart Hall’s sense—as “[forms of connection] that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions... a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all

time,” but rather “transformation through a reorganization of the elements of a cultural practice” (Hall 1986, 53). Examining case studies from Taiwan, southwest China, and Inner Mongolia, the three papers in this panel illuminate how performers and listeners negotiate their positions within and beyond the Sinophone world, forming contingent relationships that challenge dominant narratives of ethnicity, gender, Indigeneity, and national belonging. The first paper investigates adju as a pan-Indigenous gender/sexuality category, examining how performers reclaim this historically gendered term as a form of Indigenous queer agency in Han-centric, heteronormative Taiwan. The second paper explores how Inner Mongolian throat-singing (khöömii) musicians use music to symbolically re-draw borders and to form allegiances with a bigger pan-Mongolic world outside the borders of China. The third paper explores how reggae musicians in China’s ethnically diverse Yunnan province reframe locally grounded musics, experiences, and cultural narratives through Afro-Asian imaginaries. Taken together, these papers highlight the creative ways in which musicians employ local cultural practices and transnational popular musics to articulate minoritized identities, navigate shifting political landscapes, and forge connections through and across national and cultural boundaries.

Sounding Queer Indigeneity: Adju Performativity, Nandao Narratives, and Trans-Indigenous Alliance in Taiwan

Yuan-Yu Kuan, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Taiwan’s 2019 legalization of same-sex marriage has branded the nation as one of Asia’s most progressive. However, the Han-centric, settler-nationalist rhetoric of the Republic of China government often disregards the intersection of Indigeneity and gender expression, particularly among Indigenous queers, who navigate multiple marginalizations. This paper examines how adju—historically a term of endearment among Paiwan women (one of Taiwan’s 16 officially recognized Indigenous groups)—has been reclaimed as a pan-Indigenous gender/sexuality category, encompassing effeminate males, transgender individuals, and gay men. The growing audibility of adju in Taiwan’s popular music scene, particularly through performers such as Utjung, Pacak, and Ponay, reflects Indigenous queer agency in shaping spaces of belonging and recognition amid Taiwan’s contested international status.

As Taiwan democratized and repositioned itself geopolitically, the ROC government foregrounded Indigeneity through its Austronesian-speaking population, translated as Nandao-minzu (South-Island People), using linguistic and archaeological research (Bellwood 1985, 1995; Blust 1999) to frame the island as the homeland of all Austronesian-speaking peoples. This state-driven cultural policy, intended to strengthen diplomatic ties with Pacific Island nations, has reshaped domestic cultural narratives. In response, adju performers articulate the Nandao discourse, weaving Indigenous traditions with musical, political, and performative elements drawn from powerful female personas, including Mandopop diva Irene Yeh, American pop icon Beyoncé, and Hawaiian sovereignty activist Haunani-Kay Trask. In this paper, I argue that while adju performativity asserts Indigenous gender expression in Han-centric, heteronormative Taiwan, it also subverts state-driven Nandao narratives, transforming them into a lived Indigenous reality and forging both trans-Indigenous and queer alliances.

Transnational Networks and Musical Boundary-Making in Inner Mongolia, China

Charlotte D'Evelyn, Skidmore College

In the twenty-first century, global awareness of Mongolian music has been intimately accompanied with the global circulation of Inner Asian throat-singing (khöömii). By the early 2000s, young Mongolians in China recognized that khöömii could be their ticket to international success and began creating new music modeled after globally successful bands such as Tuva's Huun Huur Tu (see Levin 2006 and Beahrs 2017). With increased opportunities for travel, study abroad, and invited teaching residencies, China's Mongols have made concerted efforts to build alliances with throat-singing institutions and communities across Inner Asia, particularly in the Russian Republic of Tuva and the country of Mongolia, even as they have also incorporated a variety of local musical styles from lands within their own borders (in Inner Mongolia, China). In this paper, I use the case of khöömii bands in Inner Mongolia to trace how musicians stylistically mediate the transnational, global, and translocal through their musical work (see Beaster-Jones 2014) as a way to redraw cultural boundaries and to gain global recognition and audibility (see Colwell 2018). I demonstrate how musicians in Inner Mongolia engage in pan-Mongolic and pan-Inner Mongolian spheres that de-accentuate allegiance to Beijing and their identity as "ethnic minorities" and that, instead, emphasize alliance within and across the historical lands of the Mongols. Through their musical work – simultaneously northern- and inward-facing – Inner Mongolian khöömii bands performatively redraw musical boundaries for the knowing ears of cultural insiders, while still appealing to cultural outsiders using the unambiguously Mongolian sound of throat-singing.

Yunnan Reggae: Music, Minoritization, and Afro-Asian Imaginaries in Southwest China

Adam Kielman, Chinese University of Hong Kong

In the evolving cosmopolitan context of southern China, transnationally circulating musics, cultural knowledge, and social identities are rearticulated through emplaced and historically constituted practices of listening and creation. Several bands have come to increasing prominence in recent years who draw on folk traditions of China's ethnically diverse southwestern provinces as well as on transnationally circulating popular music styles deeply linked to African American, Afro-Caribbean, and Black Atlantic histories and experiences. This paper is grounded in long-term ethnographic work in rehearsals, performance contexts, and recording sessions with the band San Duojiao (Three Step). Named after a popular folk dance from Yunnan Province, San Duojiao blends musical traditions of the Bulang, Wa, Hani, Dai, and Lahu minorities with reggae, ska, dub, and Afrobeat. I explore how these and other musicians in southern China self-reflexively reformulate and reinterpret musics from diverse sources within locally grounded contexts and experiences, reflecting their own subjective experiences of culture, power, difference, and globality. My analysis is inspired by what Shih and Lionnet describe as "minor transnationalism," attending to "creative interventions that networks of minoritized cultures produce within and across national boundaries" (2005, 7). More broadly, this paper aims to contribute to discussions of the ways configurations of human difference understood through historically and culturally constituted concepts and ideologies—such as race,

ethnicity, Indigeneity, minzu (nationality/ethnicity), and shaoshuminzu (minority)—intersect and are reformulated through transnational circulations of local cultural practices and popular music.

10C. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Sounding Sufism: Diasporic Approaches to Contemporary Music Forms

Chair: Payam Yousefi, University of Florida

Sufi musical practices have long been shaped by the interplay of philosophical, aesthetic, and spiritual frameworks that transcend geographic and cultural boundaries. In contemporary diasporic contexts, these frameworks manifest in dynamic ways, shaping artistic processes, modes of listening, and potentials for collaborative creative practice. This panel explores how musicians across genres engage with Sufi philosophy, praxis, and traditions to create new sound worlds that navigate issues of translation in intercultural collaboration, globalized collective affect, and the very idea of “Sufi music” as a category. Individual papers address: the continuity of Sufi principles in the eclectic musical fusions of the contemporary Europe-based Sufi ensemble Zende Delan; jazz musicians’ varying invocations of Sufi practices and principles to describe their improvisational performances, kinships, and worldviews; and the intersection of minimalist compositional aesthetics with Sufi philosophies of sound in the collaboration between Arooj Aftab and Gyan Riley. Further, this panel’s research on contemporary music attempts to answer earlier critiques that Sufi music is often presented through reductive, essentialist, and exotic stereotypes that overlook the diversity of musical expressions (Frishkopf 2012). In expanding this thinking, this panel moves beyond the traditional forms of Sufi music to highlight new musics born of Sufi-inspired musical processes within shifting global contexts today.

Awakened Hearts: Remembrance and Listening as Creative Process in the Contemporary Sufi Music of the MTO

Shahmaghsoudi Zende Delan Ensemble

Payam Yousefi, University of Florida

The soft Sufi chant of “hey hele hey hoo” calls to the beloved, washing over an eclectic texture of the tār’s traditional melodies, the cello’s classical sonorities, and the guitar’s harmonic clusters. This fusion is the core sound of the Zende Delan ensemble, a contemporary Europe-based Sufi music group within the MTO Shahmaghsoudi School of Islamic Sufism. While on the surface departing from colloquial notions of “Sufi music,” these hybrid sonorities on the album *Melodies of Unity* (2022), are in fact intimately rooted in Sufi praxis. Drawing on interviews, participant observation, and collaborative performance ethnography since 2021, I show how the group’s eclectic style is deeply rooted in a continuity of Sufi principles that guide and structure their creative process. I outline how interlocutors’ practices of dhikr (remembrance) and samā (listening) engender a radically inclusive creative process that privileges meaningfully distinct principles of harmony (wahdat), service (khidmat), presence of heart (hūzūr-e qalb), and

oneness (tohid) over concepts of style, notions of authenticity, and/or genre. My interviews, and collaboration in rehearsals and performance reveal how these principles foster a creative space that embraces their diverse musical backgrounds while creating potential for both individuality and their blending into a unique whole. This case study contributes to ethnomusicological scholarship on Sufism that has explored sama and dhikr through readings of medieval texts—respectively Al-Ghazali, Hujwiri, Baqli, and Suhrawardi (Rouget 1985, Lewisohn 1997, Becker 2004, During 2010)—by exploring their application among students of Sufism who perform new musics in contemporary diasporic contexts.

Invoking the Unseen: The Virtues and Virtuosity of Sufi Jazz

Mark Lomanno, Assistant Professor, University of Miami

Throughout a multi-year ethnographic study of intercultural collaborations in jazz, multiple interlocutors have referenced Sufi performance, philosophical, and spiritual practices in response to my questions about their individual and collective experiences during improvised music-making. Glossing their references through what one interlocutor describes as the “virtuosities and invocations of jazz,” I highlight how they deal constructively and creatively with gaps in translation across linguistic, musical, and epistemological boundaries, especially related to reconciling studied and intuitive approaches to successful “community-based art-making.” After outlining historical connections between Sufism and jazz, I ground this presentation in three case studies: flautist Jamie Baum, percussionist Sunny Jain, and the Sélébéyone project. During workshops for the second Sélébéyone recording, rappers Gaston Bandimic and HPrizm—who don't speak a shared language—noticed that they both referenced the Sufi concept “al ghaib” in their improvised lyrics. That album (2022) was then titled *Xaybu: The Unseen*, referencing both Wolof and English translations of “al ghaib” and the kinships that had developed through shared sonic and spiritual experience despite linguistic and cultural differences. In this presentation, I will contextualize my interlocutors’ engagements with Sufi practices within existing scholarship on Islam and the African Diaspora in jazz studies (e.g. Chase 2010), and on global popular musics (e.g. Gaind-Krishnan 2020). Based on these examples, I will provide insight into phenomenologies of felt experience, the dynamic bonds of emergent kinship, discursive and intercultural politics of vibration, and the import of responsive methodologies attentive to both the virtuosic and invocational aspects of music-making.

Sufi Aesthetics and Musical Minimalism: Sonic Desolation in the Music of Arooj Aftab

Sonia Gaind-Krishnan, University of the Pacific

While touring in the Spring of 2025, Pakistani American vocalist/composer Arooj Aftab joked that her listeners were “either crying or meditating” alongside her music. Indeed, Aftab’s sound seems to tap into a certain zeitgeist of global overwhelm and desolation in the post-Covid era. Her vocal timbre is round and immersive—and eschews complex textual and melodic forms of ornamentation traditionally highlighted in subcontinental musicking. South Asian listeners steeped in the Sufi-inspired ghazal repertoires of the 20th

century note that Aftab’s renditions tend to be “simple” or “emotionally flat.” Heard against this backdrop, Aftab’s sonic grammar is affectively attenuated, placing it in sharp relief to the techniques of ecstasy-inducing South Asian Sufi music practices. This paper will argue that Aftab’s sonic aesthetic is intentionally crafted as a form of neo-Sufi expression that lifts off from traditional forms. Her recent collaboration with guitarist Gyan Riley—son of minimalist composer Terry Riley—situates her attenuated expressive range within a lineage of art music that turns on notions of immersion and simplicity as innovative practice. Shifting the frame of analysis toward minimalist aesthetics, then, this paper explores points of contact with concepts rooted in South Asian Sufi philosophies of sound, while analyzing Aftab’s compositional strategies in light of minimalist aesthetics. Pairing close readings of recent live recordings with interviews and digital archival materials, this paper will theorize ways that Aftab’s music transduces aspects of Sufi philosophy into a minimalist sonic landscape that resonates on the plane of affect with the state of the world in 2025.

10D. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Refugees, Forced-Migration, and Ethnomusicology: What Can We Do?

Chair: Lisa Gilman, George Mason University

Kay Kaufman Shelemay, Harvard University

Jennifer Sherrill, University of California, Davis

David A. McDonald, Indiana University, Bloomington

Bradley DeMatteo, University of Toronto

Tomal Hossain, University of Chicago

War, persecution, climate crises, and other factors have forced over 120 million people worldwide to flee their homes. As people move from one place to the other, settle temporarily or permanently in new locations, and (for some) return to their original homes, music is an inextricable part of their lives. The roundtable participants are engaged with music and displacement with diverse populations in the world (Rohingya, Ethiopians, Palestinians, Syrians, Congolese, Uyghurs, Burundians, Cambodians, and more) who currently reside in different countries (Bangladesh, United States, Greece, Türkiye, France, Malawi). The roundtable participants will center their comments around the following questions: 1) How do forcibly displaced people use the arts to establish a sense of place, build community, forge connections, create financial stability, address trauma, and counter xenophobia, racism, and other forms of prejudice? 2) What have been the major contributions of existing scholarship on music, conflict, and displacement, and what is missing? 3) How can a focus on music bring visibility to the positive contributions that displaced people make to their host countries (and the world)? 4) What role (if any) do ethnomusicologists have in advocacy or activism for displaced people?

10E. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Sounding Global Fascism: Inter-Axis Musical Exchange between Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany

Chair: Junko Oba, Hampshire College

As extremist right-wing ideology has once again taken root in governments around the world, this panel looks to the past to ask: how was music implicated in the rise of fascism in the 1930s? The panel engages the scholarly debate on “global fascism” (Larsin 2001; Jacoby 2016) as a provocative starting point to explore the transnational musical connections that developed between Imperial Japan, Japanese-occupied Manchukuo, and the Third Reich. It takes seriously the notion of the Axis Coalition as a lively nexus of cross-border collaboration and exchange, highlighting instances of mistranslation, mishearing, and misunderstanding that threatened the coherence and supposed universality of fascist ideology. Each paper explores the relation between local perspectives and Inter-Axis politics, examining the influential musicians and musical infrastructures that facilitated these connections. [Presenter One] delves into radio broadcasts organized in celebration of the composer Richard Strauss’s 70th birthday in 1933, showing how the radio served as a key infrastructure of the German-Japanese fascist alliance. [Presenter Two] focuses on popular musical recordings in Manchukuo, revealing how the global Russian diaspora helped connect the gramophone record industries in Harbin and Berlin. [Presenter Three] analyzes the influence of German-language music on the popularization of gunka (Imperial Japanese military music), upending conventional notions of fascist cultural purity and supremacy.

Broadcasting German-Japanese Relations, Richard Strauss’s 70th Birthday

Amanda Hsieh, Durham University

This paper examines the making of the fascist alliance between Nazi Germany and imperial Japan in the 1930s. Specifically, it focuses on the ways in which the alliance was made through the establishment of simultaneous radio broadcast between JOAK (today known as NHK, Japan’s public broadcaster) and the German Zeesen stations from 1933. The broadcasting of German symphonic music was important in this exchange across linguistic divides to create a sense of shared community between peoples. The paper therefore takes as a case study Richard Strauss’s 70th birthday celebration in 1934, during which a programme of international broadcast exchange took place between Japan and Germany. The Japanese composer, Kōsaku Yamada, who conducted several celebration concerts from Japan, will be the paper’s central character. Still known as one of twentieth-century Japan’s most influential composers, his career was inextricably involved in state politics, including through the infrastructure of radio, where orchestral music, due to its lack of words, became a common ground for both Japanese and German listeners (Law 2019). Aligning itself with recent developments in musicology wherein scholars have sought to reassess biographical writing in light of its historical and ideological context (Cormac 2020, Wiley and Watt 2019), this research seeks also to explore the infrastructure of the radio in the German-Japanese fascist alliance to bring together two converging approaches, with the biographical turning outwards to broader historical analysis and the infrastructural inwards to considering what large infrastructure projects mean for individuals’ hopes, fears, and desires (Larkin 2013).

Harbin-Papa, Berlin-Mama? Inter-Axis Record Circulation and Russian Diaspora

Ryan Gourley, University of California, Berkeley

“Harbin is a charming city. Harbin is a cheerful city... Alongside fascists and social democrats, they live freely and easily.” Thus began the satirical foxtrot “Harbin-Papa” recorded by the Russian-born émigré Ilja Livschakoff for Polydor Records in Berlin in 1935. A parody of the famous Yiddish song “Odessa-Mama,” the recording became wildly popular among the Russian diaspora in Harbin, then under the occupation of Imperial Japan as part of the Great Empire of Manchukuo. The biting lyrics of the tune offer insight into the shared experience of insurgent fascist politics in East Asia and Central Europe. This paper explores the circulation of popular 78 rpm musical recordings between Berlin and Harbin, and how Russian émigré musicians embedded themselves within the framework of an Inter-Axis recording industry. Studies of music in the Axis military coalition have long neglected the perspectives of minority populations, and how they promoted and critiqued global fascism. Drawing on previously unresearched archival materials and popular music recordings digitized for the first time, I show how new circuits of Russian-language gramophone trade developed alongside the formation of the Axis Coalition. I argue that Russian émigré musicians were instrumental in facilitating the convergence of Japanese and German cultural influences in the Axis recording industry, even if they did not always receive credit for their work. To replace Russian recordings from Manchukuo in the circuits of Inter-Axis musical exchange upends conventional theories of nationalism and belonging, underscoring the entanglement of record labels in diasporic politics and state ideology.

The Revolution will be Broadcasted: Reimagining Music in Imperial Japan through Inter-Axis Music Learning

Emily Lu, Florida State University

This presentation examines inter-Axis musical exchange during World War II, emphasizing on Japanese importations of German and Austrian classical music and German music teachers. This paper seeks to highlight Japan’s attempt to integrate musically into the Western culture league, one that ideologically followed the Germanosphere. Using writings and reporting from wartime newspapers and music journals, this study reconstructs a historical period in which the Axis powers had reinforced alliance through musical education and propagation that pivoted to the notion of cultural purity and supremacy. I posit that imperial Japan’s disproportionate coverage and promulgation of Germanophone music and composers, along with its invitations to Germanophone music educators helped facilitate the production and eventual popularization of *gunka*, Japanese military music, during Japan’s Fifteen Years War (1931-1945). Japan’s modern music revolution dates back to the Meiji government’s establishment of the *ongaku shirabe gakari* (1879-1887), a music research center dedicated to the study of Western music traditions and its integration into Japanese practice. As part of the *oyatoi gaikokujin* initiative (1868-1899), the Meiji government recruited music teachers from Germany, France, and the U.S. Throughout the late Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa eras, Japan sent music students to study in “music capital” Berlin. Imperial Japan’s celebrations of the Axis alliance at times invited schoolchildren from Germany and Italy and utilized

music and dance as cultural bonding activities. I seek to engage the audience with the overarching historical question of the country's effort to transform itself musically, in turn nearing the cultural stature of its Western allies.

10F. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Music and Trauma

Chair: TBD

Disasters and Mutual Aid: “Band Together” as a Critical Moment of Care

Zachary Moreau, Florida State University

The field of ethnomusicology has begun to invest time into theories and applications of care (Youngblood et al. 2021, Hoelsing 2021, Carrico 2023, Danielson 2022). This paper dives into the responses of a music community in Tallahassee, Florida following a series of tornados that affected the Southeast United States in May 2024. These tornados destroyed the local arts district known as Railroad Square, highlighting community anxieties around corporate buyouts and gentrification. Using a rapidly fashioned local benefit show as a case study, this paper asks how music communities support themselves during moments crisis. Due to the increase in ecological disasters, this paper adds to the field's understanding of how musicians and people organize and make sense of an ever-changing ecology. Drawing upon care ethics (Noddings 1984, Tronto 1993), I examine this concert through the lens of mutual aid and communal interaction (Spade 2020). The benefit show, titled “Band Together,” was put forward by a collection of local bands, artists, small businesses, and vendors on May 24, 2024. Drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with organizing members, I analyze how musicians and organizers were affected by the creation and collecting of relief funds, giving a deeper look into the challenges and nuance of contemporary mutual aid. I do so not to condemn this moment or the notion of mutual aid, but to show the limits of what communities can do under a government which does not always work in the best interests of said communities.

Music and a Politics of Care: Collaborative Songwriting in US Social Service and Community Mental Health Settings

Erica Cao, Stanford University, San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Frameworks for the application of the arts in community settings tend to focus on the development of individuals' empathy or social bonds. A commensurate level of consideration tends not to be given to the socio-economic, political, and institutional forces that shape such development and to how the arts might help build capacities to manage the impact of such forces. Especially in clinical or social interventions, unrecognized institutional dynamics may introduce or maintain imbalances of power in community and professional practice.

Through fieldwork, interviews, questionnaires, and theoretical analyses of collaborative songwriting projects in community and clinical sites in NYC (2018 – 2020) and San Mateo County (2023 – 2024), I examine how the locus of inquiry shifts from an individual level of development of empathy as a skill—an area of focus in the medical humanities and other arts programming reflecting a liberal conception of empathy—to the institutional level of social interactions that shape an environment for empathy. The application of an ethnomusicological and performance studies orientation to the medical humanities expands the potential of the arts and humanities to address justice-oriented approaches to the culture of healthcare and the social determinants of health. Participatory music from a performance studies orientation also situates the activity within the community clinical space rather than solely the University or classroom space, defamiliarizing social relations and power hierarchies as co-creation in community praxis. Such praxis with local communities positions art- and music-making themselves as constructivist methodology for participatory action research.

The Nova Festival: Exploring the Intersection of Music, Horror, Trauma, and Healing

Moshe Morad, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

The Nova electronic trance music festival, held in southern Israel and envisioned as a celebration of “friends, love, and infinite freedom,” was intended to culminate in a joyful sunrise on the morning of October 7, 2023. Instead, it became a symbol of darkness, chaos, and trauma—not only for the 3,400 attendees, but for all Israelis and psytrance communities worldwide. In a brutal attack by Hamas, 378 festivalgoers were killed and 44 were abducted to Gaza, marking it the deadliest assault on a music event in modern history, as reported by Rolling Stone in an article titled, “They Wanted to Dance in Peace. And They Got Slaughtered.” This paper draws on survivor and medical professional testimonies, alongside theoretical frameworks including biopower, necropower, and electronic dance music culture (EDMC) studies, to examine the unprecedented convergence of music and horror at the Nova festival. It explores the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by survivors and investigates how music has functioned as a tool for healing and recovery in the aftermath. Furthermore, drawing on the author’s experience as a radio editor and broadcaster, the paper examines the impact of the event on the Israeli music scene and media, offering insights into how the cultural landscape has responded to this profound collective trauma.

10G. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Ring Shout Resilience: How to Sustain Intangible Cultural Heritage in America

Chair: Eric Crawford, Morehouse College

Erika Carter, Georgia

Brenton Jordan, Georgia

Quintina Carter-Enyi, University of Georgia

Griffin Lotson, Gullah Commission

The Gullah-Geechee Ring Shout Tradition (RST) is Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of the southeastern United States with roots in West Africa and influence across contemporary music, from jazz to hip hop. In 2024, we formed a Research-Practice Partnership (RPP) with HBCU scholars and active RST practitioners. Our shared interest is to address challenges to sustaining the RST including (1) lack of intergenerational transmission and (2) limited economic opportunities. In 1980, Art Rosenbaum (UGeorgia) brought national attention to the RST, which had been a private practice shared among family members in their local church. Numerous albums, books, and documentaries followed that helped to preserve the tradition; however, award-winning organizations like the McIntosh County Shouters still struggle with sustainability. What is the future of the RST? Its legacy has been absorbed to some extent by the commercial recording industry and new Europeanized-musical interpretations. In 2019, the Kronos Quartet performed “Testimony” by Charlton Singleton, and in 2024, the Atlanta Symphony performed “Ring Shout” by Carlos Simon for Black History Month. To better understand, African-centered approaches to sustaining traditional music and dance practices, our team including members of three Gullah arts organizations visited Belize and Nigeria to interface with communities and universities actively engaged in sustaining UNESCO-recognized ICH traditions. This 90-minute workshop will include an interactive demonstration of the Ring Shout and guided participatory discussions of African-centered interventions for sustaining ICH in the United States, noting that the US is not a party to the 2003 UNESCO Convention that 161 countries have ratified.

10H. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Racialization

Chair: Stephen Stacks, North Carolina Central University

Fritz Bose and the Concept of Race in Comparative Musicology

Martin Ringsmut, University of Vienna

This paper examines the treatment of race and racial theories in comparative musicology during the Nazi era, with a focus on the work of the influential German ethnomusicologist Fritz Bose. I argue that Ethnomusicology in German-speaking countries has largely overlooked its past, particularly its contributions to the theorization of race in culture. Existing literature often neglects or minimizes the significance of the period between 1933 and 1945 (cf. Reinhard 1976; Christensen 1991). More recent studies have begun to address ethnomusicology's past, focusing on researchers' affiliations, institutional involvement, and ideological stances (Bleibinger 2001; Mildner 2003; Nußbaumer 2001). Instead of reassessing Bose's ties to the Nazi regime or presenting new archival evidence, this paper focuses on his academic writings, methodological approaches, and the ideas he espoused. Through an examination of his publications before, during, and after the Nazi period, I demonstrate how continuities and developments in comparative musicological research, theory, and concepts challenge the notion of a disciplinary hiatus. I explore the role of race as a concept in Bose's writings and its intersection with other social categorizations and theories such as Evolutionism and Kulturkreislehre. Lastly, I address the persistence of race as a determining factor in human musicking well into the post-war era. By shedding light on Bose's scholarly contributions and the broader context of comparative musicology during the Nazi era, this paper aims to contribute to the discipline's historiography of ideas and initiate a broader discussion about the implications for contemporary scholarship.

Engineering the Minorities: Folk Music, Indigenous Peoples, and the Creation of Ethnicities in China

Kai Tang, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese state announced the existence of 56 ethnic groups, including the Han, the ethnic majority occupying over 90 percent of China's population, and 55 ethnic minorities. Since then, these 55 ethnic minorities have become subjects in ethnomusicological research and also serve as persistent identifiers in the collection, preservation, and publication of Chinese folk and traditional music. In this paper, I argue that these officially recognized ethnicities are unreliable, misleading categories in the study of Chinese music, because a large portion of them did not exist before 1949. China vastly expanded its territory over the past centuries. Hundreds of tribal groups native to the annexed regions had established their distinct non-Chinese cultures before their lands become parts of China. When central governments failed to gain effective control over the socio-cultural practices on the annexed lands before 1949, these native peoples managed to maintain their diverse non-

Chinese cultures and musical traditions. However, since the 1950, these culturally disparate native peoples have been combined, mixed, and officially recognized to be components of some freshly proposed ethnicities.

Based on my extensive ethnographic research conducted during the past two decades, this paper answers two questions through two case studies: What is the role of state-arranged musical activities in generating shared attributes among dozens of culturally disparate groups registered into the same ethnicity? How state-sponsored musical representations help national or global audiences imagine the long-existence and unified culture of these newly created ethnic minorities?

“We Are Not Like the Blacks from Other Places”: Afro-Peruvian Musicians, Elite Racializing Representations, and Grassroots Agency (1920-1955)

Rodrigo Chocano, University of Vienna

Public elite discourses on Afro-diasporic music in early twentieth-century Lima depicted its racialized practitioners as anonymous staples of local musical traditions, while associating them with stereotypes of backwardness, hypersexuality, and moral laxity. Grassroots Afro-Peruvian musicians were aware of these representations of themselves and routinely engaged with them as part of their artistic practice. Those racialized practitioners were thus mindfully involved in the racial dynamics and representational politics around their musical practices, regardless of their intentions. This paper draws on the limited sources documenting the voices and practices of blue-collar Afro-Peruvian musicians to examine how they engaged with the racializing representations crafted by Criollo cultural elites and the material effects of those depictions on their lives. It builds upon critical race studies musical scholarship and new ethnomusicological literature on Afro-Latin-American music. The paper scrutinizes compositions, documented performances, music recordings, testimonies, and other sources to identify instances of Afro-Peruvian grassroots musicians' agency in their routine encounter with a racially discriminatory musical establishment. I argue that these practitioners were conscious decision-makers who strategically engaged with their environment to improve their material conditions while finding spaces to challenge the status quo. Such agency, however, often reflected also their identification and compliance with the elite nationalist discourse asserting their subaltern position. By resurfacing the voices, creations, and actions of grassroots Afro-Peruvian musicians of the time, this paper highlights the contradictions faced by underprivileged racialized individuals as they navigated systems where systemic racism shaped their precarious standing in complex and often subtle ways.

10I. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Improvisation and Gestures

Chair: TBD

Discourses of Improvisation and Musical Essence in Korean Music: 21st Century Perspectives

R.. Anderson Sutton, University of Hawaii at Manoa

In conversations with Korean musicians and in writings on Korean music (gugak), references to improvisation (jeukeungseong) and its close cognates (variation, flexibility, spontaneity, freedom) crop up with remarkable frequency. Yet these references almost always betray a sense of angst--that such qualities, once pervasive, have all but disappeared, replaced by a rigid standardization brought about by the cultural assets (munhwajae) system (Howard 2006, Maliangkay 2018), the use of increasingly detailed notation (HS Kim 2009, Finchum-Sung 2002) and formal education (gugak middle and high schools, universities). In this paper, inspired by G. Solis's call (2012) for "close listening" informing ethnomusicological theorizing and drawing on recent interviews and written discourse, I interrogate conceptions of what improvisation can mean in the Korean context, in musical sound and its relation to concepts of musical essence, and I consider recent strategies for its incorporation as a means of revitalizing gugak. I argue that the value attributed to improvisation manifests in multiple ways, as do strategies of implementation--some looking to musical practices outside the Korean traditional sphere, such as jazz, in search of new creative freedom, others exploring the music of indigenous shamans (YS Lee 2004) and the shaman-derived concert genre sinawi (HK Um & HJ Lee 2012) in search of Korean music's essence, or "soul" (jeongsin), from indigenous sources. The results have implications not just for Korea specialists, but also for the field of ethnomusicology, which has long concerned itself with improvisation's techniques, aesthetics, and sometimes its fragility (e.g., Nettl 1998, Becker 1980).

Makwa: Rhythm and Improvisation in Zimbabwean Handclapping

Jennifer W Kyker, University of Rochester

Handclapping, or makwa, is essential in many indigenous Zimbabwean musical styles, from the drumming, dance and song genres known as ngoma to the country's iconic mbira music. Makwa playing ranges from simple, on-beat clapping to virtuosic, improvisatory solos. Yet makwa is seldom discussed in the literature on Zimbabwean music, and rarely featured in mbira ensembles in North America. In this workshop, participants will gain an in-depth understanding of Zimbabwean rhythmic sensibilities through makwa playing. The workshop will begin with a brief overview of the rhythmic and metric foundations of mbira songs. Next, we will learn several common makwa patterns that are frequently played to accompany mbira music, and experiment with various playing techniques to produce different types of sounds with our hands. In the second half of the workshop, we will explore how to modify basic makwa patterns through improvisatory principles such as deletion, insertion, and recombination, in order to produce extended musical ideas. Throughout the workshop, we will pay special attention to the type of interlocking musical relationships that are made

possible when multiple players engage in makwa at the same time. During the last part of the workshop, we will bring these musical ideas to life with opportunities to play makwa with live mbira music, accompanied by hosho. Principles from this workshop will be immediately applicable in mbira ensemble teaching, and will resonate with other musical styles with a 12/8 feel from across the Black Atlantic, such as the sesquialtera rhythms of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Unity in Diversity: Regional Identity in Improvised Variations in North Balinese Sekatian

Oscar Smith, University of British Columbia

Several scholarly works have discussed (McPhee 1966, Ornstein 1977, Vitale 1990) and theorised (Tenzer 2000) nyog cag melodic elaboration patterns in Balinese gamelan. Additionally, due to accounts that characterise Balinese musical practice as lacking any improvisation (McPhee 1966, Tenzer 2000), the topic of improvisation in Balinese music was unexplored until quite recently (Gray 2012, Tilley 2019). In these studies, however, only smaller scale instances of improvisation in South Bali were explored. Only one study has analysed elaboration in metallophone ensembles in the relatively understudied region of Buleleng, North Bali (Vandal 2012). Here, a broader family of interlocking patterns called ngoncang—one of which being the nyog cag idiom—are used in an unusually large instance of group improvisation in Bali that has not received extensive scholarly study.

This improvisational phenomenon is especially pronounced in the slow-tempo, ceremonial Sekatian repertoire. Unlike the well-studied performance genre of kebyar (Tenzer 2000)—whose origins are likewise in North Bali—Sekatian pieces are not mentioned in any prior study of Balinese music. The nature of this repertoire's improvisatory elements is explored in terms of various theorisations of improvisation (Nettl 1974, 1998; Berliner 1994; Brinner 1995; Sutton 1998; Tilley 2019). Finally, interviews with North Balinese musicians are explored. From this, some central themes contributing to the emergence of this regional phenomena emerged: the participatory nature of the ritual context, the desire to differentiate North from South musical identities, the lack of institutional influence in the North, and a greater exposure to other East Javanese musics.

10J. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Global Ensembles

Chair: Kwasi Ampene, Tufts University

De-Westernizing the Modern Chinese Orchestra: The Past and the Present

Yun Hao, Boston University, College of Fine Arts

For decades, the Modern Chinese Orchestra [中国民族管弦乐团] model, based on the Western orchestra and featuring Chinese traditional and Western classical instruments, has raised concerns and debates about its Westernized symphonic structure and sound

among musicians, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists in China. It is one of the cultural products influenced by Western standards and aesthetics in the modernization process since 20th century China. The idea of Western art music as the standard for superior sound has shaped and overpowered music from “other” cultures in musical form, sound, structure, and practices. Recently, there has been a growing sentiment in China that continuing to echo Western art music supremacy in the Modern Chinese Orchestra, diminishes and erases the unique sound and identity of Chinese traditional music, reinforcing the false belief that Chinese traditional art is inferior and needs to be transformed and “cultured” through westernization to be understood globally. De-westernization is essential to President Xi Jinping’s proposition on the Chinese path to modernization. In doing so, he emphasized the role of culture in the Twentieth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in October 2022. For instance, he pointed out the preservation of intangible cultural heritages, promotion of people-centered Arts, presentation of nationalistic imagery, etc. as priorities. In this context, this paper traces the birth and historical development of the Modern Chinese Orchestra. It further presents reflections of composers, scholars, and conductors on reform, innovation, and possible future compositional and institutional trends for the orchestra.

Afro-Asian Cross-Cultural Encounters: Nigerian Drummers and South Korean Samulnori

Abiodun Adisa, Wesleyan University

Since its establishment in 2010, the South Korean Cultural Centers in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, have actively promoted Korean cultural heritage, including Taekwondo, cuisine, K-pop, films, arts, and language. In 2013, Isioma Williams, a veteran Bata drummer based in Lagos, participated in a cultural exchange program at Kyonggi University, South Korea, where he learned the Janggu drum. This paper examines the dynamic interaction between Nigerian drummers and South Korean musical tradition, focusing on drumming and the globalization of traditional Korean drums, particularly the Janggu drum. It explores the history and contemporary performance practices of the Samulnori genre in Nigeria, highlighting the cultural syncretism emerging from this cross-cultural exchange. Additionally, it outlines the role of Nigerian traditional drummers trained in Janggu drumming techniques, their contribution to Korean-Nigerian interaction, and their function as surrogates and cultural custodians of Korean traditions in West Africa. While scholarly attention has been given to the economic and political interconnectedness between Africa and South Korea, there is limited research on their musical and cultural interactions. Drawing on my active engagement in Samulnori training and performances facilitated by the Korean Cultural Center in Lagos, along with existing literature on Afro-Asian musical interaction, this paper provides a nuanced understanding of how collaborative music-making transcends cultural barriers. This paper underscores the historical and contemporary relevance of the Samulnori genre in Nigeria. It offers insights into how traditional music adapts and thrives in new environments, thus contributing to a broader discourse on globalization and cultural hybridity in the 21st century.

Communist Gamelan in Game Modding

Reid Sherwood Orphan

For the video game “modding” community- a community that edits or creates in-game content using external software- communism seems to be not only accepted, but expected, regardless of the political views of the people involved. I will examine how modding communities exemplify the moral principle that anthropologist David Graeber describes as “everyday communism” (2011, 100), in which people work purely according to their abilities to satisfy the needs of others. Modding communities have seen little scholarly recognition, despite their ability to tell us more about the possibility for communism in the capitalistic industry of game development. This paper will look at the role composers and music play in the motivation and recruitment of volunteers for video game modding, particularly through the lens of an upcoming mod for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; a mod which seeks to create a Southeast Asian-inspired worldspace, in sharp contrast to the Nordic fantasy Skyrim is known for. As a composer and consultant for the project for almost two years now, specializing in the creation of unique gamelan styles for the mod, I will look at how our project interfaces with the problematic worldbuilding and essentialism (Kostrzewa, 2022) of The Elder Scrolls in a way that crafts a more equitable fantasy world for fans of the series. I will argue that video game modding shows the ability for music to motivate people around the world to work in a baseline communist fashion, contrary to the standard hierarchy-based practices of the gaming industry.

10K. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Time Travel, Sonic Portals, and Reclaiming Black Musical Futures

Chair: Alisha Lola Jones Skinner, University of Cambridge

We are looking ahead, but also listening to the echoes of the past, fully present in the current musical moment. As such, we are pushing for better, more inclusive curricula that holistically consider the voices and personhood of Black women in their musicological constructions. One of the foremost concerns of the ethnomusicologist exploring Black music is time. The passage of time is critical to the conception and perception of music. Music is also perceived in relation to the times in which it is heard and learned. Not only is a grasp of time’s contextual meaning necessary to make music - but time is also consequential to the study of music and the development of culturally informed curricula. These studies and their application in higher education have taken on different frames. For example, sankofa has been employed as a strategy for reclaiming history. Likewise, Afrofuturism as an aesthetic reconciles history with future to affirm the present. Both frames are useful tools when traversing music, memory, and time. Separately, these papers consider the legacy of academic studies of contemporary Black music, the reimaginings of a 17th century Black woman archetype, and the possibilities generated by a reconsideration of a storied Black genre. In tandem, these papers hold, as their unifying concern, an abiding attention to Black women as they navigate their own sonic narrative formations. It is with this anchor that we propose a panel that explores the reclamation of Black musical futures in curriculum development, music history, and music theory.

Lessons from Lemonade and the Future of Interdisciplinary Black Music Courses

Birgitta Johnson, University of South Carolina

What is the future of Black music in higher education when Black music courses still struggle to become a part of the standard curriculum in music programs? Eight years ago, I developed a music history course dedicated to centering the artistic contributions of Black women in music performance, advocacy and community building. Beyoncé’s visual album, *Lemonade*, and Candice Benbow’s globally successful #LemonadeSyllabus were the key inspirations. Released a month after *Lemonade*, Benbow’s #LemonadeSyllabus included over 200 citational sources provided by over 50 Black female thought leaders from across several disciplines. It proved that *Lemonade*, when viewed as an interdisciplinary work, can also provide a critical and more expansive framework for developing Black music courses. After offering one of the first university-level classes dedicated to *Lemonade* in the fall of 2016, I continued to teach and evolve it enough to secure a dedicated course number for the class and have it cross-listed between the African American Studies department and the Music department, where it can now fulfill an elective requirement for music majors. “*Lemonade and Beyond...*” was developed as a way to explore Beyoncé’s first masterwork as well as the musical contributions of Black women artists in blues, classical, gospel, soul, disco, and hip-hop music over the last century. This presentation will explore the evolution of the course, student experiences with the curriculum, and how a multi-disciplinary approach has become a means to encourage more nuanced readings of Black women artists and Black music scholarship as a whole.

Aemilia Bassano, Muse of the Dark Lady Portal: Black Women Channeling Verse & Reclaiming the Shakespearean Legacy

Alisha Lola Jones Skinner, University of Cambridge

William Shakespeare’s Dark Lady sonnets (127–152) have echoed through the ages, inspiring fresh interpretations that intertwine history, verse, and music. Portrayed in these overtly sexual poems is the “Dark Lady”, a woman with black wiry hair and “dun”-colored skin. Central to the resound is the muse Aemilia Bassano Lanyer (1569–1645), a Jewish Venetian poet of Moroccan ancestry and the first woman to publish original poetry in England, lauding women in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611). Growing up in a family of instrument makers and composers, Bassano Lanyer’s romantic and social standing intersects with Shakespeare’s prolificacy, hinting at her possible influence on the Shakespearean corpus. The speculative Dark Lady tradition functions as a gateway, stirring contemporary Black women creatives, channeling the sonic and literary reverberations of the “dark lady” archetype through innovative expressions. From “The Shakespeare Lady” aka Margaret Holloway’s “theater of hunger” performances, which brought Shakespeare to the streets, to the debut of Anne Odeke’s play *Princess Sussex* (2024) as the first woman of color to be playwright in her own play at Shakespeare’s Globe, to Rhiannon Giddens’ ballet *Black Lucy and The Bard* (2022), based upon Caroline Randall Williams’s poetry in *Lucy Negro Redux* (2015) intuiting the dark lady’s identity, these transmissions tune into the divine feminine, highlighting Black women’s reclamation of contested histories. Through a womanist witness, this research examines the continuum of

past and future artistry conducting Shakespearean verse as a vibrant, musical legacy that amplifies marginalized voices and activates global soundscapes.

Black Gospel Revelations: Time Travel and Sonic Afrofuturism in Contemporary Gospel Music

Lauren Elizabeth Eldridge Stewart, Washington University in St. Louis

Afrofuturist aesthetics within gospel music may seem counterintuitive, given the contrast between Afrofuturism's fantastical possibility and gospel's groundedness, but further contemplation reveals gospel's foundation in a spiritual tradition attentive to past, present, and future. That attention is both pragmatic and wonderous – it is critical that Black people well-acquainted with an unstable world possess a pedagogy of time. The Afrofuturist impulse is foundational to the genre, and multiple recent songs reflect a time-traveling and time-honored attention to “who was, and is, and is to come.” (Revelation 4:8) Black women singers of gospel have cultivated a lexicon of vocal techniques reverberating far beyond the genre. I turn towards these techniques, demonstrated by Tunesha Crispell, Maranda Curtis, and Lacesia Campbell, to better understand the lessons conveyed by Afrofuturism. This presentation compiles an aesthetic theory of sonic Afrofuturism for application to contemporary gospel music, a genre that resonates in many locations across the African diaspora. Musicians frequently connect across the superficiality of national boundaries in a practice that I have written about called motivic traveling (2022). Now I consider the connections that musicians form across time to make sense of time itself.

10L. October 25, Saturday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Modes of Storytelling

Chair: TBD

“Welcome to Montero”: Lil Nas X's Transmedia Storytelling and/as Queer World-Building

Ella Saporito-Emler, Florida State University

Atlanta-born queer Black pop music icon Lil Nas X has been pushing pop music boundaries since his initial rise to fame with his record-breaking country trap song “Old Town Road” in 2019. Since then, he has made a name for himself as an expert of self-marketing on social media, utilizing transmedia storytelling techniques to create a fictionalized story world that he calls “Montero.” Transmedia storytelling, a term coined by Henry Jenkins (2006), is now a common method used by media giants to extend their stories onto multiple platforms, thereby increasing the number of eyes on any given story. Lil Nas X also utilizes this technique in his output by creating cohesive storylines across multiple online platforms, all of which take place in the world of Montero. These stories are often based on events from his real life and center his identity and public persona as a prominent queer Black artist. In this paper, I

suggest that Lil Nas X's use of transmedia storytelling acts as a method of queer world-building, creating an imagined space where queer Black folks can see themselves represented and celebrated. Drawing on media studies scholarship, Black feminist thought, and recent work on queer world-building (King 2022), this paper suggests that Lil Nas X's use (and queering) of transmedia storytelling techniques in the world of Montero allows him to center and publicly display narratives about queer Black love, heartbreak, and joy.

Reimagining Soundscapes: Cultural Encoding and Aural Narratives in Chinese Shadow Puppetry

Jinyizhuo Wang, Xi'an Conservatory of Music

Chinese shadow puppetry, as a hybrid art form integrating visual, auditory, and dramatic narrative elements, has been confined by a narrow interpretation that relegates its sound system to a mere “background function”. Its cross-media character, however, makes it ideal for studying the interplay between sound and image in traditional Chinese arts. Existing research tends to focus on visual design, craft preservation, or repertoire innovation, leaving the sound system underexplored. This study departs from conventional “heritage preservation” approaches by employing ethnomusicology, semiotics, and performance studies to propose a “soundscape layering” model that repositions sound at the center of shadow puppetry.

Drawing on soundscape theory and a 13-month fieldwork with musical analysis of shadow puppetry in Shaanxi and Gansu, China. This research explores how sound in performances constructs regional cultural identities, emotional codes, and narrative tension through dialect phonology, instrumental symbolism, and onomatopoeic techniques. For instance, the “bitter tone” in performance employs a descending fourth interval to evoke a melancholic aesthetic closely tied to northwest Chinese folk music, while banhu glides and suona's sharp timbre correspond to character hesitation and pivotal plot turns. Additionally, musicians imitate the wind with tongue trills, and cooperate with the puppets swaying to build an “audio-visual sense”. Through the construction of a “soundscape layering” model, deconstructing shadow puppetry's sound into three layers of cultural encoding, emotional interaction, and narrative reconstruction. By combining interdisciplinary semiotic analysis, the research illuminates the dynamic interrelationship between sound and visual symbols and their profound impact on cultural identity and aesthetic experience.

Preserving Indigenous Musics Survived in Oral Tradition: A Multilingual Parallel Corpus

Lijuan Qian, University College Cork, Ireland

Researchers have recognized that culture bearers need to be more centrally involved in music sustainability, both for these programmes to prove practically effective and because it is ethically essential that community members determine what music might be shared with others, if any, and under what conditions. The European Research Council funded ECura project focuses on three Indigenous villages in Yunnan, China's multi-ethnic Southwest, seeking out ways to empower community members to take up new digital technologies to become active collectors and curators of their own traditional music and dance.

With this initiative, the ECura project establishes a multilingual and multimodal parallel Corpus platform (online database) centred around the theme of traditional songs among ethnic minority communities in Yunnan which mainly exist in oral tradition. The project utilizes modern information technologies to set up the online database and its associated program used in social media platform. The Corpus collects commonly used words in Yi, Bai and Miao language that refer to music and dance genres and activities. The project takes the audio-form (the pronunciation of words and their singing examples) of ethnic minority languages existed in vocal music as an initial point, connecting the terms used and organizing corresponding written scripts (using Chinese, English and International Phonetic Alphabet) and other related materials. I argue that it is ethically important to take indigenous ways of thinking as a central point while connecting these audio sounds of the low-resourced indigenous languages to their translations into two high-resourced languages (Chinese and English).

October 25, Saturday, 4:30 PM - 5:45 PM
Charles Seeger Lecture

2025 Charles Seeger Lecture: Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje
The Fiddle/Violin in African American Culture: Meanings and Associations.
Introduction by Birgitta J. Johnson, University of South Carolina

The Charles Seeger Lecturer for the SEM 2025 Annual Meeting, held in Atlanta, Georgia, is UCLA Professor Emerita of Ethnomusicology Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. She will discuss “The Fiddle/Violin in African American Culture: Meanings and Associations.” Her retirement from UCLA in 2013 as a Distinguished Professor marked 34 years of service and leadership to the university in the Departments of Ethnomusicology, Music, and the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive. Prior to joining the faculty at UCLA in 1979, DjeDje taught at the historic Tuskegee University (1975-179). Her collegiate education in music began as a piano major at another HBCU and the birthplace of American concert spirituals, Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Her time at UCLA actually began when she was a graduate student where she earned her master’s and doctoral degrees. It was at UCLA in the 1970s and working with “the father of African musicology” J.H. Kwabena Nketia that “Jackie” began a lifelong pursuit of researching African and African American musical traditions, documenting their connections as well as their distinctions. She is particularly interested in how the dynamics of urban life give rise to change and other musical activity. In addition to conducting fieldwork in several countries in West Africa (Cote d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal), East Africa (Ethiopia), North Africa (Egypt and Morocco), as well as Jamaica, she has also done ethnographic research in various parts of the United States such as California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, North Carolina, and Virginia. In her 1942 autobiography, *Dust Tracks on the Road*, anthropologist and Black feminist literary pioneer Zora Neale Hurston defined research as “...formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.” Professor DjeDje’s contributions to the fields of ethnomusicology, Africana studies, history, and archiving exemplify the

kinds of excellence a life of focused poking and prying can yield to the world. In the encomium for her 2020 SEM Honorary Member recognition I noted, “she is a scholar of excellence, distinction, tenacity, candor, and respect who gently pushes her students, colleagues, and community to dig deeper, ask more questions, and add to the overall cultural historical narrative from as many angles as possible. She has been a remarkable presence in the discipline of Ethnomusicology serving in numerous roles that modern ethnomusicologists strive to embody today.”

Sunday, October 26

11A. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Traditional Transformations

Chair: Abraham Landa, University of Oregon

The Rise and Fall of the Azmaribet: Traditional Music Venues as Urban Form in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

John C Walsh, University of Wisconsin, Madison

In 1992 Ethiopia’s transitional government dissolved a curfew that prevented gathering at night for nearly two decades. Afterwards, new spaces for nightlife blossomed in Addis Ababa, the most prominent of these being venues for the performance of music by azmaris, a caste of traditional musicians. These new venues, called azmaribets, represented an innovation in the use of urban space, as musicians secured land rights for the first time in the city’s history. However, a generation later the azmaribet has evaporated after neoliberal forms of urban governance were enacted in service of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi’s vision of the “developmental state.” This paper explores what music venues can reveal about the governance of urban space under political transition. I ask - what were the conditions of possibility for traditional music’s production in Addis Ababa between 1992-2020? With an understanding of the “everyday” as the “condition(s) stipulated for the legibility of forms, obtained by means of functions [and] inscribed within structures” (Lefebvre 1987: 9) how does the “azmaribet,” as an urban form, make tradition legible in the context of an everyday in flux? Through ethnographic inquiry with owners of these venues, I follow how azmaris reconfigured the conditions of their musical labor during this period. Particular attention to the last remaining venue, a small club named Fendika (now closed). I demonstrate how the azmaribet territorialized musical tradition amidst shifting cultural and material terrain in the city, as well as what happens when the opportunity to do so is foreclosed.

Fluidity in Tradition: Gender and the Chilena in Costa Chica

Abraham Landa, University of Oregon

What happens when a centuries-old dance rooted in courtship and gender roles is performed in drag? This paper examines how chilena—a defining musical and choreographic tradition of Costa Chica, Mexico—becomes a tool for self-expression in queer performance. Based on fieldwork conducted in Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca, during the summer of 2024, this study centers on an interview with Camelia, a local drag performer who incorporates chilena into her acts. By integrating local traditions into her drag performances, including zapateado and improvisational versos, Camelia challenges normative gender roles while asserting her costeño identity.

In its folklorized and staged form, chilena has played a key role in constructing a homogenized, mestizo, and heteronormative national identity (Cuéllar 2022). Luis Tapia Maella’s critique of neoliberal multiculturalism offers a lens for understanding how folklorization grants cultural forms visibility without necessarily challenging underlying power structures. At the same time, Pierre Nora’s concept of lieux de mémoire (1989) helps frame Camelia’s performances as acts that do not merely preserve cultural memory but actively reshape it. Cuéllar’s notion of queer assemblages (2022) further highlights how chilena, when performed in drag, unsettles fixed gender norms and national imaginaries.

By foregrounding a performer who creatively adapts regional music and dance, this paper contributes to discussions in ethnomusicology about the intersections of tradition, performance, and identity. Rather than being a relic of the past, chilena—especially through the performative and often subversive use of versos—serves as a space where cultural heritage and gender expression converge.

Shifting Sounds of Yemen in Ofra Haza's music

Inbar Shifrin, Brandeis University

The music of Yemenite Jewry held a special place in the development of Israeli music as early as the 1930-40s, in the pre-state era. Jewish Yemenite music was perceived as directly connected to the music of the Temple. This perception gave their music a kind of “antique” or “authenticity” within the existing soundscape in those years. During the decades following the establishment of the state, Yemenite Jews were categorized as “Mizrahi”, an umbrella term used to describe Israeli Jews originated in Arab countries. Despite being seen as Mizrahi, some Yemenite singers managed to integrate into the Israeli music scene. The most successful one is the singer Ofra Haza, born in 1957 in Israel to parents who emigrated from Yemen. In my research I discuss how Haza's “Yemeniteness” evolved in her music, as she successfully moved between musical styles at the intersection of world, folk and popular music where her “Yemeniteness” played a different role according to the context of the music. Haza was trying to make it both into the Israeli mainstream which rejected Mizrahi culture at that time, and the international scene where she was valued for her oriental origin as a world singer. By examining Haza’s musical repertoire from the 1980-90, I will show how this category of “Yemeniteness” was being

symbolized and changed through her voice production, musical arrangements, and use of accents and ornamentations. I will also show how the categories of “Yemeniteness” and “Israeliness” coexisted and merged into each other in Haza’s music.

Classical Music as Cultural Capital: The Lived Experiences and Harmful Stereotypes of Gen-Z Asian American Pianists

Matthew Sehjin Lim, Skillman, New Jersey

I argued that Gen-Z Asian American pianists do not recognize playing piano as having the same cultural capital, or social value, as previous generations. Instead, they continue to play, specifically Western art music repertoire, due to outside pressures, such as college admissions, competitions, parents, and even expectations based on stereotypes. My goal was to shed light on the complex relationships between Gen-Z Asian American pianists, their identities, and Western musical culture. To do so, I interviewed eleven Gen-Z Asian American pianists to examine the prevalence of these stereotypes, to uncover their understanding of the piano’s cultural capital, and to learn about their experiences with external pressures involved with playing the piano.

Imperialist influence on the governments of Meiji era Japan and post-Mao China led to the implementation of classical music during modernization programs. Following Asian immigration to the United States, Grace Wang argues negative perceptions associated with language barriers and stereotypes led Asian Americans to believe Western art music provided them with cultural capital. Now, the “model minority,” and expectations of academic success and drive are included in those stereotypes.

Cognizant of the stereotypes, Gen-Z Asian American pianists actively work to debunk aspects of these assumptions. While I found that they placed some value on playing classical piano because it could help with college admissions, there was little indication they viewed classical piano as providing the type of cultural capital recognized by prior generations. Perhaps third-generation immigrants will mirror the general population and separate themselves from Western art music culture.

11B. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Sounding the Environment

Chair: Sonja Downing, Lawrence University

Musical Responses to the Flooded Ruins of a Brazilian Hydroelectric Project

Daniel Benson Sharp, Tulane University

This ethnographic research traces musical responses to an extractivist megaproject. It focuses on the cultural aftermath of the rerouting of the Rio São Francisco in Northeast Brazil in the 1970s-1980s, creating what at the time was the largest artificial lake in the world. The Brazilian dictatorship built dams submerging multiple interior Pernambucan and Bahian towns, forcing over 60,000 people to relocate. The flooding and forced relocation led to several musical responses decrying and denying the event. In 1979, celebrated

percussionist Naná Vasconcelos recorded “Ondas,” a shattering, percussion-driven instrumental track that surrounds the listener as if they were in a small town church witnessing the inexorable rise of the water. In 2021, EDM DJ Bhaskar anchored a pontoon boat in front of a submerged church in the center of the artificial lake near Petrolandia and filmed a set synched with the sunset. These contrasting musical responses of 1970s protest music and the 2020s DJ set serve as bookends tracing the long tail of this megaproject’s fallout. Based on interviews with relocated residents, this presentation explores the generational divide between mournful and critical responses like that of a teacher who walked through what was left of his hometown when the water receded, and the ecstatic panorama of DJ Bhaskar placing Petrolandia on the map as a destination for visitors. This work stands at the intersection of music, nostalgia, heritage, ruins, and cultural tourism.

Sounding Nature: An Ecomusicological Perspective on Ancient Chinese Guqin Music

Haiqiong Deng, Florida State University

“Flowing Water” (Liu Shui) is one of the most iconic and enduring pieces in the ancient guqin repertoire. It encapsulates the distinctly Chinese perception of nature, reflecting an idealized harmony between humanity and the natural world while embodying a profound cultural legacy in human relationships that has resonated throughout East Asia for centuries. This presentation offers an immersive auditory experience, featuring a live performance by the presenter, providing deeper insight into how this ancient musical tradition conveys ecological awareness, philosophical reflection, and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

After the live performance, a case study of a guqin cultural site in southern China will critically examine how these cultural ideals are reinterpreted within sociocultural and economic contexts by exploring spatial design, cultural heritage practices, environmental awareness, and evolving lifestyles in the 21st century.

This paper contributes to the expanding ecomusicological discourse on non-Euro-American perspectives of the natural world by exploring how these worldviews are articulated through musical instruments, thematic compositions, and indigenous knowledge systems. Additionally, it examines the role of guqin music in promoting sustainability and cultural resilience, offering a nuanced understanding of traditional ecological wisdom within the context of contemporary environmental challenges.

Sounding the “Ecological City”: Politics of Audibility in the Urban Garden

Elizabeth Frickey, New York University

In this paper, I draw attention towards problematic sonic assumptions of the urban garden – a presumed space of “silent refuge” amidst a detrimentally loud human soundscape. Drawing from existing garden historiographies (Martinez 2010, Strombeck 2020, Schrader 2020) as well as hands-on fieldwork, I take a single neighborhood, the Lower East Side in New York City, as a case study through which to understand the sonic footprint of greenspace within this urban soundscape, an element which has remained absent in previous sound studies scholarship (Thompson 2003, LaBelle 2010). In particular, I examine the activities of local “artist”

organization Earth Celebrations, founded by artist Felicia Young. For over thirty years, Young has organized large-scale annual theatrical processions replete with live musical performances, poetry readings, skits, and elaborate costumes and massive papier-mâché puppets, beginning with the original “Procession to Save Our Gardens” event in 1991. Through my own participation in their now more widespread 2025 “Ecological City” event, I trace how Earth Celebrations has used audible spectacle-building as a key strategy for protecting greenspaces, thus demonstrating how sound has left deep affective resonances within the garden environment. In constructing this apparent symbiosis between urban gardens and noise-making, I draw attention towards the central role that gardens play not only in the ecological makeup of the modern city, but in the sociocultural and musical makeup as well. Additionally, by reconstructing the garden as a necessarily “noisy” space, I imagine what it might mean to understand a garden as a sounding body unto itself.

“There is No Time for Music”: Politics and Presences of Women’s Rest Amidst Movement Across Morocco’s Northern Shore
Lydia Barrett, University of California, Santa Cruz

Rest is rare and radical for migrating women in Tangier, Morocco. They traversed the African continent, leaving partners, parents, children. Many wait for visas to Europe or to get home. They wait, chat, cook, teach their children, listen to music, and sing. The rhythms, tones, and cadences in these everyday activities reveal political and aesthetic implications of rest, both everyday occurrence and ultimate liberation. Two case studies feature musical and extra-musical sounds of rest in the daily lives of two Ivorian women living in Tangier. The interlocutors share their perspectives on the sounds of their lives in ethnographic interviews, contextualizing soundscapes with reflexive analysis on these women’s daily challenges and joys. My structural analyses of soundscapes and songs illustrate the aesthetic merits of songs and soundscapes, expanding theoretical interventions which interpret sounds of rest as politically prescient, including Quashie’s quiet, an alternative to resistance, Spracklen’s communicative rationality/leisure, the part of the lifeworld (Habermas) which gives life meaning, and Oliveros’s quantum listening, listening as activism. I introduce sonic throughlines among these women’s musical and extra-musical expressions of rest. To listen to women’s rest is to hear their everyday liberation.

11C. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Drumming Across Cultures

Chair: Andrew Aprile

Inuit Drum Dancing and the Unfolding Taskscape

Tim Murray, University of Florida

In his 1993 essay, social anthropologist Tim Ingold forwarded a conceptual framework based on Heidegger's notion of "dwelling," which he called a "taskscape perspective." Ingold proposed this framework as a way of understanding the phenomenological relationships between dwelling and time as the latter unfolded through the completion of tasks needed for living within particular landscapes or environments. In this paper, I apply this perspective to the adaptive relationship that exists between the central and western styles of Inuit drum dancing and the psychosocial well-being of younger people living in Ulukhaktok, an isolated Inuit settlement in the Canadian Arctic. I suggest that as a set of learnable tasks, drum dancing now allows multiple generations of practitioners to embody and engage with an epistemology of doing that is based on a core set of culturally defined precepts, such as the performance of cultural productivity and a more culturally consonant mode of passive communication. After first defining the constituent elements of the dwelling perspective and its usefulness as a framework for understanding drum dancing's transforming role in Inuit life, I then describe how this expressive practice has become part of an increasingly complex social space. Negotiating this space, I argue, has become an indispensable task for cultivating a healthy sense of cultural identity and cultural competence within the local social framework and for subverting social isolation by reconfiguring long-held ideas around what is acknowledged as a productive contribution to the common good.

Weave Notation: Visualizing Kadodo with a Color-Coded Metric Matrix

Andrew Aprile, City College of New York, City University of New York

This paper proposes a novel transcription method for world percussion that employs the operational metaphor of a weave. Weave notation conveys the complex, holistic interplay of ensemble parts, with pedagogical applications as a creative and analytical tool to engage students of all ages. Informed by conceptualizations of additive timelines (Kubik, 1999), lattice group theory (Pressing, 2002; Toussaint, 2003), and metric matrices (Locke, 2010), I present a weave of Kadodo recreational dance-drumming, part of the larger Adzogbo/Adzohu suite, a "warrior-spiritual music and dance... of the Ewe and Fon-speaking people of West Africa" (Gbolonyo, 2009). Here, TUBS (Time Unit Box System) notation is transformed so that onset attacks are represented with a color: each colored "weft" corresponds to a specific instrument, governed by a repeating horizontal pattern of onsets. The "warp" vertically threads a repeating isochronous pattern of downbeats, interspersed with the bell pattern timeline. This color-coded metric matrix, with its structural/geometric interpretation of West African dance-drumming, underscored by a clear downbeat referent, offers a glimpse of the

music's beguiling aesthetic beauty, and provides a framework to analyze and communicate the foundational, interwoven musical fabric of reciprocal accompaniment. Visualizing the repeating sequence as a continuous weave reveals coinciding alignments and alternating syncopations that comprise a recurring arc of tension and release. Hopefully, by seeing everything all at once, we may better hear everything all at once, deepening our understanding of West African music so that it can be performed and appreciated in culturally consonant ways.

The African Influence in Panorama Steelband Music: Illustrated in the Panorama Music of Leon “Smooth” Edwards composer-arranger for the Trinidad All Stars steelband.

Michelle Anne Rudder, University of Leeds

The steelpan, invented in the 1930s in Trinidad and Tobago, has evolved over nine decades to a family of instruments and steelband orchestra, playing all genres of music globally. Since 1963, one year post-independence from Britain, music has been composed and arranged for the annual Panorama steelband music competition held during the country's Carnival celebrations. This music, born out of the decolonisation process, is a unique blend of European and African elements that emerged in style and form over the first decade of the competition. Kramer (2001) describes the process of *debricolage*, a concept based on *bricolage*, as the breaking down of forms of the dominant culture and their transformation into symbols of identity by the subordinate group. *Bricolage* occurred when the colonial government banned African drums, and yielded the need-based invention of the steelpan; first from food tins, dust bins and other metal vessels, and ultimately from the oil drum. *Debricolage* occurred in the development of steelpan's Panorama music by transforming orchestral, western Art music; breaking down its form, and re-assembling it using a mixture of African and European elements. This case study of the works of Leon “Smooth” Edwards, arranger for the Trinidad All Stars steelband, identifies the west African musical elements in the music beyond the well-known calypso rhythms and call-and-response form, using features identified by Nketia (1975), Ekwueme (1980), Agawu (2016) and Kunnuji and Wium (2023). It illustrates how they have been used to metamorphise western Art music into this indigenous artform of Trinidad and Tobago.

From Box to Cajón: Peta's Heritage

Eve A. Ma, Palomino Productions

From Box to Cajón: Peta's Heritage is a documentary short film (30 min.) about the inter-connection between Afro-Peruvian musical (percussion) instruments and Afro-Peruvian history. The documentary shows not only how a community under terrible pressure (slavery) could essentially make something out of nothing and create a musical tradition complete with brand new instruments, but how a little-known community could create a musical instrument (the cajón) that is now used all over the world in other musical forms such as flamenco, Latin jazz, and rock.

NOTE: this is a fine-cut of the film; the documentary is partly in English and partly in Spanish with English subtitles.

11D. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Interrogating Gender and Identity

Chair: Susan Gary Walters, SIL Global/ Dallas International University

Sing Music, Experience Change: New England Sacred Harp as a Realization of Political Ideology

Christopher Andrew Hodges, Boston University

Contemporary scholarship on the Sacred Harp tradition focuses on two aspects: 1) the community singers experience through music making; and 2) the pseudo-religiosity of it all. While these aspects are crucial to the experience of modern singers globally, they are inadequate to explain the revival of Sacred Harp in New England in the 1970s through the efforts of the late Larry Gordon, a figure whose primary motivations were political. In this paper, I will describe how Gordon engaged Sacred Harp's peculiar performance practice with New Left social politics to create the unique flavor of singing in New England. Far from a Northern coastal elite appropriation of rural Southern culture, Gordon's style of Sacred Harp enacted the Marxist principles that he worked for as a member of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) on his early band of singers. Though Gordon's overt political activism diminished as he aged, Sacred Harp singing in New England has continued to support political activism, especially for LGBTQ+ activists. In the debate between New England Sacred Harp's status as a transplanted versus revived musical tradition, its political dimension provides a third option: that it is a product of the New Left political movements in the particular culture of New England. This tension explains the incompatibility New England singers often experience when encountering singers from other regions of the United States better than explanations centered around revivalism, tradition, or religiosity.

Mapping the Functions of Local Song Genres: A Global Analysis Using the Song Genre Dataset

Susan Gary Walters, SIL Global/ Dallas International University

This study investigates how local song genres function within ethnolinguistic communities, asking: What different roles do songs play globally and how do they vary across communities? To answer these questions, R, an open-source programming language and environment designed for statistical computing, data analysis, and visualization, was used to analyze data from the Song Genre Dataset, composed of more than 100 song genres (with 90 attributes each) from communities across more than 20 countries. Differing from previous efforts such as Cantometrics (Wood et al. 2022) and the Natural History of Song (S. Mehr et al. 2018), this newly created dataset prioritizes semantic (referential) and pragmatic (social meaning) categories—purpose, transmission paths, vitality, and societal functions—rather than musical form, which often requires specialized training to evaluate. The Song Genre Dataset is built from a survey that community members complete, naming and describing song genres they perceive as significant. This approach

allows them to document and preserve their musical traditions while promoting inclusivity and local agency in musical research. It also allows minoritized communities to see their artistic communication genres (Schrag 2018, 10) represented alongside those of larger groups. Participants have enjoyed the survey process, finding it a link to cherished memories and shared identities. This presentation will reveal preliminary findings and emerging patterns. It will also introduce the Song Genre Dataset and its associated Song Genre Survey, now available in eight languages, inviting broader participation to deepen our global understanding of music's diverse functions across cultures.

Latinidad and the Billboard Hot Latin Songs Chart (1986-2024)

Daniel Party, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Studies of popular music often rely on Billboard Magazine's data to quantify the success of an artist or song. For Latin American and Latinx popular music, the key source has been Billboard's Hot Latin Songs (HLS) chart. Established in 1986, the HLS chart initially relied on airplay from Spanish-language radio stations in the United States. Since 2012, its methodology has expanded to include digital sales, radio airplay, and online streaming. While other Billboard charts, particularly the Hot 100, have been the object of many studies, to the best of our knowledge the Hot Latin Songs chart has not been an object of academic inquiry.

Our study aims to address this gap by developing a publicly-available dataset of the HLS chart between 1986 and 2024. This dataset enables us to explore several key questions regarding the changing nature of "Latin Music" and "latinidad": How does Billboard's definition of "Latin Music" sound like and how has that sound changed since 1986? Are patterns in Latino migration reflected in the chart? Are trends in interaction among different Latino communities reflected in "inter-latino" song collaborations (Party 2012)? How does the representation of women in the HLS chart compare with the one in other Billboard charts (LaFrance et al 2018; Watson 2019)? Ultimately, this study will help us better understand the ways in which the music industry has contributed to the construction of the idea of Latin Music, and it will provide a counterpoint to recent ethnomusicological explorations of the concept (Byrd 2015; Moreno 2023).

The Warrior Songstress: Transcendent Listening Aesthetics, Memory, and Music Making for Black Women in the Central Valley of California

Chiquitha Aminsalehi, University of California, Merced

This paper examines the rich yet underexplored gospel and soul music practices in a small town in California. It focuses on how cultural identity, resilience, and intergenerational storytelling impact women of color. Although analyses of Black gospel and soul music typically focus on urban centers such as Los Angeles and Oakland, this research redirects attention to the semi-urban region of Merced, California. By analyzing media and collecting oral histories, I reveal how gospel and soul music in these communities mirrors

the migration experiences of African Americans who came during the Great Migration and continued establishing themselves in California's agricultural core.

This project adopts an interdisciplinary framework from sound studies, voice studies, and performance studies to examine how gospel and soul practices serve as acts of cultural preservation in contexts often overlooked by mainstream narratives of Black musical production. This investigation aims to amplify women's voices within this community, illustrating how musical traditions are shaped by regional influences, economic challenges, and a profound spiritual commitment to their heritage. These practices act not only as modes of worship but also as forms of resistance against cultural erasure, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity amid systemic marginalization.

11E. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

In the Classroom

Chair: Robin P. Harris, Dallas International University

Hindustani Classical Music and Evolving Hybrid Pedagogy: Experiential Recounting and Implications for Learning and Practise

Sumeet Anand, Visiting Associate Professor Department of Ethnomusicology Herb Alpert School of Music, University of California, Los Angeles

For centuries, Hindustani classical music has been taught as an oral tradition, where the pupil sits in front of the master and learns by watching and listening to them and repeating until they get it right, to the master's satisfaction. Besides other sociological changes, rapid advancements in information communication technology in the past few decades coupled with COVID19 period have resulted in an increased usage of zoom/skype for remote learning and audio-video recordings of the lessons used for studying afterwards. My qualitative research fieldwork was conducted in 2021-22 as part of a year-long research grant aimed at understanding the learning experiences among students who mainly study online and occasionally offline with their master, now a largely accepted practice. The enquiry was made broadly at two levels, one to examine the efficacy of online as a medium for musical skill and knowledge as information transfer among both vocalists and instrumentalists. This highlighted the technical and technological aspects that seemed to be working fine as well as those which needed improvements. And two, the intangible experiences resulting from learning a performing art from a master alongwith the inseparable values and lifestyle by being in the same physical space with them at the same time. This revealed experiences spanning across behavioural aspects, creative inspiration, energetic connection, personal and professional bonding and their influence in the musical expression, naturally, a more complex phenomenon. The findings help us in understanding the role of hybrid pedagogy in shaping the learning and practise in this space.

Integrating Analysis, Embodiment, and Ethnography: A Participatory Approach to Teaching Ethnoarts

Robin P. Harris, Dallas International University

One of the pedagogical challenges in teaching the topic of ethnoarts in academic and workshop settings is the need to help participants gain a nuanced understanding of indigenous art forms. In addition, students need to learn about ethnographic inquiry and how to study local artistry in ways that demonstrate respect for arts practitioners. Individual courses often emphasize either an analytical approach, embodied knowledge (bimusicality), or ethnographic methods. This paper proposes a pedagogy of participatory methods that combine all three for a deeper level of understanding. Details about these approaches will be outlined as well as a brief overview of a Siberian round dance genre—*ohuokhai*—that serves as the case study for student engagement. This integrated approach has been taught in multiple languages to over 1300 participants from more than 60 countries. Data from pre- and post-course feedback shows strong evidence of the effectiveness of the course. The data comes from a post-course quantitative survey covering the learning outcomes of the course and the students' perceptions of where they were “pre-class” and “post-class” in relation to those learning outcomes. Since 2015, this data has helped us to measure the effectiveness of these integrated methods. The presentation will explore discoveries from the field of neurology, providing support for why the participatory approaches outlined in this presentation are so effective in achieving student learning outcomes.

Reimagining Lutherie Education in Argentina and Brazil: Towards Inclusive, Collective, and Sustainable Frameworks

Rubens De La Corte, CUNY Graduate Center

This paper examines recent transformations in lutherie education in Argentina and Brazil through a transdisciplinary and intersectional lens, highlighting the promising involvement of marginalized groups such as women, non-binary individuals, queer communities, and racialized artisans. It draws from recent fieldwork case studies conducted at public institutions like Facultad de Artes de la Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, Universidad Nacional de las Artes de Buenos Aires, and Universidade Federal do Paraná while also considering the experiences of current students and graduates. What educational frameworks may possibly disrupt or challenge patriarchal systems that could hinder equitable participation in lutherie? By examining innovative interdisciplinary curricula that promote collaboration among diverse students and faculty, the research raises questions about how these models can foster a collective ethos and encourage shared resource use (Godemann 2008; Tasdemir & Gazo 2020). Could these communal educational frameworks defy traditional mentor-apprentice dynamics that often lead to exclusionary habits? Might they facilitate access to quality custom handmade instruments for musicians across various economic backgrounds (Gibson & Warren 2021)? I argue that public education initiatives are essential for expanding access to lutherie training, addressing economic disparities, and enriching communities through sundry perspectives. Institutions that incorporate sustainable, locally sourced materials and cooperative practices could enhance collective learning and amplify underrepresented voices. This study aims to identify transdisciplinary structures that might empower

labor dynamics, potentially advancing a broad, groundbreaking lutherie market (Frater 2019). Ultimately, this paper seeks to open up new possibilities for fostering diversity, inclusivity, and collaborative learning in lutherie education.

Digital Humanities in the World Music Classroom: Fostering Peer-Built Diversity and Inclusivity

Scott Spencer, University of Southern California, Thornton School of Music; Giulia Bratosin, University of Southern California, Thornton School of Music

An effective world music classroom encourages engagement, personal or situated experience, and inclusive practices to transcend tokenism and encourage an egalitarian representation of musical traditions (Allsup, 2016). Pedagogical approaches have tended to feature particular forms of classical musics in ensemble settings to encourage “bi-musicality,” with deep dives into those traditions with extensive ethnographic and musicological documentation. Yet students are often most eager to explore their own heritage through experiences on campus and in the surrounding community. In our large World Music class, we encourage students to undertake personal fieldwork on campus and around Los Angeles. Their level of engagement as they explore living musical communities is incredibly high, and is one of the most vital and important experiences they take from the class (Woodford, 2019). In most teaching frameworks, each of these experiences is submitted as an assignment, and tossed aside as the student finishes their semester and moves back to their academic focus. To counter this trend and offer a collaborative learning alternative, we’ve developed a digital humanities project to allow students to present their field experiences to their peers. Designed as a curated teaching resource, it functions as a means to enable student agency, positionality and pride (Golubchikov, 2015), and has become an ongoing field guide for the class and the campus community. This paper will explore the possibilities of digital pedagogical tools giving agency to students as they themselves build an inclusive ethnomusicology classroom and foster personal engagement with local musical communities.

11F. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Exchanges and Transactions

Chair: Felix Morgenstern, University of Limerick

Down in the River to Pray: Animist Exchange in Nordic Fiddling

Jameson Foster, University of Colorado Boulder

In a contemporary Western world quick to prescribe binaries between the living/non-living, organic/inorganic, and animate/inanimate, Animism provides an alternative, even antagonistic worldview which prescribes spirit, life, and agency into the beings and land around us. Animism establishes and cultivates a mode of relation-building to the world we inhabit, and thus has been gaining more

popular attention and imagination in recent years as an antidote to these modern ideological binaries which enable the exploitation and abuse of the non-human realm. In search for evidence of animism in European cultural heritage, traces of animism and animist worldview are indeed present throughout ancient Nordic history in the myths and sagas, and have received increased attention from scholars in recent years. However, the relationship between animism and the region's centuries-old fiddling tradition has been left out of the conversation, despite the fiddler's customary role as tradition bearer or cultural custodian of their community, and thus a living source of lore and legend. River and waterfall weaves throughout the lore of Nordic fiddling and its legends such as Myllarguten and Ole Bull, with the river even serving as a sacred place of refuge for fiddlers targeted by the pietist movement. By investigating this animist agency of the river spirits fossegrim, bäckahäst, and näck, and their roles as teachers, mentors, and antagonists to aspiring fiddlers, this paper aims to bring the animist story-world of Nordic fiddlers into the ever-growing conversation of Nordic animist perspectives and broader discussions of ecomusicology.

Intercultural Transactions: Irish Traditional Music, Nationalism, and Nostalgia in Germany

Felix Morgenstern, University of Limerick

This paper locates the experiences of German Irish traditional music practitioners in the broader framework of modern European history. Drawing upon extensive fieldwork, it illustrates the ongoing centrality of class privilege, cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984), acquired technical prowess (Slominski 2020) and socially sustained practices of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005) when it comes to installing gatekeeping mechanisms of inclusivity in the primary performance and transmission settings of German Irish traditional music sessions and workshops. As is shown, while still adapting some regulations of belonging shaped in the music's place of origin, such arrangements ultimately serve to decouple the trans-local German community of practice from its Irish authenticating center. Moreover, this presentation interrogates such instances of anxious control as part of a much larger cultural anxiety, tied to the abuses of German folk music for extreme nationalist and racist propaganda during the Nazi regime (1933–45). The author posits that nostalgic German gazes upon Ireland have accomplished the transferal and sublimation of patriotic German sentiments onto the canvas of a proximal, white European musical tradition. Further, unraveling distinctions between historical, anti-colonial and expansive-imperial, registers of Irish and German musical exceptionalism (Applegate 2017; White 1998) proves key to comprehending the political alignment of former German post-war revival artists with Irish folk songs of rebellion against a colonial master. In the current moment, such critical inquiry reminds ethnomusicologists of music's remarkable capacity to sound contemporary strains of extreme nationalism, while potentially hiding its disguised racist and hegemonic masculine undercurrents behind a seemingly benign façade.

Acoustemologies of Labor: Sound, Music, and Survival in the Workplaces of Adivasi Tea Tribes on Assam's Tea Plantations

Upatyaka Dutta, University of Toronto

In the workplaces of tea plantations in Assam, India, including tea fields and processing factories, the laboring Adivasi tea tribes engage in listening, sounding, and music. As descendants of communities deceitfully migrated from eastern India as indentured laborers during British colonial rule, their sonic practices reflect the enduring legacies of colonial exploitation, and ongoing postcolonial racial and capitalist violence. Drawing on theories of Plantationocene (Barua 2024; Moore and Arosoaie 2022; Haraway 2016) and world-making (Tsing 2017), and sound studies' exploration of the interplay between sound and sociocultural life (Samuels et al. 2010), I analyze how everyday sounds and music of Adivasi tea tribes reveal both the persistence of exploitative practices, and their narratives of survival and belonging within Assam's plantations. I focus on the voices of Adivasi women pluckers—talking and singing—the commands of superiors and Adivasi responses, and the ways of listening and sounding within tea processing factories. I ask, what do the communication and singing of Adivasi daily wage workers sound like? What do their sounded interactions with non-human agents reveal about their shared experiences of exploitation in plantations? How do the Adivasi engage in world-making through listening and sounding amidst machines, rigid schedules, and market demands? To answer these questions, I employ “acoustemology” (Feld 2015) and “deep hanging out” (Geertz 1973) during ethnographic research conducted across three tea plantations, spanning busy and slack seasons of tea production. By centering Adivasi sounds and music, this paper connects postcolonial struggles for survival and belonging to broader conversations on planetary change.

Broadway's Bars and Stars: Celebrity Capitalism and Brand Identity in Country Music

Holly Riley, Middle Tennessee State University

This paper explores intersections of end-stage capitalism and celebrity iconography through an analysis of venues owned by country music artists. From multi-destination empires like Dollywood and Margaritaville to the expanding series of artist-branded venues in and beyond Lower Broadway, the star-owned country bar provides intriguing insight into how the industry brands its own celebrity capitalism. Through and beyond music, bars like Lainey Wilson's “Bell Bottoms Up Bar,” Dierks Bentley's “Whiskey Row,” and Kid Rock's “Big Ass Honky Tonk & Rock ‘n’ Roll Steakhouse” perpetuate country music's symbiotic music-tourism industry and continually define the recognizable symbols of the genre through coding and branding. I employ ethnographic inquiry and reference my ongoing practices of being-in-community in these spaces as a fiddle player building relationships and musical community in these spaces.

This paper continues a thread of discussion from my previous work on country music and changing cultural perceptions of violence, where I examined sites of country music performance where recent mass shootings had occurred. Across multiple sites of violence and industry, a significant theme was a marketed push to “return to normal” and continue business operations in the wake of tragedy; this theme became perhaps even more apparent in the larger country music industry's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the wake of

many 21st-century reckonings and controversies facing the genre, the celebrity capitalism found within these bar and venue operations provides a lens through which to analyze the ways country stars and businesses mitigate controversy through a multi-faceted brand approach.

11G. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Noise and Silence

Chair: Christopher Copley, New York University

Unsilenced Bodies: Trauma in Queer Noise Music

Tyler Jordan, Duke University

Queer noise musicians in the US explore survival, social crisis, and natural decay, creating embodied performances that invite interplay between musician, audience, and environment. Through the lens of auto-destructive performance art, Queer medical practices, and electronic music history, three Queer harsh noise acts from the Northeastern US act as case studies for staging medical, political, and familial trauma as a method to free themselves and the Queer community from institutional silencing. In live performance, both Farrah Faucet and Gyna Bootleg use amplified medical equipment stemming from their chronic disease treatments as embodied musical objects. Pittsburgh duo Niku Daruma explores parental and spousal physical abuse on stage through juxtaposing sections of electronic noise and physical altercations. These physical objects and interpersonal relationships are made central to performance, calling on the witnessing audience to engage in a communal act of transfiguring its power and affect. The act of witnessing is made potent through the do-it-yourself social spheres surrounding these artists, which allow for consensual interactive exploration of traumatic themes including sexual violence, chronic disease, and Queer struggle, and instills a collective language of bodily communication that rejects coercive elements. This research aims to make Queer US noise music a distinct practice, separate from Japanese noise music and British power electronics, through these social factors and performance practices, highlighting ways in which Queer noise performers unsilence personal and collective trauma.

“The Sound of a Positive Dollar:” The Chicago Bucket Boys and Contestations of Public Spaces Within Chicago’s Street Music Noise Ordinance Debates

Christopher Copley, New York University

In 2017, the ACLU threatened to sue the city of Chicago, as it was on track to pass a restrictive bill that would severely limit street musicians from performing in the downtown “Loop.” Though the city has vacillated on these regulations, these recent debates are so contentious because they target a group of young, Black drummers from the South Side that self-identity through their unique five-

gallon hardware bucket “sound” and a mentorship network that calls on young drummers to make a “positive dollar” with their music: the Chicago Bucket Boys. While many Chicagoans refer to the Bucket Boys as local celebrities and “the face of Chicago,” others reject their connection, describing them as droning “noise,” and instigating grassroots campaigns to make changes to the city’s noise ordinance and mobilize the police on them. Through interviews with Chicago street musicians, audience observations, and historical mappings of noise ordinance enforcement, this project argues that struggles surrounding where the Bucket Boys can spread their liberatory “sound of a positive dollar” are more than just struggles over sound regulation - these are also struggles surrounding who is included in the “image” of the city and who has access to the city’s public spaces. While music scholars are often removed from debates surrounding noise ordinances, this project uses previous work in acoustemology, acoustic territories, and sonic placemaking to demonstrate how music scholars can enter these conversations and promote new ways of imagining city sound regulations that resist weaponization and retain the “public” in “public spaces.”

Silencing the Nature: The Aesthetic-Moralism and Westernization Beyond the Mountainous Silence Trail in Taiwan

Yu Hsuan Liao, Ethnomusicology, Department of Music, Duke University

On July 18, 2022, World Listening Day, Taiwan was awarded the World’s First Quiet Trail Status on the Cuifeng Lake Circular Trail (翠峰湖環湖步道) by Quiet Parks International. In this trail, the quietest measured volume is less than 25 decibels, which is almost lower than the hearing range of the human ear. In Taiwan, it has become increasingly common in recent years to describe the mountain forest environments as “silence,” using these terms to convey the soundscape or the listening experience that brings a sense of immanent peace and healing.

However, defining quietest based on non-human noise and lowest decibel level recorded at a specific moment raises methodological questions, as mountain soundscapes are never truly “silent” in Taiwan. By analyzing the case of the “Quiet Mountain Trails Project” on the Cuifeng Lake Circular Trail, this article asks how “natural silence” become the momentum that constructed the relationship between humans and mountain soundscape. I aim to discuss such “silence” narrative, in fact, set an anthropocentric and American aesthetic standards appeal as environmental ethics for bio-soundscape and listening. Therefore, this article challenges the Western-centric assumption promoted by natural recorders that “the quieter the natural environment, the better” in the context of Taiwan and advocates for embracing all sounds in nature through multiple listening modes.

“Loud and Unnecessary Noise”: Drum Circles in Miami Beach as a Space of Socio-Political Dissensus

Hannah Marie Junco, University of Pennsylvania

Miami Florida’s tourist economy has not only shaped its rhythmaculture but made it progressively expensive for locals to access their own cultural spaces; in consequence, since the 2010s, drum circles on the beach have become prevalent spaces where locals gather in co-creative “flow” and sociability. In 2023, the South Pointe Beach drum circle grew into a crowd of hundreds of participants,

garnering attention from media, tourists, and the police. This weekly event transformed into a socio-political movement, protesting to change the Miami Beach ordinances that list drumming as a subversive “loud and unnecessary noise.” The city’s attitude towards drumming testifies to the cultural politics that continue to systemically ostracize the drum from public spaces. Moreover, many of the undocumented Latin American participants who initially founded the gathering retreated into silence, leading us to question, what voices are necessary or unnecessary noise? Although the South Pointe Drum circle was shut down in 2023, the tensions caused by issues of class, first amendment rights, and privatization of public space has not dissipated. My ethnographic research allows the voices of the drum circle to speak for themselves, enabling their agency and urgency; furthermore, I draw from critical theory such as Jacques Ranciere and Lauren Berlant, as well as anthropologists such as Igor Cherstitch, Martin Holbraad, and Laura Kunreuther to situate the South Pointe Miami beach drum circle as a space of socio-political dissensus where collective “flow” constructs an urban utopia that is simultaneously as public as it is “off the grid.”

11H. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Singing and Spirituality

Chair: Golam Rabbani, Toronto Metropolitan University

Bondye fè l: Singing Resilience in Central Ohio’s Haitian Protestant Churches

Ben Griffin, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

Haitian communities in Central Ohio have grown by leaps and bounds in the last several years, as migrants entering the United States under Temporary Protected Status (TPS, known colloquially as pwogram Bidèn nan - the Biden program) join Haitians from states like Florida and New York in the search for plentiful jobs, affordable housing, but, above all, safety for their families (Hulseley 2023, Orozco 2023). Such growth led to tensions in cities like Springfield, where racist rumors parroted by politicians and pundits in the past election cycle made it a focal point for anti-immigrant hatred, now translated into official policy in the second Trump presidency. The songs and hymns of Haitian Protestantism, an under-researched but increasingly influential expression of Haitian religiosity both in Haiti and the diaspora, speak to this present moment. They echo a collective trauma born of decades of insecurity and upheaval coupled with a firm belief that God has delivered them before and will do it again: Bondye fè l, “God did it,” one popular worship song proclaims (Louis 2015). In this paper, I will explore this music as a site of remembering and source of resilience in uncertain times. As they sing these songs, believers recount the struggles of the past while also claiming supernatural help for their future.

Spiritual Resonances of Maizbhandari Songs: Eco-Centrism, Adivasi Rights, and Resistance in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh

Golam Rabbani, Toronto Metropolitan University

This paper examines how Maizbhandari spiritual songs from the Chittagong region of Bangladesh advocate for the rights of Adivasi communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts through thematic emphases on land restitution, eco-centric values, and collective resistance. Originating in the late nineteenth century through the music of Syed Ahmadullah (1826-1906) in the village of Maizbhandar, this tradition has evolved from local Sufi-oriented devotion into a subversive cultural form addressing broader socio-political injustices. Drawing on Hans Harder (2011), Abdur Sazzad Khan (2013), and Faridur Rahman (2022), I argue that these mystic compositions effectively champion Indigenous causes by foregrounding forced displacement, ecological destruction, and the need for inter-communal unity. In celebrating the eco-centric philosophies shared by Adivasi and local communities, these songs promote intercommunal solidarity and a vision of inclusive collective resistance. Despite their ostensibly devotional nature, coded references to sacred geographies and communal harmony transform Maizbhandari performances into arenas of political discourse, urging collective action against oppressive state apparatuses. This study employs ethnography, textual analysis, archival resources, and performance studies to situate Maizbhandari songs within a broader context of ongoing grassroots activism, dynamic spiritual unity, and postcolonial critique, underscoring the interplay between religion and politics. Its findings reveal that Maizbhandari spiritual music can serve as a galvanizing force for social justice, echoing the aspirations of historically marginalized groups. This exploration underscores the transformative power of folk spiritual practices to articulate communal identity, foster Adivasi resistance, and broaden music's capacity to enhance eco-centric values and shape complex socio-political realities in Bangladesh.

Singing the Walī: Moulay Abdeslam, Resonant Reverence, and the Poetics of Devotion

Hicham Chami, Yale University

Jbāl l-'Alam, the shrine of 13th-century Sufi walī (saint) Moulay Abdeslam in northwest Morocco, is both a sacred and cultural touchstone for the Jebala people native to this region. More than a pilgrimage site, it is a locus of collective memory, wherein devotional music serves as a dynamic vehicle for preserving and reinterpreting the saint's legacy, fostering communal participation and shaping spiritual experiences through sound.

In this paper, I argue that Jebli music operates as a lieu de mémoire, continuously renewing and reinforcing the presence of Moulay Abdeslam in the Jebala identity. Through a process I term Resonant Reverence, music becomes an active force in shaping cultural memory--blending improvisation, affective engagement, and embodied practice to sustain a living connection between past and present for its practitioners and listeners.

To illustrate this premise, I analyze song lyrics, historical texts, and ethnographic observations to reveal how this music encodes themes of sacrality, pilgrimage, unity, and affect. In doing so, it articulates shared histories and reinforces social bonds within the Jebala community, while ensuring the saint's enduring relevance across generations.

By examining the praxis of Jebli music through the lens of Resonant Reverence, my research highlights the interplay of memory, identity, and resistance in the enmeshed arena of Moroccan sacred and popular music traditions. More broadly, this study ultimately shows how marginalized communities mobilize indigenous music as a counter-narrative to cultural erasure, asserting their agency through sound and devotion while negotiating the boundaries between the sacred and the secular.

“Echoes of Devotion: Sonic Sufism, Senegalese Pop, and the Afrodiaspora”

Timothy Mangin, Boston College

Sufi music and practice are central to daily life in Senegal, where 90 percent practice Sufism. Senegalese Sufi identity extends globally in various ways, such as students studying abroad or emigrants maintaining ties to kith and kin through social networks and remittances to families, communities, and religious orders. Senegalese artists also amplify Sufism through their work by incorporating Sufi practices, sharing narratives of miracles, praising leaders in performances, referencing Islamic theology, and naming sacred sites. Mbalax, Senegal's most popular urban dance music, plays a major role in this production and reproduction of Sufism in mainstream culture, creating what I call “sonic Sufism.”

This paper argues that “sonic Sufism” in mbalax plays a crucial role in creating and sustaining a Senegalese Sufi cosmopolitan identity. It does so by incorporating Sufi themes, practices, theology, and praise into an urban dance music rooted in Afrodiasporic urban popular and dance music such as jazz, R&B, and salsa. Through ethnographic observations and analysis of Blackness and Sufism in mbalax performances, the paper demonstrates how popular music serves as a medium for expressing an alternative means of Sufi devotion. I examine how musicians and audiences engage with Sufi elements in mbalax performances and everyday life, highlighting mbalax's ability to foster a sense of cultural citizenship where Blackness, Wolofness, and Sufism intersect.

11I. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Jazz and Coloniality in the Netherlands

Chair: Floris Schuiling, Utrecht University

This panel explores the connections between jazz and coloniality, focusing on the Netherlands, a country that has played a large role in both colonial history and European jazz. Various scholars have advocated a global jazz studies, arguing that this music spread across the world from its earliest beginnings. This has been a particularly important argument for the study of jazz in Europe, where the rise of ‘free’ or ‘non-idiomatic’ improvisation has been understood as a significant development of global jazz history. However,

explicit considerations of coloniality in such accounts remain rare: not only does this entail an inadequate conception of the ‘global’, it also specifically disavows the role of European colonialism in jazz’s history, including its very origins in African-American culture. The papers in this panel cover the earliest mentions of jazz in the Netherlands up to contemporary practices, and explore a range of issues at the intersection of jazz and coloniality. Although our scope extends far beyond ‘non-idiomatic music’, all papers contribute to a rethinking of idiomaticity, inspired by Derrida’s (1998) aphoristic characterisation of idiom: ‘I only speak one language, and it is not mine’. From the ascription of jazz idioms to black Surinamese musicians in the 1920s to the search for lost languages through improvisation by contemporary Maluku-Dutch musicians, and from the appropriation of jazz into Eurocentric conservatory programmes to the rejection of jazz by ‘non-idiomatic’ improvisers, we use idiom as a lens through which to understand the colonial power structures that have shaped jazz history.

Postcolonial Melancholia and the Sonic Golden Age: White Supremacist Nation-Building in the Netherlands

Thomas Overdijk, Utrecht University

As Dutch colonial power waned in the 19th century, centralization efforts by the government and “intellectuals” in civil society pushed a nation-building narrative that crafted the myths of a “Golden Age”. State-sanctioned crimes such as slavery and genocide in the colonies were sanitized through socio-discursive schemes that represented it as a time of great human flourishing on the one hand, while further entrenching age-old notions of white supremacy on the other. In this paper I argue that popular music provided a particularly salient avenue for the dissemination of such ideologies through a musical exoticism that sprang from what Paul Gilroy calls “postcolonial melancholia”. I examine ways in which Dutch ethnomusicologists such as Wil Gilbert and Jaap Kunst racialized jazz by labeling it “primitive music”. They expressly mourned the loss of colonial power and staged musical propaganda events with the attempt of instilling the white public with a sense of superiority and pride regarding the overseas territories and its peoples. Ethnomusicologists partnered with colonial interest groups to organize exhibitions with “human zoos” where people from the colonies were forced to perform music for white audiences. Members of the public were invited to ridicule them, or conduct ethnographic studies at such events, and it was here that we witness some of the first jazz performances in the country by Surinamese musicians who were billed as African American artists, later made to perform at vaudevillian cabarets that gave white society a new means for self-actualization at the expense of dehumanizing a perceived colonial “Other”.

Whiteness and Free Improvisation in the Netherlands c. 1970

Floris Schuiling, Utrecht University

During the 1960s, European musicians and critics began to differentiate so-called ‘free’ or ‘non-idiomatic’ (Bailey 1992) improvisation from improvisation based on jazz or other musical traditions. As Banerji (2021) has shown, this supposedly neutral ‘free’ musical space is often understood as implicitly white amongst contemporary musicians, in contrast to the more ‘conventional’

idioms of non-white musical traditions. Earlier, Lewis (2004) already signalled that such a conception of improvisation could work to erase African-American leadership in service of a white supremacist understanding of innovation and modernity, in ways that ‘would have astonished first-generation European free musicians’. In this paper I argue that this erasure was in fact already at work in the discourse of Dutch musicians and critics of the first generation. I describe how they distinguished free improvisation from American free jazz around 1970, especially from the more spiritually oriented and pan-Africanist later work of John Coltrane. This distinction was predicated on the idea that European improvisers represented a logical next step in the autonomous development of music history, whereas African-American musicians supposedly only reproduced existing musical forms, and their concern with religion and spirituality was deemed ridiculous by white Dutch intellectuals. When the Union for Improvising Musicians (BIM) was founded in 1971, which would enable government funding that allowed Dutch improvised music to bloom, these ideas were institutionalised in its conditions for membership, leading to the exclusion of migrated African-American as well as Dutch musicians of colour, who successfully protested these policies in the course of the 1970s.

Formal Dutch Jazz Education and the Colonial Politics of Power

Loes Rusch, Utrecht University

This paper explores how institutionalized discourses of knowledge as an exclusionary and exclusive Eurocentric privilege have impacted and shaped the development of jazz and improvised music in the Netherlands. Through an exploration of the institutionalization of jazz education in the Netherlands, it explores how the Western Eurocentric modernity has colonized knowledge systems and fields, imposing a classed, raced and gendered lens on the circuits of cultural production, while dismissing other practices as immoral, barbaric, and primitivist. As such, it critically engages with decolonial and critical race theory to interrogate how jazz education has been shaped by Eurocentric epistemologies. The paper draws on archival research (conservatory archives, National Jazz Archive, personal documentation) to investigate institutional policies, curricula, and selection and assessment criteria in Dutch jazz education. Additionally, interviews with musicians and educators provide insights into the lived experiences of those navigating these structures. By synthesizing historical documents, policy analysis, and personal narratives, this paper uncovers the ways in which institutionalized jazz education in the Netherlands has upheld exclusionary knowledge systems while marginalizing alternative cultural and artistic traditions. As such, it aims to shed light on the institutionalization of improvised music education in the Netherlands and its complex relationships to questions of race, diaspora, national identity and cultural politics.

Menjadi Perantau: Delayed Diaspora and Indigeneity in Maluku-Dutch Improvised Music

Reïnda Hullij, Utrecht University

The Indonesian term merantau means to go away from your homeplace and create a living somewhere else; perantau are those who do so. Although these terms are nowadays often used within Maluku-Dutch communities, merantau has a particular significance to our

postcolonial situation. Since the Maluku-Dutch communities were promised a new, independent nation by the Dutch government in return for fighting against Indonesian independence, merantau only became necessary for these communities after the realization that the Dutch promise could not be fulfilled. This paper explores the idea of Maluku-Dutch communities as delayed diasporic communities and how improvised music became an important aspect in the creation of their new diasporic identities. Following Maluku-Dutch historians Wim Manuhutu and Ron Habiboe I argue that Maluku-Dutch communities seek the foundation of these new diasporic identities in the Indigenous knowledges and traditions of the Moluccan islands from which they hail. Nevertheless, as a result of Dutch colonization, the actual knowledge of these traditions is scarce; this is best seen in the inability of speaking and understanding Maluku languages, resulting in further loss of knowledge about Indigenous musics and traditions. This paper argues for the notion of improvised music as an alternative foundation of Indigenous knowledges. Maluku-Dutch musicians Monica Akihary and Gino-Cochise actively incorporate Indigenous languages and traditions specific to their origin island in their music, yet their indigeneity is celebrated and understood by several Maluku-Dutch communities. Music such as theirs thus create the possibility for Maluku-Dutch people to form new identities and become diasporic merantau communities.

11J. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Sounding Black Musical Histories

Chair: Fredara M. Hadley, The Julliard School

Internal/External Sustainability Practices: Toward a Critical Fusion Development (CFD) in Arts Based Education

Andre Jamal Cardine, Indiana University, Bloomington

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) continues to frame arts education as “transformative”—a term whose ephemeral nature makes it appealing across policy, philanthropy, and nonprofit discourse. Yet the criteria for transformation often go un/under-examined: Who defines it? And Who benefits from its promise? What are the metrics for assessing student transformation? In this paper, I interrogate how “transformative” functions as a placeholder for structural change without addressing the material conditions of teaching artist labor, funding instability, or policy incoherence. Drawing from my work as School Partnerships Manager at the Beverly Arts Center, I introduce Critical Fusion Development (CFD), a framework for assessing how institutional mergers, pedagogical mandates, and labor models either sustain or exploit arts educators. I analyze current tensions between CPS’s move to make external vendors supplemental, rather than fundamental, to the arts education curriculum, and its shortage of certified arts teachers.

This study is situated within the broader context of what I term sociopolitical chaos: the 2024–25 school year alone saw a \$500M CPS budget deficit, CTA service cuts, anti-DEI attacks on the Black Student Success Plan, and six changes to the CPS Board of Education. These conditions shape how, where, and whether transformation is even possible.

Using institutional ethnography and stakeholder interviews—including former BAC partnership managers, and teaching artists who’ve served as both internal and external educators—this paper urges ethnomusicologists to interrogate not only pedagogical content, but the labor infrastructures behind it, and examine the ways that teaching artists voices become siloed and silenced in systemic policy.

Collected: Creating a Museum Black History Podcast

Krystal Klingenberg, Smithsonian, National Museum of American History

The Collected Podcast, a project from the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History debuted with its first season on the history of Contemporary Black Feminism in 2022. Its second season on the Musical Genius of Black Women launched in February of 2025. In this paper, I discuss the making of the second season of the podcast: the struggles and choices in bringing it to air and the ultimate challenge of making nuanced content accessible to a general audience. Season two looks at the work of Black women in popular music, exploring the work of Ella Fitzgerald, Tina Turner, Donna Summer, Bernice Johnson Reagon, and Beyoncé Knowles Carter to understand what we might take from their work and life stories to understand their genius. Using material from the National Collection as a way into their stories, each episode distills the life and work of these artists into easily consumable content, rigorously researched and rendered, with the help of scholars and writers in the field. The making of the podcast raises questions about how we might use the audio format to represent material culture and reach an audience outside of our classrooms and exhibit halls.

Thomas W. Talley's Harlem Renaissance Musicology

Benjamin P. Skoronski, Cornell University

How did Harlem Renaissance intellectuals theorize Black music? In the 1910s and ‘20s US, Black intellectuals were engaged in a scholarly study of Black folksong (c.f. Work 1915; Dett 1918; Locke 1925). Now a few generations removed from emancipation, Black America faced a crisis of how to reckon with the folk music of enslavement: should this repertoire be left behind for the benefit of progress, revitalized out of racial pride, or developed into a new Black art music?

An influential thinker in this discourse was Thomas W. Talley, a chemistry professor at Fisk who exhaustively collected Black folksongs. Throughout his oeuvre, Talley argued that the racial uplift of the Black people was located in their folk music, which he read as a domain of both moral guidance and scientific theorization. By returning to the folksongs of the past, Black America could chart a progressive intellectual future.

In this paper I argue that Talley and his interlocutors spearheaded a reevaluation of Black folk music by Harlem Renaissance intellectuals, advancing a discourse that sought to locate the racial uplift of the New Negro in the folksong of the Old. Institutional musicology has long acknowledged its exclusion of scholars and musics on the basis of gender and race (Cusick 1999; Levitz 2018), but the time is ripe to critically evaluate the scholarship marginalized at the discipline’s founding. Involved yet ultimately excluded

from the institutional formation of US musicology, Talley instead found widespread influence within a contemporaneous discourse from Black intellectuals—a Harlem Renaissance musicology.

Researching Sonic Gentrification as a Catalyst for Ethical Engagement and Service Learning

Stefan Fiol, University of Cincinnati

In the West End, a predominantly Black neighborhood in Cincinnati, the sounds of gentrification portend new economic futures for some alongside further destruction of the community's emotional ecosystem. Drawing from a digital humanities project produced by music graduate students at the University of Cincinnati, this presentation asks how ethnographic study in a minoritized neighborhood by a professor and students from privileged backgrounds risks replicating the power dynamics of gentrification that are being studied. Given these inequities, how might student and community participants co-create learning and growth rooted in ethical engagement? The project investigated four distinct types of aural events that carry a range of meanings for West End community members: 1) the noise pollution from interstate expansion, recalling a period of 1950s "urban renewal" that traumatically severed the neighborhood; 2) the juxtaposition of silence and gunfire on the streets, representing the destruction of all or part of the community's ecosystem; 3) the construction of a new soccer stadium, signifying the formation of new communities even as it presages displacement; and 4) the rebuilding of an historic Black theater, bringing hope through sonic reclamation. Building upon analyses of sonic gentrification by Allie Martin and Andy McGraw, the presentation draws upon interview excerpts from a cross-section of residents and students, soundscape recordings, sound-mapping strategies, and video to tell a story about community collapse and resilience that centers mutual learning in the formation of student-community relationships.

11K. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Music and Political Climates

Chair: Ceyda Cekmeci, University of California, Berkeley

From Counter-Publics to Citizens: Understanding Folklorization through the Burrakatha

Shivanand Boddapati, University of Pennsylvania

In my paper I explore how the Burrakatha underwent a process of folklorization in the immediate post-colonial period in India, due to the enactment of prohibitive legislation, repression of political dissidents, and the entrenchment of musical standards associated with classicization. The Burrakatha emerged as a prominent form of political storytelling in the Coastal Andhra region of British India in the 1940s. After independence in 1947, it was used by state and central governments to popularize welfare schemes and five-year plans, claiming to deepen democratic sensibilities. It also came to be adopted by Hindu and Christian religious institutions, making it a

popular “folk” musical form practiced by musicians across the caste hierarchy. I argue that this transformation of the Burrakatha from its use to form counter-publics to being de-politicised, can help us assess how the concept of the “folk” was ambivalently situated between regional heritage and political claim-making, which will help comparatively assess processes of politicisation and depoliticisation in folkloric contexts across the world. This study will contribute to literature which is paying more attention to processes of “folklorization” in South Asia (Fiol 2017; Schreffler 2021) and will draw on archival research and oral history interviews.

Turkey’s Paradoxical Sounds of Complicity—Or, the Logic of Populist Culture

Ceyda Cekmeci, University of California, Berkeley

In the context of Turkey’s increasingly authoritarian political climate, musicians have emerged as prominent actors in the public spectacle of political loyalty. Some of the most conspicuous participants in this spectacle are artists whose identities—ethnic, gendered, aesthetic—are marginalized, instrumentalized, or selectively embraced within the cultural politics of the current hard-right regime. Three emblematic figures in this context are İbrahim Tatlıses, a Kurdish folk icon; Bülent Ersoy, a transgender diva; and Orhan Gencebay, a central figure in the once-dissenting arabesk subculture. Through snapshots of these figures, this paper introduces the phenomenon of musical complicity in contemporary Turkey, in which artists from historically marginalized or oppositional backgrounds lend performative support to the ruling regime, complicating any straightforward reading of political expression in the cultural sphere.

Drawing on media archives—including televised performances, interviews, and social media appearances—I explore how these artists’ public personas are mobilized within the performative landscape of Turkey’s authoritarian populism. My approach is informed by post-Marxist theories of hegemonic articulation (Hall, 1986; Laclau, 1977; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), which highlight how dominant blocs maintain power through the absorption and resignification of disparate social and cultural elements. This lens reveals that what appears as paradox is, in fact, central to the symbolic work of hegemony. Focusing on the cases of Tatlıses, Ersoy, and Gencebay, I argue that the regime’s mobilization of symbolic contradictions—ethnic, gendered, aesthetic—reveals complicity not as an exception, but as a constitutive feature of populist cultural politics.

Campaign Songs as Musical Manifestos in Ghanaian Electoral Politics

Divine Kwasi Gbagbo, Loyola Marymount University

This paper examines the role of campaign songs as powerful tools of political persuasion in Ghanaian electoral politics, arguing that their stylistic, rhythmic, aesthetic, and visual dimensions function as “musical manifestos” capable of swaying voter allegiance. In Ghana’s multiparty democracy, music is not merely an accessory to political campaigns; it is a core medium through which political messages are disseminated, party ideologies are reinforced, and emotional connections with the electorate are forged. Furthermore, this study explores how campaign songs extend beyond their lyrical content to employ genre-specific choices, rhythmic grooves, and

visual aesthetics that resonate with party supporters. Using the campaign songs of the two dominant political parties—the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC)—during the 2020 and 2024 elections as case studies, this paper categorizes these songs into two broad functions: those that glorify the sponsoring party’s competence and governance potential, and those that undermine political opponents (Amoakohene et al., 2019). Through audiovisual analysis and discourse on musical semiotics, this research highlights how campaign songs strategically evoke cultural memory, national identity, and partisanship, influencing voter perceptions in ways comparable to political rhetoric in advanced democracies. By foregrounding the intersection of music and politics in Africa, this paper contributes to the growing scholarship on the performative and affective dimensions of political communication, offering insights into how sonic and visual elements shape contemporary electoral discourse in Ghana.

A Relational Paradigm for Political Geographies of Belonging

Gregory Joseph Robinson, George Mason University

This presentation explores the ways that political geographies of belonging (regionalism, nationalism, transnational connections, etc.) can coalesce around relationships of intimacy, illuminating alternatives to identity-based paradigms. Using social dance music in rural Patagonia as a case study, it tracks how musically mediated experiences of convivial sociability foster conceptions of belonging and emplacement as they magnetize groups of intimates around shared practices and conjure relationships of longstanding to the forefront of social experience. It then traces the processes by which these experiences of intimate togetherness lend themselves to more formalized and abstract constructions of place and territory. Recent ethnomusicological work has shown how musical instantiations of intimacy, publicity, and counterpublicity (Warner 2005; Berlant 2000, 2008) can inform experiences of belonging (Dueck 2013; Garcia-Mispireta 2023), and while a range of scholars have noted limitations of identity over the past several decades (see for example Brubaker 2004; Diamond 2006; Ramos-Kitrell, ed. 2019), identity has proved to be an enduring paradigm for studying geographically based conceptions of belonging, even among scholars who emphasize the relational character of musical emplacement (McDonald 2013; Chávez 2016). This presentation brings these strains of the literature together to highlight the ways that musical participants construct political geographies of belonging around shared relationships outside and beyond shared identity.

11L. October 26, Sunday, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Bridging Musical Pasts and Futures

Chair: Melissa Scott, University of Central Florida

The Sampling of Brazilian Music in Hip-Hop: Material and Historical Networks

Romulo Moraes Barbosa, City University of New York Graduate Center

In the last 30 years, a profusion of American hip-hop songs have sampled 1970s Brazilian music, to the point it has become a familiar trope. In this presentation, I'll clarify some of the material and historical reasons for this newfound connection based on ethnographic interviews with producers, DJs, and collectors. First, I'll describe the infrastructure surrounding the sampling of Brazilian music to show how it happened in terms of explicit social mechanics—labels, stores, venues, channels of communication and exchange, technological relay tendencies, etc—seeking to form a factual picture of the concrete affordances that caused the approximation of the genres. In this part, I will pay particular attention to the logic of reissue culture (Novak 2011), its ethics of representation and discovery, and the role they have played in the recent elevation of 1970s MPB (*música popular brasileira*). Secondly, I will analyze the history of hip-hop and MPB for musical congruences, attending to the ways Brazilian culture has been internationally commercialized before, influencing jazz fusion (Cross 2017), which is the main node directly intersecting the two genres. In this case, the new trend of American absorption of Brazilian music might not be that far from the exotic exportation of samba with Carmen Miranda in the 1940s (Tinhorão 2015), the international formulation of bossa nova and Tropicália in the 1960s (Velooso 1997), or the cosmopolitan renaissance of world music in the 1980s (Feld 1995). I hope my presentation can trace those relations by simply mapping the actual networks that underlie such sampling.

Echoes of What Might Have Been: Hearing Speculative Futurity in KOZO's Tokyo Metabolist Syndrome

Nour El Rayes, Johns Hopkins University

Lebanon's history is often framed as cyclically violent, and its present and futures foreclosed by this seemingly interminable pattern. Citing what some have called a governmentally sanctioned public amnesia about the events of Lebanon's 1975–1990 civil wars, artist and writer Walid Sadek proposes that the way out of this temporal loop is to search, through expressive culture, for what he calls a "habitable chronotope" (2011:49). In other words, the issue is temporal: the Lebanese government's repression of the wars' events persistently threatens the country's socio-cultural fabric by severing lived experience from a framework for understanding it. In resonance with Sadek, this paper argues that music--as a time-based medium--offers a unique site for temporal intervention. Drawing on 36 months of ethnographic fieldwork, this paper examines Lebanese post-rock band KOZO's 2019 album, *Tokyo Metabolist Syndrome*, which grappled with the legacy of the civil wars by speculatively reimagining Beirut's postwar reconstruction. Where rebuilding efforts were monopolized by private companies in search of profit, the album renders audible a parallel present in

which the city was rebuilt in response to the city's social needs. The tracks on the album trace the contours of this other Beirut, filling its spaces with sound in a series of tracks that explore what it means to compose speculatively and architecturally. By bringing formal and textural invention into literal and metaphorical conversation with mid-20th century Lebanese architectural movement, the album has become active tool in recuperating a past and envisioning a future for Lebanon.

Musical Journey Of Azerbaijani Mugham

Aqil Suleymanov, Brooklyn, New York

Mugham, a profound and intricate form of traditional Azerbaijani music, transcends mere melody to embody a deep spiritual and cultural experience. Rooted in oral tradition, mugham serves as the foundation of Azerbaijani folk music and holds a revered place in the musical heritage of the East. I will begin this presentation with an overview of mugham's historical development, discussing how cities Baku, Shamakhi, Ganja, Nakhchivan, and particularly Shusha—also known as the Conservatory of the East—became centers for mugham performance and education. Mugham is typically performed by a trio: instrumentalists on the tar and kamancha, led by a singer who also plays the daf. Relying on my studies as a mugham singer under the guidance of master musicians at main music institutions in Azerbaijan, I will show how the singer leads with the main melodic themes, decorating them through a unique improvisatory style. I will proceed to demonstrate the melodic matrix of seven main mugham modes, each distinguished by emotional and affective colors: rast, shur, segah, shushtar, chahargah, bayati-shiraz, and humayun. Additionally, I will show how secondary rhythmic mughams are part of the main performed cycles. While discussing the theoretical nuances of mugham, I will explain how mugham is more than music; it is a philosophy, a form of meditation, and a bridge to the cultural and spiritual roots of Azerbaijanis. The numerous recognitions of mugham (UNESCO in 2003) and its popularity on global stages through performances of Alim Gasimov, only increased its importance as an identity marker for Azerbaijanis today.

Negotiating Spirituality in Intercultural Improvisation

Chao Tian, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts

Musical improvisation engages with spirituality as a multidimensional practice, encompassing self-transcendence, relational depth, and temporal sensitivity. I examine how spirituality in improvisation manifests across religious, secular, and intercultural contexts, with a focus on its cultural specificity and philosophical dimensions. Religious approaches often cultivate profound connections and introspection, while secular perspectives view spirituality as emerging from creativity and attunement to the present moment. Using the Art Omi music residency as a case study, I explore how intercultural improvisation highlights the tensions between universality and cultural specificity in defining spirituality. Daoist wu wei embodies intuitive adaptation in harmony with natural flow, as seen in East Asian musical practices. Jazz improvisers navigate relational dynamics, balancing tradition with spontaneity, while

classical-trained improvisers root spirituality in disciplined form and real-time creation. These perspectives highlight the interplay of intuition and structure, framing spirituality as a dynamic, culturally embedded phenomenon.

I argue that spirituality in improvisation is culturally shaped, not universal. When intercultural improvisation is detached from its roots, it risks reducing spirituality to mere emotion, raising questions about balancing intuition with structure and the role of technical mastery and cultural respect. By examining the interplay of rationality and emotion, this research demonstrates that spirituality arises not only from spontaneity but also through structured coherence. In this context, improvisation becomes a site for negotiating creativity, relationships, and transcendence, challenging static spiritual definitions. It highlights cultural specificity and philosophical depth, framing spirituality as co-constructed through individual expression, cultural context, and collective interaction.

12A. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Religiosity and/as Celebration

Chair: Matthew Williams, University of York

“As Natural to Me as Breathing”: Wedding Music and Jewish Identity in Postwar New York City

Uri Schreter, Harvard University

New York Jews after World War II revolutionized their weddings, abandoning traditional customs like fasting and the ritual bath and introducing innovations such as photographers, floral wedding canopies, and “kosher style” catering. Yet, despite these transformations, one aspect remained unwavering: Jewish dance music. Scholars have suggested that klezmer, the traditional instrumental dance music of Ashkenazi Jews, declined during this period (e.g., Netsky 2015, Feldman 2016, Rubin 2020), but I argue that its symbolic significance grew, solidifying its role as a key marker of Jewishness at American weddings. In this paper, I explore the relationship between wedding music and American Jewish identity in early postwar New York (1945–1960). Drawing on archival research, sound recordings, and over eighty oral history interviews with musicians and married couples, I explore how the varied wedding musical repertoires – including jazz, pop, Latin music, and klezmer – reflected the diversity of New York’s Jewish communities. As I show, Jewish dance music was an immovable feature of Jewish weddings that transcended denominational, socio-economic, linguistic, and political boundaries. This study re-evaluates the interplay between music, identity, and diaspora, highlighting music’s crucial role in maintaining diasporic communities (Brubaker 2005, Lidskog 2016). I illustrate that Ashkenazi Jewish dance music persisted even as many other rituals disappeared, thanks to its broad accessibility, aesthetic adaptability, and deeply embodied nature. Despite the transformations of the postwar period, this music exhibited meaningful continuities with Ashkenazi traditions, making it an effective means for signaling Jewish identity that persists at American weddings to this day.

Gospel, the Monarchy, and the Politics of Representation in British Popular Culture

Matthew Williams, University of York

This paper examines the entanglement of gospel music with British monarchy-sponsored events, foregrounding the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (2018), the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II (2022), the coronation of King Charles III (2023), and the coronation proms. These widely publicised occasions, positioned gospel within state rituals, shaping its reception in British popular culture. Drawing on Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (1993) and Melvin Butler's analysis of gospel's diasporic presence (2005, 2010, 2019), I argue that gospel's presence in these events reveals a complex negotiation of race, national identity, and diasporic belonging. While gospel music in the UK was historically cultivated in British-Caribbean Pentecostal churches through adaptations of African American stylisation, these royal performances were mediated by institutional constraints determining gospel's expressive aesthetics. The Kingdom Choir's rendition of *Stand by Me* (2018), arranged through multiple revisions at the behest of royal representatives, exemplifies this negotiation. By altering gospel's sonic characteristics while retaining its emblematic presence, the monarchy engaged in selective inclusion, signifying multiculturalism within controlled limits. This study also considers gospel music's broader trajectory in British public life, tracing its historical emergence in Caribbean-Pentecostal communities and increasing visibility in mainstream British culture. By interrogating the monarchy's role as a gatekeeper of musical representation, this paper demonstrates how gospel's indexical function (Turino 2014, Peirce, 1931) is reconfigured within British state rituals. These performances raise critical questions about recognition, the mediation of Black sacred music in national spectacles, and the entanglement of gospel with Britain's imperial legacy.

The Return of the Prayer: Navigating Identity through Cantonese Contemporary Christian Music in Postcolonial Hong Kong

Ching Yuet Kan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

The Lord's Prayer (the Prayer), taught by Jesus to his disciples and a key element of Protestant liturgy worldwide, expresses Hong Kong's transforming cultural identity through its many lives. Previous research has explained how, prior to the 1980s, Hong Kong churches used various musical settings of the Prayer that distorted the Cantonese pronunciations of the text. Cantonese, a tonal language, features pitch inflections in every syllable. Only when a song melody preserves these inflections in its lyrics' pronunciation can it be regarded as "ngaamyam" – pitch-fitting. When Cantonese gained prominence in the British colony before its return to China, old settings of the Prayer declined. Local Christians embraced new ngaamyam songs for worship but produced no ngaamyam settings of the Prayer, deeming it too challenging, and choosing to recite the text in Cantonese instead. However, many ngaamyam settings of the Prayer emerged and gained popularity in the 2010s. This study investigates the return of the Prayer in Hong Kong's churches through musical, theological, and sociological analysis supported by ethnographic research. It examines how the Prayer's multiple lives shape and exemplify the spiritual and cultural identity of Hong Kong's Christian community. The initial decline of its musical settings reveals how church music interacts with global theological trends and local societal changes. Meanwhile, its resurgence as

ngaamyam versions marks the city's shift towards post-materialism and the church community's polarizing political views. Ultimately, this study illustrates how religious musicking practices can inform and engage the continuing process of postcoloniality and identity formation.

12B. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

From Marginalization to Empowerment

Chair: Fernando Rios, University of Maryland

From Courtesans to Clickbait: Gender, Power, and the Persistent Marginalization of Women in China's Pipa Tradition

Yuxin Mei, University of North Texas

Women have been indispensable to the evolution of Chinese pipa culture as performers, composers, and pedagogues, yet their contributions have been persistently reframed through gendered lenses that reduce them to entertainers rather than artists. This paper examines how the legacy of imperial-era courtesan culture—which conflated female musical skill with sexual availability—continues to shape perceptions of women's pipa artistry, from 3rd-century BCE historical records to 21st-century social media platforms like TikTok and YouTube. Despite shifts in cultural transmission—oral tradition, imperial patronage, mass media, and algorithmic platforms—patriarchal structures regulating women's participation in pipa traditions remain largely intact. Drawing on feminist musicology and scholarship on Chinese courtesan musicians, this study identifies three enduring patterns: the commodification of femininity, where female pipa artists' technical mastery is overshadowed by emphasis on physical appearance, youth, and perceived eroticism; the denial of authorship, in which women's compositions and improvisations are often attributed to male mentors or anonymized as “folk tradition”; and the containment of innovation, wherein women's stylistic experimentation is dismissed as “inauthentic” compared to male performers' “scholarly” interpretations. Methodologically, this study employs historical textual analysis of premodern sources (Book of Han, Tang poetry, Ming-Qing courtesan anthologies) alongside digital ethnography, including qualitative coding of 500+ social media comments on performances by contemporary influencers such as @Shi Xian Guo Chao Pipa (1.2M TikTok followers). While acknowledging cases where women challenge these structures, I argue that digital platforms replicate imperial-era power dynamics by privileging virality over artistic depth, perpetuating the courtesan system's market-driven spectacle.

“Mujer Sandinista” (“Sandinista Woman”): The Nueva Canción Band Sabiá and the Intersections between the US-Central America Solidarity and Feminist/Women’s Movements

Fernando Rios, University of Maryland

This paper examines the female-led US band Sabiá’s efforts to forge greater connections between the US-Central America Solidarity and Feminist/Women’s Movements in the Reagan years. Throughout the 1980s, many progressive musicians dedicated their energies to fostering these social movements, but relatively few focused on linking them. In the first part of this paper, I document how Sabiá’s musical activities, fundraising ventures, and choice of record labels (especially Holly Near’s Redwood Records) enabled the group to effectively reach supporters of both movements. This section also discusses Sabiá’s stylistic grounding in Chilean nueva canción (New Song), and provides an overview of the US-Central America Solidarity Movement—which strongly opposed the Reagan administration’s role in fueling the armed conflicts in El Salvador and Nicaragua. The second part of the paper illuminates how Sabiá’s female-themed repertoire articulated with the members’ political goals. I give special attention to their signature song “Mujer Sandinista” (“Sandinista Woman”; i.e., Nicaraguan woman who supports the leftist Sandinista administration), which I argue encapsulates the ensemble’s overall approach to linking the US-Central America Solidarity and Feminist/Women’s Movements. Based on interviews with the bandmembers and extensive archival research, this paper explores several topics overlooked in ethnomusicological scholarship, such as the trajectories and political activism of US-based nueva canción groups, and the musical dimensions of the US-Central America Solidarity Movement. More broadly, it contributes to scholarship exploring the challenges that progressive musicians often encounter when they attempt to indexically connect contemporaneous social movements with the goal of expanding their respective bases of support.

Empowering Women Through Song: Analyzing Music and Gender Expression in Chinese Coal Mining Communities Amid Social Transformation

MingLei Niu, Xi'an Conservatory of Music

Chinese coal mining communities have traditionally been viewed as male-dominated, with musical works primarily celebrating male labor, while the roles and contributions of women have been marginalized. Rooted in the Chinese traditional gender norms of “men working outside, women managing the home” has historically positioned women on the periphery of musical expression. However, in recent years, driven by both social transformation and the revitalization of community culture, the musical landscape of these communities has undergone a notable transformation. New songs have emerged that highlight women’s active involvement in production and celebrate the empowerment of women in the workforce. This shift signifies a significant change in women’s social identity, marking the transition from “silent dependents” to “productive subjects”.

This study examines the role of women in five coal mining communities within China’s Yan Coal Group, investigating how their musical practices serve as a medium for the negotiation and reconfiguration of gender discourses and community culture. It explores

how women redefine their identities and cultural expressions by adapting traditional labor songs, composing music, and engaging in public performances. Drawing on a seven-month ethnographic fieldwork, aiming to reveal the dynamic interplay of labor, gender, and music in the context of industrialization. The findings demonstrate how women challenge gender biases, foster self-expression, and promote gender awareness through musical practices. This study offers a new perspective on the musical and cultural transformation of industrial communities and provides a significant Chinese case for gender-focused music research in the broader context of global industrial communities.

12C. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Embodied Knowledge

Chair: Jessica Hajek, Our Lady of the Lake University

Heterokinesis as Embodied Knowledge Production: China's New Music Historiographies

Gus Dalan Holley, University of California, Berkeley

Must the musicking body be marginal to historiographical inquiry? This is the question posed by the growing number of young people in China who have galvanized, over the past decade, a flowering of new historically-informed performance methodologies toward the reconstruction of the entertainment music-and-dance of the Tang court (618-907 CE). I argue these methodologies constitute distinctly embodied forms of music historiography, where knowledge about the past is produced not through textual interpretation but through the medium of the habituated musicking body. On the basis of my study with contemporary performers, I propose heterokinesis as an analytical framework for these forms of historiography. This framework takes music and dance together as composed of embodied gestures, articulated interactively in performance according to the affordances of each performer's body schema (including musical instruments, dance props, etc.). Heterokinetic analysis would trace the cross-sensory transference of kinetic "vitality effects" (Sklar 2008) between notations, frescoes, and bodies through the exercise of "kinesthetic empathy" (Foster 1997, Hahn 2007) and the speculative cultivation of *donglü*, or gestural regimes. This work extends recent ethnomusicological thinking concerning the embodiment of the musical past in Asia in relation to concepts of heterophony (Abe 2018, Dyer 2020) and amplifies calls to reframe East Asian musical aesthetics as kinesthetic, and not sonic, first (Yung 1984, Momii 2020). In locating heterokinetic knowledge production at the center of the study of historiography, I aim to open up new ground for interdisciplinary dialogue between ethnomusicology, musicology and music theory, and dance and performance studies.

Embodied Listening, Sonic Mediation, and Ivo Van Hove's Theatrical Liveness

James Gabrillo, University of Texas at Austin

Theater's claim to liveness has long been anchored in its ephemerality, yet contemporary productions increasingly blur the distinction between live and mediated presence. In the works of Ivo van Hove, sound and screen function as affective architectures that reorganize perception, intimacy, and embodiment. In *Network* (2017) and *West Side Story* (2020), van Hove's sonic dramaturgy reconfigures audience proximity, collapsing the space between performer and spectator through amplified breath, mechanical reverberations, and diegetic urban soundscapes.

In *Network*, the close-miked breath of Howard Beale, layered with ambient newsroom static and mechanical hums, transforms sonic mediation into an instability of presence, where sound intensified both immediacy and estrangement. *West Side Story* submerges Bernstein's score within the textures of a hyperrealized urban environment, embedding orchestration within an acoustic ecology of sirens, traffic, and reverberant speech. These productions integrate technological mediation and reconstruct the conditions of theatrical listening, where sound, image, and spatialized resonance function as material forces of immersion and alienation.

Bridging ethnomusicology, sound studies, and media theory, this study advances scholarship on theatrical sound as a site of embodied spectatorship, demonstrating how mediated sonic environments recalibrate perceptual hierarchies, musical affect, and spatialized intimacy. More than an extension of the stage, mediated sound operates as a conduit of embodied listening, where theatrical space becomes a site of sonic intimacy and estranged proximity. By theorizing theater as an auditory event, this study challenges dominant paradigms of liveness, positioning sonic mediation as a critical force in the dramaturgy of contemporary performance.

Tradición al Talón: Mariachi, Identity, and Embodying Tradition Through Musical Work

Erika Jean Soveranes, University of North Texas

As a cultural symbol, mariachi embodies Mexico in every way. Mariachi music reflects cultural and social practices that represent both the country and its people. Therefore, mariachi musicians must uphold the traditions of an entire nation through their daily work. While Mexican people are recognized for their dedication to agricultural labor, mariachi as a musical career is one of the lesser-known occupations available to Mexican Americans in the United States. While there is a lack of scholarship on mariachi and musical labor, I analyze the works of academics such as Daniel Sheehy and Leticia Soto-Flores to analyze the ways in which the weight of tradition and national symbolization combine with the pressures of business in mariachi work to create a complex dynamic within the individual musician as well as the musical ensemble. Mariachi skillsets are unique, yet automatic to mariachi musicians and the vast quantity of memorized repertoire and other 'blue-collar' skills demonstrate a level of expertise on par with traditions in the Western canon. I argue that the transnational exchange of culture produced by these working musicians has established a musical working-class identity that consequently alters the identity of the Mexican nation. Musicians in the Mexican diaspora utilize this musical work

to connect their cultural identity to their economic homebase in a foreign country. Mariachi work performs a transnational identity that transcends borders and political tensions during the currently tumultuous, civil condition of the United States.

12D. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Asian Metal Scenes

Chair: Mark Hsiang-Yu Feng, University of California, Davis

Gangsters And Kings: Sundanese Indigeneity And Cosmopolitanism In The Bandung Death Metal Scene

Luigi Monteanni, SOAS, University of London

In the nineties, due to globalization, extreme metal worldwide began a process of indigenization. For adherent bands this turn meant either employing their local languages, fusing extreme metal's aesthetics with ethnocultural signifiers or introducing regional instruments in their compositions. Coherently, the ethnically Sundanese Bandung scene in Indonesia, one of the biggest metal hotspots worldwide, explored this trend by reframing indigeneity as part of metal's global modernity and its politicized subjectivities and elaborating on themes of marginality and class. According to these bands, "metal indigeneity" allowed them to re-gain control over self-representations opposing hegemonic narratives exploiting ethnicity to develop an allure for a cosmopolitan middle-class. Yet, while in Bandung it's precisely by embracing indigeneity that subcultural musicians could oppose the state's soft-power, current ethnomusicological research argues that Indonesian metal scenes historically refrained from associating politico-musical core values with indigeneity precisely to avoid being forced into the exploitative, nationally controlled categories of local/global. Therefore, my analysis of the Bandung scene, based on ethnographic data gathered during a one-year fieldwork in 2023 – interviews, musical and paratextual materials - will expand on current ethnomusicological theories by showing that in different historical contexts these two opposite interpretations of indigeneity have provided musicians with similar sonically-mediated oppositional tools. Thereby, this paper contributes to research about music-fueled ethnocultural imaginations and their political employment, answering these questions: how are ideas of cosmopolitanism and ethnicity mutually constitutive in forming politically-engaged subject positions in the Indonesian metal scene? How is marginal indigeneity conceptualized through metal practice?

Zuriaake's "Li Gui": Abjection, Gender, and Horror Aesthetics in Chinese Black Metal

Qian Sun, University of Florida

In 2019, Chinese Black metal band Zuriaake (Corpse Lake) released their EP, "Shenting" (Resentment in the Ancient Courtyard). One of the songs, "Li Gui" (Evil Ghost), added vocal samples from Tuva singer Sainkho Namtchylak, symbolizing a female ghost that frequently appears in Chinese folk tales. However, both the song's original Chinese title and the English translation leave the ghost's

gender ambiguous, suggesting the cultural habitus of Chinese horror subjects. While most research on Zuriiake focuses on the band themselves, their “Chineseness,” the choices of instruments and lyrics, and hermit ideological attitude (Zhao, 2023; Norman, 2024), this study explores intersections of gender identity and expressions of Chinese horror in black metal music. In this study, I examine the representation and resignification of the female voice in subcultural music of Chinese black metal. Through the lens of Julia Kristeva’s “abjection,” I argue that the ghost suggests a rupture of the boundary between life and death, and the ghost’s female identity represented by Sainkho’s voice exacerbates this rupture and constructs a “monstrous feminine” (Creed, 1993). Moreover, the choice of female voice comes from the Chinese cultural habitus of the femaleness of the ghost. Through digital ethnography, I analyze music, videos, and public online interviews to discuss the symbolic continuation of the female voice in folklore and its representation in musical contexts. Ultimately, I demonstrate how this female voice in masculine-coded black metal music amplifies the subculture’s rebellious connotations and the trauma of females.

Global Metal, Local Struggles: White Supremacy and Internalized Orientalism in Taiwanese Metal

Mark Hsiang-Yu Feng, University of California, Davis

This paper examines the localization of metal music in Taiwan as a racial project (Omi & Winant 2006), exploring how Taiwanese metal musicians and audiences are racialized through consumption, composition, listening, and recording. Employing critical global racial theory (Christian 2019), I argue that White supremacy and internalized Orientalism have hindered the development of Taiwanese metal by shaping cultural legitimacy. Since the late 1990s, a compositional dichotomy has formed between “Taiwanese metal” and “Western metal.” The former, which incorporates Taiwanese cultural elements, is subject to lower expectations, whereas the latter, which excludes such elements, is judged by stricter standards of technical proficiency and production quality. This division stems from the Western exotic consumption of Chinese metal (Lee 2020), where audiences anticipate the use of folk instruments and traditional motifs. Taiwanese musicians internalized these Orientalist perceptions to gain global recognition (see Chthonic), reinforcing structural inequalities. Consequently, members of Ashen adopted a White Western identity in their creative process to align with global metal aesthetics. Anthelion recorded their first studio album in Sweden, rejecting imposed inferiority. Many musicians made significant investments in high-end equipment to meet what they perceived as Western production standards. Nevertheless, racialized industry expectations continue to limit their opportunities, leading some to grow resentful and ultimately quit, as invited White Western bands consistently generate more revenue than local performers. By analyzing the racial dynamics shaping Taiwanese metal, this paper challenges the notion that the absence of East Asian musicians in global metal scenes is unrelated to race and racism (Kahn-Harris 2007).

12E. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Listening to Visual Cultures

Chair: Kevin Salfen, University of the Incarnate Word

Statutory Rape and R&B: How a Documentary Influenced the Conviction of R. Kelly

Melanie Kaye Moseley, University of Pittsburgh

Documentary films have been used for decades to inform the masses about social issues. These films provide a unique medium that sends messages to audiences and evokes emotions that encourage viewers to gain or increase agency and take action to improve environments and settings around them. In recent years, the prevalence of documentaries on streaming services has brought the stories of sexual abusers into greater focus, and the ways that voices and music are utilized in these films plays an essential role in how audiences receive and understand messages. This paper analyzes how documentary sound influences emotions and mental investment by dissecting the various uses of sound in the Surviving R. Kelly documentary series (2019) which centers on the mental, emotional, financial, physical, and sexual abuse and assault of underage and adult women of color. This research delves into how feminist theories and feminist social movements worked jointly to protest sexual assault and the general oppression of women of color. Drawing on analyses of survivors whose testimonials were featured in the documentary, this paper highlights the complex ways that the intersectionality of race, gender, and class contributed to a culture of sexual abuse in R. Kelly's musical sphere.

“Phoenix Fire”: From Shinsaku Noh to Film

Kevin Salfen, University of the Incarnate Word

Phoenix Fire was originally conceived as a work of intercultural theater, drawing on the poetic and musical structures of Japanese noh to tell the story of the failed 1940 and successful 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Phoenix Fire was also intended as an exercise in cultural diplomacy in support of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, with performances planned in Tokyo and sister cities San Antonio and Kumamoto. Performers included members of international performing ensemble Theatre Nohgaku, featuring veteran Kita school shitekata Matsui Akira, and students from writer-composer Kevin Salfen's home institution, the University of the Incarnate Word. When the COVID-19 pandemic made the 2020 premiere impossible, Salfen and members of Theatre Nohgaku reimagined the work as a film, retaining much of the text and music of the original theater work. The resulting film is a novel combination of one of the world's oldest continually performed theater traditions, noh, and contemporary film techniques.

This proposal is for an introduction and screening of the concluding nochiba, or “second act,” of Phoenix Fire (2025), an encapsulation of the 1964 Games as filmed by Kon Ichikawa for the documentary Tokyo Olympiad. It features conventional noh dance as well as a dance newly choreographed by Matsui Akira and Jubilith Moore. Its score combines the traditional hayashi, or instrumental ensemble,

of noh with English-language utai, or chant, and contemporary concert music, a musical encoding of the cultural intermixture of the 1964 Games and of the Olympics more broadly. Duration: 12'30". In English, subtitled in Japanese or English.

Collaborative Composition Approaches for Balinese Gamelan on Screen and Stage

Joshua Robinson, Australian National University

This paper compares composition methods for Balinese gamelan. Once an oral tradition, the increasing complexity of gamelan composition has necessitated new ways of recording live music into a reproducible artefact. Furthermore, recording technology has enabled sampled gamelan to be created and distributed via virtual studio technologies, resulting in wide and easy access to this ensemble even if the composer has no experience with gamelan. This presents an issue of non-Balinese composers using the gamelan in ways in which it would never traditionally be used and often in derogatory ways. Multiple compositional approaches are analysed, beginning with the simple delineation between Balinese and international composers. Further comparisons are made between the approaches of singular composers, collaborative efforts, and the differences between composition for the moving image and those not. Although there is some research on composition methods for Balinese gamelan, most of this focuses on the output of a specific composer, or asserts one compositional approach. There is little research which analyses multiple approaches and as a result ignores the diverse perspectives of each of these groups. The compositional approaches were found through fieldwork and interviews conducted in six countries. Interviews were conducted with Balinese and non-Balinese participants in approximately equal number, and fieldwork consisted of participant observation in performance settings. A wider survey of Balinese and non-Balinese composers was also conducted. The results help inform a framework for intercultural composition which aims to assist collaborators in receiving fair outcomes including those relating to copyright, royalties, and giving back to culture.

12F. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Voices in Context

Chair: Cheuk Ling Yu, University of California, San Diego

Class(ical) Voice: Evolution and Association of Operatic Vibrato in American Pop Culture

Hansini Bhasker, Wesleyan University

In this paper, I address how singing techniques like vibrato can not only index the genres they are stylistic to, but also portray, reflect, and/or complicate the socio-cultural perceptions that become attributed to these genres. In the realm of opera, for example, sociologists Paul DiMaggio (1982) and David Evans (1999) and historians Bruce McConachie (1988) and Lawrence Levine (1990) have traced the designation of the genre as highbrow to the co-option of the form by elites in the US in the late 19th century. I draw on

interviews with experimental operatic and musical theater performers; digital ethnography within social media and online community forums; and analysis of soundtracks and cartoon, commercial, and film footage to show how operatic vibrato can become a core signifier of class in American popular music and media of the 20th into 21st centuries. I argue these associations, in the context of a shifting social landscape, can be consciously referenced to take on positive or negative connotations depending on the prevailing topical views of class at various periods of time. Building upon ethnomusicological and anthropological studies of the voice through register/range and timbre by the likes of Steven Feld (1982); Judith Irvine (1990); Nina Sun Eidsheim (2008); Nicholas Harkness (2013); and Amanda Weidman (2014), I illustrate vibrato as a previously unexplored vocal technique which can also represent “material embodiments of social ideology and experience” (Feld et al 2004: 332) while bringing heightened focus to cultural functions of the voice as a medium of communication in song.

Male Voices for Female Fans: A Paradox of Women’s Liberation in Contemporary Japanese Anime Franchises

Cheuk Ling Yu, University of California, San Diego

This paper investigates the role of voice in negotiating affective relationships between anime characters, voice actors, and Japanese female fans within contemporary anime franchises. Historically prioritizing a male-centered visual media marketing strategy, the Japanese anime industry did not consider female fans as compatible and affluent consumers. However, as women’s spending power increased during the economic boom of the 1980s, the industry recognized female fans as a potential market and introduced male voices as a fix for “visually-picky” women. Based on my ethnographic fieldwork in Tokyo, this paper focuses on how female fans pursue male voices through the popular concept of “oshi.” Oshi refers to fans’ favorite anime character or voice actor/actress on whom they spend resources to support. The term has evolved into a cultural phenomenon that drives the anime economy, normalizes anime fans’ devotion, and unburdens female fans from expressing their love for anime. In following their oshi male voice, female fans find spaces and communities for this expression in interwoven affective bonds with anime characters, voice actors, and other fans. Nevertheless, through integrating opinions from Japanese female fans and scholars, I consider the production of male voices as a paradoxical liberation of female fans that remains within a binary, heteronormative, and patriarchal framework. Contributing to discussions in voice studies and sound studies about the alterity of the embodied voice (Cavarero 2005; Connor 2004; Dolar 2006), this case study reflects on how the in-betweenness of voice shapes affective networks that afford contrasting ideologies of gender and sexuality.

Listening for Vocal Agency: T’ūrot’ū, Enka, and Yi Nanyōng’s Negotiation of Colonial Voice

Jiyeon Auo, University of Pittsburgh

This paper examines the career of Yi Nanyōng (1916–1965), a key figure in Korean popular music during the Japanese occupation (1910–1945), whose artistic choices challenge simplistic binaries of resistance and collaboration. While her 1935 hit Mokp’o ūi

Nunmul (Tears of Mokp'o) resonated deeply with Korean audiences, she rebranded herself in Japan as Oka Ranko and released *Wakare no Funauta* (Farewell Boat Song) in 1936. As Tears of Mokp'o became foundational to t'ŭrot'ŭ, a genre often scrutinized for its ties to Japanese enka, Yi's legacy remains contested in postcolonial Korea. The persistent collaborator-versus-resistor binary has overshadowed the complexities of her career, restricting a deeper understanding of the everyday lives of colonized musicians. However, drawing on archival research and musical analysis, I argue that Yi's recordings exemplify the multi-strategic responses of colonized artists. My comparative study of her Korean- and Japanese-language recordings reveals how Tears of Mokp'o embodies han—a Korean affect of sorrow—through melisma, vocal breaks, and dynamic phrasing. Her vocality intentionally evokes what Wilbourne (2015) describes as “virtuosic vocal failure,” a technique that, as Bloechl (2021) argues, can create a space for empathy. In contrast, her 1936 Japanese version subdues these elements, aligning with imperial narratives that reframed han as sentimentality rather than historical suffering. Ultimately, Yi's dual identities reveals how colonized musicians, while participating in imperial structures, created spaces for subtle resistance and cultural preservation. Her case illustrates the complexities of cultural negotiation under empire, moving beyond the rigid categories of collaboration and resistance.

12H. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Being, Breathing, and Aliveness: Transforming Shared Space through Movement

Chair: Juan Diego Diaz, University of California, Davis

In *Don't Let Me Be Lonely* (2004), poet Claudia Rankine theorizes being alive through the metaphor of an extending hand—a gesture simultaneously marking self-presence and self-offering. “This conflation of the solidity of presence with the offering of this same presence,” writes Rankine, “perhaps has everything to do with being alive.” This panel investigates three socially constructed spaces of shared presence and identity, considering gesture and gesturing, following Rankine, as the material praxis and method that predicates agency: the proof of being, breathing, and aliveness. The panel demonstrates how such embodied practices reject prescribed limitations put upon the potential aliveness of marginalized communities, how movement and sound work together to create new meanings based upon shared knowledge, and how the critical union of the Real and the Imaginary is necessary for the expression and performance of identity. Approaching these questions through music and movement studies, ethnographic fieldwork, sociolinguistics, Black studies, and global disability studies, the panelists consider how the members of three, distinct communities use movement, sound, and gesture to construct new possibilities for themselves from the perspective of the “elsewhere.” Following Kevin Quashie, who calls for the “philosophical audacity” in his 2021 monograph *Black Aliveness* to consider a world that displaces the neo-colonial, neo-liberal construct and negates the very concept of being Other, this panel explores how very different communities use movement to do just that.

Feather's Breath, Spirit's Mouth: Phono-choreography at the Chefoo School for the Deaf

YuHao Chen, Ohio State University

This paper examines the intersection of voice, hand, and the notion of “aliveness” in late nineteenth-century deaf education. Drawing on pedagogical materials and historical correspondence, I examine American Protestant missionary Annetta Thompson Mills’s school in Chefoo, northern China, where she engaged the hands of deaf Chinese students as delegates of vocalization in speech development and fingerspelling. By teaching the students to manually sense, inscribe, and convey speech formation, Mills sought to assimilate them into the hearing world through a kinesthetic interplay between the voice and the hand—a multifaceted enactment I call “phono-choreography.” I situate Mills’s mobilization of the hand alongside adjacent Victorian discourses around vocal aliveness. In its reach toward a semblance of life, the hand impersonated vocal vitality beyond stagnant letters of the print book. I suggest that it was the notion of aliveness that imbued the hands at Mills’s school with the currency of phono-choreography. Her disability work, which this paper tracks between its inception in 1888 and the publication of her Chinese primer *Qiya chujie* □ □ □ □ in 1907, unfolds a story of how the hand summoned various facets of the voice—that vexed and vexing telos in nineteenth-century deaf education—in order to dexterously transcribe spoken Chinese sounds. In dialogue with recent works by Anabel Mahler and Jessica Holmes on Deaf musicking, this study posits the hand as a living mediator between the shifting Sinophone and Anglophone deaf education—through its evocative transcription of vocal vitality.

The Politics of Audibility and Visibility in Basque Plaza Dances

Caitlin Romtvedt, University of California, Berkeley

Throughout the Basque Country, a stateless nation of a minority autochthonous people, social dances in town and neighborhood plazas regularly occur. These events called Plaza Dantzak create visibility and audibility for Basqueness through language, music, and dance. In this paper, I claim that Plaza Dantzak in the southern Basque Country (within the nation-state of Spain) are meaningful examples of breathing spaces or *argnaguneak*: places in which people live through the Basque language and Basque cultural expressions such as music and dance. Typically used by sociolinguists (e.g., Joshua Fishman (1991) and Mikel Zalvide (2019)) to refer exclusively to language use, I expand the concept of breathing spaces to signal how Basque cultural expressions combining language, music, and dance are vehicles for social life that allow for the experience of Basque culture as a vibrant, living, and breathing one. Active participation in such settings is key. In Plaza Dantzak, concepts of tradition, repetition, audibility and visibility interact as requirements for, and effects of, the realization of these events. In this study, I focus on the significant role that the interaction between language, music, and dance plays in maintaining and revitalizing Basque culture and language. While I highlight the successes of such revitalization efforts along with the future possibilities that the creation of breathing spaces such as Plaza Dantzak open up, I also emphasize the struggles of such initiatives in a context in which cultural and linguistic precarity is an everyday reality.

Black Aliveness – A Drummer’s Take: Black Nationalist Music, Black Music Criticism, Black Worlding, 1965-1969

Max Jefferson, University of California, Berkeley

This paper focuses on the praxis of drummers Sonny Murray on the track “Black Art,” from his 1965 album *Sonny’s Time Now*, and Denardo Coleman playing on “Freeway Express” from his father Ornette’s 1966 album *The Empty Foxhole*. On these tracks the physical gesture of Murray and Coleman becomes an equal part of the shared breath of the ensemble in what Larry Neal referred to as “collective motion ... that could be harnessed and organized.”

In their first editorial for the Black music magazine *The Cricket* in 1968, activists and music critics Amiri Baraka, A.B. Spellman, and Larry Neal wrote: “the true voices of Black liberation are Black musicians.” Published through Baraka’s New Jersey-based press Jihad Productions, *The Cricket* was a response to what its editors and founding writers considered an anti-Black music industry – its authors maintaining that Black tradition must be cultivated outside the influence of the mainstream music industry. This separatist cultivation cohered aesthetic and critical languages in what I call “Black Nationalist Music.”

The aim of this paper is to hear Murray’s and Coleman’s drum aesthetic through the music-analytical filter of writers for *The Cricket*. Black Nationalist Music, as Neal wrote, was “formalistically revolutionary [in ways that broke] with all the previous ways of improvisation.” This neo-improvisational mode was made evident in the liberation of the rhythm section from support system to equal interlocutors. The drummers’ transition, specifically, was made audible through the soloistic vocabularies invented for this unified and newly breath-centric sonic medium.

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Games, Play, and Festivals

Chair: Emily Ruth Allen, University of South Carolina

“All My Music is Based off My Home Games:” Musical Literacy and Public Play in Tabletop Role-Playing Game Fan Conventions

Andrew James Borecky, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Over the bustle of 70,000 attendees, journalists, and exhibitors, musical strains lilt through the hallways and out of conference rooms as Tabletop Role-Playing Game (TTRPGs) fans and creators share brief moments to play games during some of the busiest weekends for TTRPG communities. TTRPGs, such as *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974), create spaces to explore the imagination. To create these stories, players of tabletop roleplaying games draw on their lived experience and knowledge to create their personal imagined worlds. The phrase “all my music is based off my home games” speaks to how my interlocutors, as both musicians and TTRPG players, use music to bridge the social gap between strangers by harnessing a shared understanding of musical ideas. Drawing on definitions of

literacy in music studies and using ethnographic methods concerning sonic affect (Garcia-Misprieta, 2020) and phenomenological experience (Turino, 2014), I detail how musical literacy serves as a way to connect strangers at TTRPG tables through play, connect to a crowd during live actual play shows, and as a topic of discussion in musician conversations. I argue that the musical and sonic practice of public TTRPG play provides insight into how and why musical and sonic literacies are deployed and performed in social play and performance. Drawing on two years of ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation, and ethnographic interviews (2023-2024) conducted at TTRPG fan conventions across the south-eastern and mid-western United States, I work to expand ethnomusicology's understanding of musical affect and play in primarily non-musician communities.

Transnationalism and South-South Connections in Mobile, Alabama's Carnival

Emily Ruth Allen, University of South Carolina

Mobile, Alabama claims the oldest Mardi Gras tradition in the U.S., often asserting its distinctiveness from other Carnival sites such as New Orleans (Samuel Kinser 1990; Isabel Machado 2023). Yet, Mobile's Carnival has often lacked explicit cross-Carnival exchanges and its historiography has failed to recognize Carnival's true origins outside of the U.S. This began to change when, in May 2024, African American members of Mardi Gras organizations launched their first Caribbean Carnival, formalized under the Gulf Coast Caribbean Carnival Association (GCCA). This initiative challenges dominant narratives by recognizing Carnival's Afro-diasporic roots and expanding the festival's musical landscape beyond New Orleans' secondline tradition. Featuring soca performers and inviting participants to "play mas," the GCCA introduces a transnational sonic dimension to Mobile's Carnival. As a port city, Mobile provides a valuable site for examining South-South cultural flows, connecting the U.S. South, the Gulf South, and the broader Circum-Caribbean. Engaging with scholarship on Caribbean diasporic musical performance in the U.S. (Ray Allen 2019; Alison McLetchie and Daina Nathaniel 2020), I argue that Mobile's evolving Carnival practices exemplify the sonic interplay between U.S. Southern and Caribbean musical traditions. Given that many Mardi Gras musical forms originate from Caribbean and Latin American traditions, this direct engagement with Caribbean Carnival music highlights the cyclical nature of diasporic musical exchange. By positioning Mobile's Carnival within a broader transnational framework, this study contributes to ethnomusicology by foregrounding how sound functions as a site of cultural negotiation, identity formation, and diasporic connectivity within the U.S. Carnival landscape.

"At the End of the Street": The Marching Band as a Sonic Marker of U.S. American Identity

Anna Marinela Lopez, University of Texas at Austin

"At the end of the street, the marching band appears in full regalia!" exclaims Walt Disney on the long play (LP) *Walt Disney Takes You to Disneyland* as he guides listeners through the soundscapes of Main Street, U.S.A. At the "end of the street," a march reminiscent of John Philip Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever* begins to play. Main Street, U.S.A. is Walt Disney's hyperreal

depiction of “a typical American town” set between 1890-1910. This assumed “typicality” makes Disneyland an important site for the construction of an imagined U.S. American cultural identity that is linked to the sounds of marching bands. Intriguingly, the music on the LP does not play in the theme park, yet it serves as a valuable referential marker to the production of a U.S. American identity that transcends Disneyland’s borders. Drawing from double-diegesis (Camp 2017) and pop nostalgia (Dwyer 2015), I argue that Disneyland reifies the marching band sound as a sonic marker of U.S. American identity both within the theme park’s physical space and its manufactured soundscape. Through semiotic and hypertextual analyses, I examine: 1) the sonic relationship between Sousa marches and the original music of the LP that evokes the soundscapes of Main Street, U.S.A. and 2) the role of the marching band in the dissemination of U.S. American identity in and out of Disneyland. This analysis demonstrates the prominent role that Disneyland and its music have had on the intricate production of U.S. American national identity in contemporary culture.

12J. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Music and Mysticism

Chair: Subash Giri

In his foundational research on comparative religion, pioneering psychologist William James (1902) took special interest in mystical experiences as phenomena described by adherents of many disparate faith and spiritual traditions across large spans of history. Paradoxically, the promise of unifying spiritual frameworks that these accounts may suggest is belied by the fundamental nature of mystical experience: it produces knowledge that is inherently personal and incommunicable. Nevertheless, the poetic-musical repertoires have played a vital role in many parts of the world, serving as vectors for inter-religious community formation providing counter-narratives against hegemonic or exclusionary forms of religion. This panel emphasizes connections between the personal and the social, the poetic and the inexpressible, to discuss the latent musical potency of devotional traditions in aggregating diverse communities of performers, listeners and devotees in the context of heightened religious extremism and communal violence across the globe. Informed by perspectives on Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism across space, time and media we aim to foreground instances whereby musical repertoire, performance, transmission and ritualisation create intentional overlaps within and between traditions. We wish to share our focus on how devotional music bridges piety, identity and sociality to build cooperative networks of faith and social belonging in the present; and evaluate how the persistence of these enmeshed music cultures pose a counterpublic to the postmodern economies of hate which weaponise identity, faith and devotion to create social and cultural discord.

This panel is sponsored by the SEM South Asian Performing Arts Section.

Indo-Islamic Music in South Asia: Local and Hyperlocal contexts of performance

Shahwar Kibria Maqhf, UCLA

This presentation will study the local and hyper local contexts of sung and recited genres of Indo-Islamic liturgy such as qawwali, soz, salam, and marsiya in North India. Indo-Islamic music refers to musicalised aesthetic entanglements between Indic and Islamic idioms in the Indian subcontinent which have evolved from centuries of balanced socio-cultural contact between varieties of Muslim immigrants and Hindu natives and continue to define the demotic and lived experiences of Muslims in India. Casteism, colonialism, communalism, and religious / ideological extremism has routinely ruptured the balance of this collaborative plurality. Currently much of North India is being reorganised as an homogeneous entity where upper caste Hindutva is complemented by the resurgence of Islamist Wahhabism. Located between these two extremes, I follow ordinary hereditary Muslim musicians in North India to learn how they bridge the local and hyperlocal contexts of Indo-Islamic music through a distinct form of collaborative plurality to navigate musical repertoire, devotion, identity, and belonging in the Indian nation state. My ethnography in Barabanki, Raebareilly, Manikpur, Pratapgarh and Kaushambi prioritizes Muslim musicians in North Indian ghettos to learn firstly, “what can we learn when they sing?” (Seeger 1979); secondly how in their performance of Indo-Islamic music qasbati musicians honor history, belonging, collective identity and inclusivity to counter erasure and displacement; and finally how the Indo-Islamic musical repertoire may add to our awareness of lived everyday Islam and Muslimness in India which is counterpublic (Fraser 1991; Hirschkind 2001) to the notion of Wahhabised correct practice.

The Yoga of Sound: Mediating and Marketing a Unifying Spiritual Framework through Global Networks

Vivek Virani, University of North Texas, Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology and Music Theory

Every week in India and throughout the world, new workshops, retreats, and trademarked systems are advertised promising an experience of nād-yoga – meditation based on sound or music. For potential customers representing a wide range of spiritual, musical, and cultural backgrounds, such opportunities are often subject to scrutiny on an imagined spectrum of “commercial” versus “authentic.” But a historicization of the many roles played by the concept of “yoga” in South Asian religious life over the centuries complicates this simple binary opposition. Yoga, understood not as a unified philosophy but rather a pluralistic web of practices and communities, has served as a crucial role as a vehicle for spiritual knowledge and techniques between socioreligiously disparate communities. Yoga networks disrupted divisions between nominally “Hindu,” “Buddhist,” and “Sufi,” communities and bridged knowledge between upper-caste and subaltern communities. In light of yoga’s pluralistic history, identifying consistent markers of legitimacy or authority is a fraught process, which becomes only more complex when mapped to the modern marketplace of sound-yoga teachers and schools that serve as the site for my ongoing research. Furthermore, contemporary academic frameworks of cultural authenticity (or rejections of the notion of authenticity altogether) often contradict the insider systems of knowledge intrinsic to yoga practice and philosophy. Building on a pluralistic taxonomy of sound-yoga practices I have presented at past SEM conferences, this

paper employs a historicized and philosophically informed lens to ask: what markers and experiences do contemporary sound-yoga practitioners use to accept their practices as effective, legitimate, or authoritative?

Hearing tiqqun: Kabbalistic Music and the Rectification of the World

Yaron Cherniak, PhD student, University of California, Los Angeles

Moshe Idel, in his article “The Magical and Theurgic Interpretation of Music in Jewish Sources from the Renaissance to Hassidism (1982),” describes three conceptual domains exists in Jewish mysticism and Kabbalistic teachings, underlining the crucial role of music in making the divine realm accessible to the kabbalists via various mystical models. Idel's analysis of 12th, 13th, and 16th-century Kabbalistic texts reveals three key elements: the theurgical model, which involves the mystic's impact on the divine intra-structure; the magical model, which attempts to manipulate nature; and the mystical model, which transforms the inner state of one's consciousness. He extensively describes these concepts in his book *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (45-145, 1995), which helps to broaden Gershom Scholem's discussion on music and kabbalah in Abraham Abulafia's prophetic kabbalism (Scholem 1946). This study analyzes the evolution of musical and mystical concepts within Kabbalistic thought and practice, and their subsequent musical expression in modern Israel. Music filled an important role in accessing the divine realm and the drawing down of the divine influx (Idel 1982), attaining prophecy, entering ecstasy, and nullifying the self. To discuss this mystical apparatus that has theosophical, magical, and mystical applications, I explore the musical concepts in Rabbi Abraham Abulafia's prophetic kabbalah; ratzo va-shov Hasidic concept in nigunei Hitbonenut; and viewing musical adaptation as an act of synthesis of a shared “nostalgia for Paradise (Eliade 1969),” of Sufi, Indian Yoga and other ecstatic types of mysticism in Jewish Kabbalah, as a means of world rectification (tiqqun).

12K. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Identity and Preservation

Chair: Sara Feili, Independent Scholar, New Haven

Open Online Communities as a Mediation Between Musical Culture and Sustainability: A Case Study of Maame Ode

Naa Akle Afriyie Okantey, University of Florida

This paper explores adowa, an Akan funeral music and dance tradition, through the career of Maame Ode, a contemporary Ghanaian indigenous music composer and performer. Drawing from Joshua Brew (2023), whose work on “Music Career and Sustainability” argues that sustained musical careers lead to sustained musical cultures, I examine how Maame Ode uses her agency, cultural knowledge, and digital technology to promote her career and essentially re-present adowa music to the local and global market. I

argue that, aside from the rich funeral economy among the Akans in Ghana, open online communities also provide avenues for adowa to be sustained. I illustrate how the sustainability of the genre occurs on open online communities by drawing from Tony Perman's (2020) metonymic and deixis indexical process. This paper also seeks to push scholarship in applied ethnomusicology away from generalized notions of sustainability— especially tropes of change and preservation of “local music culture”— to acknowledge new forms of hybrid music created through an artist's agency. While contributing to ethnomusicological literature on Ghanaian music and career development, my work is relevant to the broader literature on new ways of conceptualizing sustainability, continuity, and change. This paper is based on nine months of ethnographic, historical, and archival research on communities like Maame Ode's in contemporary Ghana.

Performing the Kyrgyz Epic Manas in Contemporary Times: An Endeavor to Preserve the Oral Tradition

Aibek Baiymbetov, Wesleyan University

The performance of the Kyrgyz epic Manas represents as a vivid example of a living oral tradition that continues to be practiced among performers and their audiences in contemporary Kyrgyzstan. However, the perception of traditional performance art, both by the performers and their listeners, is evolving under the influence of modern contexts. The central figure of the ethnographic documentary film is a manaschy (epic storyteller). Manaschy received the gift of storytelling from the spirits of the epic's heroes in his youth through a visionary dream. In this way, ancestral spirits select individuals and bestow upon them the blessing to become storytellers. The film's hero recounts his unique journey of becoming a manaschy, as well as the challenges, responsibilities, and obstacles he faces in practicing his art. The storyteller believes that the epic is a living embodiment of the spirits of the epic heroes, who continue to serve the people through the art of the epic performance. Recognizing the importance of this mission, storyteller perpetuates the old tradition by mentoring a new generation of young storytellers. This work sheds light on the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage, offering valuable insights into the evolving role of the manaschy in contemporary Kyrgyz society. The film, titled *The Path*, has a total runtime of 40 minutes, is in the Kyrgyz language with English subtitles, release year 2025.

<https://youtu.be/SYOzDe0Jiw4>

Resonance in Exile: Young Afghan Musicians, Diasporic Identity, and Cultural Preservation in the United States

Sara Feili, Independent Scholar, New Haven

The experiences of young Afghan musicians within the United States diaspora provide a compelling framework for analyzing the intricate interplay between cultural preservation, identity formation, the redefinition of women's roles in Afghan music, and the impacts of forced displacement. This study focuses on a group of young Afghan musicians who fled Afghanistan due to the severe restrictions on music imposed by the second Taliban regime. Through this research, I seek to explore how these musicians navigate

the challenges of exile, adapt to their new environment, and preserve their musical and cultural identities, while simultaneously redefining the role of women in Afghan music through their promotion of Afghan musical traditions in the United States. While foundational studies by scholars such as (John Baily 1999, 2005, 2011) have examined Afghan music and diaspora communities, and (Marko Kölbl 2021) has explored Afghan music in Vienna, there remains a significant gap in research on the younger generation of Afghan musicians in the United States following the resurgence of the second Taliban regime. Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation, interviews, and recordings, this study highlights how music functions as a powerful medium for reconstructing identity and fostering a sense of belonging within the Afghan-American diasporic community.

12L. October 26, Sunday, 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Media and Music

Chair: Kieran Casey, Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University

#winning: Folk Dance Competitions and Mediated Authenticity in Greek America

Panayotis League, Florida State University

This paper explores the development, entrenchment, and renegotiation of Greek American identity in the context of competitive folk dance festivals since the 1970s. These festivals, which each year attract thousands of Greek American youth, constitute sites of intensive culture-work, where Greek Americans – mostly children and teens affiliated with a local Greek Orthodox parish – reimagine and redefine what it means to be a member of the Greek diaspora in the 21st century. More specifically, the festivals serve as a site where Orthodox Christian values and Greek folk culture are adapted to the neoliberal order and reemerge as competitive and individualistic, and hence compatible with not only the market fundamentalist drive to domination but also hegemonic models of race, class, and gender. My working hypothesis is that contemporary American notions of ethnic whiteness and unmarked racial identity, neoliberal capitalist values around the nexus of labor-productivity-pleasure, and the cultural politics of Greek Orthodoxy in contemporary America intersect and intertwine in the context of expressive culture at these sites. Further, I observe that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North America harnesses young people’s drive to participate in Greek culture and express their collective ethnic identity through dance as a means of tightening their control and strengthening their power to police the borders of Greekness, while also simultaneously depoliticizing their engagement with American society and emphasizing the ethnoreligious politics of the Orthodox Church in line with an emergent, reactionary “Neo-Byzantine” ideology.

The Magic of Musubi: Shintoism in the Soundtrack of Makoto Shinkai's Your Name

Kieran Casey, Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University

Your Name (2016) is a critically acclaimed movie directed by Makoto Shinkai that tells the story of two teenagers, Taki and Mitsuha, who unexpectedly swap bodies. Their journey is filled with longing and love, exploring themes like gender identity, climate change, and the Shintoism idea of musubi. Best described by the grandmother of Mitsuha, “musubi is the old way of calling the local guardian god.. So the braided cords that we make are the god's art and represent the flow of time itself. They converge and take shape. They twist, tangle, sometimes unravel, break, and then connect again. Musubi - knotting. That's time.” This Shinto concept is a harmonious connection between all things, whether nature, people, or the events that unfold within the universe. In the context of Your Name, musubi can be interpreted as the mystical and spiritual ties that bind the characters and their experiences. This paper explores how the musical soundtrack in this film, composed by RADWIMPS, bridges the metaphysical and emotional by examining compositional choices that signify musubi. Drawing from conversations surrounding the study of music, representation, and spirituality within anime, I discuss how musical motifs and orchestration guide the audience towards an understanding of the characters' interactions with the movie's idea of musubi. I argue that Your Name's soundtrack functions as a sonic embodiment of musubi. Its role within the film highlights how music actively constructs cultural and spiritual meaning, guiding audiences through its nonlinear temporality and deepening the film's engagement with Shinto cosmology.

I'm Walkin' Here!: Experiencing New York City's Punk Scene through Bootleg Cassette Tapes

Sean Peters, Cornell University, Syracuse University

Housed in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame archives is the bootleg tape collection of New York City (NYC) punk participant James Brawley. From 1974-1993, Brawley amassed 1,400 bootleg tapes documenting the NYC underground music scene. The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame website describes the collection as offering a firsthand perspective on the evolution of NYC punk. However, this paper argues that the breadth of Brawley's tapes suggests reading his collection as a sonic memoir instead of a targeted history. Unlike histories, memoirs don't claim to be objective accounts, enabling memoirists to tell their histories through their affective experience with less concern for accuracy. In the vein of a memoir, the Brawley Collection doesn't attempt to document a definitive history of NYC punk. Instead, as I demonstrate through an accounting of his archive, the tapes document a broader affective experience of the 1970s/1980s NYC soundworld in which James Brawley circulated.

Key to Brawley's archive and entrance into the historical record was the medium of the cassette tape. In listening to his tapes, Brawley's curatorial hand becomes evident in how we encounter his archive, determining what gets recorded, the grouping of performances together on the same tape, and notes Brawley makes on the J-cards to guide us to particular performances. In discussing Brawley's tapes, I examine how media technologies shape the historical record by exploring how the cassette tape empowered James Brawley to tell his story through these bootleg recordings and influence the legacy of NYC punk.

