Society for Ethnomusicology 71st Annual Meeting

Bloomington, Indiana

November 5-8, 2026

Abstracts

the society for
ethnomusicology

The abstracts for the SEM 2026 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. Presenters may also be found in the Index

Abstracts. SEM 71st Annual Meeting. November 4 – 8, 2026, Bloomington, Indiana

Pre-Conference. Wednesday, 8:00 AM. Special Event

SEM Pre-Conference Symposium — "Returning" Workshop: For Collections in Need of Communities

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Chair(s): Kim Marshall and Andrea Decker - The University of Oklahoma; The American Folklife Center

The Society for Ethnomusicology announces the inaugural "Returning" Workshop, prior to the 2026 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, November 4 in Bloomington, IN. Created in partnership with the Archives of Traditional Music, and co-sponsored by the SEM Executive Board, the SEM Indigenous Music Section, and the SEM Archiving SIG, this workshop will provide hands-on training for any practicing ethnomusicologist interested in connecting communities with their recorded sound and songs held in archives. We especially encourage attendance by graduate students and early career scholars.

The 2026 Workshop returns us to our roots as a discipline, where collections of sound recordings were created as part of standard professional practice. The collecting of songs and the subsequent study of them as sound objects was the professional activity upon which our discipline was founded. Each of our intellectual ancestors likely participated in these activities, and so we as a discipline are the intellectual benefactors of this collective knowledge about the world's music. However, as our colleagues during the 2023 Seeger Lecture have pointed out, this collective benefit enjoins collective responsibility.

The workshop also returns us to the rift created by collecting activities at the inception of sound archives: separating songs, sounds, and other media from their communities of origin. And yet, despite declining institutional support for music archives, high rates of staff turnover, and a loss of public support for higher education generally, archivists and archivist-scholars have engaged in sustained, significant, and innovative projects to reconnect communities to the collections. However, given the breadth and depth of archival collections, and the unreliable and diminishing support for trained archivists, the project of reconnecting ethnographic media collections with their communities cannot fall to archivists alone. Thus, we call for a broader movement of return; engaging in the cultural and logistical labor of reconnecting ethnomusicological collections to their communities.

This workshop calls for investment from all ethnomusicologists in the project of return (connecting communities to ethnomusicological collections) and provides professional development toward that end. The "Returning" Workshop is intended for ethnomusicologists with any specialization, with expertise in any musical tradition, to participate in the shared professional obligation to help with return. Participants will learn from distinguished specialists about potential models for proactive return at major ethnomusicological archives (such as the IU Archives of Traditional Music (ATM) and the American Folklife Center) as well as digital pathways to curate and provide responsible access to home communities. Participants will learn models for relationship building with communities, co-curation, and repatriation/rematriation. Participants will also have the opportunity to do hands-on work with staff from major archives in service of connecting collections and communities.

01A. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Organized Panel

Jazz as Diasporic Formation: Spirituality, Mobility, and Intercultural Exchange

Paul Schauert; Zane Cupec; Brian Casey; Austin C. Okigbo - Michigan State University; University of Pittsburgh; University of Northern Colorado; University of Colorado Boulder

Chair(s): Mark Lomanno - University of Miami

For decades, jazz studies has largely operated within secular-modern analytic frameworks that presume a separation between sound and spirit, art and cosmology, improvisation and metaphysics. Such tendencies have shaped what counts as evidence, agency, and musical meaning in the field, often muting African and African diasporic ways of knowing as structuring realities rather than culturally expressive themes. This panel contends that jazz cannot be fully apprehended

within these inherited epistemic boundaries. Rather than treating spirituality as biographical context, cultural residue, or symbolic or metaphoric content, we examine African and African diasporic cosmologies as ontological systems that organize improvisation, collectivity, temporality, embodiment, and sonic practice itself. Across diverse geographies of the African diasporas, musicians articulate jazz as relational practice, a practice grounded in reciprocity, presence, and ways of knowing that exceed secular-materialist accounts of creativity. These cosmological orientations do not merely inform musical expression; they shape the conditions under which sound becomes meaningful, efficacious, and socially operative. By highlighting cosmology as structuring ontology, this panel reframes jazz as diasporic formation constituted through metaphysical commitments as much as aesthetic innovation. In doing so, we challenge the secular assumptions that continue to delimit the field and propose analytic approaches attentive to relationality, interdependency, ritualized sound, and the porous boundaries between visible and invisible domains. Taken together, the papers model methods for theorizing jazz beyond the epistemic constraints of Euro-American modernity and toward frameworks that take African diasporic ontologies seriously on their own terms.

01A:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

Radical "Sankofa-ism": Ancestral Recall, Spiritual Healing, and African Diasporic Utopianism in the Jazz of Chief Xian aTunde Adjuah

Paul Schauert - Michigan State University

This paper examines the confluence of African and African diasporic artistic practices in the work of Chief Xian aTunde Adjuah, a contemporary New Orleans jazz musician with a rich heritage that 'stretches' across the Black Atlantic. It argues that his oeuvre creates a distinctive sonic space wherein he cultivates diasporic solidarity, spiritual healing, and utopia-making through a Pan-African cultural lens. Drawing on musical analysis, artist life-history, and diasporic theories, this study situates Adjuah's practice within a continuum of African-derived aesthetic sensibilities, including what I call: "radical Sankofa-ism" – a process of recovering cultural memory and resisting the social order to manifest revolutionary Afrofuturistic ontologies. Thus, his self-articulated concept of "stretch music" is not merely analyzed as genre expansion, but as a decolonial methodology and healing technology that defy rigid taxonomies inherited from Eurocentric worldviews. Adjuah's integration of African diasporic memory, ancestral invocation, and futurist gestures prepares an Afro-centric socio-sonic gumbo in which past, present, and future nourish new understandings of self and society. This process is analyzed as part of Adjuah's utopia-making: not as escapist fantasy, but as a grounded expression of liberation. Through layered musical textures, instrument innovations, communal performance practices, and socio-political commentary, I show how his music enacts forms of cultural solidarity and spiritual healing that resonate across temporal and geographic boundaries. Ultimately, I contend that Adjuah's music offers a model for how contemporary Black artists mobilize African diasporic culture to embody and produce iterations of jazz rooted in healing, heritage, and interconnection oriented toward collective freedom.

01A:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM.

Sounding the Òrìṣà: Creative Paradox and Diasporic Formation in African Cuban Santería and Jazz

Zane Cupec - University of Pittsburgh

How does òrìṣà-centered sound generate authority, continuity, and transcendence in diaspora? This paper examines how sacred force travels through music within African Cuban Santería (La Regla de Ocha) and transnational jazz performance contexts. Focusing on òrìṣà song, bàtá drumming, and ceremonial aesthetics, I argue that ritual knowledge extends beyond liturgical space animating intercultural collaboration, pedagogy, and global jazz stages. Through the musical philosophies and practices of artists including Román Díaz, Lázaro Galarraga, and Melvis Santa, I explore how practitioners complicate sacred-secular distinctions while sustaining what I call "creative paradox": the productive tension between preservation and innovation that enables continuity through disciplined transformation. For some, spiritual force depends on linguistic precision and guarded ritual boundaries. For others, the vitality of the òrìṣà emerges through movement across genres, instrumentation, and publics, including woman-led ensembles and diasporic jazz festivals. In these contexts, ceremonial concepts such as invitation, lineage, and aše inform improvisation and collaborative practice, rendering sound socially operative, relational, and efficacious. Sacred sound thus operates as a technology of presence, generating forms of transcendence that are neither abstract nor metaphorical; they are

experienced as the arrival of divine force in and through performance. Situating African Cuban musicianship within broader conversations about migration, Black transnational solidarity, and global jazz, I frame spiritual sound as dynamic worldmaking in diaspora, where sacred authority endures precisely because it adapts. By foregrounding cosmology as structuring ontology, the paper challenges secular-modern assumptions that continue to delimit jazz studies.

01A:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.

Transplanted Prodigy: New African Diasporas, Afro-Fusion and the Career Development of Ghanaian Drummer Paa Kow

Brian Casey - University of Northern Colorado

This paper explores African diasporic formation through the lens of an ethnography of an African musician who chose to leave a developing career in Ghana in favor of teaching and establishing a band in the United States. Paa Kow was deeply influenced in his homeland by traditional Ghanaian music as well as the Western popular music, most notably jazz, that caught his attention from an early age. This twenty-first century diasporic formation is notable for the agency that was afforded to this musician through his decision to emigrate to the United States. He embarked on this move with the intention of disseminating his understanding of African musical influence across diasporas as well as establishing his own performance career in America. The new African diaspora evidenced in this case study is highlighted by the personal and cultural identity constructs that such an emigration allows and ultimately led to an entire ontological system that informed Paa Kow's professional musical activities both in the United States and in his Ghanaian homeland. Considered a child prodigy in both traditional Ghanaian drumming and West African highlife, this musician found New World agency in the cultivation of original music in a genre known as Afro-Fusion that is quantifiably one of the predominant products of the transatlantic cultural feedback loop. The sudden passing of Paa Kow in late 2025 has given this research and analysis an added dimension of memorializing an incredible musician and proponent of cultural exchange with American jazz and other African-informed styles.

01B. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Roundtable

Communities of Care in Academic and Applied Ethnomusicology

Angela Glaros; Colin Hochstetler; Jonathan Smith; Julie Hunter; Anne Elise Thomas - Eastern Illinois University; The University of Illinois; SUNY Potsdam; World Community Education Center

Chair(s): Angela Glaros; Anne Elise Thomas

This roundtable considers twin notions of care and service and their relevance to fieldwork, practice, and the overlapping roles of professional academics. Engaging with queer and feminist theories, we discuss service both to the communities whose music we study and to others who are served by our expertise. Drawing upon an ethics of care (Gilligan, Tronto) we raise the question: how would viewing our scholarly activities - including research, teaching, and outreach - through the lenses of service and care inform our views of, relationships with, and obligations toward communities we serve.

Presenter1 considers how long-term research led her to become Greek Orthodox liturgical chanter and how this experience changed her perspectives toward women's role in performance. Presenter2 shares a collaboration between local accordionists and an educational institution toward a concert that supported the institution's future in return for members' help in researching its past. Presenter3 theorizes queer politics of Sacred Harp singing as an active participant and volunteer within singing communities. Presenter4 explores how scholars, students and performers participate in communities of care through an experimental sound conference. Presenter5 examines how community needs dramatically shape the direction of scholarly work within a collegiate West African drumming ensemble. Presenter6 documents global music ensembles on college campuses and how individual directors nurture intercultural communities within institutional structures that offer scant recognition of their labor. Taken as a whole, our roundtable opens space for discussion of scholarly and musical activities that advance accessibility, inclusion, and social justice in disparate settings.

01D. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Ancestral Frequencies: Sound, Heritage, and Resistance in the Caribbean

Collin Edouard; Manuel Garcia-Orozco; Aimee González; Tracey Stewart - Yale University; Columbia University; University of Florida; Swarthmore College

Chair(s): Rebecca Dirksen - Indiana University

01D:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.

Voye Chante (Throwing/Sending Song): Ritual Frequencies for Resistance in Haitian Vodou

Collin Edouard - Yale University

This paper examines Vodou vocality and vibration as embodied technologies of resistance and worldmaking within Haitian Vodou. Drawing on ethnographic research with practitioners, ritual specialists, and sound archives, it foregrounds the voice, breath, rhythm, and percussive utterance as epistemic forces that exceed language and textuality. In Vodou ceremonial contexts, vocal sounds, chants, cries, seemingly unintelligible utterances, call-and-answer patterns, and breath-inflected exhalations operate not merely as expressive media but as vibrational acts that reorganize space, time, and relationality. These sonic practices call lwa yo (Vodou spirits), activate ancestral memory, and recalibrate the body toward balance, producing what practitioners describe as alignment rather than belief. By centering the animation of vocality in Vodou, this paper examines how vocal performances function within the liturgical cycle, their role in sustaining cultural memory, and their capacity to mobilize both spiritual power and social solidarity. It examines instances of divine interaction as conveyed through vocal sonorities and the responses elicited from listeners. It highlights the expertise of Vodou priests, who provide insight into the significance of voice and the interpretations of performances of Vodou liturgical songs. Situating Vodou vocality within Black Atlantic histories of enslavement, colonial violence, and epistemic suppression, the paper argues that vibration functions as a counter-archive: a mode of transmission that resists capture by colonial grammars and survives through repetition, resonance, and corporeal attunement. Vocal vibration becomes a practice of fugitivity, enabling practitioners to sustain worlds that colonial modernity sought to silence or eradicate.

01D:2. Thursday, 8:30 AM.

Women Inheriting and Maturing the Bullerengue-voice in the Afro-Colombian Maroon Caribbean: Worlding, Epistemic Aurality, and Las Penas Alegres

Manuel Garcia-Orozco - Columbia University

Bullerengue is a musical tradition and epistemic site sustained by cantadoras—elderly women singers—in the Afro-Colombian Maroon Caribbean. In advanced age, cantadoras cultivate a vocal materiality shaped through lifelong performance, communal responsibility, and ancestral inheritance, gradually resembling their ancestresses' vocalities and ethics of care. This paper ethnographically analyzes how the bullerengue-voice is inherited, matured, and socially enacted through two lineages of cantadoras represented by octogenarians Juana Rosado and Petrona Martínez. While Western biomedical discourse frequently frames aging as bodily decline (Powell and Gilbert 2009), cantadoras instead understand aging as privilege, authority, and accumulated wisdom. The bullerengue-voice enables them to remain productive, creative, and indispensable within family and community life.

Drawing on the concept of worlding—"ways of knowing, practicing, and making [a] distinct world" (de la Cadena)—this paper argues that voice and worlding are mutually constitutive through an "acoustemology" (Feld 2015) that illuminates how deep listening to Maroon territory and matriarchal positionality generates knowledge through performance. I propose the concept of epistemic aurality of voice to describe this reciprocal relation between the bullerengue-voice and worlding. Framed through Escobar's notion of ontological design (2018)—where humans design worlds that in turn design them—the bullerengue-voice emerges as an ongoing life project attuned to relational existence. Such developments allow cantadoras to build constructive ontologies in the face of adversity, as exemplified by their ethos of "las penas alegres," a poetic construction that casts singing as a vehicle to assuage the adverse existential effects of marginality and life itself.

01D:3. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

Defending Cuban Heritage in Sound and Stone: Reviving Colonial-Era Music and Architecture in Contemporary Havana

Aimee González - University of Florida

This paper examines the role of colonial-era music and architecture in articulating Cuban cultural heritage in the wake of the economic and ideological crisis known as the Special Period following the collapse of the Soviet Union. I argue that Havana's ongoing revival of colonial-era Catholic sacred music that emerged in the 1990s sonically reinscribes reconstructed cultural heritage onto the restored colonial spaces of Havana. Drawing on ethnographic and archival work in Havana, I demonstrate how this musical revival is intrinsically tied to the revitalization of the previously neglected colonial Historic Center of Old Havana in the wake of new touristic and religious opportunities since the 1990s. Focusing on the restoration of the colonial Paula Church as a concert hall and on the resonances of cultural theories by writer Alejo Carpentier (1904–1980) within Havana's early music revival, I demonstrate how performances of—and writings about—colonial music have supported a cultural politics that reclaims and reimagines the colonial past from the perspective of the postcolonial present. This imaginative, presentist perspective conveys two ideas: cultural and racial mixing as inherent in Cuban identity, and a sense of agency for contemporary Cuba in infusing hegemonic European culture with subaltern cultural practices. I argue, therefore, that the revival of colonial-era music seeks to enroll the fraught colonial past in the needs of the present to foster local identity in place and to project a sense of belonging at times of profound change and uncertainty, yet it highlights the tensions between whose pasts are silenced and sounded.

01D:4. Thursday, 9:30 AM.

"Go Back and Get It": Sankofa, Jamaican Maroon Cultural Traditions, and Recovering Fugitive Histories

Tracey Stewart - Swarthmore College

Sankofa, a prominent element of the Akan Adinkra system, is embedded in Jamaican Maroon worldviews as both a conduit to asserted Akan origins and a framework for self-definition. This paper treats Sankofa's imperative—to look back, reclaim what was left behind, and use it to build a better future—as a lived philosophical orientation sounded, embodied, and transmitted through Maroon cultural traditions. Building on scholarship on Maroon political structures, histories of resistance, and expressive cultures, I examine the possibilities and limits of a Sankofa-informed approach to advancing Maroon cultural, political, and economic interests in the twenty-first century and beyond. Jamaican Maroons activate their historical archives through music and dance during annual treaty commemorations. However, fulfilling Sankofa's mandate to "go back and get it" also requires sustained engagement with Jamaica's less celebratory histories of fugitivity, freedom, victory, and betrayal. How might Sankofa instead be fully enacted through Maroon cultural traditions? Reading between the lines of Maroon songs about war, treaties, life, and death, I ask two questions: How do performances within state-sponsored national celebrations alter their meanings? And how do cultural icons function simultaneously as Jamaican Maroon historical traces and Jamaica's nationalist symbols? I argue that using music and dance to promote a curated national memory can obscure and displace historical truths deemed disruptive. Nevertheless, the persisting unresolved tensions shape identities, fuel muted grievances, and complicate political claims that ultimately constrain Sankofa's forward-facing transformative potential. I reveal how music is used to promote curated memory in the negotiation of difficult pasts.

01E. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Organized Panel

Singing imagined futures: Young people, musical arts, and forced displacement

Andrea Emberly; André de Quadros; Nadeen Abu Shaban; - York University; Boston University; York University;
Chair(s): David McDonald - Indiana University

In contexts of forced displacement, children and young people are often framed through narratives of crisis, vulnerability, and integration. Within these accounts, their musical lives and creative capacities are frequently overlooked. This panel places musical arts at the centre, examining how displaced young people use creative practice to negotiate belonging, sustain cultural memory, and imagine shared futures across transit, waiting, and resettlement.

The three papers explore how collaborative arts practices operate as sites of world-making under rupture and mobility. Together, they consider how music-making creates spaces for young people to express layered connections to place, culture, and community; how participation can unsettle dominant narratives of trauma and resilience; and how collective creation supports processes of social connection and integration. Rather than treating music as a therapeutic tool or symbolic inclusion, the panel understands it as embodied, relational, and inherently political practice.

Drawing on applied and community-based research with displaced young people in diverse settings, the presenters show how musical engagement enables the authorship of complex identities and the cultivation of emplacement within shifting geographies. For some participants, music sustains intergenerational and transnational ties; for others, it offers space for experimentation and the emergence of hybrid identities grounded in a changing sense of "here."

Bringing together scholars at different career stages, including members with lived experience of displacement, the panel concludes with a discussant who situates the papers within contemporary ethnomusicological debates and reflects on the methodological and implications of engaging music as collaborative practice oriented toward creative possibility.

01E:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.
Singing Our Stories: Musical arts and refugee children and young people in Canada
Andrea Emberly - York University

This paper examines Singing Our Stories (SOS), a community-engaged partnership between York University and refugee service providers in Toronto. The project centers the narrative experiences of refugee children and youth living in temporary shelters during resettlement through weekly musical arts programming. In contexts of forced displacement, young people are framed through deficit-based narratives of vulnerability and integration. SOS positions musical arts as relational, world-making practices through which young people articulate and shape their experiences of displacement and belonging.

Through weekly music sessions, songwriting workshops, recording projects, arts festivals, and youth-led initiatives, participants engaged in singing, composing, storytelling, and collaborative creation. These practices enabled young people to express layered connections to home, culture, and memory while cultivating emplacement within shifting geographies. In shelter environments where access to kitchens, schools, and community spaces is limited, musical arts became a vital site for sustaining cultural practices, fostering memory, and building community.

The paper conceptualizes displacement not only as physical migration but also as disruption in access to cultural traditions and collective life. It asks how musical storytelling functions as a means of navigating geographic rupture alongside systemic marginalization. Drawing on applied, community-based ethnographic research, I argue that musical arts support thrivability: the capacity of young people and their cultural practices to adapt and generate meaning within inequitable conditions.

At a time when refugee policy in Canada and globally is shaped by securitization and polarization, SOS offers a youth-led model that insists on listening differently, inviting reconsideration of how settlement systems imagine refugee futures.

01E:2. Thursday, 8:30 AM.
Sounding Against Organized Abandonment: Refugee Arts Practice and the Limits of Witnessing
André de Quadros - Boston University

This paper interrogates the politics of visibility in refugee arts practice, asking what it means to see and to be seen within participatory music-making in contexts shaped by displacement and border regimes. Drawing on the work of bell hooks, Judith Butler, Susan Sontag, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, I examine how visibility functions simultaneously as recognition, exposure, and risk. In refugee contexts, where lives are rendered hypervisible through humanitarian spectacle yet politically invisible through organized abandonment, the act of witnessing through music and storytelling becomes fraught, unstable, and ethically charged. This analysis emerges from observational and participatory research conducted during a series of music and storytelling sessions at a refugee shelter in Baja California. Attending closely to sound, silence, lyric, and embodied presence, I consider how creative expression mediates the sharing of personal narratives

while also reproducing tensions around representation and spectatorship. Through a hybrid form that interweaves analytic and lyrical writing, I critically reflect on my own positionality as facilitator and researcher, probing the limits of allyship and the complicities of community arts practices within broader structures of violence. Rather than claiming transformative impact, I argue that practices of witnessing through music may not materially alter participants' precarious conditions. However, these practices can reconfigure relational space, deepening recognition, unsettling the researchers' own assumptions, and opening fragile yet generative possibilities for collective imagination, solidarity, and resilience. In doing so, the paper contributes to ethnomusicological conversations about representation, ethics, and the responsibilities of scholars engaged in collaborative music-making across asymmetries of power.

01E:3. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

Singing Agency into Being: Refugee Youth, Participatory Arts, and the Co-Creation of Knowledge

Nadeen Abu Shaban - York University

This paper examines how refugee and newcomer children enact agency through participatory arts within Singing Our Stories (SOS). While displaced young people are often positioned as recipients of care or research subjects, this study approaches them as co-creators of knowledge whose artistic decisions shape both process and outcome.

Drawing on child-centered, arts-based research in shelter settings, the paper analyzes collaborative songwriting, creative writing, performance, and group reflection to examine how children negotiate identity, belonging, and memory on their own terms. Rather than treating participation as symbolic inclusion, the study attends to how children influence thematic direction, lyrical content, aesthetic choices, and collective meaning-making within the program.

The paper argues that participation reshapes how knowledge about displacement is produced, as understanding emerges through shared creative production rather than observation or interpretation alone. In these spaces, children do not simply recount experience; they actively shape relational understandings through sound, rhythm, and story. Musical collaboration becomes a site for articulating belonging and asserting voice within the research process itself.

By closely examining processes of co-creation, this paper demonstrates how participatory arts practices unsettle hierarchical research relationships and resist portrayals of refugee youth as passive or vulnerable. Instead, they position young people as contributors to knowledge production and to the social worlds that research seeks to understand.

01F. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Music, Media, and Power in Puerto Rico

Ana Maria Diaz Pinto; Juan Diego Diaz; Jorge L. Mercado-Méndez; Rodney Padovani; Julian Duncan - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; University of California; Florida State University

Chair(s): Juan Diego Diaz - University of California, Davis

01F:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.

"Quitate tú pa' ponerme yo": Clave Riddim, Salsa, and Puerto Rican Reggaetón Relations

Ana Maria Diaz Pinto; Juan Diego Diaz - University of California, Davis

Reggaetón and salsa are two musical genres connected not merely by shared geography but by their racial politics, transnational trajectories, and regional stances. Salsa artists like Rubén Blades have claimed that, although reggaetón musicians are perceived as requiring a different technical training in their craft, they have adopted lyrical styles and other aesthetic aspects of salsa vieja. This link has been explicit in the rhetoric of reggaetón practitioners: Old-school Puerto Rican reggaetón musicians like Eddie Dee and Daddy Yankee have been vocal about drawing inspiration from the maestros salseros while honoring this legacy through albums and performances. Yet, how does this connection extend beyond sampling practices and discursive references? This paper examines the transformation of Puerto Rican reggaetón's compositional practices through its rhythmic and historical relationship with salsa, focusing on how the clave rhythm of salsa has shaped and counter-shaped the dancehall riddim and singing/rapping flows of reggaetón. Through a close reading of the 2004 album 12 Discipulos, in which 12 famous reggaetón artists pay homage to salsa, we explore the

extent to which the instrumental layers and songs align or misalign with clave. Drawing on Édouard Glissant's poetics of relation (1990), we contend that the rhythmic encounter between clave and dancehall riddim articulates a musical genealogy of diasporic belonging in an ongoing negotiation rooted in Black Atlantic diasporic traditions shared by these two pan-Latino genres. By examining how reggaetón discourse materializes in rhythmic design, this discussion contributes to balancing the role of musical sounds and discourse in ethnomusicology.

01F:2. Thursday, 8:30 AM.

Military Bands in Puerto Rico during World War I: Music as an Instrument of Imperial Power (1917-1919)

Jorge L. Mercado-Méndez - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

During World War I, music played a crucial role in the lives of soldiers in the United States Armed Forces as a result of systematic efforts to integrate it into military culture through phonograph records, singing groups, artistic performances, and the expansion of military bands. (Suisman, 2024) In 1917, nineteen years after the United States took possession of Puerto Rico through the Treaty of Paris, U.S. citizenship was imposed on the citizens of the archipelago, enabling Puerto Rican musicians to be part of this process through military recruitment. This paper examines the United States military's strategic use of music in Puerto Rico, exploring why the U.S. Armed Forces sought to integrate Puerto Rican soldiers into its musical initiatives, and highlighting the resulting issues of racial, social, and musical identity that arose from this process. Drawing on historical newspapers and military documents, I argue that military bands served as a tool for shaping new hegemonic relationships on the archipelago through a musical framework that reinforced the musical and aesthetic values of the United States. Additionally, these performances functioned as sites of racialization, where Puerto Rican musicians were categorized and understood within U.S. racial and cultural hierarchies. By situating Puerto Rican military bands within the broader political, colonial, and social context, this study sheds light on how music served as an instrument of imperial power and identity formation, contributing to broader discussions of music, militarization, and race in the early twentieth century.

01F:3. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

Sanctioning the Divided Musical Nationhood: Institutionalization of Music under 'Muñozismo' in Puerto Rico (1949–1965)

Rodney Padovani - University of California, Berkeley

Between 1949 and 1960s, a period in Puerto Rican history some scholars call the Muñozismo period, was marked by an ambitious wave of infrastructural and cultural reforms aimed at overcoming economic constraints inherited from the Great Depression, as the government pursued modernization through state-funded programs known as Operation Bootstrap and later Operation Serenidad. (Lazo, 2017) The administration of the first Puerto Rican elected governor, Luis Muñoz Marín (1898–1980), implemented a cultural program that positioned music at the center of state-building and national identity formation. Music operated between these programs: the internationalization of Puerto Rico through European-derived classical institutions and the curation of popular and traditional musics through educational media and heritage initiatives. This paper argues that during the Muñozismo period, two parallel but unequal musical priorities were institutionalized. An analysis of these asymmetries reveals a Eurocentric cultural logic embedded within Muñozismo, whereby popular and traditional musics were elevated as markers of national identity yet denied the same institutional permanence, prestige, and international projection afforded to the classical tradition. In this framework, European classical music became the primary vehicle through which the state performed modernity, legitimacy, and refinement on the global stage, while vernacular traditions were preserved as heritage—valuable but not institutionally sovereign within the same hierarchy of national representation. By examining funding structures, publicity campaigns, institutional archives, and interviews with affiliated individuals, this study demonstrates that cultural policy under Muñoz Marín organized a hierarchy of cultural value that shaped Puerto Rico's national image and its place within transnational modernity.

01F:4. Thursday, 9:30 AM.

Concierto por radio: WKAQ, Musical Programming, and Canon Formation in 1920s Puerto Rico

Julian Duncan - Florida State University

During the 1920s, radio station WKAQ in San Juan, Puerto Rico, played a key role in shaping the island's national identity through its musical programming. Inaugurated in 1922 with a broadcast from the Teatro Rialto, WKAQ was among the first radio stations in Latin America and quickly became a fixture of musical life on the island. Influential figures such as Joaquín Burset, the station's artistic director, and the Figueroa-Sanabia family curated musical tastes by hosting frequent, diverse radio concerts featuring the station's studio orchestra and other popular ensembles. These performances included works by local Puerto Rican composers, as well as classical and U.S. popular music. Station host Joaquín Agusty and Burset emphasized that all musical broadcasts should include at least one piece in the style of a danza, Puerto Rico's national music genre. Applying a historical-ethnographic lens to contemporaneous census data, U.S. Department of Commerce trade reports, printed programs, and historical newspapers, this paper traces WKAQ's early years, revealing the station's financial structure, reach, and programming. I argue that by consistently featuring local genres and musicians, WKAQ helped shape Puerto Rican national identity and consolidate a distinct Puerto Rican musical canon. The experimental nature of radio in the 1920s, combined with Puerto Rico's cultural self-assertion under U.S. colonialism, positions this case study to provide valuable insight into how emerging mass media technologies influenced nation-building, popular tastes, and canon formation in the early twentieth century.

01G. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Beyond Ethnic Categories: Music, Mediation, and Belonging in China

Yuwei Jing; Haotian Wang; Tianyu Wang; Kai Tang - Victoria University of Wellington; Duke University; McGill University; University of Vienna

Chair(s): Kai Tang - University of Vienna

01G:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.

Mongolian Musical Practices as Ecological Mediation in Inner Mongolia

Yuwei Jing - Victoria University of Wellington

Chair(s):

This paper theorizes Mongolian musical practice in Inner Mongolia as a form of ecological mediation that challenges dominant separations between culture and nature. Rather than approaching sound as symbolic representation, I argue that musical practices actively produce relationships among humans, animals, land, and governance under conditions of accelerating ecological transformation.

Drawing on ongoing fieldwork, interviews with musicians and instrument makers, and documentation of ritual and performance contexts, I examine how ecological knowledge is embedded in vocal production, instrumental timbre, and material practices. Vocal forms such as long song and throat singing enact modes of listening attuned to wind, animal movement, and spatial openness, while rhythmic structures resonate with histories of nomadic mobility. These music practices articulate relational ethics grounded in interdependence with the grassland.

At the same time, musical sound becomes a site where environmental disruption and regulatory intervention are negotiated. Under intensified grassland management policies and shifting economic structures, narratives surrounding music register dispossession, constraint, and uneven power relations. The story of Suhe and his white horse is a folk story often linked to the morin khuur, can be read not simply as folklore but as an acoustic response to loss and territorial rupture.

By positioning sound as a material and political force, this paper explores how music, as a material and political force, carries ecological knowledge that can support or question contemporary environmental practices.

01G:2. Thursday, 8:30 AM.

Neither Ethnic Heritage nor Global Grooves: Sonic Negotiations of Minority Identity in Yunnan's Transnational Reggae Networks

Haotian Wang - Duke University

How is Yunnan heard through Reggae, and how is Reggae articulated through Yunnan? Over the past two decades, a constellation of bands, musicians, and producers in Yunnan, Southwest China has gradually become associated with the musical network of "Yunnan Reggae." Ethnic minority musicians and transnational collaborators have been at the forefront of interweaving Yunnan's folk songs, folktales, ethnic languages, and traditional instruments with reggae-inspired sounds, such as laid-back ska rhythms, psychedelic guitar textures, and dub delay/reverb effects. How are ethnic minority identities (re)negotiated and (re)articulated through these recording, production, and performance practices? Meanwhile, how does "Reggae" reshape listeners' interpretations of "Yunnan" as a borderland, multi-ethnic region of China?

This paper neither seeks to define "Yunnan Reggae" as an ethnographic case of world beat that fuses a global genre with local traditions nor narrativize an emerging subgenre within Chinese underground music scene. Rather, I listen to/for processes of translation, transduction, and transmutation in-between/across Yunnan regional musics and reggae, attending to how reggae becomes generative sonic vocabularies for minority musicians to reimagine, contest, and sustain ethnic traditions. Additionally, by examining how minorities embrace or distance themselves from "Reggae" and how record labels and festival organizers curate "#Yunnan Reggae" for domestic and international audiences, I probe how the hashtag reconstructs the aural imaginaries of "Yunnan" across the transregional, transnational mediation and circulation processes (Meintjes 1990; Novak 2013; Kheshti 2015; Kielman 2022).

01G:3. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

The Texture of Silence: Tracing the Blank History of African Soundscapes in China's Urban Archive

Tianyu Wang - McGill University

Despite its definition as a non-immigrant nation, China embodies a structural contradiction by becoming the unanticipated destination for Asia's largest African diaspora. Since the late 1990s, transnational commerce driven by African migrants has transformed Guangzhou's urban enclaves into a vital Afro-Asian hub (Mathews 2019; Lan 2017). However, a profound dissonance exists between this tangible presence and its inscription in official archives. While state media frames African music as a political symbol or exoticized display, authentic diasporic voices remain muted. Their sonic expressions, rooted in memories of home and global markets, are rendered inaudible within mainstream records. I conceptualize this absence not as a vacuum, but as a blank history. Drawing on Veena Das (2020), I argue these silences are inhabited by everyday struggles and tacit knowledge that homogeneous official archives fail to register yet are haunted by. To access this history, I employ "listening to the text" (Ochoa Gautier 2014) to interrogate gaps in media reports and urban descriptors. Following Xu (2025), I treat these textual silences as active sites where fleeting sounds and embodied practices can be reconstructed. This inquiry gains urgency post-2020, as pandemic-era policies triggered a mass exodus (China Times 2024). As African residents navigate a precarious return, this blank history becomes critical for understanding their resilience. By attending to the friction between their silenced everyday realities and China's hegemonic narratives, this study renders the diaspora's invisible history visible, revealing a sonic presence surviving within the texture of the ordinary.

01G:4. Thursday, 9:30 AM.

Music and the Invention of Ethnicities: Rethinking Ethnic Categories in the Ethnomusicological Study of Chinese Music

Kai Tang - University of Vienna

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the state announced the existence of 56 ethnic groups, including the Han, the vast ethnic majority accounting for over 90 percent of China's population, and 55 ethnic minorities. Every Chinese citizen, every musician, has been officially registered as belonging to one of these 56 ethnic groups. Since then, these 56 ethnic categories have remained persistent identifiers in the collection, documentation, and

publication of Chinese music, as well as in the nomination, inscription, and preservation of musical traditions as Intangible Cultural Heritage elements. In the meantime, ethnic minorities have been a frequent theme in the musical representations of China and Chinese culture.

This article calls for rethinking some of the 56 official ethnic categories in the study of Chinese music. Based on ethnographic research conducted over the past two decades, I argue that these ethnicities were proposed only after 1949 as a state-sanctioned way of understanding China's cultural others and of reshaping hundreds of existing groups native to the annexed lands who still maintained diverse non-Chinese cultures. Therefore, I suggest that ethnomusicologists avoid using these ethnic categories uncritically as analytical starting points or labels to summarize the cultural backgrounds and identities of musicians. This paper further examines how music helps actualize these ethnic categories by generating shared attributes among culturally diverse groups categorized as the same ethnic minority and by helping the nationwide public and global audiences imagine the millennia-long existence and cultural unity of these recently proposed ethnicities.

01H. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Christian Musicking Across Diverse Worlds

Joshua Busman; Robin Harris; Stephen Benham; George Pioustin; Andrew Janzen - University of North Carolina at Pembroke; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Toronto
Chair(s): Joshua Busman - University of North Carolina at Pembroke

01H:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.

The Afterlives of Contemporary Worship, or Metamodern Musicking in the Shadow of Megachurches

Joshua Busman - University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Anglophone evangelical Christianity has witnessed a profound exodus over the past two decades, with one estimate putting the number at more than 25 million in the USA alone (Gushee 2020). Some members of this cohort of mostly white, politically liberal young adults—often dubbed "exvangelicals"—have abandoned organized religion altogether, while others have migrated into myriad other forms of historical Christianity. But often shared across these trajectories is a particular distaste for the industrial machinery of contemporary praise and worship music. Christian popular culture and worship music, in particular, is a conflicted carrier for markers of political identity and social position and may also be tied to ongoing spiritual and familial trauma. But perhaps because of this spectral presence, it often continues to loom large in the exvangelical imagination. In this paper, I examine two case studies—American songwriter David Bazan and the Australian rock band Gang of Youths—in an attempt to understand how even those explicitly rejecting contemporary worship music are continuing to feel its push-and-pull.

Aiding my analysis is the theoretical concept of metamodernism—a term coined by Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker to describe an aesthetics of oscillation "between a modern enthusiasm and a postmodern irony, between hope and melancholy, between naïveté and knowingness, empathy and apathy, unity and plurality, totality and fragmentation, purity and ambiguity" (2010). Metamodernism in both form and content helps elucidate the multivalent relationships to music within my case studies and unveil an ongoing hauntology of worship music even amongst those who have left the faith behind.

01H:2. Thursday, 8:30 AM.

"The War Changed Everything": Reimagining Identity and Worship Songs in Ukraine

Robin Harris; Stephen Benham - Dallas International University; Duquesne University

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Protestant church experienced a revival of congregational singing, drawing heavily from Russian-language worship traditions and Western contemporary Christian music translated into Russian and Ukrainian. During this time of renewed religious freedom, Russian and Ukrainian languages coexisted in worship, with translated songs offering accessible expressions for a newly energized faith community. However, the creation of indigenous Ukrainian worship music was largely overlooked. In the wake of Russia's war on Ukraine, the Protestant church is now re-evaluating this borrowed worship tradition. With increasing national emphasis on Ukrainian

language and identity, churches have begun transitioning entirely to Ukrainian-language songs. Many now critique Western worship imports (e.g., Hillsong, Elevation) as theologically and poetically inadequate to express the grief and resilience of a suffering nation. In response, Ukrainian Christian leaders and musicians are initiating a movement toward songwriting rooted in local theology, language, and aesthetics. Ethnodoxology-based training and graduate degrees are emerging to support this cultural and spiritual shift. Based on the researchers' experiences and interactions with Ukrainians from before and during the war, this presentation explores the early stages of this movement and offers theoretical insights for contexts where worship and identity are being reimagined in response to conflict and cultural transformation.

01H:3. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

Sacred Sound Across Religious Boundaries: Carnatic Music in Kerala's Christian Communities

George Pioustin - University of California, Los Angeles

The Syrian Christians of Kerala, one of India's ancient Christian communities, trace their origins to the evangelization of Thomas the Apostle. During the colonial era, European missionaries sought to reform this community by vernacularizing the Syriac liturgy. Through printed hymnals and catechetical formation, Carnatic music, the classical tradition of South India, was integrated into Christian worship. In post-independence India, the Church institutionalized this practice through competitions that promoted Carnatic compositions and trained generations of musicians. Building on scholarship on vernacular Christianity and South Indian classical music, this paper traces the trajectory of Carnatic music among Kerala's Christian communities, examining continuity and change in its adaptation across colonial and postcolonial contexts. While Carnatic music is often framed as an exclusively Hindu art form, this study shows how Christian composers and performers reshaped it as a vehicle of devotional expression and communal identity. In contemporary India, this tradition faces renewed tension as hate campaigns target performers of non-Hindu Carnatic compositions, reflecting Hindutva ideology that seeks to define classical music within a Hindu framework. By historicizing Christian encounters with Carnatic music from colonial translation to contemporary resistance, this paper challenges assumptions about Indian classical music as religiously bounded. It demonstrates how Christian musicians navigate cultural and political pressures while continuing to create and perform, offering a model for understanding how minority communities inhabit and transform majoritarian musical traditions. The study contributes to ethnomusicological debates on music, religion, and cultural nationalism while foregrounding sound as a site of devotion and contestation in modern India.

01H:4. Thursday, 9:30 AM.

Why Suruí Christians Sing: Exploring a Post-secular Ethnomusicology in Brazil

Andrew Janzen - University of Toronto

This presentation considers the notion of post-secularism as a lens to study Christian Indigenous song in Brazil—specifically the repertoire and practices of Paiter-Suruí Christians—through critical reflection on my fieldwork experiences and research process. The continuance and resurgence of multiple religions worldwide as well as debates over the place of religion in scholarship has led scholars in diverse fields (e.g., Habermas 2008, Milbank 2006, Asad 2003) to explore post-secularism as a concept to describe how secularisms and religions interact. Though the disciplines of anthropology and theology presumably developed in opposition, recent scholarship details how the Enlightenment project structured both areas of study (Larsen 2014; Robbins 2003). In doing so, this research helps account for the frequent marginalization of Christian expressions, especially in scholarship on expressive culture in non-western, post-colonial and Indigenous contexts (Dueck and Reily 2016; Engelke 2014). This tendency is prominent in writings about Suruí culture, which describe their "traditional" rituals and shamanic singing at length, but largely ignore expressions of their Christianity (Pucci 2011). Yet my fieldwork engages with a large body of Christian worship songs that are composed and sung in Suruí and based on their traditional musical practices. Given the import of these songs to Suruí Christians and following calls for theologically engaged anthropology (Mittermaier 2025; Lemons 2018), I argue that post-secularism can facilitate frank conversations between scholars of varying beliefs and ultimately allows a fuller understanding of not only how and why Suruí Christians sing, but also how they can be fully Indigenous and Christian.

01I. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Individual Presentation Session

East Asian Tradition, Indigeneity, and Diaspora

Jiyoon Auo; Danny Allen; Qifang Hu; Xia Jing - University of Pittsburgh; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; University of Texas at Austin; Bard College Conservatory of Music

Chair(s): Hsin-wen Hsu - National Taiwan Normal University

01I:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.

The Soul of Whose Japan? The Rumor of Zainichi Korean as Imperial Trace

Jiyoon Auo - University of Pittsburgh

In the postwar era, enka was canonized as the "soul of Japan," a cultural vessel projecting a unified national identity (Yano 2003). Yet this quintessential "Japaneseness" was itself a postwar construction that effaced broader Asian entanglements (Bourdaghs 2012; Shamoon 2014). This process aligned with what Dower (2009) terms "imperial democracy"—a project that sought to forge a democratic future by disavowing an imperial past. In this shift, former colonial subjects—most notably Zainichi (ethnic Koreans remaining in Japan)—were rendered socially and historically invisible.

I argue, however, that this "national purification" of enka exposed the inherent fragility of its claim to a homogeneous Japanese essence. A primary symptom of this fragility was the persistent circulation of rumors suggesting that certain iconic enka singers were "secretly Korean" (Wajima 2018). These rumors functioned as a form of sonic surveillance, where public discourse scrutinized vocal styles, birthplaces, and biographies to patrol the borders of Japaneseness.

The paradox, then, runs deep: if the Zainichi presence was meant to be relegated to the nation's margins, why did the "soul of Japan" become the very site where that presence repeatedly surfaced in the public imagination? Drawing on Gordon's (2008) concept of haunting, I suggest that these recurring suspicions reveal the impossibility of severing a national sound from its imperial history. The voices mobilized to chant postwar unity were inextricably linked to the colonial circuits of labor that produced them, revealing enka not as a purified essence, but as a genre fundamentally structured by its imperial traces.

01I:2. Thursday, 8:30 AM.

Sound and Religious Engagement in Contemporary Jōdo Shinshū

Danny Allen - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Two strikes of a temple bell announce the beginning of a chant, and the presiding priest begins to intone the first line of Shinran Shonin's Shoshinge. Attendees and other priests join in the second line, filling the worship hall with a mix of voices. At other times the main worship hall resounds with worshippers reciting the name of Amida Buddha, namo amida butsu, as a response of gratitude after hearing a reading from a letter of Rennyo Shōnin or a particularly moving Dharma talk. These are some of the quotidian sounds of a Buddhist temple in the Jōdō Shinshū sect which, while ubiquitous in presence, may not engender commonality in meaning or interpretation. Following recent insights by Yun Emily Wang, this paper will consider the temple as a "site of multiple, competing interpellations" generated by the multiple levels of attendance and engagement, from priest to lay, tourist, or even researcher (2025). Based on fieldwork at Buddhist temples in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, I argue that sounds and music heard generate new modes of being for participants through their meditative, participatory, and transformative potential for priests and lay. While sonic practice may be shared by all in attendance, the meanings, applications, and expectations of those sounds for each person are varied. Hearing the temple in this way, ethnomusicologists can further nuance the discussion of Japanese religious engagement int the twenty-first century, showing sound as fundamental to the persistance of religious teachings in Japan.

01I:3. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

From American Showbands to Uchinā Jazz: Reclaiming Jazz Music in Postwar Okinawa

Qifang Hu - University of Texas at Austin

During the U.S. occupation of Okinawa (1945–1972), jazz musicians performed largely on American military bases, where musical labor was organized along racial and military hierarchies. These musicians mastered American swing and big band styles to meet the expectations of U.S. audiences, often suppressing local cultural expression in favor of sonic mimicry. Following the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1972 and the collapse of base entertainment, many musicians were forced out of professional performance, yet jazz persisted through informal sessions, small clubs, and intergenerational mentorship. This paper examines the historical transformation of jazz in Okinawa from a form of military entertainment under U.S. occupation to a locally rooted cultural practice known today as "Uchinā jazz."

Drawing on oral history interviews with first- and later-generation Okinawan jazz musicians, archival research and ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Okinawa, I show how jazz has been continually reshaped by shifting political, economic, and cultural conditions on the islands since 1945. I argue that Okinawan jazz has undergone a process of sonic reclamation. Musicians increasingly integrate Ryukyuan folk melodies, indigenous scales, and themes of war memory and peace into jazz performance, reframing the genre as a medium of cultural belonging rather than imported entertainment. By situating Okinawan jazz within broader debates on cultural hybridity, globalization, and postcolonial musical exchange, this study complicates center-periphery models of jazz globalization. It demonstrates how a genre shaped by asymmetrical power relations can be reappropriated to articulate local histories, intergenerational memory, and Okinawan cultural identity in a global context.

01I:4. Thursday, 9:30 AM.

Musicking, Place, and Diasporic Wellbeing: Toward a Community-Engaged Applied Ethnomusicology

Xia Jing - Bard College Conservatory of Music

This study examines the collaborative development of Harmony between Heaven and Earth (HHE), a guqin-based wellness program created in partnership with the Tucson Chinese Cultural Center in Southern Arizona. Addressing gaps in cultural diversity within music-and-health research, the study asks how ethnomusicological knowledge can move beyond documenting culturally situated relationships between music and health to inform the collaborative design of community wellbeing initiatives that meaningfully serve diasporic communities. Drawing on long-term engagement with Tucson's Chinese community, stakeholder meetings, interviews, and ongoing conversations with community members and Chinese music practitioners, the research examines how local understanding of wellbeing, culturally meaningful sounds, organizational priorities, and participants lived experiences shaped the program. HHE integrated guqin learning, contemplative listening, breathing and mindfulness practices, Chinese philosophical perspectives on self-cultivation, bilingual instruction, and participatory music-making. The cultural center functioned as a program venue and trusted diasporic gathering space supporting cultural memory, social relationships, linguistic accessibility, and place-based belonging. I argue that culturally grounded, participatory program design—rooted in ethnomusicological engagement with community values, histories, and musical traditions—is essential for promoting wellbeing in diasporic settings. Based on this case, I propose a community-engaged framework that bridges applied ethnomusicology and health promotion. By foregrounding locally defined and non-clinical notions of wellbeing, this study positions diasporic musicking as a site of embodied self-cultivation, cultural negotiation, social connection, and place-making. It calls for an expanded applied ethnomusicology in which ethnomusicologists participate ethnically and collaboratively in developing culturally responsive community health initiatives.

01J. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Organized Panel

Sounding Ownership: Music and/as Property and its Discontents

Chris Batterman Cháirez; Matthew Mendez; Michelle Bigenho; Henry Stobart - University of California, Berkeley; Stanford University;
Chair(s): Jim Sykes - University of Pennsylvania

Music's imbrication in economic regimes has long been in the remit of ethnomusicology. Scholars have documented music's circulation within diverse topographies of value (Taylor 2024; Garland 2019; Sykes 2018), as well the processes by which music is commoditized (Guilbault and Rommen 2019). What, however, is at stake in endowing music with the status of "property," as opposed to or in addition to that of commodity? Property, after all, is the language used by the legal, institutional, and social actors interested in "owning" music. In this panel, we address this question by triangulating between heritage, patrimony, and alienation as ethnographic and analytic tools for attending to music's complex fabrication as property. Three papers experiment with novel ways to theorize the relationship between music and property in different contexts: 1) how Indigenous song in Mexico moves back and forth between legal regimes such as copyright as both alienable object and inalienable patrimony and, in doing so, reveals how and why in/alienability emerges around music; 2) how disputes over the legal status of U.S. blues recordings implicate alienation in a dual sense, affording the music's intergenerational transfer while also giving rise to fraught contestations over its value; and 3) how Indigenous Bolivians make use of heritage laws to frame their musical practices and pursue the emancipatory potential of law in a recently decolonizing state. A discussant's remarks will conclude the panel, which taken together pursues novel conceptual directions for a more robust ethnomusicological engagement with the alienating machinations of law and property.

01J:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.

Property and Patrimony: Indigenous Music and the Contours of In/alienability in Mexico

Chris Batterman Cháirez - University of California, Berkeley

Pirekua, a type of Indigenous song from western Mexico, is a contested musical practice. It is claimed by the Mexican state as "national patrimony" and is recognized by UNESCO as "intangible cultural heritage of humanity." At the same time, the Indigenous communities that perform this music understand some pirekuas as belonging anonymously to specific villages and others as being composed by specific individuals who may register their songs through official copyright channels. This is additionally complicated by a recent revision to patrimony laws that recognizes Indigenous collective ownership of such practices. But at the heart of these contestations are conflicting ideas over pirekua's status as being either "alienable" and/or "inalienable." In this paper, I mark pirekua's transformations from sound to alienable object and from Indigenous song to inalienable national patrimony. Drawing from three years of fieldwork, I show that pirekua is recognized as inalienable property only after it is delimited, documented, and detached from Indigenous communities and composers. That is, patrimonial regimes protect pirekua's inalienability by producing its alienability. On another level, however, I argue that pirekua illuminates a contradiction at the heart of patrimony. By putting aside a priori understandings of ownership (Graeber 2003; Strathern 1999; Weiner 1993), I trace pirekua's movements through these legal spheres to understand how and when in/alienability materializes, and how and why it matters. This not only highlights the constraints of ownership as a model and a grammar, but reveals these movements to be the very moments in which in/alienability emerges.

01J:1. Thursday, 8:30 AM.

Contested Legacies: Kinship, Alienation, and Intergenerational Transfer in the Blues

Matthew Mendez - Stanford University

In 1975, Bessie Smith's adoptive son, Jack Gee, Jr., initiated litigation against her old record label, Columbia, alleging that its business practices while a key player in the 1920s "race records" industry had violated her civil rights. As a result, Gee's attorneys argued, Smith's property rights to her recorded performances had never been transferred to Columbia via a valid contract. Those rights had passed instead to Gee, her legal heir. Much hinged on this argument. In the early 1970s, Columbia remastered Smith's complete recordings to considerable commercial success, but Gee's assertions, if

validated by a court, would render those reissues unlawful. This paper uses Gee's suit as a case study to examine the workings of artist estates and the institutions of heirship, as legal infrastructures regulating the transmission of property rights in musical expressions and, often, the meanings associated with those expressions. I analyze Gee's litigation through the double valence of "legacy" and its intermundane (Stanyek and Piekut 2010) echoes: as a cognate of cultural heritage/patrimony, and as the legal instrument through which the deceased transfer property to the living. During litigation, it emerged that Smith never formally registered Gee's adoption, meaning the court could not recognize Gee as her legal heir. Exploring the ramifications of this outcome for Smith's "blues legacy" (Davis 1998), I propose that recorded music's intergenerational commodity circulation entails two partially overlapping forms of alienation: transfer via legal instruments like contracts/wills, and the felt experience of severance from the musical labor of one's kin.

01J:1. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

Heritage Fever and the Sounds of Insurgency in a Decolonizing State

Michelle Bigenho; Henry Stobart - Colgate University; Royal Hollaway University of London

The early 21st century brought to Bolivia its first Indigenous president, a new constitution, and a profusion of laws that recognized individual music and dance expressions as intangible cultural heritage. As part of a larger collaborative project, we question what motivated Bolivians into a heritage-making frenzy at this politically transformative moment. We pivot away from UNESCO-driven heritage debates to a different set of questions (what we call "heritage otherwise") and focus on how citizens used law to frame expressive culture and to engage their relatively new state. This paper details a La Paz Department heritage law for the mohoseño flute, a case which was notable for its decolonizing dimensions and its complex interplay between insurgent traditions and a belief in the emancipatory potential of law. This heritage law referenced "rights of identity" and represented one political tool among others in the region's longue durée anti-colonial campaigns. Heritage-making protagonists recognized the potential and lure of tourism—to support livelihoods in this remote area that is imagined to be favored with natural abundance—but also its dangers and the need for local control. In this heritage vision, they assembled an archive of Indigenous insurrectional heroes—ghosts spanning multiple centuries—who were etched into the landscape and activated through performance practices.

01K. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Organized Panel

In-group and Expanded Understandings of Diverse Timbre Patterns

Eshantha Peiris; Kristi Hardman; Jason Winikoff; Lois Wilcken - University of British Columbia; University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Worcester Polytechnic Institute; La Troupe Makandal
Chair(s): Lois Wilcken - La Troupe Makandal

While fields such as music psychology (Fischer and McAdams 2022; McAdams et al. 2022; Zhu and McAdams 2024), music theory (Lavengood 2020; Beavers 2021; Zeller 2022; Momii 2024; Reymore 2024), and musicology (Gurman et al. 2021; Dolan and Rehding eds. 2021, Wallmark 2022, Liu and Wallmark 2024; Shelley 2025;) have seen a recent surge of interest in timbre, the topic remains comparatively underexplored in ethnomusicology. This panel modestly addresses this imbalance with four analytical papers that draw on diverse global case studies. Panelists examine the timbres of assorted practices such as South Asian poetry and classicized drumming, Inuit throat singing, orchestration in the Western drumset, and Afro-Haitian solo drumming in the diaspora. They collectively question why prior studies of such traditions have focused on abstract patterns of duration and downplayed the contours of timbre that animate these rhythms and give them cultural meaning. Despite this critical reprioritization of tone color, the authors still acknowledge that timbre is never truly operating on its own (Fales 2002). These papers thus explore how the interplay of timbre and other parameters of performance (e.g., rhythm, melody, form, kinesthesia) can be perceived in varied ways by cultural insiders and outsiders. The authors investigate timbre at various stages of the musicking (Small 1998) process including composition, practice, performance, and listening. By paying close attention to the nuances of sonic structures and the cultural backgrounds that inform their conception, production, and perception, the panelists aim to acknowledge both in-group and expanded understandings of musical patterning.

01K:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.

Drumset Orchestration: Expanded and In-group Understandings of a Ubiquitous Concept

Jason Winikoff - Worcester Polytechnic Institute

In this presentation I demonstrate the ways in which Western drumset musicians use "orchestration" as a pedagogical concept for creativity and technique. To drummers, this term refers to a specific relationship between timbre, rhythm, and kinesthesia. Through orchestration, drummers can transform a single rhythmic figure into multiple grooves, fills, and exercises that vary in timbre and pitch. I explicate this process through analysis of method books (Guiliana 2016; Ventimiglia 2023) and educational social media posts by drummers Clarence Penn, and Quincy Davis. This shows that orchestration is not just a useful term for drummers, but also one with specific in-group meanings that are both akin to and distinct from conventional definitions of the term. As such, in this presentation I also use the drumset to expand academic understandings of orchestration. I place drumset orchestration in conversation with work by McAdams et al. (2022), Dolan (2013), Spitzer and Zaslaw (2004), and Winikoff (2024). Through this, I propose that (1) orchestration can occur spontaneously as opposed to solely before performance; (2) composers and arrangers are not the only agents of orchestration; and (3) orchestration does not require multiple musicians or instruments. I also push back against common beliefs that drums are primarily rhythmic. Finally, I analyze a solo by jazz great Max Roach to display other ways in which the concept of orchestration can be understood through a drumset lens. It is my hope that this approach can help academics better understand orchestration, the drumset, and the relationship between the two.

01K:2. Thursday, 8:30 AM.

Listener Expectations of Recurring Timbres in Rap Lyrics and Drum Patterns in Ta Dhom Project's "K-Rap"

Eshantha Peiris - University of British Columbia

The hip-hop collective "Ta Dhom Project"—which gained prominence in India after being featured on the soundtrack of the 2019 film "Gully Boy"—showcases in their songs rap lyrics in a variety of regional Indian languages, vocal refrains inspired by South Indian drum phrases, and the timbres of the classical drum mridangam. Given that many South Asian listeners will not understand all the lyrics in the multiple languages used in these songs, the musical experience for these listeners likely includes attending to the phonemic timbres of unfamiliar languages and orienting toward the sonic patterning created through the rhyme schemes. Through analyzing the rhyme schemes of the rapping and the patterns played on the drums in Ta Dhom Project's song "K-Rap," I suggest that unenculturated listeners' experience of the music is shaped by expectations of timbral signposts such as recurring rhyming syllables and recurring drum strokes. This analysis will serve to nuance theories of sequential expectations (Roeder 2025) and sound-color regions (Lerdahl 2026) in the context of music and poetry performance, and provide a contrasting case study to the Tamil rapping in Malaysia explored by Paige (2024). I also discuss the cultural significance of mridangam drum timbres being featured in a hip-hop track and the political implications of featuring multilingual lyrics in a multicultural society, contributing to ethnomusicological debates on the relationship of iconic sounds to demarcated social identities.

01K:3. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

Comparing Two Experiences of Beat with Tanya Tagaq's "Ilunikavi"

Kristi Hardman - University of North Carolina at Charlotte

People listen to and understand music based on their prior experiences, including their cultural experiences (Bourne 2025). Building on this idea, this paper aims to provide a method for analyzing music while accounting for how cultural background influences interpretation of beat structure. I apply this approach to Tanya Tagaq's "Ilunikavi," examining beat structure through two lenses: the composer's and my own. Using video recordings and adapting methods from Abrahams 2019, I compare the icti (sharp, delineated movements) indicated by Tagaq, an Inuk artist with an intimate knowledge of Inuit throat singing, and myself, a white Canadian listener without direct connections to Inuit culture. I then compare these moments to changes in vocal timbre to suggest that timbre plays a large role in how we both entrain to the beat, though we entrain to the timbres differently. I contextualize these observations within broader discussions of cultural conceptions of time—contrasting Inuit ecological notions of time with Western mechanical frameworks (Gombay 2009; Keyes 2009; Smith 2007)—and their implications for rhythm and meter (Grant 2014; Scherzinger 2019).

Ultimately, this paper demonstrates a methodology for analyzing music through multiple cultural perspectives, using this case study to reveal the nuanced ways that cultural experience shapes musical understanding.

01K:4. Thursday, 9:30 AM.

Timbre-Enabled Conversation in Afro-Haitian Drumming

Lois Wilcken - La Troupe Makandal

In his groundbreaking Jazz Consciousness, Dr. Paul Austerlitz quoted drummer Milford Graves. "A lot of musicians do not realize that they should listen to the drum tonally; they think of it as a rhythm thing. You cannot separate rhythm from melody, time from tone….time and tone go together" (2005, 175–176). What blocks some listeners from hearing the melodies that drummers compose from rich timbral palettes? The timbres of many if not most drum sounds tend toward inharmonicity (Richardson 2010, Roberts n.d., and Rossing 2000), but must inharmonicity preclude melody? What roles do culture and musical experience play in the perception of melody (Stevens 2004)? This study offers evidence of melodic phrasing in the music of a master drummer from Haiti. Even in the solitude of a recording studio, where he was not working with a chorus in a temple or a dance troupe on a stage, he created melodies replete with motifs, phrases, and periods in perceptible conversational structures. In using the word "conversational," I extend the thinking of Meki Nzewi, who discussed Igbo drummers' use of timbre ("tonal structure") as conjugate phrasing, with antecedents and consequents (2008, 156). This phrasing resonates with the technique that Willi Anku saw as "a compositional device found to facilitate communal music participation" in Africana traditions (1997, 217). Examination of four samples from the Haitian drummer's repertory unveils evidence of timbre-enabled conversation. This study offers ethnomusicology a window into the entanglement of timbre with melody, harmony, form—in short, all dimensions of music.

01L. Thursday, 8:00 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Radical Jazz Worlds: Improvisation, Spirituality, and Black Musical Creativity

Ahmet Karagedik; Spencer Hadley; Jonathan Gómez; Marc Gidal - Stony Brook University; Cornell University; University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Ramapo College of New Jersey
Chair(s): Marc Gidal - Ramapo College of New Jersey

01L:1. Thursday, 8:00 AM.

Allah Still Calls: Improvisation as Healing and Muslim Legibility in Post-9/11 African American Jazz

Ahmet Karagedik - Stony Brook University

This paper asks how a contemporary African American jazz improviser-composer—who embraced Islam and Sufi devotional practices in the early 2000s—mobilizes improvisation as a practice of healing. Drawing on ethnographic interviews, correspondence, and audiovisual analysis of public performances, I show how a Sufi-informed discipline of attention and Yusef Lateef's concept of autophysiopsychic self-cultivation—articulated in mid-twentieth-century Black Muslim musical thought—shape the artist's listening habits, rehearsal routines, and improvisational decisions. While scholarship on Islam in jazz has largely framed conversion as public political critique within civil rights–era struggles, I argue that healing functions here as a practical method for inner repair and spiritual endurance amid intensified Muslim legibility—marked by heightened public visibility and racialized scrutiny—in the post-9/11 United States. Through close listening, I identify audible features—especially breath-centered phrasing and calibrated silence—that render this disciplined attention audible in performance, even as the artist negotiates "jazz" as a contested category. By treating healing as method rather than metaphor, the paper connects religious practice to sonic technique and positions spiritual transmission as a form of musical knowledge, contributing to ethnomusicological debates on embodiment, ethics, and religion in performance.

01L:2. Thursday, 8:30 AM.

Amiri Baraka's "Advanced Workers" Funk Up the '77 *Berliner Jazztage*: Hearing the "Changing Same" of Black Music as a Constellation of Transnationalisms, Histories and Art Forms

Spencer Hadley - Cornell University

Though best known for his role in the 1960s US Black Arts Movement as a Black Nationalist critic, poet and dramatist, Amiri Baraka was an unusually varied artist who exploded traditional boundaries of nations, politics, and art forms. I mobilize the microcosm of a 1977 Berliner Jazztage performance by Baraka's lesser-known funk ensemble "The Advanced Workers"—a performance panned by prominent West German critics Ulrich Ohlshausen and "Jazz Pope" Joachim-Ernst Berendt—to expand onto shifting, macrocosmic "constellations" (Benjamin) of actors, histories and discourses. The most local story is a quarrel between the festival's founder, Berendt, and his successor, Swiss pianist/composer George Gruntz. Increasingly suspicious of politics in jazz, especially Black Nationalism—and ignorant of Baraka's recent shift to Third World Marxism in 1976—Berendt turned from jazz to a depoliticized, universally humanist concept of Weltmusik, whereas Gruntz championed Baraka's poetry and politics. Broader contextualization tells a more global story. West Germany reeled in the immediate wake of Deutscher Herbst, while Baraka's poetry spoke to multiple transnationalisms: not just transeuropean, transatlantic jazz festival circuits, but also, networks of solidarity with the Third World. In dialogue with contemporary Black Studies (Moten, Da Silva, Okiji) and transnational Jazz Studies (J. Wipplinger, B. Barson), I summon Baraka's "Changing Same"—from his 1966 essay on "R&B and New Black Music" and taken up again in 1978 by N. Mackey in his analysis of Baraka—to argue that Baraka's "Black Soundwork" (A. Reed) disrupts critical mishearings and refuses to submit to ongoing hegemonic categorizations and fixed understandings of Black Music.

01L:3. Thursday, 9:00 AM.

Patrice Rushen's Black Musical World-Making

Jonathan Gómez - University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance

In this paper, I draw on Dorinne Kondo's notion of world-making (2018) in combination with Jayna Brown's theorization of Black Utopias (2021) to argue for a more capacious understanding of Black musical world-buidling through an examination of the musical practices of composer, pianist, and multi-instrumentalist Patrice Rushen (b. 1954). Within, I employ comparative musical analysis of three performances and compositions of Rushen's, "Shortie's Portion" (1974) "Superstar" (1984), and "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory" (2004) to demonstrate how her musical identity, one emergent from and devleoped within Black musical history, is maintained and developed across these different modalities. A relatively understudied figure in academic music studies, Rushen's work is not only exemplary of the ways Black musicians challenge simple generic delimitation, but also one whose popularity amongst Black listeners calls for closer attention.

Guiding my analysis throughout are the musical, historical, and theoretical insights gained from my personal interviews with Rushen alongside those published in public venues. To parse the often intersecting and overlapping ways that Rushen's study and knowledge of Black musical history can be heard across genres and time periods, I employ Michael Silverstein's notions "indexical order" and "ethno-metapragmatics" (2003). Silverstein's work offers an analytical framework for recognizing and addressing the ways the multiple layers of semiosis, and indexicality in particular, inform and shape one another in social life.Though unique in the ways she deploys her knowledge and study of Black musical history, the methodology presented within s intended for wider application across Black music studies.

01L:4. Thursday, 9:30 AM.

Cyro Baptista's Musical Anthropophagy: Weighing the ethics of eclectic experimentalism for a Brazilian percussionist in New York's downtown scene

Marc Gidal - Ramapo College of New Jersey

This paper unpacks tensions and weighs ethics among concepts of musical creativity and globalization through the music and career of Cyro Baptista (b. 1950), a New York-based Brazilian percussionist, composer, collaborator, and bandleader. Specifically, the analysis will focus on cultural anthropophagy (cultural cannibalism of Brazilian modernism,

with which Baptista self-identifies) in relation to appropriation, exoticism, and experimentalism. To interpret Baptista's work through these charged terms foregrounds the ethics of creative appropriation of globally eclectic musical experimentations; yet the paper will avoid passing excessive judgement. Especially in his own projects, Baptista's ensembles comingle culturally iconic instruments (berimbau, cuíca, oud, gimbri, kora), myriad percussion, vocal sounds, grooves, and melodic characteristics from Brazil, North Africa, and jazz as well as nature-inspired soundscapes. Since the 1980s, Baptista developed his works collaboratively in and around New York City. He participated in overlapping circles of eclectic experimentalists: fellow Brazilians Hermeto Pascoal and Naná Vasconcelos (his closest mentors), Woodstock's Creative Music Studio, and New York City's downtown music scene. As a first-call percussionist, he toured and recorded with John Zorn, Paul Simon, Herbie Hancock, Osvaldo Golijov, Trey Anastasio, and others. The paper draws on original ethnographic research and analysis of his recordings, online videos, and critical reception, and is informed by musicological studies of anthropophagy (Harvey, Averbach, Della Torre), appropriation (Born and Hesmondhalgh, Feld, Young), the Brazilian musical diaspora (Stanyek, Goldschmitt, Perrone and Dunn), Latin American experimentalism (Alonso-Minutti, Herrera, and Madrid), and New York's experimental jazz and downtown scenes (Gazit, Heller, Lewis, Barzel).

02A. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Roundtable

Innovative Approaches to Public Engagement in Ethnomusicology

Robert McCormac; Yun-Kiu Lo; Jon Kay - Indiana University, Bloomington

Chair(s): Heather Sloan - Archives of Traditional Music

This roundtable addresses the concept of "public" ethnomusicology and folklore using various approaches. Panelists will share their hands-on experiences, and participants will discuss innovative strategies for meaningful engagement between institutions and communities. Panelist 1 will discuss practical and philosophical considerations pertaining to public-facing events that interweave scholarship, performance, discussion, and storytelling. As a "performer-scholar" pursuing an advanced degree in Ethnomusicology while maintaining deep community ties and a regular live-music touring schedule, Panelist 1 is in a unique position to articulate the potentials and challenges of planning events meant to bring together institutional entities and community members in the shared pursuit of knowledge. Panelist 2 will describe the development of a virtual exhibit intended for wide public dissemination. As the primary curator of a Google Arts & Culture page for a US-based ethnographic sound archive, Panelist 2 will reflect on how archivists and ethnomusicologists can engage the public while navigating challenges, such as the centrality of ethnographers/donors; metadata considerations and problematic language; and rights/licensing considerations. Panelist 3 will discuss collaborative ventures between institutions and communities. A late-career arts advocate focused on public projects, Panelist 3 has worked with long-term partners to strategically document traditional practices with the goals of preservation, pedagogy, and the search for material support (e.g., grant funding). Taken together, the session situates public ethnomusicology and folklore within broader conversations about knowledge circulation, institutional accountability, and the ethics of representation, asking not only how we make our work public, but how we make it accountable, reciprocal, and transformative.

02B. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Música Urbana as Mediated History: The Role of Genre and Scholars in the Music of Bad Bunny and Rauw Alejandro

Rebecca Bodenheimer; Juan Eduardo (Ed) Wolf; Hugo Viera-Vargas - Independent Scholar; University of Oregon; Universidad Albizu

Chair(s): Juan Eduardo (Ed) Wolf - University of Oregon

In 2025, two different música urbana artists released new albums that invoked genres strongly associated with Puerto Rico, simultaneously addressing the island's history and social issues. While the artists were responsible for any number of aesthetic choices, they did not make these decisions in a vacuum. In this panel, we explore the role of some of the other factors, particularly how historians helped inform the artists and how contemporary circumstances interacted with the history and significance of the genres employed. We demonstrate the different forms that applied ethnomusicology can assume, while also recognizing the limitations that existing systems of production as well as racialized, economic

social structures inevitably place on certain aspects of the discipline. The researchers' emotions that this work evoked ranged from celebratory to resignation, but overall, the panel offers insights into the way popular artists and academics can mediate history together.

02B:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.

Bad Bunny's Debí Tirar Más Fotos is Applied Ethnomusicology

Rebecca Bodenheimer - Independent Scholar

Bad Bunny's latest album, Debí Tirar Más Fotos, is vast in scope. It is simultaneously retro and thoroughly contemporary, mixing Puerto Rican traditional genres and instrumentation with música urbana. The album is, as many have noted, a "love letter to Puerto Rico," replete with nostalgia. However, it also has plenty to say about tourism-related displacement in Puerto Rico—as well as Bad Bunny's own feelings of romantic displacement. The album's first track, "Nueva Yol," encapsulates its intent: illuminating the ways the past informs the present. It opens with a sample of El Gran Combo's 1975 salsa "Un Verano en Nueva York," but soon transitions to dembow, a Dominican variant of reggaeton. The song pays tribute to the Puerto Rican diaspora, but the video adds an additional layer: a defense of immigrants within a xenophobic climate. Bad Bunny mines other Puerto Rican musical traditions beyond salsa. "Turista" is a poignant bolero, while "Café con Ron" is an infectious plena, which emerged in the late 19th century among poor and working-class Afro-Puerto Ricans. "Pitorro de Coco" and "Lo Que le Pasó a Hawaii" are other songs that draw on past styles. The range of genres Bad Bunny showcases on Debí Tirar Más Fotos, and the fact that he worked with an historian, gesture toward applied ethnomusicology. His goal is to educate his reggaeton-oriented audience on past Puerto Rican musical styles without suggesting their superiority; in fact, música urbana infuses the project. This album is his most ambitious and significant work yet.

02B:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.

Plena as a Resilient, Mollifying yet Disruptive Resource in the Art World of Bad Bunny

Juan Eduardo (Ed) Wolf - University of Oregon

Global awareness of Puerto Rican popular music has grown with the success of Bad Bunny's DTMF album and Superbowl LX performance. One resource that has contributed to this success is his use of plena, a Puerto Rican folk genre that symbolizes a version of nationhood in a way that is more accessible and less threatening to a broader audience than the one that consumes Bad Bunny's usual reggaetón. This contemporary use of plena resonates with how, in the early 20th century, the genre became more widely palatable than another genre, bomba, despite both genres emerging from the island's same working-class, Black cultural spaces. In this paper, I will discuss the characteristics that marked plena's emergence as a folk music, its transition to a commercial and national genre, and its recent renewal as a community-building resource. Drawing on Becker's concepts of art worlds, I illustrate that Bad Bunny's use of plena fits into a series of interactions between roots plena performers, commercial artists, and national/international audiences over the course of the genre's history that mediate racial and class identities. The varying importance of plena as a vehicle for personal expression, for commercial entertainment, and for mass protest cycles through all these interactions. Bad bunny's use of plena demonstrates how the dynamics of a genre's multiple meanings to different audiences contribute to the construction of a single artist's art world.

02B:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

Reorganizing the Past: Archival Temporalities and Ethnomusicological Mediation in platform music industries

Hugo Viera-Vargas - Universidad Albizu

How is the past reorganized when it enters contemporary global music production? This paper examines the temporal transformation of Caribbean archival narratives within Cosa Nostra: Capítulo 0, a recent large-scale Latin urban music project by popular Puerto Rican artist Rauw Alejandro. Rather than asking how history is represented or commodified, I argue that archival knowledge mediated by academics undergoes temporal reconfiguration as it moves through studio practice, aesthetic decision-making, and digital regimes of circulation.

Positioned inside the production process as a consultant, I observed how extended historical formations, rooted in Caribbean musical memory, colonial histories, and diasporic genealogies, could not circulate unchanged. These archival forms were selectively activated, compressed, stylized, and reformatted: historical duration became an aesthetic gesture; genealogical depth was reorganized into curated reference; collective memory operated less as a sustained narrative than as atmospheric signification. In this process, the past was not erased — it was temporally recalibrated to function within the regimes of cultural circulation.

My embedded position became the primary site where this recalibration unfolded: where decisions about historical scope, narrative depth, and temporal framing were actively negotiated between archival knowledge and production logics. My ethnomusicological consultancy was not merely a form of applied expertise, but a mediating interface through which the archive was transformed from an extended historical process into globally legible aesthetic signification.

By foregrounding this consultative mediation, the paper contributes to broader debates on capitalism, memory, and cultural production — suggesting that within platform-driven music industries, the archive persists, but in reorganized form.

02C. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Technologies of Witness: Recorded and Digital Sacred Music in American Life

Austin Testerman; Anita Danielle Ingram; Megan Hipp - Florida State University; Yale University; Florida State University

Chair(s): Erol Köymen - Florida State University

This panel brings historical and contemporary cases into dialogue to examine how technologies of mediation and circulation reshape religious musical practice, devotional listening, and public religious life in the United States. Across twentieth-century recording culture and twenty-first-century platformed sociality, the papers ask what happens to sacred authority, communal memory, and evangelistic intention when worship sound travels beyond the co-present event and becomes portable, replayable, and recontextualizable. "Recording the Mission Field" reconstructs the career of the Musical Betts showing how their instrumental hymn recordings functioned as intentional extensions of itinerant evangelical mission, and how commercial recording infrastructures enabled a form of mediated ministry oriented toward domestic devotional space; methodologically it combines digital archival reconstruction with track-based analysis and production-oriented listening. "The Blood Still Works" analyzes the circulation of a gospel vamp on TikTok to argue that platform affordances convert circulation into interpretive labor: users mobilize audiovisual performance and comment-thread discourse to attach shared histories, negotiate church authority and "church hurt," and rearticulate Black Protestant belonging through participatory interaction. "Sacred Music's Technological Echoes" brings a musicological lens to contemporary American Catholicism by pairing digital and in-person ethnography with scholarship on disenchantment/secularity to argue that expanded online transmission of Catholic sacred music (often organized around nostalgia and communal memory) signals an emergent mode of re-enchantment across parishes, choirs, and monastic communities. Taken together, the panel advances an ethnomusicological account of mediation constitutive of how religious publics are formed, how missions scale, and how sacred sound accrues meaning as it moves.

02C:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.

Recording the Mission Field: The Musical Betts and their "Truckload of Instruments"

Austin Testerman - Florida State University

The Musical Betts, a husband-and-wife duo comprised of Reverend Clarence Betts and Florence Betts, specialized in instrumental covers of "old beloved hymns and Gospel songs." For more than fifty years, they traveled internationally as musical evangelists, becoming known for their distinctive instrumentation and expressive renditions of Southern Gospel classics. Their album The Golden Bells offers a snapshot of their efforts to extend their ministry beyond live mission work and into the homes of listeners, situating the duo within the broader commercial evolution of twentieth-century gospel music. Grounded in a deep commitment to evangelical mission work, the Betts's recordings functioned as deliberate extensions of their spiritual calling. This study employs a three-pronged approach to reconstruct their history and interpret their recorded output. First, I establish a historical framework using digital archival sources, including

blogs, obituaries, and mission records, to assemble a working timeline of their itinerant ministry. Second, I analyze three contrasting tracks from The Golden Bells, "When They Ring Those Golden Bells," "Grumblers," and "Jesus Paid It All," treating them as archival missiological artifacts that illuminate an increasingly overlooked tradition of traveling musical evangelism. Finally, drawing on William Moylan's analytical framework, I examine the intentionality of the recording process and the role of recorded sound in expanding the Betts's missionary reach. By placing this case study in dialogue with scholarship on mediation, circulation, and commercialization in gospel music, this project demonstrates how recording technologies reshaped evangelical musical practice and devotional listening.

02C:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.

The Blood Still Works: Gospel Sound Circulation on TikTok as Black Lived Theology

Anita Danielle Ingram - Yale University

This paper examines how Black Protestant communities enact lived theology through the circulation of gospel "sounds" on TikTok, asking how sacred meaning is produced when worship vamps are algorithmically detached from their source and recontextualized through remix, performance, and comment-thread discourse. I argue that TikTok's sound-library and remix affordances do not merely redistribute gospel music as entertainment; they enable a platform-specific form of theological production in which circulation itself becomes interpretive labor, extending Black sacred aesthetics of call-and-response, repetition-with-a-difference, and communal memory into a hypermediated digital space. In conversation with practical theology's lived-theology framework and ethnomusicological/media scholarship on mediated voice, displaced sound, and relational listening, I show that TikTok's enforced acousmatic condition is routinely recontextualized by users through visual framing, embodied gesture, and vernacular commentary that reattach the sound to shared histories of worship and church life. Methodologically, the paper combines digital ethnography with close multimodal analysis of high-engagement TikToks that reuse a prominent gospel vamp, triangulating (1) audiovisual performance and affect, (2) comment sections as sites of communal meaning-making, and (3) reuse patterns across recognizable genres (devotional lip-syncs, comedic reenactments, nostalgia slideshows, etc.). I demonstrate that the sound functions as a portable liturgical fragment: across humor, critique, and devotion, users articulate divine presence, negotiate church authority and "church hurt," and reaffirm Black Christian belonging through participatory, antiphonal interaction. For ethnomusicology, this reframes viral audio as a contemporary archive of Black sacred epistemologies, where listening, remix, and circulation are themselves ethnographically legible sites of musical-theological knowledge.

02C:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

Sacred Music's Technological Echoes: Examining Online Catholic Sacred Music Transmission and Re-Enchantment

Megan Hipp - Florida State University

Discussions of increased religious revival and social media's role in propelling this phenomenon figure prominently in current academic and popular discourse. In this paper, I bring a musicological dimension to existing scholarship on contemporary Catholicism and digital media. Through digital and traditional modes of ethnography, as well as engagement with the writings of Katherine Schmidt, Alp Arat, and Marta Kolodziejska, my paper examines how online transmission of Catholic sacred music impacts the lived experience of Catholics in a variety of locations throughout the United States, encompassing parishioners, choristers, parish music directors, and choral groups of monks and nuns within monasteries and convents. Additionally, through dialogue with the writings of contemporary scholars studying disenchantment, modernity, and secularity, such as Akeel Bilgrami, Jeffers Engelhardt, and Philip Bohlman, and supported through my own fieldwork, I argue that the explosion of digital transmission of Catholic sacred music marks a definite turn towards re-enchantment in the American Catholic cultural sphere, with themes of nostalgia and communal memory driving this shift. This topic holds broader implications for ethnomusicology — as Catholic religiosity occupies an increasingly prominent niche in American culture, particularly with the recent election of the first-ever pope from the United States, it is vitally important to understand the musical dimensions of the full spectrum of American Catholic identity and lived experience, and in particular, how these musical dimensions are shaped by and disseminated through social media and other online modalities.

02D. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Roundtable

Musical Representations of Indigeneities in Contemporary Japanese Anime

Stacey Jocoy; Thomas B. Yee; Kunio Hara; Rose Bridges - Library of Congress; University of Texas, San Antonio; University of South Carolina; Widener University

Chair(s): Brooke McCorkle Okazaki - Carleton College

This roundtable explores the ways in which contemporary Japanese anime sonically represents real and imagined marginalized ethnic others. Stacey Jocoy analyzes _Samurai Champloo_'s main character Mugen, whose Ryūkyūan-coded background is rendered through a blending of Okinawan musicality with hip hop production. This hybrid, anachronistic soundscape sonically positions Mugen as culturally illegible within the homogenizing order of Feudal Japan, framing indigeneity as rhythmic disruption and resistance. Thomas B. Yee analyzes anime's use of Ainu female voices as a topical signifier of Japanese indigeneity in _Oshi no Ko_ and _Frieren: Beyond Journey's End_. In these series, Ainu indigeneity serves as a marked foil to modern Japan, encoding Ainu culture as sublimated into or appropriated by the modern Japanese nation-state. Kunio Hara turns to Joe Hisaishi's paradoxical musical treatments in a pair of Studio Ghibli films. In _Princess Mononoke_, the composer uses gagaku instruments for scenes with Ashitaka from the historic Emishi tribe. In _Spirited Away_, he draws on markers of Ryūkyū music to depict the merrymaking of Japanese deities. Rose Bridges's paper examines the _Fullmetal Alchemist_ series' scoring of Ishbal, a fictional indigenous culture based on the history of the Ainu and their struggles against Japanese settler-colonialism in Hokkaido. Their scoring raises questions about how anime represents a generic "indigeneity" displaced from specific real cultures.The flexible and eclectic uses of sonic symbols in these examples not only indexes Japanese cultural fascination with its internal "Others" but also destabilizes the myth of ethnic homogeneity.

02E. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Sound, Arts, and Cultural Memory in Mexico

Trinity Lê; Abraham Landa; Tony Rasmussen - University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music; University of Oregon; The University of Texas at Austin

Chair(s): Tony Rasmussen - The University of Texas at Austin

02E:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.

"Condenó al ostracismo": Contesting Histories of the Salon in Post-Revolutionary Mexico

Trinity Lê - University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

Academic discourse in Mexico and abroad characterizes the Salon compositions of nineteenth-century Mexican composers as outdated, conservative, and un-Mexican (Gutierrez 2024; Gaytan 2014; Behague 1979; Mayer-Serra 1941). According to this narrative, Salon music was "condemned to ostracism" in twentieth-century Mexico as modern nationalist schools of composition emerged (Meneses 2020). However, historiographic analysis reveals a different trajectory: Salon composition did not disappear after the Revolution. It found new life in popular spheres, expanding its audiences through new technologies, and experimenting with different ensemble instrumentations and aesthetics.

This project follows Alfonso Esparza Oteo (1894–1950), a prolific twentieth-century composer of Salon music, examining his career alongside (and in contrast to) dominant claims regarding Salon composition often repeated in musicological discourse. Drawing upon the historiographical interventions of Leonora Saavedra (1998, 2001), I explore the ways written perspectives by Mexican musical intellectuals became increasingly disconnected from lived musical practices, producing a distorted account of cultural life during and after the Revolution. Despite his work being framed as aesthetically and ideologically regressive, Esparza Oteo directly participated in revolutionary action, spearheaded advancements in Mexican publishing, radio, and recording industries, and deeply influenced Mexican popular music culture. By highlighting his contributions, this project challenges entrenched musicological narratives and reassesses Salon music's place in twentieth-century Mexican cultural history.

02E:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.

***Chilena* and Los Banqueros: Afro-Mexican Memory in a Motley Society**

Abraham Landa - University of Oregon

In Pinotepa Nacional, Oaxaca (a town in Mexico's Costa Chica), a group of elderly gentlemen known as Los Banqueros congregate at a park bench in the town square to share music, poetry, gossip, and cultural critique. Here, their performances of chilenas and versos evoke a social world understood as fading in the present. Although chilena is often framed as a mestizo genre, Los Banqueros conceptualize mestizaje in ways that differ from the Black-exclusionary logic of nationalist discourse. While debates over the correct way to play the chilena's rhythmic accompaniment have been shaped by competing and often racially coded claims to authenticity, Los Banqueros take a more fluid approach that highlights the diversity of chilena performance. This flexibility resonates with what René Zavaleta describes as a motley society, in which diverse histories and temporalities coexist without being fully reconciled (Tapia Maella, 2022). At times, members of Los Banqueros strategically engage multicultural frameworks when doing so is beneficial, yet they do not focus on cultural rescue or heritage display. Instead, they perform chilena as a social practice oriented toward pleasure, critique, and nostalgic remembrance. Drawing on memory studies, the concept of motley society, and ethnographic engagement, this paper examines how social music-making and storytelling among Los Banqueros produce a counter-narrative to the etnogenesis model that frames Blackness as newly emerging through political recognition (Varela-Huerta, 2023). Rather, the gatherings of Los Banqueros reveal how Black presence is embedded within everyday local understandings of history, place, and social belonging.

02E:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

Aural *Convivencia*: a Decolonial Aesthesis of Mexico City's "Typical" Sounds

Tony Rasmussen - The University of Texas at Austin

Mexico City's sonidos típicos ("typical" sounds) play a paradoxical role in the lives of city dwellers: from street cries to the warble of barrel organs, these sounds are, for many, powerful indices of the city itself, yet so integrated into quotidian routines that they are rarely considered a subject worthy of conversation much less cultural patrimony. In this paper, I trace unofficial histories of sonidos típicos through the interpretations of street vendors. I analyze these accounts with two theoretical frames that arose in these conversations: convivencia (co-existence), both perception and performance of cultural intimacy, key to the day-to-day activities and popular representations of street vendors; and the barrio (neighborhood) concept, a literal and figurative setting for convivencia in which traditional lifeways are thought to endure in the face of gentrification. I put these accounts in conversation with a fragmented official history and ambivalent public policy—from noise abatement to cultural patrimony—in which the subject of sonidos típicos and, by proxy, the sound makers themselves have been intermittently stigmatized, coopted, and omitted. I will argue that within the shared experience of convivencia lies the potential for what Rolando Vázquez dubs decolonial aesthesis, the possibility of reconstituting a history that has been appropriated or erased altogether. By focusing on how sounds perform histories to construct the present, I forgo a linear genealogy of Mexico City's sonidos típicos for an engagement with the past that is both intersubjective and multitemporal, joining myth and popular culture with the material realities of urban life.

02F. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Protest Songs and Musical Resistance

Noriko Manabe; Colleen Bertsch; Darren Sheng-Hsuan Chuang - Indiana University; Minneapolis, MN; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Chair(s): Noriko Manabe - Indiana University, Bloomington

02F:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.

AI Anti-ICE Protest Songs: Aesthetic and Sociopolitical Considerations

Noriko Manabe - Indiana University

Since mid-2025, over a hundred protest songs against ICE have been produced, of which a substantial portion is AI-generated. These AI songs sound well-produced with catchy choruses, despite stereotypical musical and lyrical patterns.

Some AI protest songs have attracted more clicks than human-produced ones. This paper considers the musical content, reception, and political and ethical ramifications of AI-generated music opposing ICE compared with human-made protest music. First, I outline political roles of protest music—attracting attention, recruiting followers, educating the public, and providing an affective outlet and vehicle for participation. I consider the affordances of AI protest music, particularly speed of creation, and the preexisting forms of protest song, particularly contrafacta and remixes, that AI is replacing. Through interviews with creators, I ascertain their motivations and processes. I analyze the songs as products (musical characteristics, lyrical patterns) and as social process (political messaging, reception). While AI affords fast generation of professional-sounding protest songs, it takes attention away from heartfelt songs by humans or innovative, humorous forms like remixes of past decades. AI-produced "Minnesota Anthem" combines lyrical clichés in nonsensical ways, muddling its message. Yet at 400,000 views, it has outpaced Billy Bragg's "City of Heroes," which has a clear political message and vocals conveying anger and authenticity. AI also introduces issues of bias in training materials and the potential for pseudonymous bad actors to produce misleading songs. My analysis highlights how AI protest songs have the potential to both stimulate and deaden affective response to political events.

02F:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.

Resistance Music in Occupied Minneapolis

Colleen Bertsch - Minneapolis, MN

On January 7, 2026, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey appeared on national news demanding that ICE agents "get the fuck out of our city." In the following weeks, Minneapolis musicians released new songs with titles like "Minneapolis (Fuck ICE)" and "Fuck This." Others wrote and released songs of political awareness, action, and hope. This paper chronicles and reflects on local Minneapolis protest music written and released in January and February 2026 in response to the federal occupation. Operation Metro Surge began on December 1, 2025, initiating over four thousand ICE and CBP federal agents in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Thousands of black, brown, and indigenous Minnesotans went into hiding and white allies armed themselves with whistles and car horns to alert their neighbors of ICE vehicles appearing in front of homes and businesses. On January 7th, after five weeks of illegal ICE activities, a federal agent murdered Renee Good; less than two weeks later, they killed Alex Pretti. Traumatized, local musicians responded by writing songs that registered community outrage and demanded ICE's immediate exit from Minnesota. Like the role of print media in Benedict Anderson's imagined communities, I argue that these protest songs, released online and shared on social media, served as important touchstones in the development of political affinity groups of occupation resisters who share a common understanding of what it means to be a radical ally and good neighbor. As recorded artifacts, these protest songs are an index of the brutal occupation and human rights atrocities in Trump's America.

02F:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

Protest Music in a Contested State: Crafting—or Cracking—Taiwan? Revisiting "Island's Sunrise"

Darren Sheng-Hsuan Chuang - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This paper explores how protest music both illuminates and consistently refracts Taiwanese national identity through the pop anthem "Island's Sunrise," which has mobilized across recent social movements. As an imagined state uneasy in hegemonic conceptions of nationhood, Taiwan has, over the past decade, witnessed the rise of grassroots protest movements responding to escalating interventions from China. Paradoxically, appeals to unity have intensified the historical precarity of this national identity. This paper examines the creation, enactment, and effects of "Island's Sunrise," outlining a semiotic analysis of the music itself alongside semi-structured interviews conducted with protester-musicians. Preliminary findings suggest that "Island's Sunrise," imbued with cosmopolitanism, interweaves verbal and nonverbal signs inherited from Taiwan's serial colonial history. Building on Dylan Robinson's concept of critical listening positionality, I decipher these signs through what I term post-serial-colonial listening in contemporary Taiwan, whereby the semiosis generates a political collective affect oriented toward Taiwanese sovereignty. Yet in practice, this song operates as a discordant semiotic mediator, revealing a peculiar double-edged force: for protester-musicians, it is powerful yet fragile, communicative yet prone to slippage, crafting collective belonging while cracking it from within.

Across song-related multi-scalar episodes, it trumpets partisan tensions between pro-Taiwan and pro-China positions and, through its prohibition in China, reverberates conflicts between democracy and authoritarianism. Through "Island's Sunrise," this paper extends Thomas Turino's framework to examine the generative dynamics of participatory music-making amid multidimensional political pressures, inviting a rethinking of music as carrying, at once, the potential of political mobilization and the conditions of its undoing.

02G. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session
Unsettlling Soundscapes: Music, Memory, and the Negotiation of Place
Jonathan Wu; Indira Hajnacs; Yu Hsuan Liao - University of California, Berkeley; Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe; Duke University
Chair(s): TBD

02G:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.
Musical Hustle: Performing "Africa" in China's Theme Park Industry
Jonathan Wu - University of California, Berkeley

This paper examines how Kenyan musicians narrate and recalibrate their performance practices within China's theme park industry. Based on ethnographic interviews with Nairobi-based musicians who have worked in Chimelong parks in Southern China, I analyze how "Africa" is curated as immersive spectacle and how performers strategically craft sound in response to those demands. In themed environments that organize the world into walkable cultural zones, difference must be rendered immediate and legible. Music plays a central role in this process, anchoring atmosphere and signaling place. For performers hired to represent "Africa," this demand translates into an emphasis on sonic markers that circulate globally as recognizable signs of the continent. Certain instruments, rhythmic textures, and timbral qualities are valued less for regional specificity than for their capacity to communicate "Africanness" quickly within tightly managed performance economies shaped by short-term contracts and standardized show formats. My interlocutors describe amplifying these elements not because they transparently reflect local tradition, but because they operate as effective currencies within transnational circuits of work. I frame this dynamic as musical hustle: the strategic crafting of sonic legibility to convert recognition into livelihood. As such, this paper shows how the notion of cultural authenticity emerges as a negotiated and infrastructurally shaped category at the intersection of tourism, diplomacy, and entertainment capital. By foregrounding sound as a site of political-economic mediation, the paper contributes to discussions of circulation, performance, and the staging of cultural difference in contemporary China–Africa engagements.

02G:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.
Sounding Steppe - (Re)Inventing the proto-Hungarian Music Today
Indira Hajnacs - Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe

"Come on, let´s strengthen our eastern roots" – is echoed by many contemporary Hungarian musicians, engaged in a distinctive folkloresque music genre since the early 2010s. Táltos drums are played on public television, throat singing is incorporated into musical performances, nomadic horsemen drink from horns in video clips, and Turkish-Hungarian music co-productions are emerging.

Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted at selected sites pertinent to this particular tradition-invention- among musicians, audiences, cultural professionals, and locations of memory- the dissertation investigates this phenomenon through the application of key anthropological concepts, like musical affect, identity and tradition invention. Utilising music and its affective power as a methodological lens, it seeks to gain insights into broader cultural processes. In accordance with Hobsbawm and Ranger´s theory of invented tradition and Benedict Anderson´s concept of imagined communities, it is posited that the emerging "Steppe music tradition" constructs a mythic continuity with

nomadic ancestors, thereby responding to what András Máthé-Tóth conceptualises as a wounded collective identity. Furthermore, this invented musical tradition functions not only as an expressive vernacular form but also as an endeavour to heal collective trauma, facilitate political myth-making, and institutionalise a reinterpretation of history.

02G:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

Jarring as Attunement: the Sound, Etiquette, and Risk in Taiwan Mountain Trail

Yu Hsuan Liao - Duke University

On Taiwan's alpine hiking trails, mountain shelters and designated camping areas are set up to provide hikers with safe places to rest at night. These shelters vary in capacity, size, location, and management methods, and most require hikers to apply for a bed and a Mountain Entry Permit online in advance. Hikers aim to reach shelters before dark to avoid accidents, typically sleeping around 8 PM and starting their hike between 3 and 5 AM. Most high-altitude shelters in Taiwan are communal and offer little or no privacy. Early-morning jarring sounds, such as packing and talking, can disturb others, especially when hikers bring their everyday habits into this shared space. This disruption not only creates fraction but also lead to insufficient rest, increasing the risk of altitude sickness or hiking-related accidents and ultimately raising serious safety concerns for alpine activities.

In this case, drawing on the conceptual tools of listening positionality by Dylan Robinson and Jennifer Hsieh's sono-sociality, I argue that jarring interactions as forming the shelter etiquette and along trails are not merely acoustic disturbances, but serve as moments of attunement—negotiated experiences shaped by hikers' auditory orientations, cultural assumptions, and differing perceptions of risk. These sound practices show how urban hikers' listening is registered by embedded ideas of shelter etiquette, care, and bodily vulnerability in alpine environments. Through jarring as a form of attunement, hikers recalibrate their bodily rhythms and perceptual modes, a process of acculturation into a survival-oriented praxis that regulates acceptable sonic events within these liminal, risk-sensitive spaces.

02H. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

American Vocal Worlds: Negotiating Invisible Labor, Community, and Affective Value

Megan Steigerwald Ille; Christopher Hodges; Holly Parker; Aurelie Gandour - College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati; Boston University;
Chair(s): Justin Hunter - University of Arkansas

02H:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.

Catching Tosca: Uncovering Technical Labor and Redefining Musicking in the Contemporary US Opera House

Megan Steigerwald Ille - College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati

When the soprano singing Floria Tosca, the titular character in Puccini's opera, flings herself off the set piece to her fictional death at the work's conclusion, scene shop foreman John Del Bono's work begins. After making sure the soprano lands on thick foam, he helps her onto a board with wheels and rushes her downstage for her bow. Historically, Del Bono's performance in this moment would hardly be considered a manifestation of the opera equal to that of the soprano he is pushing. In this presentation, however, I argue attending to the work of Del Bono and his stagehand colleagues at the San Francisco Opera illuminates an alternative mode of operatic performance in which materiality, genre, and invisible labor are intertwined. Drawing on ethnographic work with the San Francisco Opera, my paper examines how stagehands redefine the genre of opera through backstage performances before, during and after the opera itself is sung. I argue these contributions should be understood as stand-alone representations of each opera itself, meaning that the stagehand's experience might be understood as equivalent to a score or production. While operatic performance has drawn the attention of ethnographers (Atkinson 2006, Steigerwald Ille 2021; 2024, Sikau 2023), such work has focused on the work of singers and directors, not those technicians whose labor offers another lens on contemporary US opera. In putting studies of materiality in dialogue with the embodied experience of operatic labor, I offer new conceptualizations of how different types of musicking are defined, constructed, and valorized.

02H:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.

Sliding down the Sacred Harp-to-Contra Dance pipeline: the Affective Potential of Performance Arts

Christopher Hodges - Boston University

Despite the two activities having little overlap, a significant number of singers of Sacred Harp music are also rabid dancers on the Contra Dance scene. The experiences are fundamentally different (most Contra dancers do not play in the instrumental band and Sacred Harp singers sit and sing a capella), and the genres have no common repertoire. This paper considers theoretical avenues to describe a common phenomenological experience practitioners of these performance arts experience in the moment of performance, explored through interlocutor's testimony gathered from fieldwork sites across New England. Dance scholars, like Tomie Hahn and Cynthia Jean Cohn Bull, have investigated the affective properties of dance, a part of the anthropoidal "sensory turn." Music educators have explored the experiential knowledge transmitted in pedagogical situations, though mostly focusing on instrumentalists and invoking strands of ANT and Mediation theories to study the organology of these encounters. Some ludo-musicological articles, such as those by Kiri Miller, have considered the phenomonology of solo musical acts. This paper will apply these frameworks to communal musical and danced activities in order to describe a common affective complex inherent in their mode of participation. This literature suggests that the rules of performance have an inherent 'meaning' or 'truth' experienced by participants. Instead of seeking an abstracted truth content, my ethnographic research explores how contemporary participants make meaning for themselves in dialogue with narratives established by revival activists. When revived, these narrative echoed New Left social values which modern participants update to contemporary sexual and gender politics.

02H:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

"I didn't feel valuable until I got a medal": Barbershop Singing and Stepping Outside of Neoliberal Success Narratives

Holly Parker; Aurelie Gandour - University of Lincoln, London; SOAS University of London

Barbershop harmony is a form of four-part a cappella singing practiced by around 70,000 singers worldwide. The rise of modern barbershop singing closely follows the timeline for late-stage capitalism and subscribes to its market logics; namely, success, competition, meritocracy, and self-improvement (Verhaeghe, 2014). From its 1930s reinvention as a formalised "genre" (Döhl, 2014), barbershop has positioned a complex contest system at its centre and included a plethora of educational events that centre on upskilling its members. Through a combination of auto-ethnographic and ethnographic examples, this paper explores the neoliberal logics at play in three types of barbershop events: conventions (where competitions happen), "harmony brigades" (weekend quartetting events), and "afterglows" (informal party after an event). We make two central arguments. Firstly, drawing on scholars such as Harvey (2005), Verhaeghe (2014), and Wilson (2024), we demonstrate the ways barbershop organisations and their members subscribe to the neoliberal focus on self-improvement and success. Secondly, we highlight how some barbershop events and activities (such as afterglows) can challenge neoliberal market logics. As such, this paper provides a vital contribution to the study of ethnomusicology: while we focus specifically on the barbershop style, this paper can provide a greater understanding of the neoliberal influence on other styles of musicking that also centre around competition and upskilling. Overall, we argue that, while barbershop provides a great sense of joy and community to its singers, these effects will remain limited so far as they subscribe to the market logics of success and self-improvement.

02I. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Sacred Resonance: Music, Authority, and the Making of Christian Worlds in Africa

Abayomi Oni; Divine Gbagbo; Jane Akenga - University of Lagos, Nigeria; Loyola Marymount University; University of Texas at Austin

Chair(s): TBD

02I:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.

Sounding Authority in Yorùbá Indigenous Christianity: Music, Leadership and Worship

Abayomi Oni - University of Lagos, Nigeria

Indigenous Christian denominations in Nigeria preserve and transmit theological traditions through embodied ritual practices by which musical performance plays a central role in shaping how spiritual authority, leadership and communal belonging are recognised. While music is widely acknowledged as an inseparable part to Yorùbá Indigenous Christianity , scholarship has largely focused on theology, prophecy and institutional history but treating music as expressive accompaniment rather than as a constitutive mechanism of authority. Consequently, a key question remains unresolved: how does sacred musical practice produce and regulate spiritual authority within Yorùbá Indigenous Christianity?

This paper investigates both the repertoire itself and its embodied performance and how musical structure, participation and circulation operate as mechanisms through which ecclesiastical hierarchy and communal belonging are constituted within Yorùbá Indigenous Christianity. Through musical elements and embodied performances, Seraphim Songs shape how holiness, obedience and spiritual discipline are enacted and understood within Yorùbá Indigenous Christianity. This is an ethnomusicological study that focuses on the Songs of the Seraphim, as a distinctive sacred repertoire which lies at the heart of Yorùbá Indigenous Christian worshipers. While many C&S congregations share related repertories, the ESOCS maintains a distinctive organisational hierarchies and liturgical protocols that shape who may initiate the lead or authorise particular songs.

By examining the Songs of the Seraphim across different order of services and ritual contexts, this study demonstrates how sacred sound operates as a key mechanism through which the ESOCS sustains theological independence, negotiates continuity and change and constructs hierarchical structure within a rapidly transforming Christian landscape in Nigeria.

02I:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.

Groans, Shouts, and Sacred Resonance: Sound-Triggered Practices in African Worship Contexts

Divine Gbagbo - Loyola Marymount University

This paper examines the dynamic soundscapes of worship found in postcolonial African churches, conceptualizing them as deeply connected personal and communal expressions. In many twenty-first-century congregations throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the church has become more than just a spiritual hub; it serves as a place for physical and emotional healing. Within these sacred environments, worshippers create a rich tapestry of musical and non-musical sounds—sometimes intentionally, other times instinctively—during their services.

This study dives into the world of vocal sounds, artistic expressions, rhythmic beats, and onomatopoeic expressions, examining how activities like music ministry, handclapping, prayer, screaming, and groaning come to life, grow stronger, and persist during religious ceremonies. Based on recent ethnographic research and phenomenological analysis conducted from 2023 to 2025 in various congregations, the paper looks at how these sonic expressions are sparked within ritual settings and how they influence worshippers' spiritual, emotional, and psychological journeys.

By focusing on how sounds emerge and their effects, I propose that both established liturgical frameworks and spontaneous sonic expressions create rich layers of sound that can be both cathartic and therapeutic. These intricate soundscapes foster shared emotional experiences that help people connect with one another, find personal release, and feel a sense of the divine. This study emphasizes the complex relationship between how we hear, think, feel, and embody our emotions in shaping religious experiences. Ultimately, it adds to larger discussions in sound studies, ethnomusicology, and African religious studies by showing how sound-based practices create intricate, culturally relevant meanings in modern worship settings.

02I:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

Beyond Vatican II'S Inculturation Reforms in Kenya: A study of Traditional Catholicism at Holy Cross Church, Nairobi

Jane Akenga - University of Texas at Austin

Pope Leo XIV's recent excommunication of the traditionalist Society of Saint Pius X on July 2, 2026, illuminates enduring tensions between traditionalist and progressive Roman Catholics over Vatican II's (1962-1965) liturgical reforms. Regarding music, traditionalists advocate for a return to Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony while progressives support the use of indigenous instruments, languages, and repertoires. Scholarship on East African Catholicism by Chibuko (2022), Orobator (2023), and Ssempijja (2018) illustrates an overwhelmingly positive reception of Vatican II's inculturation reforms, especially the inclusion of African drums. However, scholarship addressing traditionalist resistance to Vatican II's reforms on the African continent remains scarce. This presentation examines Traditional Catholicism in Kenya through a case study of Holy Cross Catholic Church. This church primarily incorporates Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony in its liturgy. Holy Cross is affiliated with the SSPX, which was founded in 1970 by Archbishop Marcel Lefabvre to preserve the Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) My presentation will address three critical questions: Why does Holy Cross prioritize Gregorian chant and polyphony over Kenyan hymns, drums, and liturgical dances in liturgy? How does Holy Cross Parishioners' rationale for attending the Traditional Latin Mass challenge inculturation discourses in African Catholicism? Can the Traditional Latin Mass be considered an authentic form of African Catholic worship? Drawing on scholarship on Traditional Catholicism, inculturation, and virtual ethnography, my presentation argues that inculturation discourse in Africa inadequately accounts for the conservative liturgical preferences of Holy Cross parishioners.

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02J. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Roundtable

Building Sound Pedagogies for Collaboration across Boundaries in Music Education

Jennifer Mellizo; Marcia Ostashewski; Jody Stark; Leim Joe; Starr Paul; Julian Kytasty - Smithsonian Folkways Recordings; Cape Breton University; University of Manitoba;
Chair(s): Logan Clark - Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

This roundtable presents perspectives from the multiple roles involved in creating a first-of-its-kind online music education resource designed to address a long-expressed need by educators—providing meaningful cultural context in K-12 music classrooms, so teachers can feel comfortable teaching beyond the Western European music canon. Many existing resources focus on virtuosity defined by Western European norms, or introduce "diverse" repertoire with little or no context for a piece's importance or corresponding aesthetic value. Furthermore, they are often not created by members of that music community. In contrast, this resource is written collaboratively by artists, educators, and cultural knowledge keepers from cultures more representative of the diverse North American classroom.

The six participants in this roundtable will reflect on the impact and challenges of the co-creation process across sonic, professional, and geopolitical borders. We will hear from a museum educator with a Ph.D. in curriculum development and 22 years of experience in the music classroom, who will talk about the format of the online resource; a Professor of Ethnomusicology who will talk about the decolonial approach of research-creation with artists; a Music Education scholar who will discuss approaches to decolonizing education; an Indigenous musician-educator, who will speak to creating lessons grounded in Indigenous ontological perspectives; a Professor of Indigenous language, who will address music's role in language revitalization; and a Ukrainian musician, who will reflect on music and remembrance. Each participant will offer a seven-minute introduction to their involvement, followed by 45 minutes for facilitated dialogue between participants and the audience.

02K. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Answering to Whom? Addressivity and the Creative Act in the Causasus and Central Asia

Katherine Freeze Wolf; Polina Dessiatnitchenko; Richard Wolf - Independent; SOAS University of London; Harvard

University
Chair(s): Richard Wolf - Harvard University

As ethnomusicologists we are alert not only to the acts of the individual creator, but also to how social-cultural, economic, religious and political forces beyond the individual constrain or enable those acts, making them more or less impactful, long or short term. This panel views creativity through the perspectives of individuals as they imagine possible responses to their work. This entails understanding the stance of a given actor in time in relation to such entities as audience and patron; the constitution of such entities through creative artists' discourses; choices of the actor at a given moment; and implications of how the artist's vision of futurity comes to be communicated. When do motivations appear to be retrospectively assigned? In what ways is an account by a musician or filmmaker affected by the context for the account—memoire, radio interview, encounter with another artist or an ethnomusicologist? This inquiry emerges from a long history of writings engaging with addressivity and response, including those of Ibn Khaldun, Roman Jakobson, Mikhail Bakhtin and ethnomusicologists Regula Qureshi and Stephen Blum. The three papers on this panel share common ground in late Soviet and post-Soviet Muslim societies with musical practices that Russian-trained scholars long struggled to pin down, and an intercultural environment bringing together creative efforts from across the Soviet Union. The first concerns a Central Asian filmmaker's musical strategies; the second, voice and vocal timbre in Azerbaijani mugham; the third, the poetic imagination of a Wakhi singer in Tajikistan.

02K:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.
Musical Polyaddressivity in Late Soviet Central Asian Cinema
Katherine Freeze Wolf - Independent

During the Thaw and subsequent national awakening across non-Russian Soviet republics, many Central Asian filmmakers committed themselves to depicting their lands and peoples more authentically and truthfully. Ostensibly local musics often figured in their efforts, but in different ways. Some filmmakers relied on Soviet folkloric forms that provided easily graspable, yet dramaturgically imprecise, ethnographic texture. Other filmmakers sought out less legible uses of music for conveying the humanity, rather than merely the ethnocultural particularity, of their subjects. In this paper, I explore the addressive dimensions of this shift: following Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of speech as always directed at someone and adjusted, as well as perceived, according to the recipient's own familiarity with and attitude toward the message, I consider how these more ambiguous musical-filmic "utterances" produced a new polyaddressivity in their appeals to multiple audiences. I examine Tajik filmmaker Davlat Khudonazarov's (b. 1944) cinematic portraits of his native Pamir Mountains and Pamiri indigenous ethnolinguistic minorities to show how, by deploying lesser-known and (for most audiences) linguistically incomprehensible traditional musics in incomplete fragments across on-screen socially meaningful action, Khudonazarov facilitated diverse interpretations by a range of viewer-listeners—from a multi-national Soviet public with limited knowledge of the Pamir, to his own Pamiri community—all of whom, he hoped, would grasp in their own ways the substance and spirit of his work. This paper draws on long-term ethnomusicological fieldwork and positions Khudonazarov's legacy among other indigenous and minoritarian cinemas laying claim to audiovisual sovereignty (e.g., Raheja 2010) beyond dominant representational models.

02K:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.
Voice, Vocal Timbre, and Addressivity in Creativity of Azerbaijani Musicians
Polina Dessiatnitchenko - SOAS University of London

The creativity of many classical musicians in present-day Azerbaijan is charged with a deep sense of urgency to recover mugham—modal music that underwent drastic Soviet reforms. Some musicians try to find lost repertoire in the remnants of their lineage styles, while others look across borders to different maqam branches in the Middle East. Their alterations are examples of "intentional hybridization" (Bakhtin 1981; Eisenberg 2024) that works to outline emerging religious, spiritual, and Eastern identities. In this presentation, I focus on the relational quality of addressivity (Bakhtin 1986) in these creative acts. On the one hand, musicians insist that their main legacy is the impact on future generations of mugham performers and general audiences. While oriented forward, their creativity is also directed backward to respective lineage predecessors. Moreover, the mugham tradition itself—in its authentic form as envisioned by

musicians—is implicated as a "superaddressee" (Bakhtin 1986) who gives no other choice but to be addressed and manifested in creativity. To discuss how these relations underpin addressivity, I focus on voice and vocal timbre. I rely on extensive ethnographic fieldwork with two well-known mugham singers: Fergana Gasimova, who leads restoration projects of entire mugham cycles, and Haji Agil Malikov, who performs in unique ways through powerful rendering of poetic texts. To explore how voice and vocal timbre deliver the weight of addressivity, my study considers how musicians understand the importance of orality and aurality in Islam, and how they use intonations in performance and speech.

02K:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

Responding to the self: Qurbonsho's Wakhi poetry in Tajikistan

Richard Wolf - Harvard University

A key question ethnomusicologists ask when analyzing statements, actions, and output of poets and musicians concerns how these artists see themselves as following from, addressing, or responding to others (e.g. Blum 2023, 131; cf Bakhtin 1986, 69). Less common is consideration of how such artists fashion themselves in relation to their own self-images (cf Davis 1992, xvii), or conceptualize sung poetry "as material constructions and as representations of imagined human actions" (Hallowell 2002, 173). Aspects of Aristotle's mimetic theory alluded to here fed into theories of "image-making" (takhyīl) in medieval Islamic philosophy (Gelder and Hammond ed, 2008) that are, I argue, relevant to understanding the thinking of modern poets, especially Ismaili poets. Qurbonsho was an Ismaili poet-singer in Tajikistan who, in the early 1990s, drew from musical styles circulating in the Soviet Union to develop an influential new style of Wakhi sung poetry. In conversation with the author over 8 years, Qurbonsho outlined a poetics involving himself as a dual agent (composer-performer) addressing a twinned beloved, as well as his vision of what Wakhi poem-song could be. Qurbonsho's vision of futurity projected the duality he ascribed to himself—one aspect was the outward performer on stage, or at a wedding, stirring people to dance; the other was the introspective composer, expecting listeners to dig beneath the surface. In constructing this vision, Qurbonsho was responding to his own dual self-image as well as his conversations with a local mystic, and with the author, who made an ethnographic film about him.

02L. Thursday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Intimate Community Building: Women Making Music Communities Across Asia and Its Diasporas

Caroline Rohm; Stephanie Choi; Kate Alexander - University of Texas, Austin; University of Colorado Boulder; University of Arizona
Chair(s): Sarah Morelli - University of Denver

The papers in this panel consider how women build and sustain musical communities across Asia and its diasporas under embedded sociocultural expectations. Female instrumentalists in North India, female K-pop fans around the globe, and taiko drum builders in Arizona are all at work building the capacity to participate in their communities of musical practice in tangible and intangible ways. Working against expectations for how women can, should, and must be involved in diverse musical practices of Asian origin, all three papers trace how women trace how women navigate, reshape, and at times confront constraints. One author focuses on the ways female instrumentalists in North India are saddled with additional labors—often domestic—beyond that of tradition-bearing, and how such expectations shape access to participation. The second author considers the systemic work of female K-pop fans to produce forms of fandom that are socially and commercially recognizable, resisting misogynistic dismissal. The third author documents the literal building of musical infrastructure in the form of taiko drums made and used by the founders of Arizona's taiko dojos, foregrounding questions of belonging, stewardship, and tradition. A strong undercurrent here is intimacy: the entrapping intimacy of domestic space that can preclude musical involvement; the reframing and commodification of intimacy in popular music fandoms; and the tactile intimacy with materials forged through instrument making and apprenticeship. Together, these papers position community building as an embodied, affective, and political practice. A discussant with expertise in Asian and Asian American musics will synthesize the panel's shared concerns.

02L:1. Thursday, 10:45 AM.

Work before Practice: Women, Intimate Moments, and Embodiment in North Indian Art Music

Caroline Rohm - University of Texas, Austin

This paper explores what it means for women to be professional instrumental musicians in North India through labor, physicality, and embodiment. How do expectations of domestic labor circumscribe women's ability to pursue instrumental musicianship? How might expectations of feminine presentation—I.e. through wearing traditional garments—interfere or interact with musical practice? And most specifically, what class-positioning do these expectations imply? Part of this ties in with the fact that women are, under varying circumstances, obligated to undertake various kinds of work in order to do the regular labor of pursuing instrumental music. In some cases, this involves undertaking the brunt of domestic duties for an extended family as a young bride as older family members relinquish them. In others, this involves acquiring additional skills of expertise such as instrument building and repair in order to ensure that they and any of their students are able to work with playable instruments. In writing this I consider the labor women undertake to participate in music circles a considerable barrier to their general inclusion as professional musicians in Hindustani classical music. I base my findings on dissertation field research conducted in 2023 as a series of long form interviews combined with active learning through becoming a proficient female instrumentalist in the Bishnupur gharana.

02L:2. Thursday, 11:15 AM.

Intimate Publics in the Moral Economy of K-pop

Stephanie Choi - University of Colorado Boulder

According to the IFPI Global Album Sales Chart, 19 of the top 20 albums were released by K-pop groups. This was not a viral phenomenon, but rather the result of sustained fan labor. Once a single is released, K-pop fans systematically—yet voluntarily—"work" to place the song at the top of music charts by repeatedly streaming it on platforms such as YouTube and Melon and purchasing multiple copies of the same album during the first week of its release. Often portrayed as "14-year-old girls," these fans are dismissed as unproductive and delusional consumers who are allegedly manipulated by romantic fantasies into purchasing excessive quantities of albums. In this paper, I examine how female fans resist such misogynistic narratives of fandom pathology by defining their own notions of fandom and constructing new forms of fan authenticity. By legally and commercially valorizing intimacy as a commodity produced through co-creative labor, K-pop fans assert and protect their rights as consumers. At the same time, they establish fandom rules and ethical norms that facilitate a more "professionalized" mode of idol-fan communication. This paper situates these practices within broader debates on gender politics in contemporary South Korea, engaging with feminist discourses on consumption, labor, and popular culture. In doing so, this paper demonstrates how a musical space becomes a political site in which women constitute intimate publics (Berlant 2008) through the sustained moral economy of K-pop.

02L:3. Thursday, 11:45 AM.

Skin in the Game: Taiko Drum Makers in Arizona

Kate Alexander - University of Arizona

In the United States, a particularly vibrant hub in taiko's global distribution, the necessity of taiko groups fabricating their own drums due to the often prohibitive cost of importing drums made using traditional methods in Japan, is well-known. Focusing on the almost exclusively female taiko drum builders in Arizona, this paper moves beyond a story of DIY industry by focusing on the politics of drum making as a reflection of the builders' identities and the taiko communities they serve and steward. These women, all non-Japanese American and taught by a White drum builder, illuminate the tension of taiko's multi-ethnic, yet always tacitly Japanese American, reality that can support narratives of innovation that obscure the contributions of non-Japanese Americans. Getting into the tacks, sawdust, and odors, this meditation is founded on the author's ongoing apprenticeship with an Arizona drum maker, and the messiness grounded in the realities of how taiko communities are literally built and sustained. This extends the richly phenomenological explorations by Wong (2019) and Ahlgren (2018) of identity amongst U.S. taiko players. In the broader context U.S.

taiko's connections to the Asian American Movement and legacies of the Internment, who "owns" taiko becomes a story of belonging, stewardship, and tradition.

03A. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Roundtable

Board Sponsored Session: The Future of SEM Publications and Academic Publishing

J. Lawrence Witzleben; Katherine Brucher; Andrew Snyder; Frank Gunderson; Benjamin J. Harbert; Kathryn Minyoung Cooke; Timothy Yu - University of Maryland; DePaul University; NOVA University Lisbon; Florida State University; Georgetown; Columbia University; Florida State University

Chair(s): Eduardo Herrera

What roles should scholarly publications play in a rapidly changing academic landscape? This Board-sponsored roundtable brings together editors from across the Society for Ethnomusicology's publication ecosystem to consider the present and future of scholarly publishing within SEM and the discipline more broadly. Organized as a moderated conversation rather than a series of formal presentations, the session will address changing purposes and audiences for ethnomusicological publications, open access and evolving publishing models, artificial intelligence and its implications for scholarly production and editorial practice, and relationships among SEM's various publication venues. Drawing on participants' experiences as editors, the conversation will consider both current challenges and emerging possibilities, including how SEM publications might better complement and support one another. Rather than seeking definitive solutions, the roundtable aims to identify shared questions and priorities that can help guide the future of SEM's publications.

03B. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Roundtable

Founding Mothers of Ethnomusicology: Looking Back, Looking Forward

Deborah Wong; Charlotte Frisbie; Ellen Koskoff; Allie Martin; Lei X. Ouyang; Stephanie Shonekan -

Chair(s): Deborah Wong

Attention to SEM's institution-building has been sometimes celebratory, sometimes critical. Charlotte Frisbie's landmark forthcoming book, Founding Mothers of the Society for Ethnomusicology (University of Illinois Press, 2026), offers an "eyewitness account" of women's experiences in SEM's early years (1952-1963). This roundtable offers SEM a chance to reflect on those years, with a throughline to the present. We will discuss the book and ask: how can it carry us forward? What's surprising about the stories told… and what isn't? What stakes are revealed? Given the structural sexism of SEM's "founding fathers," can we talk about institutional progress? Since the time of the founding mothers, have shifting gender demographics and a centering of humanistic methods feminized ethnomusicology as a field? Frisbie dug deep into ten women's experiences with SEM: she conducted extensive archival research and interviews. Most importantly, she was there. She takes the long view on women's contributions to SEM, asking provoking questions about whose academic labor counts, and what it means to innovate, trailblaze, and build a field and an organization. Surprisingly, Frisbie concludes that "In contrast with the founding fathers, our founding mothers did not see themselves as a cohesive collective group nor did they ever try to function as one." The roundtable participants come from three generations of ethnomusicologists. Each has shown sustained commitment to SEM; as thought leaders, they have actively changed the Society. We will run the session as a structured conversation between the participants and the audience, and brief excerpts will be read from the book.

03C. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Lyrics in Contention: Song, Power, and Identity in Latin America

Sean Bellaviti; León F. García Corona; Heather Sloan - Toronto Metropolitan University; University of Southern California; Archives of Traditional Music

Chair(s): Sean Bellaviti - Toronto Metropolitan University

The panel examines song lyrics as the subject of discourse, argument, and debate in the formation of communal and national identities. Engaging a diverse range of genres and performance contexts, the panelists explore how musical texts serve as catalysts for intracommunal rivalry, articulate claims to justice, construct belonging, and complicate ideas of ownership and borders across Latin America.

Presenter 1 examines a competitive Panamanian Carnival songwriting tradition that generates risqué entertainment through increasingly grotesque and personal insults, drawing broad public participation and producing multiple, sometimes conflicting, interpretations. The second presentation analyzes the controversy surrounding a narcocorrido performance by Los Alegres del Barranco that names the leader of the fearsome Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación, showing how the ensuing backlash places music at the center of debates over authority, legality, and justice in Mexico. Presenter 3 surveys contemporary Dominican popular music to show how musicians use lyrics to assert, negotiate, and project national and diasporic identities across shifting local and transnational contexts. Broadening the perspective even further, the final presentation examines the transnational circulation of iconic songs, demonstrating how musical "covers" and adaptations challenge (or reinscribe) ideas of genre, nation, and regional borders.

Moving from local to national to transnational perspectives, the panel as a whole offers a rich exploration of the way song lyrics become central to the negotiation of power, memory, and collective imagination and the formation of communal and national identity within Latin America.

03C:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.
Lyrical Insults and Collective Fun: The Social Dynamics of Carnival in a Panamanian Town
Sean Bellaviti - Toronto Metropolitan University

Every year in the weeks leading up to Carnival, local authorities in the small Panamanian town of Las Tablas review the lyrics of the songs of two rival bands with the aim of censoring personal insults they regard as simply beyond the pale. Yet each year, these bands explicitly ignore the edicts of the censors, to the scandal of some and delight of many. This defiance, as any interviewee would tell you, is in keeping with the spirit of Carnival: a raucous annual tradition where throngs of locals, bolstered by a vastly larger contingent of visitors, gather in the town square to denigrate their rivals through lyrics that are, by most standards, extremely pungent.

Las Tablas's Carnival differs from other, more well-known (and well-studied), carnival traditions in that the focus of ridicule is not the rich, famous, or political elite, but rather regular townsfolk on opposing sides of a longstanding rivalry. In this paper, I examine the varied incentives that simultaneously draw (A) outsiders to engage in the pillorying of people they scarcely know and (B) locals who risk offending intimate acquaintances in pursuit of risqué Carnival fun. I argue that for many participants, Las Tablas's deeply (inter)personal lyrical mudslinging spans a continuum between obscenity for obscenity's sake—an accusation often lobbed at outsiders who cannot know the esoteric real-life stories behind the insults—and something approaching Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of grotesque realism, in which public displays of obscenity temporarily dissolve social boundaries and offer the possibility of communal renewal.

03C:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.
México Canta y la Apología del Delito: Music, Authority, and the Idea of Justice
León F. García Corona - University of Southern California

On March 29, 2025, a packed auditorium in Zapopan, Jalisco hosted "Los Señores del Corrido," a concert by Los Alegres del Barranco. Among their performances was "El dueño del palenque," a narcocorrido that explicitly names Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes, leader of the Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación, while projecting his image on large screens. The spectacle—lyrics and visuals combined—sparked national outrage and accusations of apología del delito (the defense or glorification of crime). Within days, President Claudia Sheinbaum's administration announced México Canta, a state-sponsored music competition promoting songs centered on social responsibility, explicitly rejecting lyrics that reference violence or drug trafficking.

This paper examines México Canta as a cultural policy response to narcocorrido performance and as a site where music becomes central to debates over authority, legality, and justice in contemporary Mexico. I argue that the state's swift condemnation of musical "apology" contrasts sharply with its slower, unresolved responses to structural violence, most notably the 2014 disappearance of 43 students from Ayotzinapa, Guerrero. By juxtaposing these cases, I explore how musical expression becomes a terrain for negotiating moral authority and public legitimacy.

Drawing on analysis of lyrics, media discourse, and theories of performativity, I ask: What forms of justice are imagined, enacted, or deferred through song? How do audiences interpret and inhabit these narratives? Ultimately, the paper positions narcocorridos and state cultural initiatives not simply as opposing forces, but as intertwined actors in the ongoing reconfiguration of justice, memory, and power in Mexico's soundscape.

03C:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.

Buscando Al Caballo: Song Lyrics and the Conjuring of Dominican Identity

Heather Sloan - Archives of Traditional Music

There are numerous musical traditions and lyrical practices in the Dominican Republic in which artists regularly employ song texts to offer perspective on everything from the hyper-local to the global. This commentary can take the form of name-checking an artistic rival, teasing or berating the opposite sex for a particular behavior, expressing pride in one's town or region of origin, or speaking across borders to—or as—members of the diasporic community. Scholars such as Dr. Paul Austerlitz (Merengue: Dominican Music and Dominican Identity) and Dr. Deborah Pacini-Hernandez (Bachata) have established the centrality of popular music in the formation and evolution of Dominican identity. As a contributor to this panel on song lyrics as the subject of discourse, argument, and debate on communal and national identity, the presenter will offer an overview of selected examples from Dominican merengue, bachata, and the lesser-known extemporized a cappella group song tradition known as chuines. The aim of the presentation is to explore numerous strategies Dominican musicians and lyricists use to make meaning and to challenge or support identity claims at both the individual and group level. In conjunction with the other topics included in the panel, this presentation provides information on popular music and identity within the circum-Caribbean that may be more broadly useful within the field.

03D. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Whose Instrument? The Banjo, Blackness, and the Politics of Cultural Recovery

Kristina Gaddy; Jake Blount; Maya Brown-Boateng; Joe Z. Johnson - University of Nottingham; Brown University; University of Pittsburgh; Indiana University, Bloomington
Chair(s): Joe Z. Johnson - Indiana University, Bloomington

This panel examines the evolving scholarly discourse surrounding the Black banjo renaissance and its impact on both academic knowledge production and Black communities' relationship with the instrument. As research on the banjo's African diasporic origins and cultural trajectory has expanded, it has fundamentally reshaped how practitioners, particularly Black musicians and scholars, engage with and reclaim this historically significant instrument. The presentations trace Black engagement with the banjo across its historical continuum: from early Caribbean antecedents through the minstrel and classic eras to contemporary revitalization efforts. Collectively, the panel interrogates how each historical iteration has shaped Black cultural identity and musical practice, while exploring the ways in which current scholarship is facilitating the banjo's reclamation as an explicitly Black cultural and political enterprise. By situating contemporary revitalization within this longer historical arc, the panel illuminates the intersections of musicology, African American studies, and cultural memory in understanding how marginalized communities recover and redefine their cultural inheritance.

03D:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.

What Makes an Early Banjo?

Kristina Gaddy - University of Nottingham

This presentation is a synthesis of research conducted with early banjos. It outlines the organological characteristics of early banjos—pre-industrial gourd- and calabash-bodied instruments. It argues that a materialist approach to organology alone cannot determine if an instrument is a banjo and suggests that we must consider an instrument's provenance, usage, and cultural context. It outlines the organological characteristics shared across early banjos, how those characteristics differ from known African instrument antecedents, and discusses the known cultural context of the banjo, which was created by people of African descent in the Americas and used as accompaniment for ritual dance.

03D:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.

Alien Music: Hauntology and Temporal Disruption in Contemporary Black Banjo Performance

Jake Blount - Brown University

Contemporary Black banjo performance is hauntological at its core. Invoking ancestors through artistic choices like tunings, timbres, and interpolations of historical repertoire, performers conjure phantasmal soundscapes from a dark past. Musicians often invoke individual forebears by name or historical account, connecting their contemporary performances with the Black past in order to force a reckoning with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and its afterlives. In this respect, we may understand contemporary Black banjo music to be a form of what Kodwo Eshun has called "Alien Music": it arrives from another time to disrupt and trouble our relationships with the category called "human." There are, however, key differences: Eshun's Afrofuturist Alien Music arrives from the future, undermining the human by its invocation of the extraterrestrial and the cyborg. Black banjo music arrives (seemingly) from the past, and achieves the same purpose by invoking dehumanized figures from Black history (e.g. the slave). The presence of these figures confronts listeners with the subjectiveness and unreliability of the category of the human throughout history and today, just as Eshun's alien music urges us to transcend it in the future. While their temporal orientations may seem opposite at first glance (in truth, this may not be so), Black banjo music and Afrofuturist music share a strong kinship. This chapter draws on my firsthand experience as a Black banjo player, Afrofuturist theory from Eshun, Isaiah Lavender III, and others, and blues scholarship from Julia Simon to explore the time-bending properties of contemporary Black banjo music.

03D:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.

Classic Style, Personal Collections, and the Pittsburgh Banjo Scene

Maya Brown-Boateng - University of Pittsburgh

This presentation provides a brief biography of Dr. Joan Dickerson and her contributions to the Pittsburgh banjo scene. Dickerson is one of a few custodians of the classic banjo—a style from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that is readily associated with ragtime, parlor music, and dance orchestras. With nearly 40 years of experience as a collaborator, educator, and a collector in Pittsburgh, her life offers a rich record about the intersections of race, gender, and music making. Drawing from personal conversations and materials in Dickerson's private collection, this presentation celebrates her pursuits of creative fulfillment and community building through the banjo.

03D:4. Thursday, 3:15 PM.

Defining 'Black Banjo': Toward Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Joe Z. Johnson - Indiana University, Bloomington

This presentation draws from research and public programming with the Black banjo and fiddle fellowship. Given the historical and interracial complexities surrounding the banjo's use throughout the long twentieth century, this study examines the tensions that emerge when employing "Black banjo" as a pedagogical framework. This presentation centers auto-ethnogrampic reflections and feedback interviews on the presenter's work developing and teaching banjo technique classes and banjo history that center Black experiences at the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music. This presentation expands the parameters of culturally responsive banjo pedagogy, challenging established frameworks of American traditional music education that have historically decentered race and critical historical context from technical instruction. Ultimately, the presentation theorizes "Black banjo" pedagogy as a contemporary political project rather than solely a race-centered practice.

03E. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

The (De)Growth of Music

Brian Barone; Oliver Shao; Ida Tello; Esther Viola Kurtz - Berklee College of Music; School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Washington University in St; Washington University in St. Louis

Chair(s): Oliver Shao - School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Capitalism's insatiable appetite is devouring the wealth of nature, expropriating value from racialized populations, collapsing democracy, and devaluing carework (Fraser 2023). Responding to this reality, post-growth studies is a transdisciplinary field that rejects and critiques the growth imperative and offers alternative frameworks for rebalancing resource use in ways that foster well-being, sustainability, and equity (Savini 2024; Saito 2024; Hickel 2020; Kallis 2018; Raworth 2018). Few post-growth studies, however, have examined these issues through music research. While some work has explored the ecological limits of the material basis of music (Allen 2023; Bates 2020; Roy 2020; Titon 2020; Devine 2019; Solomos 2016), many questions remain. What are the effects of music's expansion through capitalism? How are musical communities proposing other models that reinvigorate the commons and prioritize collective care? The first paper reconsiders "music" through theories of "real abstraction," identifying growth as a fundamental—and frightening—characteristic of music in racial capitalist modernity. The second paper calls for integrating degrowth studies into ethnomusicology in ways that support alternatives to the unsustainability of endless growth. The third paper considers how all-women performance groups make visible and revalue (re)productive labor in creative spheres, deploying care to upend the capital-driven binary between production and reproduction. The fourth paper models a novel methodology, merging ethnography and plant ecology, to revalorize and spread the radical anticapitalist practices already underway in a local jazz scene. The papers thus collectively offer new theoretical and ethnographic approaches for bringing music scholarship to bear on the challenges of these urgent times.

03E:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.

Music, Real Abstraction, and Growth: A Monster Story

Brian Barone - Berklee College of Music

In ethnomusicological discourse, "music" is routinely dismissed not only for its coloniality, but also for its abstraction. However, the discipline's "reproach" (Osborne 2004) of music's abstractness may have been too hasty. This paper argues that a re-thinking of "music" via the theory of "real abstraction" (Sohn-Rethel 1978, Toscano 2008) can allow the concept to regain critical purchase. For real abstraction theorists, abstraction is not a process of thought, but a product of social practice. By adopting this view, this paper argues for an account of "music" as emerging out of increasing exchange and interaction of diverse sonic practices from around the globe across a long and continuing modernity. Far from being a mere abstraction imposed by the West, music comes to be understood instead as precisely a real abstraction that crystallizes out of colonialism, racial capitalism, and globalization. Through examples drawn from circuits of exchange between West Africa, Iberia, and the Caribbean, this paper outlines the process of music's constitution through real abstraction, highlighting in particular its tendency toward ceaseless material and conceptual growth. Re-cast in this light, it becomes clear that the problem with music is not simply its abstractness, but its voracious appetite toward the whole world of sounded practice (Robinson 2020). Ultimately, recognizing this monstrous (McNally 2011) aspect of "music" and its alliance to growth establishes a new basis for a critical approach to music and social theory.

03E:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.

Sounds of Enough: Toward a Degrowth Ethnomusicology

Oliver Shao - School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Climate catastrophe, ocean acidification, biodiversity loss, labor exploitation, and colonial appropriation: capitalism's infinite growth model is driving systemic inequality and environmental collapse. In response, post-growth studies has emerged as a transdisciplinary field that investigates ecological and equitable limits to capitalism's inherent demand for endless growth, in ways that I suggest are productive for ethnomusicologists. In this paper, I argue for more directly integrating post-growth approaches from degrowth studies into ethnomusicology. Doing so will enable us to further

develop inquiries, theories, and methods toward fostering alternatives that contest unequal and unsustainable systems of endless growth. I begin by introducing degrowth and its associated models and movements. I next discuss the work in economic and ecological studies on music and its relevance for understanding and critiquing capitalism's growth imperative. I then shift attention to a multidisciplinary review of music studies that discuss decolonial, decelerated, non-productivist, and non-consumerist ideas and practices, with a heightened consideration of ethnomusicology's role in this discussion. I conclude with a call for an ethnomusicology that more seriously engages with its own history as a resource-intensive discipline, and that proceeds in ways that better support our living worlds.

03E:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.

Songwriting (Re)Productive Labor in Veracruz's Sotavento

Ida Tello - Washington University in St. Louis

In the south of Veracruz, women's labor contributions in community fandangos and in the circulation of son Jarocho as a commercialized genre are consistently undervalued in musical and academic spaces. Notably, many all-women groups have, in recent years, formed in response to the absence of women in positions of creative and economic authority in the region, with women-dominated performance groups emerging as early as 2007. In this paper, I consider how two of these contemporary groups highlight their (re)productive labor contributions in the fandango, in performance, and to son Jarocho as a genre by not only exercising their creative and improvisatory capacities in performances and recording sessions, but also by centering examples of female productivity and land management in their lyrics. I first dissect how they frame and situate their creative and care-based labor within a standardized set of repertoire, while also considering how they reimagine their reproductive work as productive, visible labor. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and Marxist feminist writings on social reproduction, I argue that these all-women groups are revealing a labor of care that permeates and sustains musical practice in southern Veracruz, but that is underrepresented in the music's spatial, corporeal, sonic, and poetic manifestations. I further consider the role of socially reproductive labor and care work in the process of genre formation, canonization, and commercialization, specifically through a Mexican nationalist framework, questioning what we might observe when songwriting and performance are treated as a form of reproductive labor that sustains communities instead of capital.

03E:4. Thursday, 3:15 PM.

Spreading St. Louis Jazz Values to "Postfigure" a Different Future

Esther Viola Kurtz - Washington University in St. Louis

What can music studies contribute in the face of climate catastrophe, cannibalistic capitalism, and rising fascism? These world-destroying threats may seem too great to be fought with music. However, as Judith Butler (2024) reminds us, we require practices of imagination—like musicking—to create a "counter-imaginary" of a world in which we all can live, love, move, and breathe without fear of destruction. In this paper, I merge ethnography with plant ecology to model a new approach for valorizing the counter-imaginaries that jazz musicians offer for contesting capital's limitless appetite. As a participant-observer in the St. Louis jazz community since 2018, I have found that musicians labor according to "jazz values," such as collectivity, interdependence, and intergenerational care. These values are rooted in Black knowledge ways and also embraced by scholars of degrowth and social reproduction. Indeed, musical collectivities have long operated alternative value systems that "open possibilities towards imagining and enacting alternative post-capitalist, degrowth futures," in other words, that are "postfigurative" (Muñoz-Sueiro and Kallis 2024). I suggest we nurture these radical possibilities, for they are the seeds of alternative futures. Considering the prairieland as interlocutor, instead of growth, I propose spread as a form of dissemination that embodies the tough resilience of Missouri's prairie grasses and flowers that spread so exuberantly in poor, disturbed soil, putting down deep soil-saving roots. The prairie ecology thus offers a method for embracing the imaginative practices already in our midst and spreading their anticapitalist lessons to postfigure a different future into being.

03F. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Sonic Publics: Performance, Space, and Belonging in the City

Erin Allen; Gia Dreyer; Kristy Swift; Maurice Restrepo - Ohio State University; CUNY: Hunter College; University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music; The Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY)

Chair(s): Kristy Swift - University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

03F:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.

Reclaiming the Public: Listening Out in All-Women and Gender-Expansive HONK! Street Bands

Erin Allen - Ohio State University

The HONK! Street Band Movement and its family of festivals – participatory, grassroots, and non-commercial festivals featuring activist or community-based brass and percussion ensembles – have since 2006 used sound and music as a means for inviting people to assemble in public, in-person festivals in ways understood by participants as contesting hegemonic power, reclaiming public space, and facilitating collective solidarity via joyful brass and percussion performances. Yet even as HONK! musicians view their acoustic, mobile, and collective music-making as something which might reclaim public space for more inclusive and democratic uses, an increasing emergence of HONK! bands composed entirely of women, non-binary, and transgender musicians reveals that the inclusive space that HONK! festivals and bands conceive of and seek to produce may be organized in ways that hinder gender-marginalized musicians from feeling like they can participate. In this paper, I argue that gender-marginalized HONK! musicians practice a mode of listening in their bands that "listens out" (Lacey 2013) for diverse voices and perspectives in a radically open, anticipatory, and intersubjective way. Through practices of listening out and with careful attention for one another, gender-marginalized HONK! bands produce spaces that facilitate learning and build confidence among musicians working to find their musical and political voices. I argue that listening out reveals forms of exclusion present and reconfigures relations of attention such that diverse voices might more easily resonate within the broader HONK! movement. In turn, the HONK! movement's reclamations of public space might be more informed by the lived experiences of its participants.

03F:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.

***Vendedores Ambulantes*: Their Lives and Labor Embedded Within the Soundscape of Capital**

Gia Dreyer - CUNY: Hunter College

The soundscape of the Times Square-42nd St subway station is a confluence of social experiences disguised within the everyday cacophony. An active contributor to this environment is a community of Latin American street vendors (vendedores ambulantes). I attempt to elucidate their sonic contribution to the subway's soundscape by examining the dynamic between their lives and labor. The sounding of their labor consists of monotone repetitions of the commodity—such as "mango, mango, mango, mango"—where semantic meaning elides and sound foregrounds to engage with transitory passengers. The banal everydayness of laborers in the subway tends to obfuscate the structural orientation that coerces certain vendedores ambulantes, particularly unpermitted Latin American women, to work in this environment. The vendors' sonic contribution emerges through their positionality, an instance localized in this paper as a patch in the network of racial capitalism. Using the methodology of patchwork ethnography, I document the entanglement that my interlocutors experience between their lives and livelihood, using short but frequent visits to weave a thread that elucidates their contribution to the sonic fabric of the subway. This paper analyzes the "sounding" of subway street vending and the "hearing" of colliding modes of production, including the hegemonic mode of capitalism. In discussion with my interlocutors, vending sounds a history beyond the sound that is heard: the transition from criminalizing labor to criminalizing the identity of the laborer. Los vendedores ambulantes vocalize their work within and against the conditions perpetuated by the NYC municipality, and exacerbated by the Trump administration.

03F:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.

"A Tale of Two Protests": Soundscapes of Urban Immigration Rights Shared-Care Spaces in Cincinnati, Ohio 2025–2026

Kristy Swift - University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

How do urban shared-care sites sound? How do sacrality and secularity blur to emerge as spaces for traumatized communities through sound during public life-and-death political crises? Using site-specific ecumenical gatherings led by faith-based leaders in response specifically to the incarceration and release of the Iman Ayman Soliman in greater Cincinnati, OH and generally in support of local immigrants during 2024 and 2025, I ask how immigration rights gatherings transformed public and private digital, geographic, and physical sites to shared-care spaces (Gelsthorpe, Mody, and Sloan 2023). Synthesizing Soliman's public addresses, participant interlocutors' stories, advocacy-informed ethnographic experiences, an open letter, social media posts, and journalistic reporting source the ways that religious and secular organizations' boundaries blurred as individual and collective culture, identity, and values merged dress, geography, images, and sound. From a positionality of advocacy, I bear witness to acoustemologic and emotional entanglements of sacrality and secularity permeating shared care-based gatherings, memorials, and protests at sites of resistance framed by Soliman's detention and release (Balkenhol, van den Hemel, and Stengs 2020). I explore free-Ayman and anti-ICE soundscapes on a city sidewalk, detention center lawn and parking lot, within a church sanctuary, and reverberations of "A Tale of Two Protests" merging a "No Kings" resistance and "Good Trouble" vigil on a bridge connecting US states Kentucky and Ohio. I show how gatherings in these locales blur sacred-secular binaries and boundaries and reframe these experiences as praxelogic, shared-care sites promoting belonging within the broader US immigration rights community.

03F:4. Thursday, 3:15 PM.

(Dis)Locating Masculinities in the New York Jazz Scene

Maurice Restrepo - The Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY)

New York's jazz scene is a male-dominated geography. Nonetheless, male jazz musicians and their masculinities are rarely discussed as such. Although gender and sexuality are now important analytics in jazz scholarship, masculinities remain elusive and undertheorized. In my fieldwork in jazz's predominantly homosocial spaces in NYC, I often find that cishet men struggle to articulate their feelings about masculinity and patriarchy in their community. For bell hooks (2004), "most men never think about patriarchy—what it means, how it is created and sustained…and therefore dismiss it as irrelevant to their own experiences." Consequently, hegemonic masculinities—as categories of power within patriarchy—may hide in plain sight (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). This presents a methodological challenge: how to have our interlocutors remark on the unmarked?

Masculinities are relational; their definitions are typically reactive to material and discursive shifts experienced by subordinated groups (Kimmel 1987). Today, masculinities in jazz are undergoing change, partly in response to gender-justice initiatives at major jazz institutions designed to support women and gender-expansive performers. These projects ask us to imagine 'jazz without patriarchy,' but what does it mean when this structure of domination isn't recognized by most men? Moreover, as ethnographers we're trained to construct analyses from our interlocutors' statements, but what happens when our research questions are embedded in what is taken for granted and omitted? Based on data from my dissertation research, this paper reflects on this ethnographic quandary by analyzing the messy, indirect, and intersectional ways musicians interpret masculinities in jazz's contemporary gender landscape.

03G. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Echoes After Empire: Sound Archives and the Post-Imperial Nation-State

Caio de Souza; Davindar Singh; Adriane Pontecorvo; Eduardo Sato - Universidade do Estado do Amapá; Harvard University; Indiana University; Virginia Tech
Chair(s): Caio de Souza - Universidade do Estado do Amapá

The constitution and continued existence of sonic archives rest upon budget pressures and efforts to preserve specific histories, hence institutional priorities and, frequently, national imaginaries. In the wake of the "sonic turn" in the

humanities, scholars have approached sonic archives not only as unproblematic repositories of musical heritage, but as sites of politically positioned preservation, recovery, and historical critique. Extending this line of inquiry, recent studies from Alejandro Madrid and Ana Maria Ochoa examine how sound archives not only document history, but also legitimize imperial violence, sustain institutions, and reimagine collective futures. This panel examines implications of this scholarship across case studies from Brazil, India, and the United States, comparatively investigating the political uses of sonic archives during and after empire. We especially center how archival recordings are wielded in struggles over the historical consequences of empire. The first paper examines contemporary reenactments of 1940s Brazilian radio recordings through podcasting and performance. The second paper analyzes invocations of "archival violence" in Punjabi popular song and nationalist contentions with Sikh militancy. The third paper investigates mobilizations of community radio archives in the late imperial United States amid federal defunding and media precarity. These three case studies examine how sonic archives are not fixed or inert repositories, but mediate discourse in the making, tools for political action both during and after the imperial project. Such analyses illuminate how sound mediates political memory and foreground archives within broader social and institutional formations, exposing ongoing struggles over public culture, sovereignty, and belonging.

03G:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.

Sonic Transductions: Revisiting Lorenzo Dow Turner's Radioscape in Bahia (1940-1941)

Caio de Souza - Universidade do Estado do Amapá

In 1940, the African American linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner arrived in Brazil with the mission of studying the African diaspora in Brazil through their language and sounds. By recording those sounds, Turner not only documented Afro-Brazilian traditions but also captured a broader sonic environment of Bahia at the time. In addition to a large repository of Yoruba songs and stories, which had been widely studied, he also recorded shows and music from the Rádio Sociedade da Bahia. I argue that these recordings deviate from the researcher's original archival intentions. How are these radio recordings heard today? I propose two contemporary modes of listening. First, I developed a curated podcast that recontextualizes Turner's radio recordings through historical framing and critical commentary, reactivating their circulation for present-day audiences. Second, through collective listening sessions with undergraduate music students at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), I proposed an activity in which participants creatively engaged with the recordings: the collective selected two musical pieces and rerecorded them. Both approaches suggest reenactment as a collaborative method of sonic inquiry. Drawing on four years of archival research at the Archives of Traditional Music, as well as press and oral sources in Salvador, I argue that these recordings illuminate urban musical practice in early 1940s Bahia and reveal radio's role in shaping regional and national identities. By combining archival analysis with experimental listening practices, this paper demonstrates how historical recordings continue to generate meaning through contemporary audition and performance.

03G:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.

Making Archives Musical, Making War Historical: Popular Song, Archival Violence, and Other Constructed Histories In and Against Sikh Militancy

Davindar Singh - Harvard University

This paper examines how people across opposing political stances wield state, popular, and musical archival practices to variably construe Sikh militants as either martyrs to censorship, or as murderous censors. The term "Archival Violence" here is literal, not metaphoric. It refers not to concerns with epistemic inequity in recording practices, a trope of prior generations of postcolonial scholarship, but to a common trope in contemporary Punjabi popular song: that of heroic militants whose armed uprisings against the unjust states of both colonial-imperial and postcolonial India are murderously repressed, and obscured within dusty, inaccessible state archives. Contemporary Punjabi pop singers attempt to position themselves within electoral and theological-political conflicts via these musical references to archival violence. Militants subsequently draw upon these songs to explain and justify their own actions. Conversely, Hindu Nationalist publications now portray contemporary Sikh militants as incarnations of prior decades of censorious assassins, including those murdering All-India-Radio personnel. By drawing on these histories, Hindu nationalists site contemporary Sikh militant pop songs within a supposedly continual history of murderous Sikh censorship. This paper

draws on these vernacular archival practices, state archives, and ethnographic fieldwork conducted with persons (and embedded in organizations, including state archives) in contemporary conflict over Sikh militancy, and over its multiple, particularly musical histories. I argue that constructions of musical history and censorship within these historical narratives are not just byproducts, but weapons in Sikh war against the Indian state, in populist Hindu nationalist war against these militants, and in the imperial-nationalist imaginaries of both sides.

03G:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.

Nostalgic Collages: Archival Projects of Critical Radiophonic Utopianism

Adriane Pontecorvo - Indiana University

For Bloomington, Indiana-based community radio station WFHB, the summer of 2025 was a time of both commemoration and catastrophe. In the same month as the station celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, the politically right-leaning 119th U.S. Congress passed the Rescissions Act of 2025, defunding the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, among other organizations, and thus stripping crucial resources from thousands of non-commercial media outlets nationwide. For WFHB, this meant the loss of one-quarter of its annual budget. In this paper, I examine mobilizations of materials from community archives at the station's public celebration of its first half century as acts of organizational sustainability and placemaking at a time of crisis. I argue that the multimodal collages of archival materials and live sonic performance comprising the event's sensory environment are attempts to resist dominant sociopolitical imaginaries of the station's local and regional context that serve state- and institution-sponsored neoliberal agendas, though in practice, they may also reify uncritical nostalgic senses of place and belonging. WFHB's usage of community archives in public programming nevertheless demonstrates a wide range of possible understandings of localness through voices of past and present. These, in turn, make a case for the significance of independent, grassroots media based in ideologies of accessibility and diversity. Understood in their spatial and social contexts, I hear in WFHB's archival practices intentions of critical aural utopianism that bear close on-the-ground scrutiny amid U.S. community media's struggle to adapt to new economic and political realities.

03H. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Individual Presentation Session; Film

Practicing Care and Equity Through Music and Sound

Sarah Cooper; Natalia Neira Nieto; Juno Leopoldina Gómez Neira; Nannette de Jong; Matesu DUBE; Blessing Garamumhango; Steve Humble; Anna Valcour - University of Bristol; Harvard University; Newcastle Iniversity, UK; Brandeis University
Chair(s): Gregory Barz - Boston University

03H:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.

Refusing 'Plague Logic:' Sonic Mundanity and Affective Care in Bristol's Trans+ Drag Scene

Sarah Cooper - University of Bristol

This paper examines how trans+ drag performers in Bristol (U.K.) use music to articulate forms of trans+ embodiment that challenge dominant crisis narratives. Drawing on two years of ethnographic fieldwork – including participant observation, interviews, and performance analysis – I approach drag as a sonic ecology structured through listening, affect, and relationality. In public discourse trans+ bodies are typically framed through crisis frameworks of medicalisation, sexualisation, and moral panic. Music has historically been central in queer responses to this. I situate current trans+ responses by building on Matthew J. Jones's work on recorded pop and AIDS (2024), Keith C. Ward's analysis of The AIDS Quilt Songbook (1999), and Gregory Barz's ethnography of AIDS and performance in East Africa (2006). I trace how amplification, textual clarity, and repetition have become aligned with societal crisis narratives. I term this alignment 'plague logic:' a sonic mode privileging legibility, urgency, and didactic address. Through close analysis of drag performances, audience interaction, and backstage musical practices, I show how performers disrupt plague logic by foregrounding mundanity as an affective sonic register. Mundanity emerges through genre promiscuity, songs without symbolic gravitas, and affective warmth and intimacy that resist symbolic overdetermination. Music enables privacy within public space and collective strength without heroic framing. By centring mundanity as an ethnographically grounded performance framework, this paper contributes to trans+ methodologies in ethnomusicology (Garcia-

Mispireta, 2023; Heller, 2020; Pennington, 2018), reframing music as a site where trans+ embodiment is sustained through community sonic practice and radical care.

03H:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.

Parenthood and (Music) Academia. A *Rantflection* about Institutional Structures

Natalia Neira Nieto; Juno Leopoldina Gómez Neira - Harvard University

This paper draws on autoethnography and theoretical scholarship on care and disability studies to address how the neoliberal model in contemporary universities in the United States hinders and hampers music scholars experiencing parenthood. Following Audre Lorde's formulation of anger as a source of energy for progress and change, together with Sarah Ahmed's use of writing from the own experience to make sense of it, I present what I call a rantflection – the combination of the words 'rant' and 'reflection' – to present some thoughts originating from my anger and expressing them critically to create a dialogue about the experience of parenthood in relation to the practice of music scholarship. While care and disability studies have increasingly gained scholarly attention in the last decade, the focus of these debates has been centered on practices of self-care and the challenges that the structural hostility of academia poses on scholars with disability. Meanwhile, ongoing discussions about the ethics of fieldwork and the figure of the researcher have been present in ethnomusicology and anthropology, and yet, dialogue about care-related day to day activities and how they shape our experiences and decisions have largely remained in the dark. In this paper I set an invitation to think collectively about how acknowledging our own relations to care and the sociability within it could impact our work in the field, but also what possibilities would it open to shaping our discipline into the future.

03H:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM. Film

Reducing HIV-stigma through music, dance, and theatre: An action research approach

Nannette de Jong; Matesu DUBE; Blessing Garamumhango; Steve Humble - Newcastle University, UK

Music and the arts are increasingly used in Southern Africa to reduce HIV-related stigma. However, due to lack of evidence underpinning their impact, rarely do the music and the arts become part of policy development or are they formally integrated into healthcare programmes. The objective of our project was to design and pilot a music, dance, and theatre-based intervention combatting HIV-stigma in urban and peri-urban Zimbabwe, and then to conduct a comprehensive, in-depth evaluation of its impact.

With this presentation, we will show a recording of the music/dance/theatre intervention (20-minutes long), followed by a discussion featuring: (1) the research conducted to identify key drivers of HIV-stigma in Zimbabwe; (2) how we used that data to develop the intervention; and (3) how we assessed the impact of the intervention.

The intervention had a significant positive effect on an individual's support against discriminatory actions or policies towards HIV: respondents who watched the play had reduced levels of fear and judgement towards HIV. This project demonstrates the potential music and the arts can serve in reducing HIV-stigma, findings that could have widespread implications for HIV prevention, treatment, and care.

03H:4. Thursday, 3:15 PM.

Up to Code: Interrogating Fatphobia in AmericanYoung Artist Programs' Audition "Uniforms"

Anna Valcour - Brandeis University

"I have been told my arms are too fat and I should cover them up… I've been advised that I looked thinner in college and should return to that," says soprano Victoria Erickson. Promulgated in the early 1990s, America's moral panic over its so-called "obesity epidemic" extended beyond public health and media into the arts, reinforcing fatphobia entangled with white, classed, and westernized ideals of beauty. In classical music, these bodily norms are often framed as neutral, yet they are deeply embedded in professional training and evaluation. Within the opera industry, such norms surface with particular intensity in Young Artist Programs (YAPs), where emerging singers are judged not only on vocal ability but on their capacity to embody cis-heteronormative, fatphobic ideals of believability and marketability.

Over the past three decades, a neoliberal proliferation of "how-to" discourse—ranging from OPERA America audition guidelines to blogs, workshops, self-help literature, and social media—has codified professional audition attire as a visible marker of competence, belonging, and hireability. These gender-binarized prescriptions converge on a standardized audition "uniform,"disciplining singers' bodies into industry-sanctioned legibility rather than individual expression. Drawing on young artists' lived experiences through in-depth interviews, American industry praxis, and cultural criticism, I interrogate how fatphobia intersects with racism, classism, sexism, heteronormativity, and ableism to constrain access and govern opportunity under the guise of professionalism. I argue that audition "uniforms" function as technologies of compliance that naturalize systemic exclusion while displacing responsibility onto individual singers, obscuring the structural forces that shape operatic labor and inclusion.

03I. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Indian Musical Worlds: Lineage, Devotion, and Belonging

Achintya Prahlad; Suhail Yusuf; Avanti Chhatre - Faculty of Music, University of Cambridge; University of California Santa Cruz; Department of Anthropology, Indiana University Bloomington

Chair(s): Shalini Ayyagari - University of Pittsburgh

03I:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.

Milk in Marathi Musics: From the Mother of the Gods to the "Tigress" of Education

Achintya Prahlad - Faculty of Music, University of Cambridge

Two occasions: a Hindu festival, and International Women's Day. Two tranquil venues in the midst of the city's noise: one a temple, another a memorial to an educational activist couple. Two musics; two stories – one traditional and religious, the other anti-caste and feminist. Two strong women at opposite ends of the caste ladder. Yet, I argue that there is great sameness amidst all this difference. Both women are connected by the metaphor of milk (Elbaz 2025) and their "othermothering" (Pasche-Guignard 2020) – key to my research on music's inseparable intertwining with food, motherhood and caste in Maharashtra, India. Anasūyā, a Brahmin woman, becomes mother to three gods. Aklujkar (2000) terms Anasūyā a "pativratā [i.e., one devoted to her husband,] with panache". Through Nāradīya kīrtan (Schultz 2012), a music-rich form of religious storytelling, I took a fresh look at her story. Anasūyā exerts her strength while remaining within "brahmanical patriarchy" (Chakravarti 1993) – a system that the second woman, Savitribai Phule (1831-1897), strives to dismantle. An oppressed-caste woman, she birthed a feminist, anti-caste educational revolution. I experienced her through an activist-musician's live performance of a unique genre-blurring song. Major, minor; sweet, bitter; triumph, struggle – this song is a delectable auditory experience of Savitribai's power. This song and the kīrtan, while sonically distinct, are unmistakably Maharashtrian in their flavour and tell stories of female power in unforgettable ways. My unique contribution to ethnomusicology is in using this complex interplay of sameness and difference to propose new gastro[ethno-]musicological (Mason 2012, Varli 2024) and multisensory theories.

03I:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.

"Listening to the *Sarangi* in a House of Music (*Gharana*)"

Suhail Yusuf - University of California Santa Cruz

The sarangi players are identified as Mirāsī in Hindustani (North Indian classical) music. The Mirāsī (from Arabic mīrās: "inheritance," "heritage") are an under-represented caste of Muslim musicians, dancers, genealogists, and other kinds of tradition-bearers. They were central to forming a pluralistic set of cultural practices in North India and Pakistan but have been marginalized socially and economically by Indic caste hierarchical ideologies and British colonial policy. Cultural Anthropologist Eva-Maria van Straaten has offered insights into the interplay of space, experiences, and assumptions surrounding Hindustani instrumental music by adopting "a radically open mode of listening to demonstrate how power relations are sonically negotiated" (2015: 86). Building on van Straaten's research, this paper illustrates how the dynamics of knowledge and hierarchy are constructed through listening to the sarangi within the musical lineages of Mirāsī, known as Gharana.

This socio-musical analysis examines a sarangi trio recorded at All India Radio in 1970, interpreted from my perspective as the grandson of Sabri Khan (1927-2015), one of the featured performers. My methodology includes interviews with musicians involved in the recording, as well as personal anecdotes and narratives collected during a listening session at Sabri Khan's home in 2000. Additionally, I draw upon the 13th-century Sanskrit treatise Saṅgīta-ratnākara to explore the concept of "classicism" in the music of sarangi players. This approach enables me to apply an interactive digital transcription method developed by Professor Dard Neuman at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

03I:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.

Sonic Imaginations of the Nation: An Analysis of the Politics and Poetics of the Powada (Ballad) in Maharashtra, India

Avanti Chhatre - Department of Anthropology, Indiana University Bloomington

The global rise of right-wing populisms necessitates an understanding of how national sentiment is sustained through cultural expressions such that it becomes a visceral force for members of the nation-community. In India, over the last decade, Hindu nationalism, a religious-territorial ideology envisioning India as a Hindu nation, has gained predominance, partly due to electoral victories. However, scholars such as Anna Schultz highlight the significance of locally rooted music/performances to nationalist mobilization. A case in point is the nationalist appropriation of the powada, a performance tradition in Maharashtra historically stemming from performance cultures of subaltern castes. The powada constitutes ballads on themes ranging from pre-colonial figures such as Shivaji, to anti-colonial leaders and contemporary social issues. As Sharmila Rege writes, it has adapted to various socio-political contexts, from anti-caste and left-wing politics to exclusionary Hindu nationalist movements.

Delving into the powada's politics, this paper analyzes ways in which the powada, performed across spaces like government-sponsored workshops, ticketed programs, temples, and social media platforms, enables performers to perform the nation, in ways that perpetuate as well as unsettle Hindu nationalism. Performers from diverse caste/class/gender/age backgrounds deploy the powada to lead audiences into emotionally charged experiences of differing visions of the nation. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with select performers in Pune in 2024-2025, I will analyze how performers from differing social locations plumb aspects of the powada such as a 'rustic' voice that 'emanates from the navel', liveness, melodramatic enactment, and thematic content to shape varying sonic imaginations of the nation.

03J. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Multi-Sited Ethnography: Promises and Perils, Politics and Poetics

Jenna Przybysz; Michael Figueroa; Noah Rosen; ken tianyuan Ge - Stanford University; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Columbia University; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chair(s): ken tianyuan Ge - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Multi-sited ethnography promises a departure from the Malinowskian romanticism of native informancy and single-area expertise, advocating instead for the analysis of world-systemic and polytopographical relations through the intimate affordances of ethnographic science and poetry (Rajan 2021; Tsing 2015; Coleman and von Hellermann 2011; Marcus 1995; Clifford and Marcus 1986). In Anglophone ethnomusicology, the provocations of multi-sitedness have been manifold, imploding and rescaling discourses of globalization, political economy, im/mobilities, postcolonialism, transnationalisms, borders, migration, and diaspora (Shannon, forthcoming; Ge 2026; Allen 2025; Wollert 2023; Appert 2017; Solis 2015; Celestini & Bohlman 2014; Novak 2013; Stokes 2004). Invoked as an abstract meta-method for unruly fieldwork, and a materialization of decolonial, feminist, and diasporic politics in anthropological scholarship, multi-sitedness risks fetishization as another shiny mode of ethnographic liberalism. Yet, its loosening of musical and sonic objecthood also productively engages the project of "studying culture musically" (Pilzer 2022) over the study of music as settled cultural form and terrain. Our panel features four scholars who are multiply situated in terms of social and institutional identities, geographic foci, and musical affinities. Their papers investigate wide-ranging sites of cultural production, including the global racial capitalisms of cruise ship tourism, archipelagic networks of Philippine musicking, diasporic SWANA dance parties and their North American movements, and the intercontinental resonances of Black

radical improvisation between the United States, South Africa, and Poland. Heard together, the panelists offer new perspectives on translocal subcultures, diasporic subjectivities, postcolonial geographies, and transnational gig economies, thereby centering worlds of dynamic motion and reinvention.

03J:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.
"Following the Jazz": Stories from Improvised Music Scenes of Three Continents
Jenna Przybysz - Stanford University

Shortly after our first meeting in Cape Town in February 2025, South African and Khoisan interdisciplinary artist, musician, and activist Garth Erasmus described my multi-sited dissertation project as "following the jazz." In many ways, he was right, however, this was only after I (re)calibrated a series of decisions during multi-sited fieldwork between 2023 to 2025. As to be expected, nearly a year of research in Poland redirected my project. When my theories began to crystallize and a series of archival woes ensued, I found myself scrambling to reorient two months of fieldwork in South Africa supported by a grant. In order to keep a coherent project alive, I relied greatly upon my established musical networks of improvisers from Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area to make such research possible. This paper examines my method of ethnographic triangulation between improvised music scenes in Poland, the United States, and South Africa in order to demonstrate how multi-sited ethnographic research, especially non-comparative projects, require acts of improvisation (Svašek 2023; Humphreys et al. 2003). Illustrating how my fieldwork in Cape Town reflected the transnational careers and networks of the musicians who guided my research, I found myself improvising alongside them. This paper contributes to existing frameworks for understanding the mobilities of Black avant-garde musical performance practices, specifically those promoted by members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) and the South African ensemble The Blue Notes, by placing them in current day narratives of transnational musical encounters.

03J:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.
Taking Elsewhere on the Road: Laylit and the SWANA Dance Party
Michael Figueroa - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

By 2026, Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) dance parties have become a major force in electronic-music nightlife across North American cities. These events offer participants vital spaces to gather amid a hostile racial climate in domestic public culture as US-produced bombs rain down on Gaza City, Tehran, and elsewhere in the region. Within these nightlife spaces, community members negotiate their multiply situated diasporic orientations to heritage, sexuality, coalition politics, and more. More than social gatherings, they function as cultural laboratories where diasporic communities cultivate inclusive forms of belonging through musical experimentation. DJ sets at these parties draw together contemporary regional styles (e.g., mahraganat, electro shaabi, and dabke), intertextual references to older Arabic and Persian pop (often reframed through camp sensibilities), and global electronic genres (e.g., house, techno, baile funk, and dubstep). Such performances index both transnational circulation and the localized club cultures of the North American cities where SWANA DJs work. This paper examines my multi-sited fieldwork with Laylit, one of the most influential party collectives, whose events move between New York, Washington DC, Montreal, Ottawa, Detroit, Chicago, and San Francisco. Through participant observation and interviews with organizers and performers, I trace how these parties, and others like them, constitute a networked scene in which participants, repertoires, and discourses move fluidly across cities, presenting both challenges and opportunities for emergent models for theorizing the diasporic subjectivities that the SWANA acronym attempts to hold together.

03J:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.
Beyond Homeland/Diaspora: Listening Archipelagically Across Filipino/American Jazz Scenes
Noah Rosen - Columbia University

This paper considers the limitations of diaspora as a framework for representing the flows of peoples and musical cultures between the United States and the Philippines. Contemporary diasporic discourse has been problematized for its ever-expanding nature (Brubaker 2005), and the use of diaspora as a descriptor for Filipinos in the United States has likewise become a recent point of contention amongst some scholars (Aguilar 2015; Teaiwa 2006). Following

ethnomusicological studies on the transpacific (Fellezs 2019) and translocal (Balance 2016) that have productively reoriented and remapped colonial geographies in Asia and the United States, I attend to how Filipino musicians move beyond binary framings of homeland/diaspora, instead reimagining possibilities for Filipino lifeworlds both within and beyond the designated nation-state. Drawing from my fieldwork that placed me alongside Filipino jazz musicians in Manila and San Francisco, I analyze the discursive and performative use of "Filipino jazz" in both sites as an expressive mode that circumvents a bidirectional framing of Filipino musicking and cultural belonging. While "Filipino" remains the ontological nexus of personal and communal expression, multi-sited research affords a co-constitutive—rather than comparative—alternative to the static, place-based analysis of culture informed by notions of continentalism and national hegemony (Roberts & Stephens 2017). Moving away from affirming qualities and characteristics of cultural designation mapped onto land-based positionality, this multi-sited analysis explores how musicians use "Filipino jazz" as an organizing principle to connect seemingly disparate islands of thought and cultural production; soundworlds that become archipelagically interlinked through relational configurations of different styles and sonic aesthetics.

03J:4. Thursday, 3:15 PM.

Scale, Affect, Infrastructure: Keywords for Musical Labor in the Global Cruise Industry, Provocations for a Multi-Situated Economic Ethnomusicology

ken tianyuan Ge - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

This paper treats scale, affect, and infrastructure as intersecting problematics for a multi-situated economic ethnomusicology. Multi-situatedness (Rajan 2021) is a research sensibility that synthesizes the logistical-conceptual problematics of multi-locale fieldwork with the ethical-political imperatives of writing non-objectifying scholarship within the metropolitan university. In the context of economic ethnomusicology, multi-situatedness implicates scale (Tsing 2015), affect (Berlant 2022), and infrastructure (Larkin 2013) as conceptual tools for the analysis of musical-sonic circulations in capitalist lifeworlds, and as real-world preoccupations, central to capitalist practices, that shape global political economies of musical labor and sensorial engineering. Drawing from my research with migrant seafaring musicians in the cruise ship tourism sector, I demonstrate the affordances of a multi-situated approach to political economies of music in the global leisure industries. I argue that live music on cruise ships—from the transnational sites of its brokerage, to the social dynamics it engenders between western vacationers and global Southern hospitality workers—is animated by a durable colonial matrix (Mignolo & Walsh 2018) of epistemological, aesthetic, cultural, legal, and financial power that transcends terrestrial borders and calls for multi-scalar ethnographic storytelling. In my analysis, musical labor thus presents as an "affective infrastructure," both a sensory architecture for the circulation of leisure (Sterne 1997) and an oceanic lifeworld of racial capitalism and post-plantational relations (Guilbault & Rommen 2019). Scale transforms my telling of cruising's affective infrastructures, telescoping ethnography across the macro levels of labor migration, the local levels of musical conviviality, and the granular levels of intersubjective musical performance and psychic life.

03K. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Sound, Practice, and Power in Thailand

John Latartara; Katherine Scahill; Micah Mooney; Chutikan Chaikittiwatana - The University of Mississippi; University of Pennsylvania; University of Michigan; Stony Brook University
Chair(s): Supeena Adler - UCLA

03K:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.

***Khap* of the Tai Dam: Timbre, Language Sounds, and the Vocable**

John Latartara - The University of Mississippi

The Tai Dam, or "Black Tai" due to their traditional black clothing, are an ethnic minority with sizable communities in Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, China, France, and the United States, and khap is their main vocal genre used in both sacred and secular contexts. While studies have analyzed Tai Dam khap and music through the lens of preservation and identity (Chansri and Burusphat 2017), transmission and categorization (Lissoir 2016, 2015), instrumentation (Iamsin, Roongruang, and Nanthachak 2012), and social function (Jarusopon 2008), none have specifically focused on timbre.

Based upon original fieldwork, I analyze the timbre of twenty-four secular Tai Dam khap documented from nine communities in Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and the United States, focusing on the non-lexical vocable. Spectrograms are used to provide acoustic support for my timbral conclusions. I argue that the vocables in all twenty-four khap share a timbral concordance expressed through the bright [œ] vowel, as in the British English word "bird" or the French word "fleur", which consistently delineates the larger sections and/or smaller phrases. In addition to the primary [œ] vowel, other secondary language sounds often appear such as the bright [I] and [i] vowels and the darker [ŋ] nasal. These are plotted against geography to reveal timbral correspondences between secondary khap language sounds and specific Tai Dam communities.

03K:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.

Practice, Performance, and Repetition: Vocal Training and Attunement of the Senses in a Buddhist Ordination Ritual

Katherine Scahill - University of Pennsylvania

In this paper, I build on scholarship in Buddhist ethnomusicology (Douglas 2020; Greene et al. 2002) to examine the pedagogical processes at work in an ordination ceremony and training program for novice Buddhist nuns (samaneri) in central Thailand. Following Cupchik (2015), I approach the ordination ritual as performing art, attending to how it engages the senses and shapes monastics' aesthetic standards. Using Mross's (2022) description of ritual as "multisensorial," I show how insights from dance, music, and performance studies (Wong 2001; Hahn 2007) provide useful tools in understanding the mechanisms of monastic training, which is also an education of the integrated body-mind system. Based on participant observation as a lay volunteer and temporary novice, as well as semi-structured interviews with nuns and laypeople, I demonstrate how the ordination ritual and training link mind, body, and community in a process I term "attunement of the senses." I employ autoethnography and feminist sensory ethnography (Guzman and Hong 2022) to relay the embodied and sonic components of the ordination, showing how training the senses is integral to training the mind, which is considered the sixth sense in a Buddhist framework. In so doing, I contribute to a more wholistic understanding of the sensorium and lived practices of Buddhist traditions, which have historically been represented as the silent contemplation of a solitary (male) monk (Sykes 2018). Finally, this "attunement of the senses" gains additional significance within the broader Thai national context in which Buddhist nuns are not automatically heard and seen as religious authorities.

03K:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.

Ornamentation in Thai SATB Repertoire

Micah Mooney - University of Michigan

Although composed by a Ukrainian in the late 1880s, "Sansoen Phra Barami," is the current Thai royal anthem, and thus occupies a central place in Thailand's politics and culture. Contemporary vocal arrangements of the anthem show how performers use ornamentation to incorporate a Thai musical identity into an otherwise Western composition. In Thai language SATB choral repertoire, ornamentation influenced by the language's linguistic tones serves as a strong marker of a Thai identity within a Western style. This paper will compare multiple performances of "Sansoen Phra Barami" and the classical song "Lao Duang Deuan," investigating how choral arrangements incorporate ornamentation. Tanese-Itō (1988) and Swangviboonpong (2003) have outlined structural rules governing ornamentation in Thai classical singing, and List (1961), Ho (2006), and Tanprasert and Rockwell (2021), discuss treatment of falling and rising tones in Thai popular music's text-setting practices. I will show how ornamentation in Thai choral music is unique. For example, Tanese-Ito's formula for Thai classical singing, which is a highly ornamented style, predicts that a word with a falling tone will insert notes after and below the primary pitch. My analyses, however, show that in Thai contemporary choral music, the ornamentation may instead occur before and above the primary pitch for a falling tone. The cross-fertilization between Thai and Western musical styles creates a unique sound world with distinct ornamentation norms. By preserving Thai markers in a post-contact environment, musicians incorporate Thai phonological expression into traditionally Western contexts, creating a nuanced musical style.

03K:4. Thursday, 3:15 PM.

Booing the Thai Royal Anthem: Contesting National Identities in Contemporary Thailand

Chutikan Chaikittiwatana - Stony Brook University

On January 7, 2023, videos of audience members booing the Thai royal anthem—played with an on-screen request to stand silently in respect for the King—at the opening of a Blackpink concert in Bangkok went viral online. This incident marked the first widely recognized case of a collective vocal reaction to the anthem in Thailand. If simultaneous singing of a national anthem provides "occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community" (Anderson 1983), what identities were expressed, and through what forms of belonging, when simultaneous booing clashed with conventional silence? Drawing on Abe's (2018) analytical trope of resonance, which understands human sonic expressions as articulating latent socialities and sedimented histories, I analyze online reactions to the incident alongside archival research on the royal anthem's history. Rather than constituting a planned protest, the boos signaled audiences' discomfort with the anthem as a symbol of Thainess that did not resonate within Thai Blackpink fandom, particularly as fans expressed their pride in welcoming the group's Thai member, Lisa, home. As noted in K-pop scholarship (Siriyuvasak and Shin 2007; Wee 2021; Lee and Kao 2021), the genre generates imagined communities through shared transnational consumer culture, complicating historically constituted national identities and boundaries. By booing, audiences contested the royal anthem, which has long served as an emblem of Thai royal nationalism since the formation of the Thai nation-state in the late nineteenth century. This vocalization reverberated in a space celebrating a stylish, glossy Thainess shaped by inter-Asian pop-cultural circulation.

03L. Thursday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Beyond Identity Politics: Rethinking Music, Selfhood, and Sonic Ontology in African Musics

Alaba Ilesanmi; Josh Brew; Kingsley K. Okyere; Matthew Eshun - University of Minnesota; University of Virginia; University of Pennsylvania; Stanford University
Chair(s): Josh Brew - University of Virginia

In 2018, Jim Sykes theorized the "music and identity episteme" as a European modernist framework that centers identity as music's primary organizing principle, marginalizing non-Western cosmologies. Responding to Sykes, alongside scholarship in African music studies, sound studies, and multispecies ethnography, this panel examines how this episteme operates across African and diasporic contexts. The identity episteme excludes alternative ontologies while reinforcing cultural separation narratives that serve economic interests, nationalist agendas, and colonial legacies—despite their historical inaccuracies and political dangers. The panel argues that identity-centered frameworks obscure African musical worlds' conceptual landscape, including human and non-human relations, ancestral continuity, and cultural actors' self-actualization.

The four papers address: transnational disputes over Afrobeats between Ghana and Nigeria, revealing how digital circulation and collaborative networks generate nationalist narratives driven by capitalist structures; Ghanaian violinists' engagement with diverse musical traditions, disrupting (de)colonial taxonomies by centering their agency through aesthetic choices; palmwine and highlife musics in Ghana, demonstrating how anthropocentric sustainability frameworks ignore non-human dependencies and the ongoing environmental destruction; and Fela Kuti's enduring presence in contemporary performance and political discourse, through African cosmologies, challenges liberal frameworks of selfhood and embodiment in ethnomusicology by demonstrating music's persistence beyond the living and individual.

Despite recognition that linking music to identity is "a trap from which we want to escape" (Sykes 2018, 4), identity frameworks continue to foreclose other possibilities for understanding musical meaning across African contexts and diasporas. The panel advocates approaches that consider sonic exchange economies, material and ecological relations, relational ontologies, and extended temporalities.

03L:1. Thursday, 1:45 PM.

Beyond the Living: Toward a Spectral Theory of the Musical Individual.

Alaba Ilesanmi - University of Minnesota

Africanist ethnomusicology has long engaged questions of identity and the musical individual, yet it rarely theorizes personhood beyond the living or through African cosmological frameworks. In this presentation, I consider what it means to conceptualize the musical individual when identity exceeds the boundaries of life, and how one might account for the presence of the dead. Drawing on African cosmological and ontological perspectives that foreground relations between the living and the departed, I argue that the musical individual is relational and temporally expansive. Central to my argument is the concept of "spectral personhood," which moves beyond liberal notions of individuality. I use this concept to capture the enduring agency of African and Black diasporic musical figures whose presence persists beyond death and continues to shape global Black life, and to examine how these figures are summoned as collaborators in contemporary political and musical contexts. By foregrounding spectral personhood and its socio-cultural implications, this paper expands ongoing discussions of agency, presence, temporality, and visibility within ethnomusicology.

03L:2. Thursday, 2:15 PM.

Transcending Anthropocentrism in Musical Sustainability

Josh Brew - University of Virginia

Ghana has recently seen an upsurge in musical sustainability efforts, including the revitalization of palmwine music and UNESCOS' recognition of highlife music as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. Drawing from long-term ethnographic fieldwork and community engagement, this paper interrogates the identity politics embedded in these projects. I ask: Are these initiatives sustaining Ghanaian music as a dynamic, evolving practice, or being ossified within a limiting identity framework? What does contestation over palmwine and highlife music's identity mean for labeling the music as endangered and for sustainability efforts? I interrogate these questions to show that the fear of losing something undefined drives cultural sustainability concerns. I argue that musical sustainability is entangled with identity politics—questions of authenticity, authority, and who profits from cultural heritage. These frameworks overlook non-human relations and obscure the music-nature relationship, limiting music's capacity to address ecological crises. The paper argues for a musical sustainability that moves beyond anthropocentric logics of identity and authenticity, establishing an ethical framework rooted in a shared history and future among humans and non-humans alike.

03L:3. Thursday, 2:45 PM.

Is there even Ghanaian Afrobeats?

Kingsley K. Okyere - University of Pennsylvania

While often conceived in banter, in this paper, I take the above question seriously in examining contemporary cultural politics between Ghana and Nigeria. I confront notions of ownership, identity, influence, and capital in Afrobeats' cultural production within the recent decade. I trace Ghana's and Nigeria's shared music history within the context of economic and labor relations by juxtaposing two major events: first, a group of Nigerian musicians' anxieties about the popularity of Ghanaian highlife musicians in Nigeria in the 1960s; then, the 2023 Play Ghana initiative, interpreted by Afrobeats fans as a covert jab at the predominance of Nigerian artists in Ghana's entertainment spaces. I question the legitimacies and inconsistencies in the arguments produced on both sides, examining recent presence of transnational corporations, UNESCO's cultural heritage declarations, and aesthetic transfer as factors complicating regional cultural politics. Finally, I ask where Ghana is situated in these exchanges as it negotiates its place in global popular music and its contemporary musical identity in highlife, and in Afrobeats as a shared cultural product.

03L:4. Thursday, 3:15 PM.

"Religioso": Sonic morphologies as identity construction in Ghanaian art music

Matthew Eshun - Stanford University

In March 2025, a group of young musicians led by Emmanuel Fiifi Quaye, popularly known as "Fiifi Flawless," staged a concert dubbed Religioso. It follows a series of concerts that brought together different music cultures, including

Ghanaian art music, popular music, Western art music, traditional drumming, and dance theater. Together, Religioso epitomizes a coalescence of disparate musical cultures, gesturing towards a reimagination of African sonic identity that, in conventional practice, would be organized on separate stages and in different contexts. Religioso exemplifies how artists reimagine themselves in response to changing socio-economic conditions within the Accra metropolis. I draw on interviews with Fiifi, video analysis of Religioso's use of repertoire and staging, and my experiences as a conductor and performer in earlier versions of this concert in 2024, held at the Ghana National Theater and the University of Education (Winneba). Amidst economic uncertainty, I investigate how Fiifi redefines this sonic landscape. I demonstrate how musicians' agency as social actors in music-making also resists decolonial tropes of identity creation. I argue that, through a showcase of affinities with different music cultures, Religioso redefines African identity as a sonic morphology situated in power, subjectivity, and self-actualization.

04A. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Roundtable

Intersectional Disruptions: Interrogating Hegemonic Understandings of Musical Talent/Musicality through Disability, d/Deafness, and Race/Ethnicity

Alexandria Carrico; Katelyn Best; Briana Nave; Lindsay Wright -
Chair(s): Alexandria Carrico - University of South Carolina

This roundtable considers how musical talent/musicality has been institutionally constructed within Euro-American culture(s) and critically examines ideological mechanisms that perpetuate these constructions in ways that exclude intersectional identities relative to disability, d/Deafness, and race/ethnicity. Drawing upon their ethnographic fieldwork with neurodivergent musicians, Presenter 1 proposes a counterpoint to ableist understandings of musical talent through the framework of neurodivergent musicality, which centers the neurodivergent experience and privileges nonnormative musical and creative exchange. Presenter 2 critically examines constructions of amateur and professional as applied to the work of rappers involved in dip hop. Based on their ethnographic work documenting the early formation of this style, this presenter problematizes notions of amateur and professional as tied to performance expectations, musical value, and financial longevity. Presenter 3 draws from a case study in the early twentieth century in which musical talent fueled a landmark experiment in racist science. Her analysis of the 1927 report "Race Crossing in Jamaica" underlines how medicalized talent has historically been used as a metric of racial potential in clinical spaces. Presenter 4 interrogates the role of standardization in the Suzuki method of music education, drawing upon fieldwork with learning communities across the U.S. They consider how the method's repertoire, teaching points, and modes of evaluation can promote equity in some contexts, and exclusionary, normate conceptions of musicality in others. By melding ethnographic and historical case studies this roundtable facilitates a conversation that reveals and disrupts hegemonic understandings of musical value rooted in ableism and racism.

04B. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Organized Panel

Critical Trans Ethnographies of Music and Sound

Alejandrina M. Medina; Juniper Clark; Anton L. Blackburn - UC San Diego; University of Pennsylvania; Duke University
Chair(s): M. Myrta Leslie Santana - UC San Diego

Queering the Field (Barz and Cheng 2019) sought "subversive" transformations of queerness for ethnomusicology, from "the queer embrace of sound as embodied" and "the queer critique of gendered binaries" to "the advocacy for queer-identified musical individuals" (Barz 2019, 13–17). This panel responds to queer ethnomusicology's ascension through recent feminist theoretical developments (e.g., subjectless critique, more-than-humanisms, materialism), as an elision of gendered and sexual musical identities. Critical ethnographies expand beyond thick descriptions of music made by trans people, thus exceeding cis-hegemonic "hungry listening" (Robinson 2020) that subsumes minoritized creative practice under "queer" ethnomusicology. The papers in this panel work to expand "acoustemologies" (Feld 2015) of and in transition. The first paper documents transfeminine migrant pedagogies in San Diego/Tijuana. The second paper explores the ordinary auralities of transition within London's transfeminine nightlife scenes. The third paper interrogates the vocal performativities of transing species at furry conventions across the U.S.. We tune ourselves to loud, deafening, and dissonant auralities/oralities which refuse, reappropriate, or disidentify with institutionalized organizations of sexed

audibility (Ochoa Gautier 2014). Together, the papers in this panel employ critical ethnographic listening to (re)articulate global and local configurations of transness, where the sonic imaginaries of performers, musicians, and listeners in our fieldwork may recast prevailing conceptual settlements in ethnomusicology about music and sound's social mediations of gender and sex. Rather than listening for queer- or transness in the field, we let ourselves get out of tune at the after party, on the stage, and up against one another.

04B:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.
Liberia's Daughters: The Legacies of "Women Working as Women" in San Diego/Tijuana
Alejandrina M. Medina - UC San Diego

In this paper, I argue that the pedagogical legacies of show travesti shape a coalitional, transnational feminist approach to gendered labor in popular music through transfeminine nightlife economies. My interlocutors describe show travesti as "women working as women" in distinction from crossdressing performances (e.g., drag), where showseras honor the legacies of women's music-making in popular music in contrast to a mimesis of diva behavior. With origins in Latin American cabaret theaters dating as early as 1960, show travesti augments an ethnomusicological understanding of gendered labor in musical performance through showseras' reproductive labor in aiding younger performers. Through my fieldwork I conducted interviews, attended performances, and even learned "como dar un show" ("how to give a show") to practice "knowledge [that] is located, not transcendent…that [] must be engaged, not abstracted…and that it is forged from solidarity with, not separation from, the people" (Conquergood 2002, 149). I argue that showseras teach their daughters how to work "as women" less as an expression of their trans identity and more to gain access to nightlife economies that have otherwise shut the doors to migrants on both sides of the border. In San Diego/Tijuana, these pedagogies are entangled with and center around the memory of Liberia Aceves Castaneda, a trans migrant performer from the Mexican state of Nayarit, who founded the local scene in the 1990s. Thus, this paper posits a transfemme of color ethnographic intervention by centering the legacies of show travesti, or when women work as women.

04B:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM.
Tr/animal Voices at the Furry Convention
Juniper Clark - University of Pennsylvania

From its beginnings at the fringes of American sci-fi conventions in the 1980s, to its cultivation on the early internet message boards, forums, and digital art galleries of the 1990s and 2000s, to its contemporary, transnational explosion onto mainstream cultural outlets, the "furry fandom" is now so expanded, diverse, and diffuse that it has become nearly impossible (nor desirable) to offer clean definitions of what it is or what it encompasses, apart from a generalized affinity for anthropomorphic animality. While the forms of cultural production under the umbrella of furry and its related subcultural ecologies are multiple, the practice and deployment of animalized vocalizations (barks, growls, hisses, howls, etc.) holds particular importance for community participants in performances of nonhuman self-fashioning and across networks of intracommunal intimacy. This is especially the case for many queer and trans members of these communities, who often must already contend both with the gendered politics of voice and the (equally gendered) technics of voice training. Drawing from multi-sited fieldwork at community gatherings and conventions across the US, I situate the messy vocalities (LaBelle) and "tranimalic explorations" (Hayward and Weinstein 2015) characteristic of trans-furry spaces (the convention center, the private meetup, the room party) within the broader fabric of queer/trans community practices that look to destabilize "the human" (what Sylvia Wynter calls "Man") as a legible category of identity, which participate in the celebration of "nonstandard" queer intimacies (Berlant and Warner 1998), sex/gender/species transgression, and resistance against dominant regimes of capital, commodification, and anthropocentrism.

04B:3. Thursday, 5:00 PM.
Aural Suspension: Voice and the Derealization of Sex in London's Transfem Nightlife
Anton L. Blackburn - Duke University

Transaurality has been theorized as a method of listening that attends to how sound makes transitions of gender and sex audible and actual (Blackburn 2025). This paper extends this method from recorded song to the everyday and nocturnal

life of trans women in East London, where the voice becomes the site at which sex change is realized and derealized. Drawing on over a year of fieldwork with transfeminine women in London, I ask: how does the voice as it is heard suspend trans women between gendered recognition and its withdrawal within British and global (anti-)trans politics? Against the normative regimes of aurality (Ochoa Gautier 2014) and their relations to vocal truth (Cavarero 2005), I theorize aural suspension: the condition in which a trans woman's gender is neither affirmed nor reassigned upon being heard, but left unresolved. I explore three scenes — the kebab counter, the Accident and Emergency waiting room, and the dancefloor — where gendered address is withdrawn without replacement, amplitude becomes grounds for harassment, and a provisional double suspension affords resolution in which the dissonance of transness can be briefly optional. Across these scenes, I trace the social and ideological forces that determine which bodies risk being heard (Gill-Peterson 2024). I conclude by reflecting on what ethnomusicological knowledge production asks of its subjects in the romances of resistance and community. Nightlife in its fullness, beyond just the dancefloor, urges us to consider what resides in "life" after the music stops, the lights come on, and the ordinary resumes.

04C. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Organized Panel

Voicing against Voicelessness: An Ethnomusicology of Voice through Rupture

Elisa Alfonso; Bradley DeMatteo; Hanna Salmon - University of Utah; University of North Carolina Chapel Hill; Austin Community College

Chair(s): Bradley DeMatteo - University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Author Arundhati Roy laid bare the ways in which the construct of voicelessness obfuscates hegemonic acts of silencing when she stated, "There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless.' There are only the deliberately silenced or the preferably unheard." In this panel, we follow Roy's words through ethnomusicological studies of the voice that privilege the action of "voicing" rather than the voice or lack thereof as an object or state of being. Using this approach, we utilize three contrasting studies to examine how different actors exercise agency through their voice and the voices of others— their usage, their silencing, and their contortion. Our panel seeks to place this approach to the voice in dialogue with trauma and refugee studies to further interrogate the way people traverse hardships of violence, trauma, gendered repression, and racial discrimination by voicing against forces that attempt to render them voiceless. We ask: how does vocality empower survivors? What kinds of fractures in systems of violence might occur upon their voicings? Our panelists address these questions through examining the affect and empathy Palestinian women's personal narrative storytelling, the vocalities of long-term refuge in the Cambodian American communities of Lowell, Massachusetts, and the dissonance between child refugee voicing and appropriated voice in state-sponsored propaganda. While drawing from different situations and regions of the world, each paper on this panel argues that the voice exceeds itself as a sounding entity, always but especially in circumstances when people are deliberately silenced or unheard.

04C:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.

Sounding the "Blank Slate": Examining the Roles and Ramifications of the Refugee Child's Voice in Cold War Propaganda

Elisa Alfonso - University of Utah

While studies examining the construct of "romantic childhood" and its mobilization in Cold War propaganda abound (e.g. May 2008; Dubinsky 2010; Grieve 2018), only a handful of articles have addressed the use of refugee children's singing specifically (Woo 2015, 2020; Lee 2022), and none have, to my knowledge, deeply analyzed the refugee child's voice as a specific construct. The proposed paper begins addressing this lacuna in scholarship by examining the role of the refugee child's voice (real or imagined) in state-sponsored propaganda from the period. I take as my case study two US films, WTVJ's The Plight of Pepito (1961) and the USIA's The Lost Apple (1963), which purport to examine the perspectives and experiences of Cuban child refugees in the early 1960s. Drawing from Alexis Artaud de la Ferrière's suggestion that constructs of "innocence" applied to children's voices can act as a "moralizing" force within adults' political messaging, I highlight the ways in which young refugees' voices were muted, stolen, and structured through music and narrative to support political messaging. I contrast these analyses with oral history testimony about the literal and metaphoric silencing these young Cubans experienced upon arrival in the US. In so doing, I demonstrate that not only did these children suffer from what Y-Dang Troeung calls "refugee aphasia" (2022), but were further suffocated by

the imagined tenets of romantic childhood itself, such as joy, adaptability, and innocence, which obfuscate individual agency and homogenize diverse experiences.

04C:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM.
Voicing Long-Term Refuge in Cambodian American Lowell, Massachusetts
Bradley DeMatteo - University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

For over fifty years, Cambodian American experience has been articulated through myriad voices spanning Khmer speech, song, chant, recitation, and silence. Following the tumult of mid-20th century Cambodia foregrounded by the Khmer Rouge genocide from 1975 to 1979 and incited by the American bombing campaign during the late 1960s, two civil wars, and ensuing mass displacement, over 150,000 Cambodians arrived as refugees in the US. They carried with them the weight of trauma, fears and uncertainties, and hopes for life beyond violent rupture. They also carried with them voices as sonically and metaphorically resonant mediums through which to navigate identities in diaspora. Voices bearing Khmer language and song, stories, and religious practice helped to sustain Cambodian lifeworlds in diaspora. Informed by new turns in Critical Refugee Studies and over seven years of ethnographic research in the Cambodian American enclave of Lowell, Massachusetts, I consider the ways Cambodian Americans have used voice as a resource throughout un- and resettlements in three primary criteria: 1) vocalities of everyday life that actively resist the imposition of voicelessness as it stands for a lack of agency; 2) vocalities that sound beyond the traumatic past; and 3) the ways that vocality contributes to notions of permanency in a time when migrant emplacement is challenged by the isolationist policies of the Trump administration. I argue that centering resourcefulness embedded within uses of voice by refugees through and beyond the initial crises of displacement foregrounds an agentive solidarity often denied or ignored in state-centered frameworks of refuge.

04C:3. Thursday, 5:00 PM.
A Vocal Politics of Empathy in Palestinian Personal Narrative Storytelling
Hanna Salmon - Austin Community College

Personal narrative storytelling is an artform that gains reality through the voice. Through their voice, a storyteller communicates the events, characters, images, and feelings of a memory.

Yet, when working to narrate a traumatic experience, people may run up against the "unspeakable." In these cases, scholarship in voice studies, oral history, and feminist theory has focused on the role of the voice in communicating beyond and around language, through affective, timbral, material, and relational qualities that are themselves situated within sociocultural frameworks of voicing. This paper places ethnographic fieldwork in Palestine in conversation with approaches from studies in oral history, voice, feminist theory, affect and atmosphere, and Palestinian cultural practice to analyze one woman's telling of a traumatic personal story in her own voice. By examining the storyteller's and listeners' vocalizations within the context of sociocultural frameworks around women's vocal practices and the storyteller's own reflections on her voice, I outline the politics of empathy that emerged through this storytelling moment. I argue that the corporeality of the storyteller's voice allowed her listeners to feel alongside her, enabling an intimate and communally situated mode of bearing witness. This research therefore helps us to understand the complex dynamics through which voicing incites and shapes empathy and vice versa, molding not only what is said but how it sounds, how it is heard, and how it is felt.

04D. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session
Sonic Thresholds: Ritual, Empire, and the Performance of Belonging
Damilola Odebiyi; Bradford Garvey; Francis Penaranda - UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA; Brandeis University; Univeristy of the Philippines College of Music
Chair(s): Charles Lwanga - University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

04D:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.

Sounding Sacred Order: Gender, Boundary, and Choral Performance in the Celestial Church of Christ, Nigeria

Damilola Odebiyi - UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

This paper examines how sacred boundaries materially organize choral performance, gendered participation, and musical structure in the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) Yemetu, Ibadan, Nigeria. While scholarship on African Indigenous Churches has emphasized theology, ritual symbolism, and institutional history, comparatively little attention has been given to how doctrinal regulations shape musical practice at the level of rehearsal, sound production, and ensemble coordination. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and musicological analysis, this study argues that sacred boundaries function as performance technologies that structure spatial arrangement, authority, vocal distribution, and liturgical sequencing. Regulations governing altar access, hierarchical rank, and menstrual purity directly influence leadership patterns, rehearsal planning, cantata execution, and harmonic balance. Rather than operating solely as constraints, these boundaries generate adaptive musical strategies, including flexible part redistribution, anticipatory rehearsal culture, and spatially negotiated ensemble interaction. Hymnody and liturgical flow further reinforce sacred order by sonically marking purity, hierarchy, and divine authority. Engaging theories of the sacred and profane alongside ethnomusicological approaches to music as social action, the paper demonstrates that sacred order in African Indigenous Christianity is not only believed or symbolized but acoustically produced and continually reproduced through choral practice. By foregrounding the intersection of gender, embodiment, and musical form, this study contributes to broader debates on religion, performance, and power while advancing a music-centered understanding of how ritual regulation becomes audible in lived worship.

04D:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM.

Dances of Empire: Dance and Power on the Nineteenth Century Omani East African Coast

Bradford Garvey - Brandeis University

The Omani state's imperial expansion along the East African littoral in the nineteenth century secured Arab political and military dominance over the western edges of the Indian Ocean's vast networks of trade in weapons, spices, and the enslaved. This expansion was conducted by Omani political and mercantile elites, who, from their coastal palaces, balanced South Asian investment capital, enslaved labor on new clove plantations, and Indian Ocean merchant networks with their own naval and military might. This paper traces this imperial expansion through the steps of a particular dance form—the Omani razḥa—which, I argue, was a crucial tool in the expansion of Omani hegemony. I show that the razḥa was the premier dance and social technology that accompanied Omani Arab sailors and soldiers as they cut a bloody wake down the Swahili coast, and, in the eyes of African locals, became a symbol of the Arab empire. Through documentary and ethnographic evidence, I argue that the Omani razḥa served as a model for several Swahili dance forms along the East African coast throughout the nineteenth century precisely due to its centrality to Omani political practice. As many scholars of East Africa have noted, East African societies have long adopted and reframed the images, sounds, and regalia of dominant groups, especially within competitive dance contexts. By putting dance at the center of historical and ethnomusicological analysis, I show how dance, especially but not exclusively war dances, can operate as a social practice of domination in the context of imperial expansion.

04D:3. Thursday, 5:00 PM.

Sounding the Dead: The Tulod-Damag Mortuary Rite of Central Panay, Philippines

Francis Penaranda - Univeristy of the Philippines College of Music

This paper presents a preliminary inquiry into Tulod-Damag, a mortuary rite practiced in Central Panay, Philippines. Grounded in the local knowledge system and cosmology, it examines how recurring sounds, ritual utterances, bodily gestures, and spatial movements structure the separation of the deceased from the world of the living. Drawing on ongoing fieldwork, interviews with practitioners, audio documentation, and analysis of ritual sequences, the study treats sound not merely as an expression of grief but as a performative medium through which mortuary transition is enacted and communally recognized. The analysis suggests that recurring sonic and embodied actions form flexible, cumulative cycles rather than strictly metrical patterns. Through repetition and intensification, these actions progressively mark

separation, transition, and ritual closure. The paper further proposes that the relationship among sound, performativity, and mortuary passage may be explained by an emic concept rooted in local cultural knowledge. By foregrounding this culturally grounded category, the study contributes to ethnomusicological discussions of ritual sound, temporality, death, and social continuity.

04E. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Roundtable

Shame on the Field: How Shame Shapes Field Experiences

Ryan Lambe; Lisa Beebe; Nicol Hammond; Lydia Barrett - Eckerd College; University of Wisconsin, Whitewater; University of California, Santa Cruz

Chair(s): Ryan Lambe - Eckerd College

Shame is an ugly feeling. It does not drive us to connect or create. It halts us. It isolates us. It's hard to produce when slumped and alone. Ethnomusicologists have attended to how shame influences our collaborators. We explore shame as it emerges in fieldwork.

Ryan J. Lambe examines how shame paralyzed while in his queer open mic field, preventing him from interviewing important interlocutors. That shame is compounded as he faces the discipline without that crucial information.

Lisa Beebe reflects on experiences of impostor syndrome, a deeply-engrained feeling of not belonging in academia or ethnomusicology. Shame distorts fieldwork and scholarship challenges into personal failures, stymying productive reflection and critical analysis of external factors. Academic institutions benefit from this shame, increasing pressures for service and scholarly productivity while reducing institutional support.

Nicol Hammond considers the relationship between her shame and that of queer Afrikaans music fans who are her research subjects in South Africa. In the wake of a diagnosis of PTSD, , she unpacks how sexual violence shapes legible topics and scholars within ethnomusicology.

Lydia Barrett examines their positionality in relation to physical presences of neo/postcolonial power structures in former French colonies of Africa. They explore complexities of access that their positionality as a white femme researcher affords them in the afterlife of colonization, while also examining how their presentation precludes connections with some interlocutors. They reflect on balancing ethical research with culturally humble interrogation of prestige and economic privilege that comes with conducting American-funded fieldwork in postcolonial Africa.

04F. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Roundtable

Suspending Asian/American Listening

Aydin Quach; Alissa Liu; Chun Chia Tai; Nic Vigilante; Heidi Tai - University of Southern California; University of California, San Diego; Cornell University; University of California, San Diego

Chair(s): Allan Zheng - Loyola Marymount University

This roundtable invites participants to think with and through suspense as a heuristic which bridges the embodied and the political, the local and the transnational, the mediated and the "authentic." We examine how musical performance "within the slash" of Asian/America (Palumbo-Liu 1999) complicates and enriches the very ideas of "Asian" and "American" upon which it rests, suspending preconceived notions of the boundaries between nations and academic disciplines. Drawing from conversations in Global Asias (Chen and Eubanks 2025) and music and performance studies (Huang 2022, Wong 2004), suspense allows us to put sonic practice into conversation with geopolitical and disciplinary critique. Rooted in the diasporic spaces and politics of Southern California, panelists draw from their ethnographic research on 1) Asian/American listeners' affective responses to EDM at "Asian/American" music festivals; 2) live concert spaces within globalized Kpop performances as "pan-Asian"; 3) Taiwanese/American musical practices in Taiwan; 4) Taiwanese American music as a form of participation in global politics; and 5) queer panethnic Asian/American nightlife. Each of the speakers invite the wider SEM community to join in on this exploration and to contend with how Asian/American ethnomusicologists as well as others can hold in suspense the field of ethnomusicology through the blurring of taken-for-granted boundaries of nation/state.

04G. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Organized Panel

Listening to Medical(ized) Spaces: Sound, Care, and Clinical Ethics

YuHao Chen; Meghan Wysocki; Francis Eniola - University of Notre Dame; University of Michigan; Olabisi Onabanjo University

Chair(s): Diandian Zeng; Gabrielle Hooper

With growing interest in how the humanities can inform medical interventions, patient care, and healing, this panel features a collection of studies as entry points to the sonic potentials and critiques of medical(ized) spaces. These investigations compel close interrogation of the rational and colonial legacies that undergird past linguistic and tonal destabilization, contemporary bioethics, and culturally and religiously centered sonic care. Tracing missionary hospitals in early twentieth-century northern China, the first paper examines a phonetic shorthand taught to illiterate patients that split Chinese syllables into two parts, paralleling this phonetic division with the surgical incisions imposed upon China's body politic by Western imperialism. The second paper draws attention to the instrument and architectural presence of the carillon at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, arguing that as a cultural symbol of the hospital, it represents an alternative aliveness that complicates and reconfigures the bioethical principles of the clinical setting. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, the third paper investigates the role of culturally grounded musical practices such as songs employed during antenatal sessions as forms of care in maternal health across a government-owned hospital and a faith-based maternity home. Together these papers allow an exploration of sounds and musical practices that have been evoked, invited, and even enforced within medical(ized) contexts of the past, institutionally ingrained in the present, and burgeoning today.

04G:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.

Table of Phonetic Wounds

YuHao Chen - University of Notre Dame

When sound is broken in half, what takes place in the cut? This paper examines a sound-based literacy program implemented in northern China in the 1910s and 1920s, where medical staff at the London Missionary Society hospitals taught illiterate Chinese patients a new phonetic shorthand during their post-surgery recovery. This shorthand script operated through a two-part spelling principle, whereby the pronunciation of a Chinese syllable was split into an initial and final sound. Drawing on missionary writings, reading materials, and medical reports, I link this phonetic procedure to the surgical cutting performed in the hospitals. I argue that the parallel pursuit of phonetic dissection and medical care hinged on the kinds of semi-anesthetized experiences that came to characterize modernity. Attending to incisions made on the Chinese syllables and the flesh, I listen for a fractured, mechanized modernity at a time when the encroachment of western imperialism was understood as a traumatic cutting up of China's body politic. Building on Brian Fairley's critique of "dissected listening" (2023), I suggest that the notion of dismemberment not only guided early ethnomusicological listening—in the way that Erich Moritz von Hornbostel approached recordings of Thai court music as though a vivisection—but also described, literally, the concurrent parsing of Chinese sounds and bodies in the foreign missionary hospitals. The phonetic wounds left by the scalpel thus share a caesura with ethnomusicology's past, a cut seemingly too distant, too anesthetized to be addressed within the current ambit of medical ethnomusicology.

04G:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM.

Negotiating an Alternate Aliveness on the Mayo Clinic's Rochester Carillon

Meghan Wysocki - University of Michigan

As both an architectural element and instrument, the carillon (a set of stationary bells played manually from a keyboard in a bell tower) creates and disseminates meaning through its sonic and physical presence. I examine this dual presence in the context of the Mayo Clinic's Rochester Carillon in Rochester, Minnesota, the only such instrument owned by a hospital in North America. Despite the instrument's standing as a primary cultural symbol of the Clinic, I argue that the Rochester Carillon, understood as both the carillonist and the building, negotiates an alternative aliveness through routine clashes with expressed bioethical principles of the clinical setting. In examining power relations both through and from the instrument, I interpret how the carillon becomes a site of public bioethics, where notions of autonomy,

beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice are destabilized and reinterpreted. The power of the Rochester Carillon lies in its position as a highly concealed instrument within the Plummer Building, an icon of the city's public biomedical consciousness. Simultaneously, the instrument's operation and performance remain largely exclusive to the Clinic's carillonneur and Humanities in Medicine staff, a small, active division of the Clinic's 76,000-person workforce. As the building reflects an aesthetic representation of the Clinic's values framework, the carillon's expression reveals a complex institutional identity that challenges the practiced principles of its bioethical environment.

04G:3. Thursday, 5:00 PM.

Sonic Care and Maternal Well-Being in Ibadan, Nigeria: Musical Practices in Faith-Based and Government Antenatal Clinics

Francis Eniola - Olabisi Onabanjo University

Maternal mortality remains a pressing global challenge, particularly in Africa and Nigeria. While efforts to reduce maternal mortality have primarily emphasized biomedical interventions, the role of music as a form of care in maternal health remains under explored. This study is situated within medical ethnomusicology and examined musical activities in Adeoyo Maternity Hospital, a government-owned facility, and Christ Apostolic Church Oke-Ibukun, a faith-based maternity home, both located in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Grounded in Rosenstock et al.'s Health Belief Model, the research draws on ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation, in-depth interviews with healthcare providers and expectant mothers, and analysis of songs employed during antenatal sessions. In the faith-based maternity home, music is deeply rooted in spirituality, with hymns, thanksgiving songs, and warfare songs forming the core of antenatal sessions. In contrast, music in the government hospital primarily serves therapeutic functions. Both settings, however, utilize music for health education, exercise, and prayer. These results underscore the multifaceted role of sonic care in shaping emotional, social, and spiritual well-being among expectant mothers. By documenting these practices in the Global South, this study contributes to medical ethnomusicology and offers insights for integrating culturally grounded music into maternal healthcare interventions internationally.

04H. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Between Sanctuary and Stage: Jewish Music, Identity, and Mediation

Devorah Belin; Miranda Crowdus; Raphael Reis Medeiros de Campos - CUNY Graduate Center; Concordia University; Independent Researcher, Brazil

04H:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.

Frum Women Sing: Voice, Agency, and Orthodox Jewish Subjectivity

Devorah Belin - CUNY Graduate Center

In many Orthodox Jewish ("frum") communities, women do not sing in front of men, shielding men from women's singing voices for religious modesty. This practice has often been framed as a "silencing of women's voices" and a form of patriarchal oppression (Lubet 2011; Borts 2021). However, by focusing on the absence of women's singing voices in male dominated-spaces, researchers and outside observers effectively re-enact the silencing of these women by failing to notice the actual singing voices of frum women. Rather than focusing on what frum women aren't doing or where they cannot be heard, it is more productive to investigate what they are doing with their voices and why. Not only do frum women sing, but they have unique and vibrant singing practices and spaces that exist separately from men's or mixed-gender singing spaces. Using the approaches of scholars who investigate the formation of gendered religious subjectivity (Mahmood 2005) and the construction of conceptions of "the voice" (Weidman 2014; Sundar 2023) as well as interviews and participant observation in New York, I argue that implicit assumptions about singing, agency, and frum women obscure the ways that singing is used in these communities, namely as a tool for collective connection and to consciously form a religious and communal subjectivity. This critical examination of understandings of "the frum voice" has implications for wider musical research that involves religious or non-Western communities which may have misalignments between emic and etic understandings of singing and its purposes.

04H:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM.

Portable, Iridescent Heritage: Liturgical Musicking of Middle Eastern and North African Jews in Montreal

Miranda Crowdus - Concordia University

This talk chronicles the results of a federally-funded project at Concordia University "Sonic Heritage Diversity," a project that explores the disappearing music and musical and listening practices, as well as related intangible cultural heritage, of Montreal Jews of Middle Eastern (Mizrahi) and North African (Sephardic) origin, and more broadly the practices of communities and individuals fitting outside of "Ashkenormative" parameters such as Yemenite, Ethiopian, or Romaniote (Judeo-Greek). This talk will highlight key moments revealed during fieldwork and archival research.

Montreal is currently home to an unusually diverse population of Jews from different origins. While some came to Canada directly from their places of origin, others came from countries like the United States, Israel and France, to which they had originally immigrated often in order to leave situations that had become unsustainable owing to conflict and/or antisemitism. This talk explores the multi-faceted areas to which the project "Sonic Heritage Diversity" contributes, for instance, how the project stimulated the exploration of innovative research methods to preserve disappearing repertoires of intangible heritage in a context in which Canadian Jewish identity is rapidly changing, and previous intra-Jewish ethnic boundaries are shifting and, in some cases, coalescing. The public-facing aspect, including the ongoing creative activation aspect of the project serves as an important resource through which Jewish subjectivities can remember their musical past and engage with it in the present. The talk also highlights rich, community-led depictions of practitioners, their music, and their diverse journeys and encounters.

04H:3. Thursday, 5:00 PM.

Mediated Mourning on a Global Stage: Israel at the Eurovision Song Contest, 2024–2025

Raphael Reis Medeiros de Campos - Independent Researcher, Brazil

This paper examines Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest during the Gaza war by looking at its 2024 ("Hurricane") and 2025 ("New Day Will Rise") entries as audiovisual articulations of national mourning in the aftermath of October 7th. Instead of looking at these entries primarily as strategic interventions within a moment of political controversy, I analyze their official music videos as platforms through which collective grief and resilience are rendered visible and audible. Through scholarship on semiotics, trauma and grievability, I argue that the videos mobilize visual and sonic motifs to represent mourning through both personal vulnerability and communal endurance. These mediated discourses address domestic audiences that are still going through the aftermath of trauma, as well as international audiences for whom the scale and impact of October 7 on Israeli civilians have not been fully apprehended within dominant media frames. However, once the contest begins, their expression of grief becomes entangled in geopolitical debates, revealing how public grief acquires political force when mediated transnationally. By examining these entries as sites where mourning is aesthetically shaped and the Eurovision as an international arena where both support and contestation occur, this paper contributes to discussions regarding the intersections between public mourning and geopolitical contestation in global media events, as well as to ethnomusicological studies of music in crisis.

04I. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session

From Remix to Resistance: Music, Algorithms, and Digital Publics

ZIXUAN WANG; Joshua Kerobo; Pablo Infante-Amate - The University of Texas at Austin; University of Michigan; University of Jaén (Spain)
Chair(s): Joshua Kerobo - University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

04I:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.

"This Is *Dingqu*": Remixing Ding Zhen into Dissent on Bilibili

Zixuan Wang - The University of Texas at Austin

This paper examines Dingqu(丁曲)—a grassroots remix subgenre on China's video platform Bilibili inspired by Ding Zhen (丁真), a Tibetan youth who went viral in November 2020 and was quickly elevated as a tourism ambassador and a state-friendly symbol of "ethnic harmony."

Building from this mediated celebrity, Dingqu (means Ding Zhen's music) creators mimic Ding Zhen's Mandarin accent, rewrite lyrics with irony, and circulate parodic songs that reframe his fame as an uneasy convergence of propaganda, commercial extraction, and anxieties about social mobility. In this paper, I ask: How does Dingqu resist state-sponsored narratives of ethnic harmony and meritocracy, and what does its participatory production reveal about the possibilities and limits of China's digital public sphere?

This study utilizes a virtual ethnography of highly circulated Dingqu videos, ranging from the early 2021 breakout remixes that established genre conventions to later, intertextual works that weave together classical literature and online memes. I argue that Dingqu functions as networked, humorous dissent rather than mere entertainment. Through satire, mimicry, and dense intertextual play, remixers appropriate an officially celebrated figure to stage counter-narratives about fairness, ethnicity, and symbolic capital.

The paper connects Habermasian debates on public sphere to platformed participatory culture and highlights puns as a tactical aesthetic that enables critique while navigating censorship and platform governance. Ultimately, Dingqu crystallizes how digital musicking can open contingent spaces of commentary and agency—yet only within shifting boundaries of state and platform control.

04I:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM.

Alhaji Beats: Afrobeats and the Mediation of African Muslim Identity within the Global Popular Music Market

Joshua Kerobo - University of Michigan

Nigerian Afrobeats artist Asake (born Ahmed Ololade) rose to national and global pop stardom with the release of his first album Mr. Money with the Vibe (2022), under famed Nigerian hip-hop artist and music producer Olamide's Yahoo Boy No Laptop Nation (YBNL) record label. One of the album's singles, "Peace Be Unto You (PBUY)", was released before Nigeria's celebration of the Muslim Eid-el-Kabir. The hit song, which was secular in nature but utilized religious language in its lyrics, called for peace amid growing political insecurity that disproportionately affected Muslims. This paper argues that popular music opportunely centered Muslim religious expression during the holiday period, discursively challenging insecurity and generating revenue among Muslim music consumers. I draw upon Allottey-Pappoe's (2024) description of Afrobeats as a hypernym, a broad categorization that elucidates sonic influences of Afro/Afro-Diasporic religious communities. I also use Osiebe's (2016) conception of market-driven themes in Nigerian popular music to examine how Asake and other Nigerian Afrobeats artists address Muslim audiences in their music productions as morally attuned citizen-consumers. Their musical works subvert industry margins by sonically mediating the experiences of African Muslims, involving them as discursive citizens and popular music consumers contending with Nigeria's daily precarities.

04I:3. Thursday, 5:00 PM.

Alternative by Accident: WhatsApp, Music Circulation, and the Margins of Platform Capitalism in Equatorial Guinea

Pablo Infante-Amate - University of Jaén (Spain)

In Equatorial Guinea, a small Central African petro-state where music streaming has not taken hold, music circulates primarily via WhatsApp—a Meta-owned messaging app never designed for music distribution. This paper examines WhatsApp as an accidental alternative to the dominant infrastructures of digital music circulation and asks whether its architectural features circumvent core logics of platform capitalism—algorithmic recommendation, data extraction,

copyright enforcement—more effectively than purpose-built alternatives such as P2P file-sharing networks, netlabels, and producer-oriented platforms like SoundCloud and Bandcamp. Drawing on 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork—including participant observation in recording studios, interviews with musicians and fans, and analysis of WhatsApp-based music sharing networks—the paper explores how digital music exchange in Equatorial Guinea is shaped not only by global technological infrastructures but also by local economic and political formations, most notably a longstanding oil-rich authoritarian state and the musical patronage it sustains. The analysis reveals a paradox: WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption, absence of algorithmic recommendation, and lack of licensing agreements create a distinct space for circulation, yet these very features—combined with state control of internet access and entrenched patronage logics—prevent artists from monetizing their music, reinforcing their dependence on political elites. The paper contributes to scholarship on digital platforms in the Global South by showing that resistance to platform capitalism may emerge not from intentional design but from infrastructural accident.

04J. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session; Film

The Social Life of Sound: Justice, Displacement, and Aesthetic Worlds

Melanie Moseley; Jiaxi Xie; Alec Norkey - University of Pittsburgh; Goldsmiths, University of London; UCLA

Chair(s): Gavin Douglas - University of North Carolina-Greensboro

04J:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.

Acoustic Architectures of Justice: Sound, Power, and the Courtroom

Melanie Moseley - University of Pittsburgh

The courtroom is an acoustic and spatial environment where law is enacted through regulated listening. As ethnomusicologists increasingly encounter legal institutions as expert witnesses and as scholar-activists, the courtroom demands clearer theorization as a critical listening space within the discipline. Drawing on Season 3 of Surviving R. Kelly (2023), which features federal court proceedings of sexual abuse by the R&B artist, this paper analyzes how architectural design, courtroom protocol, and surrounding courthouse soundscapes shape what can be heard, withheld, or (mis)understood in legal settings. Microphones, sound systems, white noise generators, architectural materials, and ambient disturbances shape the courthouse as a layered soundscape. Media coverage constitutes a parallel soundscape that recontextualizes courtroom speech as legal narratives circulate in real time. Testimonies delivered under oath are excerpted, replayed, and reframed, while press conferences outside the courthouse transform legal argument into performative statements designed for broadcast. The courtroom thus becomes a site where voice, emotion, and institutional power converge, and where testimony functions as both narrative and performance shaped by acoustic conditions and psychological expectations. Drawing on Gelbwasser's discussion of courtroom noise and privileged communication (2001) and Blesser and Salter's theory of aural architecture (2007), this paper argues that courtroom acoustics structure access to information, condition credibility, and influence how justice is experienced by witnesses, legal actors, and listening publics. By theorizing juridical listening through mediated soundscapes and aural architecture, this intervention expands ethnomusicological approaches to power by locating law as an underexamined but increasingly consequential site of listening, governance, and public meaning.

04J:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM. Film

A Multimodal Ethnography of Displaced Karen Refugees at the Thai-Burmese Border

Jiaxi Xie - Goldsmiths, University of London

Title: Sounding the "Kawthoolei" (in progress)Year produced: 2026 (in production)Estimated total length: 75 minutesLanguage: English

This film is part of my ongoing practice-based PhD project on the music and sound of Karen refugees along the Thai-Burmese border, displaced by the Burmese civil war. The Karen are an ethnic minority group, with the majority originally residing in Burma. Many of them have been persecuted by the Burmese military junta for several decades and have settled in Thai border areas. I study the sonic world of the Karen through the theoretical lenses of displacement, ethnicity, and war, examining how Karen music and sound shape and express ethnic identity, construct and present their cultural memory, and engage with themes of war.

The research produces a multimodal and multisensory ethnography, including a thesis, an ethnographic film, soundscape compositions, and a participatory artwork co-created with my participants. For this conference, I would present an excerpt of the film, highlighting Karen youth rap. It centers on oral stories of Karen people's homeland, "Kawthoolei," and documents Karen rap music production, interweaving several individual narratives with related Karen music videos. The film explores the senses of the Karen people, such as hearing, vision, imagination, memory, fear, and hope. I have completed my fieldwork and am currently experimenting with different approaches to editing.

Preview excerpt (work-in-progress):

https://vimeo.com/1097677512?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

04J:3. Thursday, 5:00 PM.

Aesthetics and Production in Los Angeles: A Global "New Music" Field of Cultural Production

Alec Norkey - UCLA

In many ways, the complexity of composer freelancing in Los Angeles is an intensification of conditions previously observed: musical tradition is interwoven with networking strategies and challenging working conditions. Yet the city's history of musical eclecticism and desacralization, as described by historian Kenneth Marcus, clearly influences the flavor of artistic activity. Professional opportunities extend beyond a variety of classical music scenes, spilling over to the cultural businesses of film and television (Taylor 2023). At the same time, considerations of musical tradition, ethnic diversity, histories of immigration, economic precarity, and gendered dynamics contribute to artistic profiles and professionalization trajectories. Here, notions of multiculturalism, musical hybridity, and what Andrea Moore has called the "incorporation aesthetic" (2016) become intertwined with contemporary classical music's connections with entrepreneurialism, the marketplace, and American-based ensemble strategies (Pippen 2014, 2022). Based on my fieldwork, I argue that composers based in Los Angeles operate within a distinct, global "new music" field of cultural production, where professional advancement is influenced by themes of entrepreneurialism, multiculturalism, and social identity. By articulating Los Angeles's contemporary classical music production in terms of working conditions and cultural diversity, this research contributes to a broader understanding of how freelance musicians engage with and strategize within large, multicultural metropolitan areas.

04K. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Sonic Citizenship in South America: Music, Gender, and the Politics of Belonging

Kumera Zekarias Genet; Vicky Mogollón Montagne; Rafael Torralvo - Boston University; Boston University; Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany

Chair(s): Rachel Horner - Indiana University, Bloomington

04K:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.

Black Women's Songs of Migration: Reinforcing the Collective Authority of Cantadoras in Cali, Colombia

Kumera Zekarias Genet - Boston University

In this presentation, I investigate how affective music performance and community organizing structure the work of the cantadora Elena Hinestroza in the black migrant communities of Cali, Colombia. Cantadoras are traditional singers of Afro-Colombian music who are the matriarchs of rural Colombian Pacific communities. Hinestroza operates La Azotea de la Abuela in eastern Cali, a cultural performance and meeting space located in the rooftop of her home that hosts Pacific Music workshops for local youth and traditional nightlong musical ceremonies called arrullos, in addition to community and government meetings. I posit that La Azotea is a location where Pacific Music performance (re)produces a politics of black cultural preservation, and that the affective resonances of Afro-Colombian music performance are vital to sustaining the symbolic capital through which Hinestroza performs community advocacy, and furthermore, that La Azotea is a political space where cantadoras reassert their authority to regulate intercommunal and intra-communal relationships. Hinestroza and her collaborators also adapt traditional Afro-Colombian voice pedagogies to compose a contemporary urban song repertoire informed by their experiences of internal displacement. I argue that these songs establish a shared meaning of place for black migrants and their descendants by speaking to their collective

memories of the rural Colombian Pacific and current struggles against racial segregation Cali. This presentation is in dialogue with recent sociological and Black Feminist scholarship on black Pacific cultural expression in Cali, and contributes ethnomusicological analysis of performance genealogies and the affective voice.

04K:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM.
Sounds of Fuerza: Espiritismo Marialioncero and Venezuela's Contemporary Crisis
Vicky Mogollón Montagne - Boston University

This paper delves into how sonic and musical experience contributes to espiritismo marialioncero's (Venezuelan spiritism) formulation of spiritual intensity, or a principle better known as fuerza. Spectacularizing approaches have justified persecution of religious practitioners since the 1950s by describing espiritismo as a "cult to violence" or a scam with negative influences on Venezuelan society (Barreto 2020, Ferrándiz 2004, Taussig 1997). The forceful character of spirit possession is a central concern as it signals a fracture between different understandings of subjectivity, humanity and violence. While for espiritistas marialionceros this ritual is desired and transformative, others see it as threatening and abhorrent (Crosson 2019). I argue that we can explore this epistemological impasse most effectively by interrogating the role of intensity as a threshold between the ordinary and extraordinary. 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. Through (auto)ethnographic engagement, I study espiritistas' methodical curation of the intensities of sound, sights and temperatures to propitiate the fuerza needed for intervention into legacies of unbelonging and suffering. Ultimately, fuerza illuminates espiritista human/non-human solidarities that profoundly modify how this religious community inhabits Venezuela's contemporary crisis.

04K:3. Thursday, 5:00 PM.
ARMORIAL MEMORY: INSURGENT CITIZENSHIP AND THE RESIGNIFICATION OF SPACES
Rafael Torralvo - Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany

Drawing on archival and ethnographic research conducted in São José do Belmonte, a rural community in the backlands of Pernambuco, this talk examines how grassroots initiatives linked to the Armorial Movement, a multifaceted artistic project spearheaded by playwright, novelist, and scholar Ariano Suassuna (1927–2014) have empowered residents of Belmonte to effect change through what political anthropologist James Holston terms insurgent citizenship. I explore how the Stone of the Kingdom Association has served as a site for the performance of citizenship by cultivating networks of belonging through participatory cultural activities, such as the Stone of the Kingdom Celebration. This event is an equestrian pilgrimage to Pedra do Reino, a historical site where, in 1838, a group of religious zealots, followers of Sebastianismo, a messianic ideology centered on the prophesied return of Dom Sebastião (1554–1578), King of Portugal, carried out a massacre in hopes of bringing about the monarch's return. Taking the Stone of the Kingdom Celebration as a point of departure, I demonstrate how members of the Stone of the Kingdom Association embrace Suassuna's Armorial universe as a means of performing cultural identity and citizenship, re-signifying the historic site of Pedra do Reino into a space of cultural and political significance.

04L. Thursday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session
04L: Unruly Sounds: Noise, Participation, and Cultural Politics
Martin Ringsmut; Julia Peters - University of Vienna; University of Pennsylvania
Chair(s): Jeremy Wallach - Bowling Green University

04L:1. Thursday, 4:00 PM.
Barulho and Belonging: Noise, Tradition, and Creolized Auralities in Mindelo
Martin Ringsmut - University of Vienna

This paper explores the notion of barulho (noise) in Mindelo, São Vicente, Cabo Verde, as a contested sonic category shaped by colonial legacies and contemporary spatial politics. While scholarship von Cabo Verdean music has predominantly centered genres framed as "tradition"—such as morna, coladeira, batuku, and funaná—this paper turns to two practices that are frequently relegated to the domain of barulho: Kolá San Jon and Heavy Metal in Mindelo. In

local discourse, barulho often contrasts with ideas of heritage and respectability, implying that excessive loudness, distortion, and percussive intensity fall outside the bounds of legitimate tradition. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research, I examine how Kolá San Jon's processional drumming and Heavy Metal's amplified rehearsals and concerts are regulated, spatially contained, and at times morally condemned. Building on Camal's (2019) concept of "creolized auralities," I argue that both forms articulate alternative modes of sonic belonging that unsettle inherited hierarchies of civility and musical value rooted in colonial governance. Historically, African-derived expressive forms were disciplined through spatial restriction and discourses of disorder; contemporary debates over volume, amplification, and public festivity echo these earlier regimes. Finally, this paper conceptualizes barulho as a relational category through which race, class, and postcolonial modernity are negotiated. By juxtaposing these two genres, I demonstrate how creolized aural practices challenge dominant auditory regimes and reconfigure urban space through sound. In doing so, the paper contributes to ethnomusicological discussions on sound, power, and the afterlives of colonialism in the Atlantic.

04L:2. Thursday, 4:30 PM.

"Closer to God": Nine Inch Nails and the Popular Allure of the Abject

Julia Peters - University of Pennsylvania

This paper explores the popular allure of the abject in the music of the industrial rock band Nine Inch Nails, specifically in the song "Closer" and its accompanying music video. Julia Kristeva defined the abject as the material result of bodily waste separated from the body, like vomit, excrement, and blood, which causes simultaneous disgust and intrigue in the subject who experiences it. While the genre of industrial music as a whole often contains explicit references to Kristeva, Georges Bataille, and other philosophers who have written about the abject, Nine Inch Nails was the first to receive worldwide radio and television play without compromising on grotesque imagery, including visuals and lyrics running the gamut from sadomasochistic sex to suicide. This paper probes the public's hidden desires and fascination with the abject through the band's most popular single, "Closer," and how that fascination aided in catapulting the band to stardom. In tandem, I situate the band's cult following in a countercultural movement that felt abjected–expunged, alienated, sequestered–from the rest of society and how identification with the extreme and disturbing lyrical imagery allowed them to band together as outcasts. Using ethnographic and theoretical methodologies, I explore the abject's ability to both unify and divide, and how that mirrors its dual nature as alluring and repulsive.

05A. Friday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Indigenous Musical Resistance and Representation

Maxwell Yamane; Kimberly Cannady; Yui Tim Timothy Yu; Jonah Francese - University of Oklahoma; Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington; Florida State University; University of Chicago
Chair(s): Maxwell Yamane - University of Oklahoma

05A:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

"Hail to the Redhawks": Sounding Against Native American Stereotypes in the Washington Football Team

Maxwell Yamane - University of Oklahoma

Sports have been a major American cultural arena for displaying Native American stereotypes. Central to debates about Native mascotry, the so-called Washington "R**skins" maintained the racial slur and logo for almost a century. Native scholars, activists, and Tribal leaders have fervently called for a change in the name for decades. In particular, protests have been important in sounding dissent against Native stereotypes in the home football team of Washington, D.C. My paper provides a close listening to three key sonic moments of Native performers and powwow singers at Washington football games: 1) the 2017 protest led by D.C.-based Northern Drum group, the UpTown Boyz, at the Washington team's home stadium; 2) the 2020 celebration by UpTown Boyz at the R.F.K Memorial Stadium when the team changed its name; and 3) the 1977 "unexpected" (Deloria 2004) half-time show by an all-Native marching band directed by Louis Ballard (Quapaw/Cherokee). Based on fieldwork and historical research, I show how these performances sonically assert Indigeneity in settler colonial spaces designed to erase it. Deriving from Mapuche sound scholar Luis Carcamo-Huechante's (2025) concept of "interference," I argue that these sonic acts of interference disrupted the settler colonial soundscape of the Washington team. This paper contributes to interdisciplinary dialogues in ethnomusicology, sound

studies, and Native American and Indigenous studies by demonstrating how Native performers strategically and sonically disrupt stereotypes in the American cultural realm of sports. This paper also suggests that music and sound scholars should closely examine sports as sonic sites that (re)produce settler colonialism.

05A:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

Poisoned Fish: Aotearoa's Indigenous Gothic Popular Music

Kimberly Cannady - Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington

Over the past twenty years, a sense of the gothic has emerged in the popular music of Aotearoa, especially in music associated with genres such as alt-country, Americana, and indie-folk. Gothic sensibilities come through in the sounds of the music, the visuals, and the marketing, such as NZ indie label Flying Nun Records' advertising of Erny Belle's (Ngāpuhi) 2022 debut album, Venus Is Home, as "a showcase of gothic Pacific storytelling." The use of the voice also adds a specific uncanny quality to the music, where the vocality is often mismatched with the lyrical darkness, such as Erny Belle calmly crooning about poisoned fish and nuclear annihilation or Marlon Williams crooning about passing away alone in the ocean. In this paper, I explore this sense of the musical gothic in recent albums by a range of musicians and argue that this music challenges dominant narratives of Aotearoa and the wider Pacific as paradise. References to environmental decay, ancestral disconnect, economic hardship, and senses of dislocation and loss mix with emotions of love and longing in much of this music. This discussion highlights the ongoing effects of colonialism and displacement and positions popular music as a vital form of expression in our Indigenous context. Through long-term research in Aotearoa, including discussions with musicians and other music industry contributors, attendance at local performances, as well as historical research in local archives, I explore new ways of understanding Pacific popular music through an Indigenous gothic lens.

05A:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Gendered, Exoticized, and Marginalized: Musical Imaginaries of Alaskan Natives in the Early-Twentieth Century United States

Yui Tim Timothy Yu - Florida State University

Facing the crisis of the "closing of the frontier" in the American West in 1890, historians such as Frederick Jackson Turner, imbued with the conviction of Manifest Destiny, suggested that the nation look to Alaska as the "new" frontier. Widely regarded as the "Last Frontier" since the Klondike Gold Rush of the late-nineteenth century, serialized dime novels, paintings, and popular sheet music fashioned in the Tin Pan Alley style during the early-twentieth century have perpetuated the frontier myth of Alaska. In this paper, I explore how popular sheet music about Alaska published in the early-twentieth century has gendered, exoticized, and marginalized Indigenous populations in Alaska as part of the frontier myth of Alaska. Using two case studies, "My Gal's an Esquimau" (1904) and "Oogie Oogie Wa Wa" (1922), I argue that composers employ seemingly "innocent" songwriting strategies that depict Alaskan Natives as primitive, hypersexualized objects. Through close examination of the music, lyrics, and visual content of illustrated covers, I highlight the layered and often troubling musical imaginaries of Alaskan Natives by the nation during the early-twentieth century.Drawing from theories of decolonial practices of listening, particularly engaging with Dylan Robinson's concept of "hungry listening" (2020), I situate these two songs, along with early-twentieth century popular sheet music about Alaska, within broader discussions of American imperialism, Indigeneity, and listening positionalities. Ultimately, this paper invites reflection on how studying sonic histories of the American frontier can reveal underlying tensions about "American-ness" and notions of citizenship.

05A:4. Friday, 10:00 AM.

Native Sonic Futures: Sound Back, Sonic Stewardship and the Native Sonic Archive

Jonah Francese - University of Chicago

This presentation looks at the ways in which what I call "Sound Back" brings sonic stewardship to Native communities. My intervention lies in combining Trevor Reed's sonic sovereignty with the Land Back movement, arguing that Sound Back is a growing movement of sonic stewardship. Sound Back encompasses taking up space through Native record labels that assert sovereignty and self-governance, demanding spatial justice by remapping settler geographies and

containments, and remixing/looping recordings that are captives in settler archives. Next, sharing fieldwork from my time in Nuuk, Greenland, I present Inuit owned labels as a model for sound stewardship within the larger movement of new labels being founded in the last five years such as Land Back Records. I then look to my time at the Santa Fe Indian Market as a way to remap settler containments, and my experience in N.Y.C. with Quechua language music as a similar way to resound settler geographies. Finally, I present a conversation I had with Kiowa and Apache trombone player Quinn Carson which interrogates the ways in which he samples and uses citational practices to engage with archival recordings of his ancestors.

05B. Friday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Cosmology, Media, and Sociality: Sound and Music in Orisha-Ifá Religiosity

Michael Birenbaum Quintero; Táíwò Fátósìn Awósọlá; Pablo D. Herrera Veitia; Ahkeel Mestayer; David Font-Navarrete - Boston University; University of Ibadan; Università Ca' Foscari; University of California - Berkeley; Lehman College and CUNY Graduate Center

Chair(s): Pablo D. Herrera Veitia; Michael Birenbaum Quintero - Università Ca' Foscari; Boston University

Music and sounded poetics are integral to the spiritual devotional practices of the Yorùbá-derived Orisha-Ifá tradition, practiced in various forms by millions of devotees located in West Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and beyond. The four presentations comprising this panel reflect on the nature of sound in Orisha-Ifá philosophy, sociality, collective memory, and ritual practice. The first two presentations find, in the body of oral literature of Ifá in its Nigerian and Cuban variants, respectively, a philosophy of sound and an articulation of a sounded cosmology that provides something like a non-Western sound studies. The third intervention describes the ways in which music and sound knit together a social fabric of spiritual kinship through the brotherhood of ritual musicians sworn to the spirit of the drum (Añá) in the context of the migration of Cubans to Mexico, which has a burgeoning local Orisha-Ifá community. The final presentation enquires into the relationship between sound, the ontology of its technological capture through recording, and the affordances and encumbrances of recording for collective memory — the encoding of esoteric knowledge in ritual music, its storage in technologies of recorded sound, and the variety of formal, informal, and illicit archives in which it is deposited and accessed. In all, this panel outlines the functions and theorizations of sound within an emblematic Afro-diasporic spiritual traditions.

05B:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

Toward a Yorùbá Metaphysics of Sound and Music in Ifá Oral Literature

Michael Birenbaum Quintero; Táíwò Fátósìn Awósọlá - Boston University; University of Ibadan

Sound studies has only rarely engaged with metaphysics of sound beyond Western ontologies. This paper aims to outline an ethnotheory of sound in the cosmology of the Yorùbá people of West Africa. We suggest that sound acts as a sacred medium in which humans, non-human nature, divinities, and ancestors are mutually immersed, even when they dwell in otherwise separate realms. We examine how Yorùbá spiritual practice depends on the resonations of voices, musical instruments, and sounding ritual implements — artfully and authoritatively executed and consecrated with the spiritual force of efficacy (àṣẹ) to vibrate through this sacred medium — to enact communication and action in the human and spiritual realms. Drawing on references to sound in Yorùbá divination literature (Odù Ifá) and proverbs, Western and Yorùbá scholarship, and our participant-observation in the use of musical and non-musical sound in Yorùbá spiritual practice, we aim to demonstrate the complexity of Yorùbá theories of sound in three traditional registers: drums and bells, vocal incantations and imprecations, and the non-musical sound of Ifá implements during divination. We conclude with use of traditional sound cosmology in the writings on sound by the composer and intellectual Fẹ́lá Ṣọ́wándé, as a road less traveled for sound studies in comparison with the work of Ṣọ́wándé's near-contemporary Murray Schafer. Beyond the specific Yorùbá case, we hope to offer a model of collaborative intercultural research that takes seriously a non-Western knowledge system as a philosophical tradition.

05B:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

Listening, Non-Listening, and the Musical Cosmology of Afro-Cuban Ifá

Pablo D. Herrera Veitia - Università Ca' Foscari

Sound studies have increasingly turned to multisensorial thinking and "sensory constellations," yet these conversations remain largely anchored in Western ontology. Building on the premise that Yorùbá spiritual practice depends on sound as a sacred medium through which humans, divinities, and ancestors communicate across otherwise separate realms, this paper examines how the criollo (creolized) practice of Ifá divination in Cuba, particularly in the provinces of La Habana and Matanzas, elaborates a complex theory of hearing, listening, and musical practice. Drawing on the Dice Ifá, the most widely circulated Afro-Cuban treatise of the Ifá literary corpus, and conversations with divination priests in Havana, I trace three dimensions of sound within oracular figures. First, I show how the corpus establishes hearing as foundational among the five senses and prescribes listening as the operative capacity of the divination priest, one who must first listen, then interpret, then apply. Second, I explore how hearing constitutes an ethical virtue tied to moral wealth, and consider the implications of non-listening, adapted in Afro-Cuban practice to address the Cuban state's refusal to heed Afro-Cuban demands for social inclusion. Third, I examine the cosmological foundations of music: a deity's pact with four Yorùbá gods of music, and a narrative in which a flautist's rejection and transatlantic displacement dramatize a community's failure to recognize musical and spiritual counsel. The paper proposes that Afro-Cuban Ifá oral literature constitutes an operative acoustemology, a way of knowing and being through sound in which listening and its refusal carry ethical, political, and historical force.

05B:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Race, Immigration, and Spiritual Kinship: Afro-Cuban Sacred Drumming in Mexico

Ahkeel Mestayer - University of California - Berkeley

Cuban migration has been rising over the last several years. Political influences, both foreign and domestic, create a difficult situation for Cubans looking to leave the island. With many countries requiring special visas for Cuban nationals, Cuban musicians are among those who have a higher probability of leaving. International touring circuits have become stop off points with entire ensembles at a time defecting and legally or illegally immigrating. Mexico City has become one of the largest hub Cubans abroad, especially for Cuban folklorists. Afro-Cuban Santería ritual specialists–diviners, priests, drummers, singers, and dancers–have been received by the Mexican Santería community. Drawing on my field work in Mexico with Cuban immigrant communities of omó alañá (term in Santería to refer to those initiated into the cult of the drum, literally: child of the spirit of the drum), I ask: What is the role of Santería religious communities in the immigration process for these Cuban Immigrants in Mexico? How do these networks of Spiritual kinship both undermine and reinforce Mexican nationalist narratives about illegal immigration, blackness, and the "occult"? How do religious drumming ceremonies become sites of negotiation across race, nation, ones that simultaneously include and exclude members of shared spiritual kinship networks?

05B:4. Friday, 10:00 AM.

Afro-Atlantic Art, Tradition, and/or Liturgy: Notes on Orisha Music in the Age of Multimedia

David Font-Navarrete - Lehman College and CUNY Graduate Center

Among innumerable constellations of "sacred arts" traditions in the historical Afro-Atlantic, orisha music has become an especially prominent wellspring of inspiration for devotees, scholars, and artists alike. With roots in West Africa and iconic diasporas in the Americas, orisha songs have become a sort of Afro-centric lingua franca whose global prominence is especially notable, in light of both its prior centuries worth of transnational and multilingual history and its preoccupation with questions of origins, antecedents, and authenticity. This paper reflects on some of the novel, manifold ways that orisha music traditions have been mediated by a transformative century's worth of multimedia technology. In archives ranging from prestigious

institutions to often-motley, relatively-discreet, and sometimes-illicit private collections, the provenance of historical recordings of orisha music takes on a heightened significance. What do we make of the historically-novel repetition, performance, disembodied abstraction, and objectification that is necessarily inherent in the "documentary recording" of

a ritual (musical) act? How do we make sense of the stability and change in a liturgical tradition saturated by recent, ever-changing audiovisual technologies? Three case studies illustrate diverse ways that historical recordings of orisha music, in both sacred and secular contexts, encompass an array of functions (intentional and otherwise). Taken together, the case studies become object lessons in the complex, fluid movements of Afro-Atlantic culture, ostensibly in real-time, between secular and ritual spaces, and in and out of collective memory.

05C. Friday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Listening Beyond Vulnerability: Music, Care, and Resilience

Ailsa Lipscombe; Peng Liu; Chiquitha Aminsalehi; Tes Slominski - University of Cincinnati; Southern Methodist University; University of California, San Francisco; independent scholar

Chair(s): Ailsa Lipscombe - University of Cincinnati

05C:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

Precarity Amplified: Listening to Medicalization through Technology and Trauma

Ailsa Lipscombe - University of Cincinnati

In times of crisis, how is precarity made audible? And how does the amplification of precarious worlds and precarious bodies reinforce assumptions about our embodiments—their sonicities and their fallibilities? Taking these questions as its starting point, this paper investigates the relationship between technology, trauma, and (sonic) medicalization. It frames technological mediation during the ongoing endemic era as both creating medicalized sonic environments and transmitting these acoustemologies to a diverse—and globally dispersed—audience. It further characterizes these mediated acoustemologies as a sonic manifestation of catastrophilia (Svenvold 2005; Roelstraete 2007) and (re-)traumatization (Foster 1996; Seremetakis 2019; Bregman 2021). Weaving together audiovisual media, including news journalism and social media posts, and ethnographic interviews, I clarify how mediated praxes not only circulate specific sounds, but also strengthen particular listening habits that are inflected (or perhaps, infected) by medicalization. I focus on the myriad ways sound has been utilized in reporting during the endemic era to announce and authenticate the crisis at hand, while drawing us affectively into its orbit (Fink 2020; Kristof 2020). In analyzing these techniques of mediation, I also consider how they rely on pre-established assumptions about what affects medicalized sound incites. Thus, what happens when, as one disabled interlocutor asked me, the sounds of our disabled lives are shared via mediated representations, presumed to provoke fear and reveal inhospitable conditions? In reproducing and reinforcing negative interpretations of medicalized sound, what are the consequences for how a non-disabled majority evaluates the quality of a disabled life?

05C:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

From Racialized Vulnerability to Sonic Resistance: Asian American Children and Older Adults in Musical Activism during COVID-19

Peng Liu - Southern Methodist University

During the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-Asian violence in the United States was widely mediated through images of vulnerable bodies—particularly older victims and fearful children. While professional artists such as MC Jin and Jessica Sanchez mobilized music to protest this violence, children and older adults also emerged as musical agents. Expanding scholarship on Asian American musical activism that centers primarily on professional rappers (Shao 2025), I shift attention to children and older adults as agents of sonic resistance. This paper examines two case studies: the all-girl youth punk band the Linda Lindas' shouted anthem "Racist, Sexist Boy" (2021), marked by confrontational, chant-like vocals and distorted guitar riffs, and older Chinese Americans' multilingual community rap "Gai Mou Sou Rap" (2021), delivered through emphatic rhythmic flow while reclaiming the "chicken-feather stick," a symbol of disciplinary authority in Chinese culture. Drawing on Samia Hesni's concept of "social script disruption" (2023), alongside close musical and performance analysis and digital ethnography of online comments and media coverage, I argue that these performances interrupt racialized scripts that cast Asian children and older adults as fragile, passive, or apolitical. This disruption operates through timbral aggression, rhythmic insistence, and embodied gestures—including beat-synchronized body rocking and staged disciplinary gestures—that reconfigure vulnerability as defiance. Audience

responses register surprise, admiration, and collective solidarity, further reinforcing this disruption. By centering age-coded self-voicing, this paper demonstrates how musical performance transforms racialized vulnerability into recognized political agency, offering a framework for understanding the intersection of age, sound, and resistance in Asian America.

05C:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

The potential for faith-based musicking to address dementia risk factors

Chiquitha Aminsalehi - University of California, San Francisco

Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia lead to a syndrome of cognitive and functional decline that ends in death. Health sciences research has identified loneliness and social isolation as major dementia risk factors. Current counseling of older adults includes recommendations for social engagement to mitigate loneliness and social isolation, including a health-focused intervention to increase dementia awareness among Black/African-American faith communities. Ethnomusicological research has identified myriad ways in which the expression of faith through music supports personal well-being and social engagement. Yet the two bodies of knowledge rarely intersect. In this paper, we integrate health sciences and ethnomusicology perspectives in a secondary analysis of a four-year longitudinal ethnography of Pentecostal, Baptist, and non-denominational African-American women in churches in the San Joaquin Valley, California, to show how gospel music performance may reduce loneliness and social isolation. Older women in these congregations used gospel as a central site for demonstrating resilience, forming communal bonds, and enacting perseverance. Gospel musicking served as a form of intergenerational storytelling, spiritual and cultural transmission, and, with continued engagement, a means of reinforcing important memories. As a spiritual resource, gospel musicking supported emotional-well-being, replacing feelings of loneliness with a sense of belonging. We recontextualize these findings within the National Institutes of Health Science of Behavior Change framework to demonstrate the potential for gospel music to function as a dementia risk-reduction strategy and to lay a path forward for studying the impact of faith-based musicking on cognitive health.

05C:4. Friday, 10:00 AM.

Playing with Difference: Neurodiversity-Affirming Approaches to Performance Pedagogy

Tes Slominski - independent scholar

How can insights from neurodiversity-informed pedagogies benefit ensemble leading and individual instruction in musics beyond the Western canon? Ethnomusicologists, music therapists, and music educators have explored the role of music in supporting circumscribed neurodiverse clinical populations (Carrico 2023; Bakan 2014 and 2016), while scholarship on neurodiversity, accessibility, and universal design has tended to focus on teaching outside the realm of performance (Carrico and Grennell 2022; Costa 2026). And although some ensemble directors and instructors have worked to make their performance courses more accessible, they often lack the institutional support (including time and funding for coursework on neurodiversity) that would enable them to ground and share their approaches more widely. Based on International Coaching Federation-accredited training/experience in coaching neurodiverse students and 25+ years of teaching Irish traditional music in academic, ensemble, and lesson contexts, this paper connects practice-based research and scholarship in music, education, and psychology. From a strengths-based and specifically ethnomusicological perspective based on teaching beyond the Western canon, this paper discusses some of the ways ADHD, autism, and other forms of neurodiversity can show up in performance instruction and offers strategies for helping students thrive in our classrooms and studios. This work is part of a larger project on Irish traditional music pedagogy: intended as both a resource for instructors and an intervention in Western music-based teaching approaches, it will join work by Thomas (2025), Dor (2014), Clendinning (2020), and others in articulating the value of so-called "world music" performance instruction in fostering community and critical engagement.

05D. Friday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Archive and Experimentation across Transnational Arab Cultural Geographies

Rim Irscheid; Shayna Silverstein; Sophie Frankford; - Kings College London; Northwestern University; Kings College London;

Chair(s): Shayna Silverstein - Northwestern University

This panel seeks to dislocate the archive from its institutional and written moorings with a focus on transnational Arab cultural geographies. By siting archival matter in ephemeral and natural resources and by locating archival agency and intervention in artistic practices, we reconsider archival processes and scholarship in relation to sensoriality, materiality, and cultural geography. The first paper considers how water becomes an archival formation – a sonic container for memories and stories of those who can no longer speak – while reflecting on Arab diaspora artists' use of archive as a metaphor for institutional power. The second paper examines how archives function in relation to creativity and scholarship by reframing the special collection archives of the sonic experimentalist and composer Halim El Dabh in relation to contemporary sonic artworks and retrospectives inspired by El Dabh. The third paper draws on ethnographic fieldwork in Egypt's Diana Market to conceptualise street markets as archive and everyday practices in the street market as a method that attunes to the material life of musical things. Together, the panel addresses how the notion of archive becomes an object of study, artistic experimentation and drive for collecting personal items and stories that preserve imagined collective and personal histories from the MENA region. We ask the following questions: in what ways do practitioners, collectors and scholars engage with the language and logic of the archive? And what is the role of sensory experience in the formation and distribution of archival stories across different institutional and spatial formations?

05D:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

Water as Archive: Tamara Al-Mashouk's I'd search forever, I want to remember (2023)

Rim Irscheid - Kings College London

How does the natural world around us bear traces of colonial pasts, presents, and futures? Focusing on a water-based installation by London-based visual artist Tamara Al-Mashouk as an alternative archival formation, this paper explores how, in the absence of the human voice, non-human agents perform the memory of those who can no longer speak. In the durational performance I'd search forever, I want to remember (2023), the artist bears witness to 34,361 refugees who died in the sea as an act of solidarity with those who lost their lives in the water while crossing the English Channel. The accompanying installation features a custom-made wave machine using the water of the English Channel. With only the sounds of crushing water accompanying the uncanny presence of large plastic containers that signify unjust silences, Al-Mashouk reminds us of the variety of archival surrogates that make audible traces of the past. As artists diverge from previous romantic depictions of water and colonial oceanic imaginaries in decolonial approaches to archiving (Morse 2022), many foreground the 'archival agency' of water which can witness the impact of human activity on ecological and cultural erasure beyond the realm of the human (Yazzie 2018). Drawing on scholarship on archival interventions in the arts (Van Alphen 2023; von Bismarck 2023), I argue that socially engaged artists strategically use archive as metaphor and leitmotif to challenge anthropocentric methods of archiving and remembering by appealing to spectators' moral values and sensory perception.

05D:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

Archival Play with the "Halim El Dabh Papers"

Shayna Silverstein - Northwestern University

More than eighty years after he experimented with radio technology and produced the world's first electronic music, Halim El Dabh and his oeuvre reverberate as loudly as ever. Between recent retrospective exhibitions, archival dives that inform multimedia sonic installations, and the acquisition of the "Halim El Dabh Papers" by Northwestern University, the Egyptian composer, philosopher, healer, and ethnomusicologist's archives endure as material inspiration for work in sound, memory, and humanistic philosophy. This paper explores Halim El Dabh's archive from two perspectives: direct engagement with the university archival holdings – specifically sketches, manuscripts, and audio recordings of "Osmo-Symbiotic" (1952); and critical engagement with contemporary sound artist Joe Namy's archival research on El Dabh

that yielded sonic installations – specifically "Study for Sonic No. 7 and No. 10" (2021) and "Dub Plants" (2024). These works all address issues of agriculture, plant communication and movement through/as sound, and organic matter. By positioning these archival traces of El Dabh into conversation with one another through existing works (recordings, performances, and written text), this paper opens the broader question of how archives function in relation to creativity and scholarship. What methodological distinctions can we articulate between "practice-as-research" and sonic historiography when working with the same sets of archival materials? How do recordings, performances, and written texts all echo El Dabh's enduring legacy on sound and world-making, especially in relation to organic matter? How does an archive of experimentation become inspiration for further experimentation in ways that unsettle the forms and objects of archival matter?

05D:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Market as Archive / Market as Method: Music and Materiality in Cairo's Used Goods Markets

Sophie Frankford - Kings College London

Much of Egypt's material musical heritage – that is, the physical stuff of musical pasts, from wax cylinders and LPs to ephemera like concert programmes and recording contracts – resides not in official institutional archives, but rather in private hands, being bought and sold via the expansive networks that make up the country's used goods market. Over the past decade, these networks have coalesced around the weekly Diana Market, held every Saturday in downtown Cairo, which attracts increasingly varied crowds of antique enthusiasts, collectors and tourists. Based on ethnographic research with the dealers and collectors who constitute this market, this paper addresses the materiality of music: the 'stuff' of music-making; the labour that goes into its preservation and circulation; and the varied uses to which this material is put. Engaging with scholarship on the sensorial aspects of materiality, in this chapter I listen, look and touch my way through the market. I ask what it means for Egypt's musical pasts to circulate like this, attending to what Howes (2022) calls the 'sensori-social life' of musical things. I contextualise the recent growth of Diana Market within increasing popular interest in 'the archival' as it relates to arts and culture in Egypt and beyond, noting the recent proliferation of projects and sound installations which explicitly engage with this archival impulse. By conceptualising street market as archive and street market as method, this paper argues for the necessity of attending to materiality and the senses when engaging archival objects, sonic and otherwise.

05E. Friday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Ensembles and Classrooms: Musical Knowledge in Practice

Kimberley Watson; Kristin Murrell; Francesca Cassio; Vicki Lu - Indiana University, Bloomington; Port of Spain; Hofstra University, NY; N/A
Chair(s): Francesca Cassio - Hofstra University, NY

05E:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

The Exodus Model: Engineering Legacy and Sustainability in a Trinidadian Steel Orchestra

Kimberley Watson - Indiana University, Bloomington

This paper presents a longitudinal case study of the Exodus Steel Orchestra to theorize the processes of deliberate cultural institution-building within the Trinbagonian steelband tradition. More than a musical ensemble, the steelband or "pan side," of Trinidad and Tobago is a complex social institution through which histories of class, community, and postcolonial nationhood are articulated. Examining Exodus's transformation from its founding in a 1981 schism into a paragon of organizational rigor and artistic innovation, this analysis moves beyond simple chronology to deconstruct the "Exodus model" of sustained success. Drawing on decades of ethnographic engagement, interviews, and archival research, the band's development is traced through four key phases: its disciplined founding under the Mohammed brothers; the symbiotic and highly effective partnership between arranger Pelham Goddard and musical director Desmond Waithe, which produced a signature "orchestral" sound that came to dominate the competitive Panorama arena; the pedagogical engineering of the Exocubs youth program, which ensured robust generational continuity; and the band's role as a proactive cultural curator through initiatives like the Pan Ramajay festival. Exodus's four decades of excellence are not the result of organic community emergence, but of deliberate, interdependent organizational choices.

Four deliberate strategies underpin its success: the professionalization of community management; the fostering of artistic innovation; the engineering of generational continuity through youth pedagogy; and the proactive curation of culture. Through sustained excellence across diverse arenas—from the hyper-competitive Panorama to the classical stage and international cultural diplomacy—Exodus offers a granular perspective on how community-based ensembles can achieve sustainability.

05E:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

Inside the Engine Room: The Social Logistics of Conventional Steelbands in Trinidad and Tobago Panorama

Kristin Murrell - Port of Spain

The Trinidad and Tobago Panorama competition is the world's largest steelpan gathering and one of the most complex annual musical events in Caribbean diasporas. While scholarship often highlights the intricacies of the "Panorama arrangement," the extensive operational efforts required to bring a 60 to 125-member orchestra to the stage are less explored. This paper examines the "social logistics" of conventional steelbands - a steelband in which a pannist can play single or multiple steel drums (Pan Trinbago 2026), positioning the panyard as a center of administrative and community mobilization. Drawing on autoethnographic insights and lived experience (Ellis, C. (2004), I offer an insider analysis of the challenges involved in coordinating both human and physical resources. Building on Thurab (2021), I argue that the "viability of the modern steelband now depends" on developing autonomous income streams and securing tenure, making successful Panorama performances reliant on a sophisticated, often unseen, system of social organization. I analyze four key logistical pillars: managing the logistics for the "panyard-to-Savannah" pipeline, navigating Pan Trinbago's regulatory frameworks, sustaining a volunteer-driven workforce, and delivering a dynamic musical performance. The success of a Panorama set depends on balancing corporate sponsorship with the grassroots energy of the community. By focusing on panyards rather than the stage, this paper demonstrates that the survival of the steelband movement relies on indigenous strategic planning. Ultimately, Panorama logistics are not simply a backdrop to the music but constitute a knowledgeable cultural practice that sustains the social fabric of Steelpan culture in Trinidad and Tobago.

05E:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Sonic Pedagogies for Decolonizing Liberal Arts Education. Introducing the Sikh Musical Heritage in College Curricula.

Francesca Cassio - Hofstra University, NY

Recent scholarship on the decolonization of South Asian Studies (Santos 2014; Mandair 2022; Thomas and Perera 2025) has redefined the field of education through an interdisciplinary lens and an aural turn (Lorea and Hackett 2024; Feld 2024), contributing to the rediscovery of indigenous pedagogies grounded in sonic practices. In line with these approaches, this paper discusses the introduction of interdisciplinary courses into Liberal Arts curricula that engage with Sikh thought through the study of its musical heritage. Enshrined in the Sikh Scripture and oral literature, the Sikh pluriversal vision is based on an ecology of knowledges that, incorporating Bhakti and Sufi voices, is preserved in a body of about 6000 rāga-based songs. On the one hand, listening and singing to these scriptural hymns as oral-aural 'ways of knowing' allow students to experience the role of sung poetry and community practices in the transmission of epistemologies not grounded in the Western canon. On the other hand, these interdisciplinary courses on Sikh musical heritage are an avenue for acknowledging the underestimated role of the Sikh tradition in the history of musics, literatures, and religions of the Indian subcontinent. While the Sikh sonic pedagogy inspires new modes of learning through classes co-taught by faculty and students, with an emphasis on community engagement and experiential knowledge, it also opens a space in the college setting to critically discuss the power dynamics of neocolonial narratives and modern frameworks embedded in liberal arts and music education.

05E:4. Friday, 10:00 AM.

Integrating Chinese Music into Academic Spaces: Pedagogical Insights and Challenges

Vicki Lu - N/A

Chinese immigrants have a deep-rooted history in the United States, notably during the mid-19th century and the California Gold Rush era. Despite this enduring presence, Chinese musicians and their traditions have faced challenges integrating fully into academic musical spaces in the U.S. These obstacles arise from historical biases, cultural barriers, and the limited representation of Chinese music in mainstream music education curricula. Consequently, Chinese music encounters difficulties in gaining recognition and acceptance within academic circles, emphasizing the ongoing necessity for inclusivity and diversity in music education.

The establishment of the first Chinese Music Ensemble at the University of Northern Illinois in the 1970s marked a significant shift, pioneering the advancement of Chinese musical traditions within academia. Subsequently, there has been a noticeable rise in Chinese music ensembles across various universities and music schools in the United States.

Building upon the historical struggles and advancements of Chinese music integration in academic settings in the United States, this paper explores effective pedagogical strategies for teaching Chinese music ensembles. Drawing from my experiences as the director of the University of Georgia's Chinese Music Ensemble in the last two years, I will discuss challenges related to instrumentation, repertoire selection, and community engagement. These challenges stem from historical biases, cultural barriers, and the limited representation of Chinese music in mainstream music education curricula.

05F. Friday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Affective Vitalities: Gendered Voice, Place, and Un/Belonging

Elyse Carter Vosen; Bonnie Gordon; Mana Pouresmaeil; Carol Muller - The College of St. Scholastica; The University of Virginia; The University of Texas at Austin; The University of Pennsylvania
Chair(s): Elyse Carter Vosen; Bonnie Gordon - The College of St. Scholastica; University of Virginia

This panel explores gendered vocal presences as they engage physical, public, ceremonial, mediated, and digital spaces to articulate histories of dispossession, migration, mediation, regulation, and the complexities of re-possession. Our papers examine uses of the voice to reckon with histories of colonization (apartheid), conflict, diaspora, and contemporary regimes of gendered repression. These voices [re]claim connection to people and place, cultivate intimacy/vulnerability, release the voice beyond borders, and create technologies of belonging. Individual papers explore (1) song/dance and deep listening in song circles emerging from American Jewish communal farming, where environmental justice and belonging are constituted through feminist musical practice; (2) shared listening and dance, where teen girls' radio production cultivates technologies of belonging in mother tongue languages for recently arrived Afghan girls in Virginia; (3) AI generated Iranian female voices that interrogate the tension between gains of accessibility through media circulation against potential losses from political repression and risk in the wake of the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement; and (4) invoking song and ceremony to reclaim land and community history and belonging for those who identify as "brown" in post-apartheid South Africa. Together these explorations argue that sounding and listening generate place-based affective vitalities: through shared singing, deep listening, ceremony, and dance they ameliorate fragmentation and suspicion by making community audible. We strive for a feminist understanding of singing and deep listening that treats the voice as relational, and builds community through attunement.

05F:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

Let My People Sing! Gendered Creativity, Song Circles, and Earth-Based Spiritual Practices for Repair and Belonging

Elyse Carter Vosen - The College of St. Scholastica

Since the 1990s, cooperative farming—rooted in many cultural communities—has surged in the U.S., reconnecting food growers to land and community. In this context, new generations of Jewish communal farmers have flourished, reconstructing earth-based spiritual practice grounded in song, meditation, physical labor and intentional community that

grapples with complex relationships to land, politics, and Jewish and gendered identity. Adamah (Hebrew "earth") is a farm fellowship in restorative agriculture, Jewish learning and food justice created in 2003, launching hundreds of Millennial and Gen Z alumni to establish Jewish cooperative farms, environmental programs, and singing circles across the U.S.. Many leaders and songwriters identify as women, gender-fluid, queer, disabled, and people of color, including the founders of Let My People Sing! which gathers in "multi-racial, multicultural and genderful Jewish community," defying voiced and bodily categorization and consciously building new models of belonging. Singing practices grounded in mystical teachings serve as "spiritual technologies" (Schachter-Shalomi, 2012) that strive toward re-enchantment, vulnerability, intimacy and healing through sung Hebrew and Yiddish text and wordless melodies, creative harmonization and dance, emphasizing the "in-between-ness of affect and its grounding…in physical bodies" (Graber and Sumera 2020:5). Through ethnographic interviews and participant observation, this paper explores how these shared singing and spiritual practices nourish connection and drive food and environmental justice movements. It demonstrates how song circles generate feminist strategies of participatory leadership, attuning voice not for the sake of performance, but rather striving for mutual healing, social liberation and community action through song, dance, and embodied listening.

05F:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

Beyond "Amplifying Voices": Radio, Advocacy, and Refugee Girls' Sounding Practices

Bonnie Gordon - The University of Virginia

On February 19, 2024, WXTJ in Charlottesville aired a radio show produced by teenage Afghan girls who DJ in English, Dari, and Pashto. A fourth grader opened in Dari, then shifted to English to introduce "Labkhand Bezan" by Aryana Sayeed, a song she and her sister dance to. By the time the girls produced their second show in fall 2024, the Taliban had issued new legal codes making it illegal for women and girls to speak in public; the female voice is now a sin. I treat these broadcasts as a form of nomadic vocal agency: voices that travel across borders, platforms, and listening publics. I argue that shared listening, dancing, and youth radio production operate as everyday technologies of belonging and place-making. The shows make community audible through laughter, dedication, rhythm, and shared attention. The girls and their mothers participate in Cville Tulips, a program I co-founded with Marjan Omranian in winter 2022. We work with students, faculty, and staff at the University of Virginia to offer culturally responsive English, health education, and youth programming to recently arrived Afghan and Syrian women. Drawing on a quantitative study of belonging and a community-driven project on resilience and mental health (workshops, interviews, participant observation), I ask questions about the relationship between ethnography and advocacy and offer a model for arts-based, community-engaged research that asks how sound can support co-produced knowledge rather than merely "amplifying voices."

05F:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Permissible Voices: AI Singing, Popular Aesthetics, and Gendered Power in Iran

Mana Pouresmaeil - The University of Texas at Austin

AI scholarship often centers on technological capacity, overlooking the political stakes of AI voices in public listening. This paper examines Nava, an AI-generated female singer, as a site where musical aesthetics, digital mediation, and gender politics intersect in contemporary Iranian sound culture. By focusing on Nava's reinterpretation of traditional Iranian melodies, this paper asks: How does AI voice remake familiar melodies into global-pop sensibilities, and what does that remake do to gendered power under Iran's vocal restrictions? Firstly, this paper focuses on musical analysis. Nava's voice avoids ornamentations and has a smooth, compressed pop timbre, moving her singing away from Iranian vocal techniques and reshaping it into a globally recognizable sound. This "de-specialized" style mirrors change in Iranian listening, where global media and algorithms favor immediacy and accessibility over virtuosity and traditional lineage, and reflects a broader turn among young listeners toward platform-trained expectations. Secondly, the paper situates Nava within feminist and cyberfeminist debates on voice, embodiment, and technology. Nava's digitally produced female persona enables forms of legitimacy inaccessible to many Iranian women musicians, particularly in post-"Woman, Life, Freedom" struggles. Framing Nava's voice as religiously permissible by the dominant authority because it is artificial exposes a paradox: Nava becomes permissible precisely because she is disembodied; this mediation expands musical visibility while weakening the political force of women's embodied vocal resistance. By integrating

musical analysis with feminist critiques of AI and embodiment, this paper shows how Nava's voice reshapes Iranian listening cultures and exposes the cultural costs of sonic accessibility.

05F:4. Friday, 10:00 AM.

Brown vs. "Coloured" Song: Indigenous, Gendered Rituals of Restoration in Contemporary South Africa

Carol Muller - The University of Pennsylvania

Labeled "coloured" by the apartheid regime, South African singer songwriter, indigenous healer, and mother, Ernestine Deane identifies as "brown," connecting to the global movement towards indigenous audibility, presence, and ceremony after decades of colonial, segregationist, and apartheid dispossession. "Brown" allows her to embrace her indigenous aboriginal Khoi and San and Zulu mixed with Irish via Anglo Zulu war and missionary migrations, Dutch/ Indonesian/Mozambican (via Dutch East India Company) heritage to write/sing /restore a matrilineal relationship to the land from which her family was forcibly removed. "Constantia" is now one of Cape Town's wealthiest white-owned wine producing suburbs. In 1964 Deane's family was forcibly removed from Constantia to a remote place for "coloureds" called "Grassy Park," on the Cape Flats which was neither grassy nor park. Close to birthing her first child in 2003, Ernestine Deane interrogates the contours of her family's loss in an award-winning documentary film, "Brown" (2005) as a step toward healing the effects of a traumatic apartheid past. Embracing her Khoi and San knowledge/roots, she offers healing ceremonies and sings to extend an invitation for personal and cultural repair. In this paper I focus on Ernestine Deane's contemporary healing ceremonies and songwriting, with its particular approach to voice, timbre, and texture, as a vessel of connection and restoration for her extended family after the severance of their relationship to the unique floral and animal kingdoms of the Western Cape.

05G. Friday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Streets and Soundworlds

Kristen Graves; Upatyaka Dutta; Rachel Horner; Eduardo Herrera - University of Nebraska (Lincoln); University of Toronto; Cornell University; Indiana University
Chair(s): Eduardo Herrera - Indiana University

How do we listen for place? How do the sounds (or silences) of a place shape the experiences and memories that a space can contain? The presenters on this panel ground these questions in the lifeworlds of individual streets, lanes, and plazas, localizing a broader discourse on the tactics (de Certeau 1984), media (Rao 2009), and dynamic flows (Sheringham and Wentworth 2016) of constructed pathways. In doing so, they listen for the aspects of the built environment that become avenues of access for the lived experiences and memories that sound archives, embracing or resisting the transitory nature of streets to trace everyday sonic inscriptions and their echoes. Panelist 1 examines how everyday sounds accumulate on Calle de Progreso, the street bordering a Mexican garbage dump, transforming it into a sonic counter-archive of labor, memory, and collective identity. Panelist 2 explores workday soundscapes of Assam's tea plantation lanes to reveal how Adivasi women pluckers navigate relationships and everyday life within the temporal collapse of plantation pasts and presents. Panelist 3 maps the silences that forge and reinvigorate collective memories of place in the plazas that house the burning of satirical monuments during the Falles Festival of València, Spain. Extending this discourse beyond Mexico, India, and Spain, the panelists invite audience members to participate in small-group discussions between presentations, turning the focus toward the streets that animate attendees' own field sites. The panel culminates in a guided conversation on the intersections between streets, sounds, and senses of place.

05G:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

The Street Holds the Stories: Calle de Progreso as a Community's Sonic Counter-Archive

Kristen Graves - University of Nebraska (Lincoln)

From 1980 to 2022, Los Pepenadores, a labor union in the garbage dump of Oaxaca, Mexico, developed multisensory, embodied sonic practices to locate, collect, and sell recyclable materials, maintain health and safety, and build community. Although the city materially benefited from their work, it never awarded the union a government contract or officially recognized its labor, thereby perpetuating the union's precarity inside and outside the dump. Union families lived for decades on the unnamed road bordering the landfill without electricity or running water. In 2010, when the

union successfully petitioned the city for electricity, it encountered a bureaucratic snag: unnamed streets were ineligible for metered service. In response, union members officially named their shared road Calle de Progreso ("The Street of Progress"). I argue this act of naming was both indicative and declarative; it publicly inscribed what residents had enacted for decades: material, environmental, and collective progress through frontline recycling labor and vibrant community life. As a sonic counter-archive to systemic ignorance, Calle de Progreso stores memory in accumulated everyday acts: footsteps, radios, arguments, and laughter have inscribed the street through audible and remembered sound. Drawing on Michel de Certeau's concept of "pedestrian speech acts" (1984) and Kathleen Millar's notion of "forms of living" (2018), this paper examines working, walking, listening, and sound-making as practices of social and sonic inscription. Understanding Calle de Progreso as a sonic counter-archive demonstrates how everyday sonic practices build collective identity and perform self-representation in contexts of structural power and disregard.

05G:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

Sound Relations Along Plantation Lanes

Upatyaka Dutta - University of Toronto

In Assam's postcolonial tea plantations, lanes running through tea fields are spaces where Adivasi women pluckers—descendants of communities brought to the region as indentured labourers by British colonisers beginning in the nineteenth century—encounter tea estate administrative and managerial staff during their workday. This paper explores the everyday sounds and silences that inhabit these lanes during plucking shifts, weighing breaks, and lunchtime. I argue that these lanes hold heterogeneous sonic co-presences through which relations unfold, and plantation pasts and presents gather in layered temporal encounters. Through sound, I analyse relationalities including Adivasi kinship among women pluckers and administrative staff, friendships among the women, expressions of motherhood, and working relations among labouring, administrative, and managerial staff. I attend to "pyāri gāli" or scoldings of affection directed at labouring Adivasi women; to the songs they sing as brief moments of respite; to their gossip and laughter; and to the silences that settle in when the managerial staff are nearby—alongside other everyday sounds and absences that shape the lanes. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted across three tea plantations in Assam between 2024 and 2026, I situate my analysis within scholarship on listening (Kapchan 2017; Rice 2015), voice (Harkness 2013; Weidman 2008), and the Plantationocene (Baruah 2024). Unlike dominant narratives that frame Adivasis of Assam solely as victims of the plantation system, this paper turns to the soundscapes of the plantation lanes to foreground Adivasi connections to land and their everyday practices of survival and world-making.

05G:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Embers of Memory: Sound and Silence in the Cremà

Rachel Horner - Cornell University

March 20 is said to be the quietest day in València, Spain. Musicians have stowed their instruments, and kids have thrown their last firecrackers. But March 19, the final night of the city's annual Falles Festival, features its own silences, the most palpable of which are those that punctuate the ritual burning of the massive satirical artworks that lend the festival its name. Marking the transition between these collections of silence is the cremà, the fiery process whereby the hundreds of monuments that populate plazas during Falles Week are consumed by cleansing fire. I linger in one such plaza across three festival years (2024, 2025, and 2026) to show how the cremà's silences activate the collective memories essential to the internal and external legibility of the festival. Because it captures the not-yet-disappeared aspects of the outgoing festival year as it prepares for the coming of another, the cremà is a present so laden with the past and future that its present is necessarily an absent-present. Silence becomes the expressive device of this absent-present because it operates through a kaleidoscope of unpredictable, always-plural signifying modes (Smilges 2020), all the while feigning its own non-presence (Ochoa Gautier 2015). Through its cycles of presence and non-presence, silence generates what I call an axis of memory that charts the perceived distance between past, present, and future. This axis molds to the shifting collections of memories that shape participants' relationships with one another, with the festival's practices, and with the festival spaces these practices animate.

05H. Friday, 8:30 AM. Roundtable

John Coltrane and South Africa: A Centennial Meditation

Yonela Mnana - University of Witwatersrand; Nlhanlha Manana, MA - University of Witwatersrand; Salim Washington - UCLA; Nhlanlha Mahlangu - Independent

Chair(s): Maya Cunningham - American University

This roundtable is a Centennial anniversary meditation on John Coltrane's ubiquitous influence on the South African jazz tradition. While his role as an African American cultural icon has been robustly explored by scholars (Bracey, Sanchez, et al, 2014 and Bracey, 2016), his role as a cultural icon in other areas of the Black world has received less attention in ethnomusicological scholarship. This session builds on Feld's (2012) exploration of Coltrane's influence on musicians in Ghana, and Kubik (2017) and Washington's (2012) study of his influence on South African tenor saxophonist Winston Ngozi. An ethnomusicologist/South African Jazz scholar will moderate a dialogue in the first half with four South African jazz musicians. The dialogue between a legendary tenor saxophonist, a leading younger-generation alto saxophonist, a Blue Note Africa recording artist and tenor saxophonist in the younger generation and a celebrated middle-generation South African jazz pianist will explore why Coltrane was positioned by Winston Ngozi as a musical father in his song "Dedication (To Daddy Trane…)," his tremendous influence on the modal aesthetic of South African jazz and its tenor saxophone tradition, as well as their insider perspectives on the cultural, political, spiritual and aesthetic meanings of Coltrane's music to South African jazz musicians, particularly his role as a thought leader of the Black liberation movement with African heritage celebrations in recordings like "Africa/Brass," in relationship to the Anti-Apartheid Freedom Movement. In the second half, attendees will engage with the presenters with questions to further understand Coltrane's impact on South African jazz.

05I. Friday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Digital Music Cultures: Labor, Fandom, and Industry

Kate Galloway; Mira Vuorinen; Uğur Cihat Sakarya CİHAT SAKARYA; Golam Rabbani - Wilfrid Laurier University; Temple University; Trabson University; Toronto Metropolitan University

05I:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

From Glitter to Green: EcoSwifties, Material Culture, and Environmental Responsibility in Taylor Swift Fan Communities

Kate Galloway - Wilfrid Laurier University

Beads from a friendship bracelet scatter across asphalt, catching stadium light before disappearing into the dark. A snowglobe breaks in transit, glitter drifting loose, a tiny storm of permanence and loss. This presentation examines the environmental and ecological dimensions of contemporary Taylor Swift fandom through the emergence of "EcoSwifties"—fans who integrate environmental ethics into their participation in Swiftie culture. Framing fandom as both an ecological and cultural phenomenon, I argue that large-scale pop fandoms generate material, infrastructural, and affective environmental impacts through touring, merchandise production, digital platforms, and fan mobility. Rather than positioning environmental critique as external to fandom, I foreground how ecological concern arises from within fan communities as a form of ethical self-reflexivity. Drawing on mixed-method qualitative research, combining digital ethnography, online discourse analysis, and content analysis of public fan spaces, I examine how EcoSwifties negotiate the moral tension between affective attachment to a beloved artist and unease with the environmental costs of fandom practices. Particular attention is given to merchandise culture—such as vinyl variants, limited-edition drops, and defective goods—as a key site where environmental anxiety, consumer guilt, and ethical experimentation converge. Through anonymized ethnographic vignettes, I show how fans articulate responsibility not through abstention, but through reuse, repair, upcycling, peer education, and forms of "low-impact" participation. Ultimately, the presentation contributes to scholarship on fandom, popular music, and the environmental humanities by demonstrating how fans operate as ecological actors, mediating pleasure, care, and planetary responsibility within highly mediated pop cultures.

05I:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

Branded Postfeminist Intimacies: Music and the Marketization of Romance on TikTok

Mira Vuorinen - Temple University

This paper examines how romantic couples on TikTok use music to create affective, intimate, and marketable representations of heterosexual love, and how these sonic strategies participate in postfeminist constructions of gender, desire, and intimacy. Focusing on three highly visible TikTok couples—Levi Coralynn and William Conrad, Nara and Lucky Smith, and Pookie and Jett Puckett—the study analyzes 18 videos through multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) to examine how music interacts with visual and textual elements to shape romantic self-branding. Drawing on postfeminist media theory (Gill; Banet-Weiser) and the concept of romantic opportunism (Bandinelli), the paper argues that music plays a central ideological role in compressing complex relationships into affectively compelling and commercial narratives of romantic love. Across the cases, the paper presents three key findings: (1) music functions as an affective romantic brand that stabilizes couples' online identities; (2) it supports gendered performances of desire in which women are positioned as primary objects of love; and (3) it blurs boundaries between intimate moments and commercial content. By mobilizing familiar songs, audio trends and memes, and music genres, these couples present romance as both attainable and aspirational, even within sponsored content, aligning intimate life with neoliberal and postfeminist logics of self-branding. The paper contributes to ethnomusicological debates on music, affect, and mediation by demonstrating how sound operates as a form of power and affective labor, naturalizing the commodification of intimacy and framing romantic love as something to be felt, admired, and purchased, reinforcing postfeminist notions of love.

05I:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Algorithmic Infrastructures and Musical Labor in Contemporary Music Scenes

Uğur Cihat Sakarya – Trabzon University

This paper examines artificial intelligence (AI) as a form of infrastructural power that reshapes creativity, sustainability, and labor within contemporary music scenes. Moving beyond approaches that frame AI primarily as a neutral tool for composition and production, the study focuses on AI-mediated platforms, data-driven production environments, and recommendation systems, asking how these infrastructures reorganize the social, material, and symbolic conditions through which music is created, circulated, and valued in everyday musical life. Methodologically, the research combines scene-based analysis with qualitative interpretive perspectives grounded in cultural economy and critical platform studies (Straw 1991; Bennett and Peterson 2004; Hesmondhalgh 2019), tracing how creative agency, authorship, and musical labor are negotiated across human musicians, algorithmic systems, and platform infrastructures. Musical practices shaped within the Turkish context are approached not as a bounded case but as analytical intensifiers that render visible heightened forms of algorithmic visibility, platform dependency, and precarious labor within globally uneven music economies. The paper argues that AI reorganizes collective, affective, and experiential dimensions of musical work while redistributing value and recognition, thereby functioning as a regulatory infrastructure that contributes to the reproduction yet also the potential transformation of inequalities across global music worlds (Zuboff 2019; Couldry and Mejias 2019). By foregrounding lived musical experience alongside technological structures, the study contributes to ethnomusicological debates on creativity, labor, sustainability, and power in contemporary music.

05I:4. Friday, 10:00 AM.

From Nana–Nati to Streaming Metrics: Contemporary Gombhira Gaan as Industry Critique in Bangladesh

Golam Rabbani - Toronto Metropolitan University

Contemporary Gombhira Gaan, a satirical song theatre tradition associated with Chapai Nawabganj and performed through the dialogic pairing of nana–nati (grandfather–grandson), has long operated as a vernacular public sphere where moral commentary is staged through humor, parody, and topicality. Das (2021) argues that Gambhira's protest poetics convert everyday injustice into performable critique, and I extend his insight to the political economy of music-making under contemporary cultural capitalism. Farjana (2022) shows how Gombhira's humorous address binds entertainment to ethical counsel, and I ask what happens when that counsel targets the institutions that broker musical value in

Bangladesh. Drawing on performance ethnography in festival contexts, lyric and discourse analysis, and digital ethnography of video clips, this paper traces how Gombhira ensembles narrate and mock Bangladesh's music industries and their Dhaka infrastructures. Performers render the work of intermediaries, including commissioning politics, gatekeeping in broadcast and live circuits, platform-driven visibility, and the problem of piracy and unpaid royalties, as UNESCO Dhaka documents in its sector mapping. Rather than treating folk and industry as separate domains, I show how contemporary Gombhira collapses them. The stage becomes a site where supply-chain logics are debated, rural mobility to metropolitan markets is evaluated, and revenue opacity is named as a failure. The paper contributes to debates on mediation and cultural policy by proposing Gombhira as a form of industry critique that travels across stages and smartphones while remaining anchored in satire's ethical grammar of shame, laughter, and counsel.

05J. Friday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Global Music Theory: Interrogating Musical Paradigms, Histories, and Soundworlds

Ayesha Sheth; Kenneth Van Dyk; Tiffany Nicely; Dylan Rodgers - Ahmedabad University; University of Connecticut; SUNY Fredonia; Los Angeles, CA

Chair(s): Tiffany Nicely - SUNY Fredonia

05J:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

Where Is *Raga* Born? Origin, Soundworlds, and Ksemakarna's *Ragotpatti*

Ayesha Sheth - Ahmedabad University

This paper examines the unusual ragotpatti (origin of raga) section of Ksemakarna's Ragamala (1570), in which each raga is said to originate from a specific sound of the animate or inanimate world—from birdsong and animal calls to the noises of everyday labour. While art historians have analysed these verses for their influence on the ragamala painting tradition, their music-theoretical implications remain largely unexplored. Modern scholarship on raga has often characterised elements such as time and season associations, and visual and aesthetic embodiments, as "extra-musical," peripheral to raga grammar and performance. Through a close reading of sonic analogy in earlier sangitasastra (technical treatises on music), this paper investigates the musicological function of these origin sounds. By examining how premodern theorists mobilised so-called "extra-musical" material to conceptualise raga, the paper argues that such sounds were not peripheral but central epistemic devices within premodern raga theory. For ethnomusicology, this case study invites a reconsideration of raga theory not as a bounded sonic object reducible to tonal structure, but as a form of acoustemological knowledge that embedded musical identity within ecological, visual, and social worlds.

05J:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

Gatra: How the West Influences through Analogy

Kenneth Van Dyk - University of Connecticut

In the music theory and performance of Javanese gamelan music, gatra is an important concept for measuring time and governing interactions within an ensemble. Despite its importance, definitions of the term vary over whether it is a metrical unit inhabited by melody or a unit of melody with specific metric characteristics. Due to metric emphases on the second and fourth beats, Western scholars describe gatra as essentially the reverse of a Western 4/4 measure (Perlman 2004, Pickvance 2005). This treatment of gatra as a metric unit stands in opposition to how Javanese scholars describe it as both melodic and metric (Sumarsam 1995/2023, Supanggah 2004). This paper argues that the analogy between gatra and Western measures caused the definition of the term to shift, resulting in the current divide. To demonstrate this, I trace the term's usage from its origins in the Indonesian nationalist movement through its shift in twentieth-century scholarship. Gatra, originally used both melodically and metrically, gained an analogy with measures which obscured its melodic definition in favor of an easily understandable description for Western audiences. Scholars read Sumarsam's (1995) critique of using gatra to describe the act of composition as a critique of its melodic definition, which contributed to the unpopularity of this usage despite Sumarsam's own support of it. By examining this history, this paper reveals how cross-cultural analogies have the potential to influence the music theory of non-Western traditions by causing concepts to shift in definition to better fit Western frameworks.

05J:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Interval Paradigms and Voice Leading in Guinean Mande *Bala* Music

Tiffany Nicely - SUNY Fredonia

This paper investigates the construction of accompaniment patterns in Guinean Mande polyphonic bala music, as a means of understanding the structural intervallic foundations of this improvisatory genre. As accompaniment patterns form the backdrop for songs and more elaborate improvisation, understanding their characteristic combinations of intervals and rhythms is essential to an overview of their systemic use. This paper focuses on intervals rather than specific pitches, as this is a modal system whose instruments, although nowadays commonly tuned to a C-major scale, were historically equiheptatonic.

In Mande bala traditions of Guinea, a soloist improvises over one to several supporting parts. As these musical lines layer and interlock, they create what I call interval paradigms, a backdrop of interval patterns that establishes a context for the lead player and/or supports a singer. My analysis of more than twenty bala pieces created by six master players, where each piece consists of at least three accompaniment patterns, often also including sample runs and songs, reveals four types of recurring interval paradigms. These range from extremely simple, where only one note changes from one collection to another, to neighbor-tone dyads, to more complex changes.

My analysis builds on the work of scholars including Eric Charry, whose analysis invokes such concepts as "harmony" and "tonic," as well as Joe Luther Williams, whose transcriptions provide additional sources to the dozens of patterns included in this analysis that I learned from master bala player N'Camara Abou Sylla.

05J:4. Friday, 10:00 AM.

In Tune with What? Microtonal Guitar Culture and the Unraveling of "In Tune-ness"

Dylan Rodgers - Los Angeles, CA

Since the emergence of 12-tone equal temperament (12-TET) in early modern Europe, proponents of 12-TET have pointed to the guitar and other fretted instruments as evidence that equal temperament represents not only a theoretical compromise, but a practical necessity. Such theorists have suggested that fretted instruments must rely on 12-TET in order to diminish the dissonances of historical tuning systems and enable consonant playability in all major and minor keys. Thus, for centuries, the guitar and similarly fretted instruments have been considered to be inextricably linked to the theoretical structure of 12-TET. Although 12-TET has achieved hegemony in the modern era (at the expense of historical, alternative and global systems of tuning and temperament), there persists a niche subculture of guitarists who will not so simply acquiesce to this theoretical ubiquity.

This paper explores the many ways in which contemporary guitarists have sought to reject the predominance of 12-TET by way of organological modification. Based on interviews with instrument builders and "microtonal" guitarists, this study examines how, in their pursuit of intonational idiosyncrasy, such instrumentalists have repositioned the concept of "in tune-ness" as a value that is negotiated through community discourse, craft knowledge and performance practices. In foregrounding these interventions, this study emphasizes that "in tune-ness" is not simply an inherited epistemological framework, but, instead, is a socio-cultural construction that remains ever evolving.

05K. Friday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Unquiet Archives: Sound, Silence, and Contested Memories

Laura Risk; Kirsta Stapelfeldt; Bennett Steinburg; Michael Broussard; Bryan Le; Jason Nguyen - University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign; CUNY Hunter; Cerritos College
Chair(s): Jason Nguyen - Cerritos College

05K:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

Collaboration in Practice: Partnering with Digital Scholarship Librarians to Build a Community-Centered Traditional Music Archive

Laura Risk; Kirsta Stapelfeldt; Bennett Steinburg - University of Toronto

How can working across disciplinary boundaries increase digital access to, and community engagement with, audiovisual archives? This paper, co-authored by a musicologist and two librarians, argues that multifaceted transdisciplinary collaborations can support sustainable research infrastructures that themselves serve multiple purposes. We describe the creation of a bilingual open access online portal and digital archive to provide curated access to the Fonds Jean Trudel (150+ hours of audio/video, 2000+ digital objects) and propose faculty-library collaboration as a means of working within university structures to create meaningful and sustained community engagement with archives. Following Barwick (2019), who distinguishes between archivists, end users, and "knowledge holders," where the latter are deeply embedded in the community with which an archive is associated, we argue that a musicology-library partnership has created the necessary infrastructure for the musicologist to move beyond preservation, organization, and documentation to community-oriented transmission and dissemination, or what Seeger and Chaudhuri (2015) call the "collaborative archiving of community traditions" (25). The Fonds Jean Trudel ensures the long-term preservation and accessibility of a faculty member's research, embeds experiential learning for information students, expands multilingual and audiovisual capacity within the library's shared Islandora-based infrastructure, and strengthens partnerships with allied memory institutions to sustain the circulation of carefully curated, human-produced knowledge (Rothman 2024). These outcomes support the mandate of the library (Lankes 2011; Kisilowska-Szurmińska et al. 2024)

05K:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

"Come in Through the Back Door: Archives, Oral Histories, and Heritage Negotiation at the Louisiana Music Museum"

Michael Broussard - University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

In 2028, the Louisiana Music Museum is expected to open to the public in downtown Lafayette, Louisiana. According to their vision statement, the museum seeks to stand "as a testament to the rhythms and harmonies that resonate within the history of our state, from Indigenous roots to the globally-connected present." Towards this vision, the second story will feature a functional dance floor meant to emulate regional dance hall venues, once popular communal sites fundamental to local social life throughout the twentieth century. Importantly, histories and memories of these spaces have been largely transmitted through oral traditions, which have since been collected and mediated through archival institutions. Drawing from contemporary theories in heritage studies, I consider the interconnection of sound, dance, and oral history in heritage construction processes. I am interested in how sound and dance is integral to remembering dance hall experiences and how it facilitates the negotiation of local heritages in relation to senses of (un)belonging. Through archival research in the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Center for Louisiana Studies and interviews with local heritage authorities linked to the Louisiana Music Museum, I explore the ways in which archival mediation and museum re-presentation of oral histories contribute to reactivating the sociocultural significance of dance hall life in the public imaginary. My research seeks to weave together theoretical insights from heritage studies with ethnomusicological methods, developing a framework for understanding how individuals, as parts of larger multivocal community networks, engage with sound as a mode of heritage negotiation.

05K:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

***Mùi*, *Sến*, and the "Bolero Wave": State Censorship, Cultural Memory, and the Resurgence of a Vietnamese Musical Repertoire**

Jason Nguyen - Cerritos College

In post-Renovation ("Đổi Mới") Vietnam, the "Bolero Wave" represents the public resurgence of pre-1975 South Vietnamese popular music—a repertoire historically marginalized by state pressure and pejoratively labeled "yellow music" (nhạc vàng) against North Vietnam's revolutionary "red music" (nhạc đỏ). Focusing on the 2000s to the late 2010s, this paper examines how "bolero" evolved from a rhythmic descriptor into a depoliticized signifier facilitating this

music's re-entry into the official public sphere. Rapidly expanding to absorb interconnected local genres, the term's use culminated in mainstream phenomena like the show Bolero Idol (Thần Tượng Bolero, 2016). By mapping conceptual overlaps between bolero and diverse local categories—romantic nhạc trữ tình ("music conveying emotion"), pastoral nhạc quê hương ("homeland/countryside music"), and repertoires simultaneously praised as mùi (pungent) and disparaged as sến (maudlin)—this study reveals genre-making as a complex process of cultural negotiation. Musically, Vietnamese bolero mediates between Latin American rhythms signalling cosmopolitanism and the provincial aesthetics of southern traditional genres (e.g. cải lương). Discursively, adopting the "bolero" moniker eases the genre away from politically fraught wartime repertoires in favor of apolitical romanticism. This shift transforms a stigmatized, southern artifact into a pan-Vietnamese popular tradition, a reorientation I argue is embodied in the divergent performance styles of two prominent vocalists: southern-born Đàm Vĩnh Hưng and northern-born Lệ Quyên. Ultimately, this presentation highlights musical nomenclature and aesthetics as strategic tools for historical reclamation, offering ethnomusicological insights into how post-conflict societies navigate censorship, rehabilitate marginalized archives, and leverage genre to reshape cultural memory.

05L. Friday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Across and Beyond Coloniality: What Do Ethnomusicologists Get to Say?

Diane Oliva; Sergio Ospina-Romero; Jessica Swanston Baker; Olimpia Rosenthal - University of Michigan; Indiana University; The University of Chicago; Indiana University
Chair(s): Sergio Ospina-Romero - Indiana University

This panel interrogates the notion of coloniality in music scholarship. For many centuries, imperial interventions and colonial maneuvers have played a decisive role in shaping transcultural scenarios and cultural practices (including music making) around the world. However, an overreliance on coloniality as a totalizing narrative has usually come at the expense of neglecting not only other material and social processes but the convoluted agency of colonial subjects. Building on the work of Caribbean and Latin American decolonial thinkers like Sylvia Wynter and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui but also on Myriam Chancy's idea that colonial subjects are more than what coloniality has made of them, the panelists reflect on these questions from the vantage point of their own research projects: To what extent do the "colonial" or the "postcolonial" continue to be relevant intellectual frameworks? What kind of musical facets become more or less legible when accounted from narratives grounded on colonial histories? Has the notion of coloniality been limiting or misleading when applied to diasporic scenarios? What kind of contradictions come to the fore when considering the perspective of Black, Latin American, and Caribbean scholars regarding "coloniality"? The first speaker questions whether the early colonial era was as coherent as the framework of coloniality assumes. The second speaker examines the imperial character of the sound recording industry in the early twentieth century. The third speaker turns to Anglophone Caribbean music and critical Black studies to argue that while coloniality remains useful, antiblackness reveals its limits as an account of the present.

05L:1. Friday, 8:30 AM.

What Persists? Questioning Colonial Coherence from the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World

Diane Oliva - University of Michigan

This paper approaches coloniality from the eighteenth-century Spanish colonial world, questioning whether colonial structures were ever as stable or totalizing as frameworks of persistence assume. Working with Peruvian earthquake devotions that circulated to Spain and eventually shaped European sacred music, I examine the ways "colonial power" was profoundly unstable. In this case study, colonial subjects developed epistemological frameworks for understanding earthquakes through embodied sound and sensation, which Spanish authorities later extracted and naturalized. This process, however, was scattered, contradictory, and incomplete. The archival record itself performs these instabilities: it reveals colonial subjects creating knowledge while simultaneously obscuring the practices it claims to preserve. If colonial paradigms were themselves contradictory and incomplete in the eighteenth-century, what does their twentieth-century invocation actually mean? This raises questions for how we theorize coloniality. If colonial structures were

fragmentary rather than totalizing, what exactly persists into the postcolonial present? Does the framework paradoxically universalize and stabilize what was historically contested? And do different archival formations across fields demand different frameworks rather than unified "coloniality"? Building on Myriam Chancy's insight that colonial subjects were more than what coloniality made of them, I argue this was true even during the colonial period itself. Centering subjects' inventive practices may require moving beyond coloniality's emphasis on structural persistence toward frameworks that can hold both constraint and creativity, extraction and excess.

05L:2. Friday, 9:00 AM.

On the Interchangeability (or not) of Imperialism and Colonialism: A Look from the Early Sound Recording Industry

Sergio Ospina-Romero - Indiana University

The globalization of recorded sound at the turn of the twentieth century took place in tandem with a rekindling of imperial ventures across the Global South. As a matter of fact, the transnational outreach of sound recording businesses from North America and Europe was often facilitated by the (neo)colonial interventions of the United States, Britain, Germany, and France in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia. The opposite was also true. In the wake of the Great War, these nations often capitalized on the mercantile advancement of those and other businesses, in an intricate entanglement of commercial and political imperialism. By focusing on the interventions of sound recording corporations from the Global North in Latin America and the Caribbean during the acoustic era (1877-1925), in this paper I discuss the relevance and limitations of the notion of coloniality to account for the cultural and political factors that informed the dawn of the modern entertainment industry in the region. Expanding upon the ideas of Anibal Quijano and Kyle Levine, I argue that the sound-capturing operations of Victor, Columbia, Odeón, Pathé and other businesses belong to the same matrix of colonial extractivism that informed the interventions of metropolitan corporations in pursuit of natural resources. At the same time, however, the imperial theater of early twenty-century global capitalism reveals multiple layers of agency, action, and materiality in which their colonial contours were inevitably shaped by libidinal economies, consumer culture, and all kinds of battles in the arena of cultural autonomy.

05L:3. Friday, 9:30 AM.

Coloniality and the Event of Musical Antiblackness

Jessica Swanston Baker - The University of Chicago

This paper draws on work in critical Black studies to reconsider the utility of coloniality and decoloniality as organizing frames for music scholarship. Latin American scholarship on coloniality has shown how race organizes the modern world, but it has not always specified antiblackness as the ontological force at stake. Critical Black studies, by contrast, insists that antiblackness is not simply one effect of colonial rule but one of its initiating conditions. This paper considers how coloniality functions within Anglophone Caribbean music scholarship as shorthand for naming structures of injury and contradiction. While the term helps mark the afterlives of empire, I argue that it occludes antiblackness, which continually reorganizes distinctions between the proper and the improper and the legitimate and the disposable. Turning to sonic practices of the Anglophone Caribbean, I argue that musical genres dismissed in public discourse as vulgar or fast are not only evidence of colonial residue. They are sites where antiblack classification is actively produced in the present. Following Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, I understand antiblackness as an iterative system whose limits are recalibrated. The policing of musical speed, propriety, national culture, and embarrassment is one such recalibration. At the same time, these musics are apprehended through registers of intensity such as tempo, drive, density, and repetition that exceed the taxonomic distinctions used to contain them. What would it mean to resist easy decolonial optimism while still attending to the potentials of these musics?

06B. Friday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Repositioning Japanese Musical Subcultures

Stephen Tian-You Ai; Christina Misaki Nikitin; Wei Lin Tan - Harvard University; Harvard University; University of California, Berkeley

Chair(s): Marié Abe - University of California, Berkeley

Since the postwar period, Japan has seen the emergence of a wide variety of niche sabukaru ("subcultures")—from anime to visual kei to lolita fashion—with many gaining wide global appeal. Despite the abundance of scholarship investigating these scenes, the structural distinctions between sub- and mainstream culture are often glossed over. This panel complicates meanings bound in the prefixial function of "sub-," exploring alternative positionalities other than those simply under, below, or less than a relative entity. While EuroAmerican discourse typically frames subcultures as oppositional, marginalized, or subordinate to a dominant culture, Japanese iterations of sabukaru have historically positioned themselves removed from, even indifferent to, such power struggles (Yoda 2000). Sabukaru participants repurpose mainstream culture through localized theorization and place-making, reconfiguring hegemonic social orders into relations of alternativity (Thornton 1997). Music, as both representation and enactment of sociality, provides a vantage point from which to explore such processes. In interfacing studies on the production of space and place (Lefebvre 1974) with ethnomusicological perspectives concerning the circulation of affect in musical practices (Abe 2018; Garcia-Mispireta 2023), this panel delves into the underlying affective economies that dissolve, at times intensify, the sticky thresholds between sounds, bodies, and venues. We present case studies on sabukaru formation through musical collectivity in anikura (anime song nightclub) venues, queer cosplay events, and noise music performances, and reframe sabukaru participants from mere ethnographic subjects to active producers of musical knowledge. In doing so, this panel contributes to broader conversations in ethnomusicology concerning subaltern musicking, microgenre formation, and musical affect.

06B:1. Friday, 10:45 AM.

Anikura's Database Intimacy: Remix, Beats, and Tactility

Stephen Tian-You Ai - Harvard University

This paper investigates how tactile vibrational sensations on the dancefloor of anikura (anime nightclubs)—nightclubs that spin records of anison (anime songs)—give rise to a sense of utopian collectivity despite relative anonymity and asociality. While anison has often functioned to forge social cohesion amongst anime fans, anikura scenes express postmodern aesthetics (i.e. remix, parody) that place it askew from past practices, including the karaoke boom of the 1970s that formed the anison meta-genre (Kitaba and Drexler 2024). Anikura DJs, in their beatmatching of anison from diverse musical genres and tempi, expose the overwhelming formal regularity of anison's song structure (Nazare 2025), an abridged verse–chorus form containing a single verse–chorus unit (Temperley 2018) that begins with a timbrally bright and texturally busy "call" (Nazare 2023). In doing so, they render the "database" (Azuma 2009)—a deep-level repository of elements used to fashion endless variations and products—behind anison's creation sensible as vibration, namely, as a consistent club dance beat. Drawing from Luis Manuel Garcia-Mispireta's concept of "sonic tactility" (2023)—the capacity for beats at low frequencies and high amplitudes to be felt by the skin, flesh, and bones—I argue that it is through the "touching" of this sonified database that listeners' entrained social boundaries and barriers to physical touch are disturbed, providing opportunities for the formation of an "inchoate sociality." To this end, I draw on fieldwork conducted at MOGRA Akihabara, Tokyo's foremost anikura, focusing on performances of database touching: gestures, heightened dancing, vocal exclamations, and displays of character merchandise.

06B:2. Friday, 11:15 AM.

The Lesbian Erotics of Cosplay: Musicking in Women Otaku Counterpublics

Christina Misaki Nikitin - Harvard University

In Tokyo's gayborhood of Shinjuku Ni-chōme, the lesbian nightlife cosplay event "Diamond Cutter Anison Night" serves as a subcultural haven for women otaku fans of anime, gaming, Vocaloid, and VTubers. In this women-only sanctuary, cosplayers belt anime anthems, dance synchronized penlight routines, and stage homoerotic scene

reinterpretations, all while inhabiting the physical and affective registers of fictional characters. Although scholars frequently liken cosplay to drag for its capacity to denaturalize gender (Lamerichs 2011), I argue that it extends beyond a performative subversion of individual identity. Instead, cosplay entails a collective practice that disintegrates hegemonic boundaries not only of gender and sexuality, but of selfhood itself. By performing live, embodied reenactments of virtual personas, women cosplayers displace cisheterosexist norms and actively reimagine their relationalities as—and in-between—character and self. This paper presents "Diamond Cutter Anison Night" as a queer counterpublic where fan-reappropriated narratives and homosocial musicking engender alternative socialities across the lesbian continuum (Rich 1980). Bridging ethnomusicological scholarship on queer collectivity (Hayes 2010; Tongson 2018; Garcia-Mispireta 2023) with Japanese studies of women otaku subcultures (Mizoguchi 2007; Saito 2011), I explore the affective interplay through which women otaku reconfigure virtual relationships into conduits for lesbian world-making. Through song, dance, and touch, women cosplayers engage "an erotic in female terms" (Lorde 1978), sharing pleasure in the sticky disintegration of barriers dividing cosplayer and character, flesh and figure, reality and fantasy. Drawing on participant-observation, interviews, and autoethnographic insights, I examine how these subcultural musicking practices envision alternative modes of intimacy, belonging, and kinship.

06B:3. Friday, 11:45 AM.

Spirit Prison: Linekraft's Theory and Practice of Affective Blockage through Noise

Wei Lin Tan - University of California, Berkeley

It is tempting to read the sensory overload of noise music as a catalyst for affective circulation and the formation of subcultural collectivities. This paper tells a different story from the perspective of the theory and practice of Okubo Masahiko, the sole member of the noise/industrial music project Linekraft. Drawing on recorded music, published interviews, performance videos, and my experience of a Linekraft performance live, I place Okubo in conversation with the major tendency of affect theory towards expansiveness beyond individual subjectivity (Gregg and Seigworth 2010; Massumi 2002). I argue that Okubo envisions an alternative affect theory premised on blockage, which is meant to preserve the individual from its reassembly into collectivity. Okubo's theory primarily serves to resist the integration of human bodies into the circulation of desire under consumer capitalism. Noise is deployed in Linekraft's recordings and performances not as a plane of shared affect into which subjectivities dissolve, but as a barrier against which individuals are compelled to intensify their subjectivity. Linekraft's noise can thus be interpreted as an explication of the sensorial and psychic pressure exerted within the space of capitalism. Such explication sharpens the contours between zones of circulation and non-circulation. The latter, delimited by the human body, would be what Okubo calls a "spirit prison". An attention to Linekraft as a negative theorist of affect and collectivity therefore illuminates the irreducible tension between individuality and collectivity in subcultural scenes, thus raising the question concerning the relevance of the individual in supraindividual assemblages.

06C. Friday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

AfroAlt: Theorizing on Blackness, Space, and Place in Popular Music

Taylor Howard; Xaria Siplin - University of Colorado Boulder; University of Denver
Chair(s): Maureen Mahon - New York University

This panel investigates the "alternative" creative expressions of Blackness in popular music genres and fandoms that have been designated as "not traditionally Black" in the public eye. "Alternative" encompasses the spectrum of Black expression that exists outside of the most popularized and accepted presentations of Blackness. We not only discuss white audience perceptions of Blackness in music, we also synthesize Black voices into our theoretical analyses. Black audience perceptions of "non-Black" genres can highlight the gaps in representation and the resulting consequences caused by the global and domestic music industries. Presenter 1 analyzes how Rico Nasty uses screaming, a hardcore and emo sonic aesthetic, to challenge a gendered and racialized hegemony seen in hip hop and emo to validate the identities and experiences of Black Alt participants. Presenter 2 theorizes that the adaptation of "Devil's Music" conservatism into communal Black spaces, notably through Afropunk, has transformed into a tool of identity negotiation and generational repression of Black expression in Black society and the American music industry. Presenter 3 evaluates #KEEPKPOPKOREAN, an ultranationalistic social media campaign that wishes to stonewall "outsiders"—meaning

Black fans and artists—from participating in K-pop despite its Black-coded aesthetics and musical influence, and to uphold the purist ideologies of K-pop by non-Black fans, undermining the experiences of Black fans and suppressing K-pop's history of globalizing Black culture and performing anti-blackness.

06C:1. Friday, 11:15 AM.

Black Devil/White Space: The Negotiation of Afropunk Identity Through "Devil's Music" Conservatism

Taylor Howard - University of Colorado Boulder

James Spooner's 2003 documentary Afropunk grappled with the concept of identity negotiation, spotlighting Black alternative culture through interviews with Black fans and musicians. Many interviewees describe the highs and lows of being Black and alternative, notably the labeling of "safe" and "unsafe." "Safe" are the popularized and acceptable presentations of Blackness in media and music defined by white audience perceptions. In punk scenes, "safe" also refers to "white leaning" (Spooner 2003). Confusingly, Black audience perceptions are somewhat inverted; while "safe" also means acceptable, "unsafe" targets alternative Blackness. I theorize that the concept of "Devil's Music," a white conservative epithet that demonized rock'n'roll during the 1950s, was adapted into Black communal spaces, thus reinforcing a musical manifestation of "post-traumatic slave syndrome" (DeGruy 2005). White conservatism in Black communal spaces thrives in the self-negotiation and generational repression of self to weaken communal support. The post-traumatic manifestation in Black communal spaces likewise repressed and rejected alternative Blackness, a learned negotiation technique as a consequence of white Christians' explicit demonization of Black aesthetics and cultural products (Stephens 2018). With a conjoint historical overview of white "Devil's Music" conservatism, I will analyze the Black intercommunal tension surrounding alternative Blackness—primarily Afropunk—as "unsafe," or "white leaning," in Black communal spaces. I will connect "Devil's Music" conservatism to internalized anti-blackness through Afropunk and American audience perceptions of rock music as "white people music," furthering discussion on Black participation and history amidst socio-cultural erasure.

06C:2. Friday, 11:45 AM.

#KEEPKPOPKOREAN: Ultranationalism, Historical Revisionism, and Anti-Blackness

Xaria Siplin - University of Denver

What does it mean exactly to #KEEPKPOPKOREAN? With the social media hashtag designed to keep a perceived "outsider" to the genre away, the question remains. After all, no K-Pop group emerged with the indigenous music at the forefront (Fuhr 2012). Most groups have maintained or go through a "street aesthetic," where many of them don Black-coded features or aesthetics (i.e. box braids or grills). Musically, the genre takes from Black American genres such as hip-hop and R&B, with most groups within the industry even having their own designated rappers. Multiple groups and individual idols have also come under fire for having said the N-word, or even debuting in blackface. Do any of these aspects make the genre Korean? Fans, both domestically and internationally will claim that these musics are inherently Korean or have effectively become Koreanized, with the main assumption being that the "Korean" way is inherently better or purer. With K-pop being the most profitable export of South Korea, it is important both culturally as a nation and within the industry itself to claim Korean identity (Lie 2012). But with this clashing with the numerous instances of appropriation and appeals to Black culture, it is important to examine both the ultranationalism present within the K-Pop culture and the anti-blackness that has been perpetrated year after year. Perhaps examining these forces can help us to reckon on how to 'keep' K-Pop Korean or whether it was inherently Korean to begin with.

06D. Friday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Performance, Sustainability, and Ritual in Modern Indonesia

Edy Panjaitan; Meghan Hynson; Hannah Standiford - Ohio University and The Ohio State University; University of San Diego; Allegheny College

Chair(s): Meghan Hynson - University of San Diego

06D:1. Friday, 10:45 AM.

Honoring Ancestors: The Toba Batak *Mangongkal Holi* Ritual Music in Sianjur Mulamula Village, Samosir Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Edy Panjaitan - Ohio University and The Ohio State University

This paper examines the musical performance of mangongkal holi, the ancestral bone-exhumation ritual of the Toba Batak people of North Sumatra, Indonesia, with particular attention to the role of gondang sabangunan music and tortor dance in mediating memory, cosmology, and social identity. Drawing on hybrid ethnographic fieldwork in Sianjur Mulamula—including audiovisual documentation, musical transcription, and ritual theory, I argue that gondang functions not merely as ritual accompaniment but as a powerful musical compendium that structure ritual processions, sustains kinship and social relationships (dalihan na tolu), and facilitates communication between the human and ancestral realms.

Engaging prior scholarship on Toba Batak ritual music, including Artur Simon (1982), Okazaki (1994), and Mauly Purba (2000, 2004), among others, alongside broader ethnomusicological discussions of music rituals in Southeast Asia, the paper situates mangongkal holi within a dynamic continuum of continuity and transformation. Particular attention is given to the leader pargonsi (musicians), Aliman Tua Limbong, and the negotiation of indigenous cosmology with Christian influences and contemporary social realities. By foregrounding music as a central ritual ceremony, this study demonstrates how ritual music sustains ancestral presence, negotiates cultural resilience, and articulates indigenous identity amid historical and modern pressures.

06D:2. Friday, 11:15 AM.

Development and Sustainability in the 21st-Century Gender Wayang Complex

Meghan Hynson - University of San Diego

Commonly defined as the quartet of metallophones that accompanies Balinese shadow puppet theater, gender wayang is widely described as "the music for wayang." Yet in twenty-first-century Bali, this definition is increasingly partial. Gender wayang now circulates through extracurricular school programs, arts competitions, banjar and sanggar initiatives, radio and television broadcasts of the Puja Tri Sandhya mantra, commercial recordings, and experimental compositions. While these developments suggest vitality, they also raise a central question: what, precisely, is being sustained? Drawing on Huib Schippers' ecological "Five-Domain Framework," and engaging scholarship by Lisa Gold, Ako Mashino, and Brita Heimarck, this paper argues that development and sustainability within the gender wayang complex are paradoxically intertwined. Rather than equating sustainability with the number of performers or new compositions, I examine four interrelated domains, systems of learning, musicians and communities, contexts and constructs, and media and infrastructures, to assess how change simultaneously enables and endangers distinct dimensions of the tradition. Standardization in formal education, competition repertoires detached from puppetry, shifting ritual practices, gender inclusion, and expanding media circulation have broadened participation while narrowing regional repertoires and weakening links to dramatic function. By disentangling these processes, this paper reframes sustainability as a multi-layered condition rather than a binary of loss or survival. For ethnomusicology, this case underscores the need to theorize development as both generative and erosive, to interrogate what stakeholders value as "tradition," and to foreground context, power, and mediation in analyses of musical change.

06D:3. Friday, 11:45 AM.

Raminten Cabaret Show: Lip-Syncing and the Production of Liveness in Drag

Hannah Standiford - Allegheny College

Hiding in plain sight in Yogyakarta, a city in Muslim-majority Indonesia, the top floor of a clothing store has hosted a twice weekly drag performance called Raminten Cabaret Show since 2014. The shows often begin with performances of traditional Javanese dance and then feature drag acts ranging from American pop stars like Beyoncé and Nicki Minaj to Indonesian popular artists like Dewi Perssik and Inul Daratista, complete with acrobatics and pyrotechnics. Sexual and

gender minorities in Indonesia are currently threatened by a criminal code which was passed in 2022. Despite these social and legal threats, Indonesia has a long history of tolerance and recognition of plural gender expressions and this remains evident in sold-out performances at the Raminten Cabaret Show. Audiences are primarily Indonesian and typically range in age from 20-60 although attendees sometimes bring their children to the event. This presentation focuses on the practice of lip-syncing, commonplace in drag but unique in this context in that the performers use live recordings instead of studio recordings for their performances. By providing an ethnographic case study, I extend Philip Auslander's challenge to the binary between the live and the mediatized by examining how drag queens perform using prerecorded music from live events.

06E. Friday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Queer Frequencies: Sound, Space, and the Making of Alternative Communities

Moira de Kok; Kailan Rubinoff; Katelyn Hearfield - Cornell University; UNC Greensboro; Harvard University

Chair(s): Zoe Sherinian - Oklahoma University

06E:1. Friday, 10:45 AM.

"Stop Worrying and Learn to Love the Moog Synthesizer": Analog Technology and Queer Worldbuilding in San Francisco's 1990s Queer Underground

Moira de Kok - Cornell University

Across disciplines, scholars have diagnosed the twenty-first century West with a peculiar affliction: analog nostalgia (e.g., Beverland et al. 2024; Schrey 2024). They note that artists and consumers revive analog media such as photography, vinyl records, and analog synthesizers to retrieve a materiality, agency, and intentionality they perceive to be lacking in an increasingly digital world.

However, analog nostalgia has been a part of Western music cultures ever since the rise of digital technologies in the late 1970s. One early analog revival scene took place in San Francisco's queer underground around 1990, spearheaded by artist Michael Collins. Many of his and his comrades' activities revived the analog styles of new wave music from a decade earlier: from the original songs by Collins' performance group the Popstitutes, to drag performances of new wave music videos, to "Club Analog," a nightlife event with the subtitle "Stop worrying and learn to love the Moog synthesizer."

In this paper, I ask how and why Collins and his associates enacted analog nostalgia for an era barely ten years past. Closely reading their archival materials—flyers, press clippings, video recordings, and more—I argue that analog technology was crucial to this circle's queer worldbuilding in the face of the AIDS crisis. While this analog revival could be seen as a precursor to today's analog nostalgia, the San Francisco underground made explicit the queer pleasures of analog technology in a way that recent analog revivals, centered on hegemonically masculine discourses of control and mastery, have obscured.

06E:2. Friday, 11:15 AM.

Queering Bach's Passion: Pride, Heritage, and Community-Building at the 2025 Bachfest Leipzig

Kailan Rubinoff - UNC Greensboro

The queerPassion production at the 2025 Bachfest Leipzig sheds light on contemporary European values of musical heritage, authenticity and sociality. A contrafact of the St. John Passion, queerPassion resets Bach's music to a new libretto by Thomas Höft, highlighting tragic stories of homophobic violence in the eighteenth century (1730 Utrecht sodomy trials, a Prussian trans man) and recent times (Orlando, Chechnya, Lagos). At Bachfest, queerPassion featured under the festival theme "Transformation": the project incorporated the professional Baroque orchestra Ārt House 17 and soloists, with a local women's choir and gay men's chorus singing the chorales. Leipzig thus presented a provocative context where Bach "superfans," historical performers, the LGBTQ+ community, professionals and amateurs would intersect. Drawing on ethnographic research I conducted in Leipzig, including observations, musician interviews, and an audience survey, I situate the queerPassion at the intersection of scholarship on participatory musicking (Turino 2008, Reily & Brucker 2017, Bartleet & Higgins 2018), queer music studies (Attinello 2006, Barz & Cheng 2020, Maus &

Whitely 2022, MacLachlan 2020, Hilder 2023), music revivals (Bithell & Hill 2014), and festival studies (Falassi 1987). My study explores how the utopian vision of the funder Creative Europe to "safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage" played out in Leipzig: while fostering tolerance and understanding among participants and audience, the queerPassion also exposed sometimes competing artistic and ideological values (professionalism vs. amateur community-building; queer pride and identity vs. Bach reverence and historical authenticity in performance) with lively, but not always harmonious, results.

06E:3. Friday, 11:45 AM.

Kesha Cruises Atopia: Queer Community in International Waters

Katelyn Hearfield - Harvard University

This paper explores the cultural contradictions of music festival cruises aimed at fostering community despite participation in the destructive forces of capitalism, climate catastrophe, and violence against women and children globally. I focus on a 2019 cruise hosted by Kesha for her largely queer fanbase that curated an aesthetic space physically removed from heteronormative society through an all-hours party atmosphere. I frame this as an atopic "non-space" (Augé, 1992) where attendees felt protected from such sociocultural structures in international waters; yet the very same structures take advantage of international waters to avoid accountability as the cruising industry wreaks havoc on the environment and reproduces violent, ongoing histories of colonialism. This paper engages online communities as archive and ethnographic field, blending methodological approaches to explore the potential of social media as a fruitful scholarly resource. Working from theorists including Jill Dolan, Amy Hollywood, and José Esteban Muñoz, I question the extent to which a population alienated by society holds themselves accountable for contributing to environmental damages (air, water, and noise pollution) and the exploitation of other vulnerable populations (underpaid employees from the global south, and women and children guests subject to violence with little recourse). In an atopia designed to protect community from structural marginalization, how do we reconcile such benefits with the detrimental impact on the world at large?

06F. Friday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Entangled Jewish Pasts: Chronologies, Memory, and Retelling

Jardena Gertler-Jaffe; Lily Henley; Yuval Tessman-Bar-On - New York University; Harvard University; New York University
Chair(s): Evan Rapport - The New School

This panel examines reciprocal processes through which Jewish histories of forced migration and adaptation are narrated, imagined, and mobilized across musical contexts, and through which Western classical musical idioms and narratives are drawn upon, reworked, and recontextualized in relation to Jewish stories. Rather than assuming a one-directional flow of influence, the papers attend to moments of translation, borrowing, layering, and reinterpretation in which works mediate between diverse Jewish cultural histories and musical performance. At times, these stories privilege an ideological conception of Jewish experience over historical fact. The first paper explores representations of Jewish difference in Mason Bates' opera The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay, arguing that his use of Jewish languages, melodies, and iconography represents a temporal displacement of ethnolinguist ideologies from the present onto a story set in 1939. The second paper examines performance of the Ladino song "Adio Kerida," tracing how a modern song shaped by operatic and popular idioms has come to be widely understood as a medieval Sephardic artifact through contrafacta, performance framing, and allegorical interpretation. The final paper shows how Leonard Bernstein's Kaddish Symphony evolved, from its original composition by Bernstein through additions made by Holocaust survivor Samuel Pisar and his family. Taking each addition as a form of "intermundane collaboration" (Stanyek and Piekut 2010), this paper explores the symphony's current performers' perceptions of intergenerational witnessing. This panel ultimately considers how Jewish stories are reinterpreted musically, retold, and re-enacted in the present, and how such performances become constitutive in Jewish historiography.

06F:1. Friday, 10:45 AM.

Jewish Opera?: The Look and Sound of Jewish Difference in Bates' Kavalier and Clay

Jardena Gertler-Jaffe - New York University

The Metropolitan Opera performed its commission of The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay on the Met stage in October 2025, returning in February 2026 after a sold-out initial run. Kavalier and Clay, adapted from Michael Chabon's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, is set at the beginning of WWII, first in Prague and, following Joseph Kavalier's displacement to his cousin Sam Clay's home, in New York. The story follows these Jewish cousins as they invent a comic-book superhero, "The Escapist," a morale-boosting character who fights on behalf of Jews. To bring "authenticity to the subject matter," composer Mason Bates spent six months at a reform temple in San Francisco, "immersing himself in the culture" to "integrate elements of what he heard into his music" (Metropolitan Opera "Master Key," 2025). I argue that this construction of authenticity fails to attend to the specificities of historical Jewish soundworlds. Treating opera as a hybrid medium with deep semiotic processes, I track representations of difference in the opera through marked language-in-use, Jewish melodies, and iconography (Abbate and Parker, 1989; Jakobson 1990 [1976]; Adelstein 2024; Livak 2020). I contend that the representation of Jews in the opera can be understood as a transposition of ethnolinguistic ideologies from the present onto Prague and New York in 1939. Drawing on the live production, promotional materials, and ethnographic interviews with the Met cast and creatives, I interrogate how Jewish representation was approached during production. Lastly, I explore a difficult question: What might Jewish difference sound like in 21st-century opera?

06F:2. Friday, 11:15 AM.

The Myth of Antiquity: Desire, Contrafacta, and the Making of a Sephardic Past in "Adio Kerida"

Lily Henley - Harvard University

"Adio Kerida" is among the most widely performed Ladino songs today and is frequently presented as part of a medieval Sephardi past. Yet musicological evidence situates the song many hundreds of years later, shaped by European popular and operatic idioms. Most notably, its refrain closely resembles "Addio del passato" from Verdi's La Traviata, placing the song within a modern world of musical borrowing and contrafacta rather than as a more arcane relic. This paper asks not where "Adio Kerida" originated, but how it has come to feel ancient, and what cultural work that perception performs. Drawing on ethnographic interviews with performers and members of the Sephardi community, performance analysis, and media circulation, I trace how the song acquires an aura of antiquity through layered practices of framing, allegorical interpretation, and selective remembrance. Early Music performance contexts, revivalist pedagogy, Holocaust-era narratives, and paratextual commentary each contribute to repositioning a modern song within imagined medieval and traumatic pasts. Rather than treating misattributions of age as s, I approach "Adio Kerida" through an anti-biographical lens, attentive to how modern circulation and contrafacta enable songs to accumulate historical depth. I argue that the song's perceived antiquity is not evidence of uninterrupted transmission but a response to histories marked by rupture, dispersal, and loss. Attending to how antiquity is produced rather than presumed offers a way to hear how Sephardic pasts are continually being made audible in the present.

06F:3. Friday, 11:45 AM.

The Prayer for the Dead, the Symphony for the Dead

Yuval Tessman-Bar-On - New York University

Leonard Bernstein's response to the Holocaust was his Symphony No. 3 (1963), which he titled "Kaddish," invoking the Jewish prayer for the dead. Having visited Holocaust survivors in Europe, Bernstein composed the symphony for narrator, soprano soloist, choir, and orchestra. Before his death in 1990, he asked friend and Holocaust survivor, Samuel Pisar, to write a new narration for the symphony. Pisar finally honored this request in 2003, offering his Holocaust experience for the symphony's narration. While Bernstein never heard it, his estate considers Samuel Pisar's testimony to be the symphony's authoritative text and supported Pisar's performances of it. After Pisar's death in 2015, his wife and daughter, Judith and Leah, began performing as the narrators for the symphony. I argue that these additions to the symphony constitute palimpsestic layers of haunting. In each of these layers, the Kaddish prayer is said for the dead—

not only those who died in the Holocaust (for whom the symphony was composed), but also, in each added layer, the dead who haunt the symphony's past: Leonard Bernstein and Samuel Pisar. Simultaneously, the performances act as a form of intergenerational Holocaust witnessing. I draw on Derrida's "hauntology" (1993) and Stanyek and Piekut's idea of "intermundane collaboration," in which the dead and the living co-create. Building on previous work on the Kaddish Symphony (Schiller 2003), I also discuss my interviews with Leah Pisar, who experiences herself as a messenger of her father's Holocaust story and works carefully to mimic his vocal inflections when performing the piece.

06G. Friday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Sonic Borderlands: Love, Gender, and Politics in Mexican Popular Music

Falina Enriquez; Edgar Gomez Alvarez; Salvador Hernandez - University of Wisconsin-Madison; University of Maryland, College Park; University of North Texas

Chair(s): Falina Enriquez - University of Wisconsin-Madison

06G:1. Friday, 10:45 AM.

Love and Politics in *Canciones de mi Padre*

Falina Enriquez - University of Wisconsin-Madison

In 1987 Linda Ronstadt diverged from her successes in rock and other genres to record the album, Canciones de mi Padre. In it, she revived nostalgic Mexican mariachi music to honor her father and Mexican American heritage. Record industry insiders doubted a Spanish-language album featuring decades-old songs could succeed in the mainstream market. Nevertheless, the album reached 42 on the Billboard 200, sold over 2.5 million copies, won a Grammy for best Mexican/Mexican American performance, and became the bestselling non-English music album in U.S. history. This presentation analyzes Canciones in dialogue with interviews with musicians and fans of the album. It contributes to ethnomusicology by understanding music as a political action that mediates affect and emotion (e.g., Chávez 2017; Desai-Stephens & Reisnour 2020; Garland 2020; Gray Kun 2016; Sakakeeny 2024). Specifically, it asks: what are the political implications and effects of the love the album conveys? While romantic love is thematically relevant in many of the album's songs, I argue Canciones constructs and prioritizes a love for family, community, and Mexican Americanness. Although Ronstadt did not intend to record a political album, this love is political. In 1987 and still today, Canciones challenges the stigmatization of Mexican American people while also contributing to the construction of what scholars call a "third space" beyond the U.S./Mexico binary (Anzaldúa 1987; Licona 2005; Sandoval 2013).

06G:2. Friday, 11:15 AM.

Representations of Post-NAFTA Mexico in Lila Downs' *Border/La Línea* (2001)

Edgar Gomez Alvarez - University of Maryland, College Park

Since the beginning of her career in the mid-1990s, singer-songwriter Lila Downs (b. 1968) has woven themes of Indigeneity and migration in her songs. Inspired by her Mixtec Indigenous, Mexican, and U.S. American heritage, Downs blends a variety of languages (Spanish, English, Mixtec, Zapotec) and musical styles (Mexican sones, rancheras, corridos, cumbia, jazz). Together, her heritage and musical fusions allowed Downs to consolidate her position as a "world music" artist at a time of deep transformation in Mexico, with the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Zapatista uprising of the same year, and later, the power transition after the 2000 Mexican presidential elections. Building on scholarship at the intersection of music, migration, globalization, and the U.S.-Mexico border (Madrid 2011; Ramos-Kittrell 2020; Días Santana-Garza 2021), in this presentation I analyze Downs' representation of post-NAFTA Mexico in her 2001 album Border/La Línea for Mexican and international audiences. Specifically, I concentrate on the lyrics, music, and vocal timbre of Border's third track, Sale Sobrando" (Good for Nothin'). In this song, Downs discusses Mexico's national origin myth, northbound migration, race, national identity, and injustice. A complicated assemblage of musical styles and vocal timbres undergirds the topic variety, as Downs combines cumbia with rock, funk, and jazz. Additionally, references to the well-known song "Cielito Lindo" and Mexico's national anthem contribute to the dense musical fabric. I argue that in "Sale Sobrando," Downs presents nuanced representations of immigrants and marginalized communities while inadvertently reinforcing essentialist images of Mexican people.

06G:3. Friday, 11:45 AM.

Machos, Vampiros, y Mandilones: Deviant Masculinities and the Banda Cumbia

Salvador Hernandez - University of North Texas

Starting in the early 21st century, Mexican bandas have increasingly adopted a distinct variant of the cumbia norteña featuring faster tempi, licentious lyrics, and nonnormative masculine expressions: ranging from hypersexualized machos preying on women in party contexts, submissive men dominated by their wives, or queer behavior. This banda cumbia—increasingly popular among U.S-based Mexican audiences—thus provides a valuable opportunity to explore what sociologist Raewynn Connell identifies as the "many local instabilities of gender" resulting from the establishment of a world gender order dominated by Western conceptualizations of masculinity (1998, 16); a reality intimately felt by many migrant Mexican men who feel feminized by authoritative U.S. social structures that submit them to lower-class, supervised jobs while also granting their spouses more autonomy and rights (Rouse 1992, 38). I argue that the sound of the banda cumbia, which most often appears late at night during Mexican parties, creates a cathartic space of masculine possibility that enables men to subvert U.S. and Mexican gender orders: be it via hypermasculine behavior, or the assertion of queer identities. Along with an analysis of the banda cumbia's unique sonic properties, its ambiguous yet transgressive lyrics, and the de-coupled circle dance that accompanies it; I draw from my time performing with the Banda Poderosa de Jalisco in the Dallas-Fort Worth area (2018 – 2022) and interviews with affiliated banda musicians and listeners to demonstrate how the banda cumbia expands the banda ensemble's capacity to represent and celebrate a myriad of transnational masculinities.

06H. Friday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Resonant Territories: Music, Extractivism, and Institutional Power in South America

Luis Ricardo Queiroz; Rubens De La Corte; Maria Fantinato Geo de Siqueira - Federal University of Paraiba; Graduate Center-CUNY; Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)
Chair(s): Andrew Snyder - INET-MD Universidade Nova de Lisboa

06H:1. Friday, 10:45 AM.

Structural Racism in Brazilian Music Programs and Ethnomusicological Perspectives for Confronting This Colonial Legacy

Luis Ricardo Queiroz - Federal University of Paraiba

Higher education in music in Brazil has evolved through a historical process marked by coloniality, a legacy that continues to shape undergraduate music programs today. As a consequence of this trajectory, structural racism has emerged as one of the significant challenges the country must confront to build a model of music education aligned with its social demands and cultural potential. In response to this reality, this paper presents findings from a research project that examined undergraduate music programs at 30 universities across the country. Conducted between February 2019 and January 2025, the project investigates how Brazilian undergraduate music programs incorporate Afro-Brazilian music and Black individuals, highlighting the tensions between institutional inclusion policies and the persistence of colonial structures. The study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in bibliographic and documentary analysis. The results indicate that the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian cultures and the participation of Black individuals remain underrepresented within music programs, particularly given the significant strength and impact of Afro-Brazilian cultural production in Brazil, as demonstrated by research in Brazilian ethnomusicology and music education (Araújo, 2006; Pereira, 2020; Queiroz, 2023; Sandroni, 2001). This tendency reinforces the logic of structural racism, historically rooted in the country. Based on this diagnosis, as well as on ethnomusicological and educational initiatives developed nationwide and on studies and proposals systematized in the country since the 2000s, the paper outlines brief decolonial pathways for rethinking and overcoming structural racism in music curricula and pedagogical practices in this context.

06H:2. Friday, 11:15 AM.

Crafting Culture: How Lutherie Education Helps to Define San Miguel de Tucumán and Curitiba as Music

Cities
Rubens De La Corte - Graduate Center-CUNY

Over the past decade, San Miguel de Tucumán (Argentina) and Curitiba (Brazil) have become prominent examples of music cities, partly due to the role of lutherie influencing their cultural and urban identities. Drawing on key sources on music cities (Finnegan 1989, Cohen 2007) and scenes (Straw 1991, Bennett 1999), this paper argues that the presence of comprehensive public lutherie programs alongside affordable private courses has been influential in establishing both cities as key hubs for regional and national musical instrument making. The incorporation of lutherie into public university curricula elevates the craft to an academic discipline, changing a master-apprentice tradition into an interdisciplinary and collective knowledge integration (Godemann 2008). Meanwhile, affordable private courses broaden opportunities for aspiring luthiers. These rich learning environments have contributed to establishing a large and collaborative population of luthiers, whose instruments, workshops, and events influence and help to maintain local music scenes. Such actions are reinforced by local initiatives, cultural institutions, and the participation of musicians, students, and audiences, creating a cycle that boosts cultural identity and economic growth (Soja 1996). By examining the interactions among education, production, and practices, this paper shows how lutherie, often overlooked in urban music studies, serves as a foundation for musical milieus in each city. The case studies also reveal how lutherie education and infrastructure can elevate a city's status as a music city. As a result, these cities serve as valuable models for other urban centers seeking independent music cultures rooted in craft, innovation, and community participation.

06H:3. Friday, 11:45 AM.
The Sensory Abyss of Extractivism: Reflections from Listening in the Brazilian Amazon
Maria Fantinato Geo de Siqueira - Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)

What kind of collectivity do we listen with when sensing the river in this or that way? Who is interested, and when, in hearing this song, breath or voice as something that exists and knows? As social educator, environmental activist and researcher Ana Laide Soares Barbosa observed, thinking from a river brutally devastated by a mega-dam: "There is an abyss of not-listening, and because of people not listening to those at Volta Grande do Xingu, the destruction is voracious" (2023). Ontological thresholds of listening mark divides between modes of living and knowing (Ochoa 2014). In contexts of territorial conflicts and advancement of megaprojects on ancestral lands, these divides shape what is recognized as alive, valuable, and worth being preserved. This paper theorizes the sensory abyss as a central mechanism of socio-environmental destruction and "ontological occupation" (Escobar 2015) in the Brazilian Amazon. Based on ethnographic research and inter-epistemic dialogues with interlocutors in Pará, I examine the intersection between sensory alienation and extractive logic, where the devastation of ecosystems is sustained by a dissociation of agency and perception. In resonance with analyses of neoliberal and settler-colonial sonic governance in Indigenous territories (Robinson 2020; Veeraraghavan 2024; Cárcamo-Huechante 2026), I theorize extractivism as not merely an economic process, but a regime of listening. This regime produces sensory alienation and material devastation while organizing whose voices count, whose worlds are audible, whose territories can be rendered available. This paper contributes to ethnomusicological debates on the colonial and political implications of aurality in socio-environmental struggles.

06I. Friday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session
From Player Pianos to Digital Platforms: Technologies of Jazz Transmission and Transformation
Yufei Lui; ching-nam Hippocrates Cheng; Rory Corbett - Hong Kong Baptist University; Binghamton University, United States of America; Maynooth University
Chair(s): ching-nam Hippocrates Cheng - Binghamton University

06I:1. Friday, 10:45 AM.
Virtual Jazz Engagement in China: An Ethnographic Exploration of Digital Platforms and Cultural Reimagining
Yufei Liu - Hong Kong Baptist University

In the past five years, there has been an increasing number of research papers on the virtual ethnography of jazz music and its fans, but few studies have focused on the virtual jazz life in the Chinese context. Traditionally, jazz has been

confined to elite spaces such as clubs and conservatories in urban centers like Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong. However, the rise of social media and digital platforms has democratized access to jazz, expanding its reach beyond these institutional settings to a broader, more diverse audience. This study employs a virtual ethnographic approach to analyze four distinct cases of jazz-related content on platforms such as RedNote and Bilibili, focusing on memes, short videos, and comment sections. By applying affective media theory, Kivy's resemblance theory of musical expressiveness, and the framework of participatory culture, the paper demonstrates that jazz is no longer solely a domain for the musically literate. Rather, it is a medium that evokes emotional resonance, symbolic associations, and widespread participation. This research challenges conventional notions of jazz as an exclusive art form, emphasizing its role in creating belonging and reimagining local cultural meanings. The findings suggest that virtual jazz participation disrupts traditional access barriers and allows jazz to circulate as a living, dynamic cultural resource in China.

06I:2. Friday, 11:15 AM.

Reproducing Jazz through Machines: The Forgotten Master of Player Piano in Early Jazz History — J. Lawrence Cook (1899–1976)

ching-nam Hippocrates Cheng - Binghamton University, United States of America

The player piano and piano rolls occupy a unique space in jazz history, bridging live improvisation with mechanical music reproduction. These technologies preserved intricate jazz performances and allowed artists to reach audiences beyond live venues. Yet, despite their significance, many figures central to their development remain underrecognized.

This paper examines the contributions of J. Lawrence Cook, a prolific yet overlooked Black artist who played a crucial role in the player piano era. As one of the most productive piano roll arrangers of the 20th century, Cook crafted thousands of rolls, many of which were widely circulated by major music roll companies. His work extended beyond simple transcription; he infused rolls with stylistic nuance, capturing the dynamism of jazz performance in ways that mechanical reproduction often struggled to achieve.

Cook's influence is particularly evident in his connection to Fats Waller. Some of Cook's rolls were released under Waller's name, highlighting the complexities of authorship and recognition in jazz history. Furthermore, Cook's contributions were not limited to performance—he also played a key role in advancing piano roll technology, refining techniques that enhanced the expressivity of mechanically reproduced music.

This paper draws on ethnographic and ethnomusicological approaches to analyze Cook's piano rolls, shedding light on his stylistic innovations and technical contributions. By acknowledging his legacy, I aim to reposition Cook within jazz historiography, illustrating how his work not only shaped the player piano era but also influenced subsequent generations of musicians.

06I:3. Friday, 11:45 AM.

The Grapevine Twist: Rethinking Early Banjo Song Through Embodied Technique

Rory Corbett - Maynooth University

Accounts of early banjo repertory have tended to privilege textual and melodic sources over the embodied techniques through which tunes and songs took shape in performance. As a result, instrumental practice has remained peripheral to accounts of Atlantic musical exchange. Though widely regarded as a definitive study, Hans Nathan's analysis of the early blackface minstrel repertoire as rooted in Anglo-Celtic and Afro-Caribbean music and dance cultures stops short of explaining how that fusion was realized in instrumental technique. Comparative analysis of notated sources associated with early minstrel banjoists instead points to downstroke playing (a percussive downward striking style) as a principal site at which European and African American musical practices were brought into relation. Building on Cecelia Conway's account of banjo song as a tradition forged within African American communities and transmitted through interracial exchange, this paper explores how the Irish/Scottish fiddle tune "The Devil's Dream" was reconfigured as the "Grapevine Twist" through patterned striking motions of the right hand. Rather than treating syncopation as a stylistic trait added to otherwise stable European tunes, the paper argues that their internal organization shifted to accommodate Black banjo technique. What emerged was not simply a change in rhythmic inflection but a restructuring of the tune

itself, shaped by the demands of downstroke banjo playing.

06K. Friday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Enacting Indigenous Sovereignty in Sound

Beatriz Goubert; Jay Loomis; Renata Yazzie - N/A; Brown University; Columbia University
Chair(s): Beatriz Goubert - N/A

This panel explores the enactment of Indigenous sovereignty through sound, focusing on how communities reclaim, reshape, and revitalize sonic practices in diverse cultural contexts. Featuring case studies from Mesoamerica, the Colombian Andes, and Native North America, the panel situates collaborative initiatives at the intersection of institutional collections and community-driven musical projects. Two papers consider the role of archaeological sound objects in museums, highlighting how community-negotiated access and the creation of three-dimensional replicas of prehispanic instruments facilitate Indigenous-led sounding, recording, composition, and pedagogical transmission. Rather than equating replication with repatriation, these analyses position replication as part of broader efforts to restore material knowledge, technical skill, and production capacity. The third paper examines contemporary musical practice as a site for the articulation of sovereignty, foregrounding sound as a medium of jurisdiction, resurgence, and future-making. Together, the panel demonstrates that Indigenous sovereignty is materialized through active community engagement with sound as it is reproduced, reinterpreted, and circulated to support cultural continuity and future-oriented practices. By centering practice, material engagement, and governance, the panel advances ethnomusicological debates on rematriation, sovereignty, and Indigenous sound studies.

06K:1. Friday, 10:45 AM.

Reconstructing Sonic Practice: Rematriation and Indigenous Futurity among Muisca Communities

Beatriz Goubert - N/A

This paper examines rematriation, as defined in recent scholarly literature, is approached here as an ongoing, relational process through which Indigenous communities reclaim authority over ancestral sound objects, knowledge, and practices from colonial institutions. Focusing on Muisca communities in Bogotá and neighboring areas, I trace how collaboration with Indigenous musicians and spiritual authorities has facilitated negotiated access to prehispanic instruments, the creation of three-dimensional replicas, and the production of new recordings and soundscapes. Given restrictions on handling original artifacts, replication serves as a provisional infrastructure for community-led performance, composition, and teaching. Rather than equating replication with repatriation, I argue that rematriation involves restoring material knowledge, technical skill, and community protocols essential for Indigenous-led instrument making and sonic resurgence. By foregrounding how replicated instruments and recordings are mobilized in revitalization and intergenerational transmission, this study demonstrates that rematriation is not a singular act of return, but an ongoing enactment of Indigenous sovereignty and futurity—rooted in relationships, responsibilities, and the revitalization of ancestral sound.

06K:2. Friday, 11:15 AM.

Replication and Indigenous Sonic Sovereignty in Mesoamerican Archaeological Sound

Jay Loomis - Brown University

Archaeological Indigenous musical instruments housed in museum collections are often inaccessible to the descendants of the communities from which the artifacts originate. In this paper, I consider how 3D printed replicas can support Indigenous sonic sovereignty by increasing access to playable reproductions of the original instruments. I discuss a collaborative effort to create playable copies of two ancient Mesoamerican ocarinas in the Haffenreffer Museum at Brown University. In conversation with Indigenous and non-Indigenous makers in Mexico, I scanned and successfully replicated the instruments in order to restore their acoustic behavior and produce playable forms that can circulate beyond conservation limits. My research asks what changes, and for whom, when archaeological Indigenous sound becomes playable again. The replicas make it possible to test airflow, pitch collections, and breath technique, and they serve as reference points for contemporary Indigenous makers who work in related traditions of ceramic wind

instrument making. They also create shared sounding objects for discussion through which makers, institutions, and collaborators can evaluate design choices, compare craft knowledge, and consider access. I do not frame this effort as a substitute for returning museum objects to Indigenous communities of origin. Instead, I argue that Indigenous access to playable replicas creates new conditions for collaboration, evaluation, and reinterpretation of ancient sound technologies in the present. By expanding Indigenous access to sound, and by foregrounding dialogue around who plays, interprets, and circulates these forms, my research examines how sovereignty over archaeological Indigenous sound is negotiated and enacted.

06K:3. Friday, 11:45 AM.

Recording, Notation, and Reshaping Meaning: "Shí Naashá" and Diné Sovereignty

Renata Yazzie - Columbia University

In 1868, Diné peoples signed a treaty with the U.S. Government that allowed them to return to their ancestral homelands in the Southwest after living in captivity 350 miles away for four years in a place they called "Hwéeldi" or the place of great suffering. It is said that as the people returned home, they saw Tsóódzil—the sacred mountain that marked the eastern boundary of their land and sang a song now called "Shí Naashá" or "I Am Walking." The song popularized through anthropological interest with its first recording done by Willard Rhodes and sung by the Fort Wingate Choir in 1949. The song went on to be notated in 1953 and sold as sheet music from a local music store, whereby it became a standard piece of repertoire within music education curricula both on and off the Navajo Nation. Sometimes referred to as the "Navajo Happiness Song," "Shí Naashá" is often depicted as the unofficial anthem of the Navajo Nation—a song that represents the resilience and fortitude of the Navajo people. This paper will discuss the potential origins of "Shí Naashá," trace its meaning and symbolism that was both shaped by and archived within the anthropological record, and discern how Navajo musicians across genres have covered it and reshaped its meaning once more to express a futuristic outlook of Diné sovereignty.

Friday, 12:30 PM. Section/SIG Meeting

AADMS Keynote – Portia Maultsby: Performing Blackness in Global Spaces: Black Gospel Music in the Netherlands

Portia Maultsby - Indiana University, Bloomington

Since the 1990s, African American gospel music has become a global phenomenon. Its popularity across cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries has resulted in the proliferation of gospel choirs throughout the world. In this new context, performance settings for gospel music vary, giving rise to localized functions, meanings and performance aesthetics. Although African American expatriates occasionally serve as choir directors, many choirs are led by non-African Americans. With varying success, some non-African American and African-Diaspora directors strive to preserve the "original" performance rituals and aesthetic practices; others reference black gospel music as inspiration to create localized religious music.

As a case study, my presentation focuses on Edith Casteleyn, the Euro-Dutch director of gospel choirs in the Netherlands. The choirs, dominated by Euro-Dutch members, include Blacks from the former Dutch Colonies in Caribbean. They perform what she describes as "authentic" Black American gospel music.

My presentation will examine the rituals and sounds of Blackness produced by Casteleyn's choirs. Specifically, it explores: (1) concepts of authenticity; (2) how this concept informs the way Casteleyn interprets and teaches Black gospel music; (3) challenges transmitting Black church rituals, musical practices, aesthetic priorities and cultural values to choir members; and (4) the choirs' reception by both Dutch audiences and Black American congregations, the latter in the context of U.S.A. tours.

07A. Friday, 1:45 PM. Roundtable

Archiving Ethnomusicology: The American Folklife Center at 50 and the Future of Sound Stewardship

John Fenn; Judith Gray; Doug Peach; Nancy Groce; Andrea Decker - American Folklife Center, Library of Congress
Chair(s): John Fenn - American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

This 120-minute roundtable, convened in conjunction with the American Folklife Center's (AFC) 50th Anniversary, will examine AFC's longstanding and future-facing relationship with the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) and the discipline of ethnomusicology. Framed as a facilitated conversation, presenters will address how AFC collections, programs, and professional practices have developed in parallel with SEM and the discipline of ethnomusicology as a whole, while considering how AFC can continue to serve as a vital resource for ethnomusicologists in the decades ahead.

The roundtable will open with an overview from Panelist 1 situating the historical trajectories of SEM and AFC and reflecting on the collaborative ecosystems that support ethnomusicological work. Panelist 2 will focus on collections associated with prominent ethnomusicologists and SEM's history, underscoring AFC's role in preserving the intellectual and institutional memory of the field. Panelist 3 will consider major disciplinary trends, such as sound studies and commons-based approaches, and examine how these frameworks inform current and emerging archival practices at AFC. Panelist 4 will address AFC's public-facing and digital initiatives, including online concerts, lectures, and audio resources. Panelist 5 will highlight research and teaching support offered by AFC, including reference services, grants and fellowships, research orientations, support for teaching with primary sources, and acquisition of archival collections.

Through collective discussion between participants and attendees, the session aims to articulate and shape AFC's ongoing and future contributions to SEM and the field at large.

07B. Friday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Sound, Identity, and Power in the Musical Circulation of Latin America

Constanza Fuentes-Landaeta; Elizabeth Castillo Mena; Laura Camacho; Steffan M. Perez-Velez Solis - The University of Texas at Austin; The University of Texas at Austin; The University of Texas at Austin; The University of Texas at Austin
Chair(s): Tony Rasmussen - The University of Texas at Austin

This panel examines how musical genres across Latin America become sites for negotiating identity, memory, and power as they circulate through geographical and social borders. By tracing the transnational journeys of cumbia, the reimagining of Afro-Dominican religious music, the queering of tango, and the localization of jazz in Mexico, we illuminate the complex acoustemologies that emerge when genres travel and adapt. The first paper traces cumbia's transnational acoustemologies from 1940s Colombia to Chile in the 1960s and to Argentina in the 1990s, arguing that its sonic expressions of festivity intertwine with local experiences of social and political adversity. The second examines Afro-Dominican fusion music as a palimpsest of Blackness, where religious traditions are both celebrated and commodified, transforming perceptions of Black Dominican music. The third explores how queer milongas and younger musicians in North America subvert tango conventions to reclaim the genre as community-centered practice. The fourth investigates how Mexican jazz programs adapt a global genre to regional needs, with "jazz" functioning as a malleable label empowering local musicians. Together, these papers engage questions of sound and place, tradition and innovation, and the impact of social hierarchies on musical expression. By following musical currents across the region—from the Caribbean to the Southern Cone, from religious ritual to the jazz classroom—we reveal how communities use sound to navigate legacies of colonialism, dictatorship, and marginalization while actively shaping new sonorous futures.

07B:1. Friday, 1:45 PM.

Transnational Acoustemologies of Cumbia: From the Caribbean to the South

Constanza Fuentes-Landaeta - The University of Texas at Austin

This paper addresses the sonorous and transnational ties that have resulted in cumbia's dissemination throughout South America. I focus on three historical moments in the genre's development: 1940s Colombia, 1960s Chile, and 1990s Argentina. Based in theoretical frameworks of globalization, cosmopolitanism, and sound studies, I demonstrate that transnational acoustemologies of cumbia reflect distinct sonic experiences of festivity, often in adverse contexts marked by social, economic, and political challenges. I argue that an acoustemological approach to cumbia, focused on

interrelations between radically different contexts, can shed light on the development of the genre as well as divergent notions of class, gender, ethnicity, national expression, and latinidad. I explore Lucho Bermúdez's key role in the early commercialization of cumbia, essential to subsequent forms of popular culture that developed in the region. I examine the emergence of Chilean cumbia as a cross-border encounter between Caribbean sounds and local sonic experiences linked to subversive humor. Lastly, I explore Argentine cumbia, framing it as informed by consumerism and further sonic transculturation between the Caribbean and the South. My research adds to existing literature on cumbia by foregrounding multi-site research, offering detailed musical analyses of stylistic innovations, and by exploring the transnational ties that have led to the emergence of new local variants.

07B:2. Friday, 2:15 PM.

Afro-Dominican Music: From Syncretism to Pastiche

Elizabeth Castillo Mena - The University of Texas at Austin

Afro-Dominican fusion music emerged in the 1970s as a blend of Black local traditions, often tied to religious or spiritual practices, such as palos, Congos de Villa Mella, Gagá, and sarandunga, with global genres like jazz, rock, pop, and electronica. This fusion music was pioneered by artists like Luis "El T" Días, whose work can be interpreted as a response to the repressive and racist political regimes that took place in the country during Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship between 1930 and 1961, and the authoritarian President José Joaquín Balaguer between 1960 and 1996. With his music, Luis Días unveiled a paradigm that has led to ontological shifts around Black Dominican music, impacting its associated economies. A myriad of performers from diverse backgrounds, with different target audiences and access to resources, have produced Afro-Dominican fusion music since then. I examine racial politics surrounding Afro-Dominican music performance, drawing on Dr. Celina de Sá's conception of the coloniality of Black performance to study the repercussions of commodifying Black Dominican religious music. I analyze Afro-Dominican fusion music repertoire vis-à-vis the spiritual and religious traditions from which it is created. Based on ethnographic accounts, I compare the dynamics of traditional musicians, such as Los Menores de Candelo, with those of Afro-Dominican fusion groups like Toné Vicioso & Aumbata and La Carisalve. I argue that Afro-Dominican fusion music creates a palimpsest that reveals diverse iterations of Blackness, while being the object of pastiche, appropriation, or the evisceration of Afro-Dominican traditions.

07B:3. Friday, 2:45 PM.

Younger and Closer to Our Grandparents' Music: How Gender and LGBTQ+ Occupation of Tango Spaces Has Changed The Repertoire

Laura Camacho - The University of Texas at Austin

In the last fifteen years tango as social dance has grown exponentially in popularity among people under 45 in the USA. Many musicians now perform and compose the popular, danceable form of the genre instead of the post-Piazzolla New Tango that dominated the scene until the early 2000s. This reversal of priorities and in turn the artists' ability to make a living can be observed in North American cities like Austin. It is not by chance that this shift coincides in part with the appearance of queer milongas. Although much has been written about gender in tango, one issue yet to be explored is how female LGBTQ+ involvement, a younger tango community, and the new dance repertoire boom are interconnected. With social shifts like the legalization of gay marriage, first in Argentina and later in the USA, women and LGBTQ+ spaces operating in Buenos Aires and elsewhere have grown in number. Drawing on queer theory, sound studies, previous research by Bergero (2008) and Liska (2016), as well as fieldwork in Austin, this paper explores how new generations of musicians, audiences and dancers reclaim tango music as a popular practice through a subversion/queering of performance event. As they reclaim public spaces, these communities become ever more central to sustaining the tradition, putting the music again at the service of the community.

07B:4. Friday, 3:15 PM.

Mexicans Can Swing, Too

Steffan M. Perez-Velez Solis - The University of Texas at Austin

Since their development in the 1960s, jazz programs have become a mainstay of institutional music education in the United States, coinciding with and reinforcing the genre's continuingly strong presence in popular culture. It should come as no surprise, then, that the rise of globalization has produced collegiate jazz programs across the world – including in my home country of Mexico. There exist only three public universities in Mexico that boast professional training focused on jazz studies: the National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature (INBAL) in Mexico City, the Veracruzan University in Xalapa, and the University of Sciences and Arts of Chiapas (UNICACH) in Tuxtla Gutiérrez. Though their curriculums often overlap on paper, with course offerings similar to what one would find up north in the U.S., their individual praxes are radically unique and seek to serve distinct student populations. I thus explore how these programs operate according to their sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts, adapting an already flexible musical style to best fit regional needs and tastes. Through analyses of their respective curriculums, I argue that jazz is understood less as a cohesive genre and more as a malleable utilitarian label that empowers local community musicians to participate in acoustic economies. I pay particular attention to UNICACH, drawing on interviews with its current program coordinator to demonstrate how institutional jazz has served to "professionalize" already existing musical practices in the rapidly urbanizing, historically underserved locale: a groundwork model for other similar global arts advocacy initiatives.

07D. Friday, 1:45 PM. Roundtable

Teaching Ethnomusicology In Situ The Challenges and Rewards of Study Away Programs

Andrew Mall; Michael Allemana; Damascus Kafumbe; Nathan Myrick; Sean Williams - Northeastern University; University of Chicago; Middlebury College; Mercer University; The Evergreen State College
Chair(s): Andrew Mall - Northeastern University

For ethnomusicologists, study away and study abroad programs may seem to dovetail naturally with our fieldwork, training, and expertise. But the logistics of traveling with a dozen or more students can appear daunting. In this roundtable, panelists share their experiences planning, organizing, and teaching in study away/abroad programs. Decisions about site location, preparation, accommodations, finances, local partnerships, student selection, and travel arrangements set the tone for the entire program. Upon arrival, faculty often have responsibilities beyond their on-campus roles, serving as budget managers, counselors, dorm parents, emergency responders, and travel guides. In the compressed timeframe, resilience and adaptability is key. The rewards are clear: faculty build lasting relationships with students in a more intimate setting; students learn more deeply and quickly in the focused, intense environment; and all gain a deeper appreciation for the program's topic when participating, observing, and studying in situ. Panelist 1 has students discover Chicago's public programming and vibrant summer festival calendar. Panelist 2, who lives in Chicago and teaches in Panelist 1's study away program, utilizes professional contacts to help the city's musical life come alive for students. Panelist 3 brings students to Uganda to study performing arts alongside local partners. Panelist 4 travels with students to Morocco where they study sacred sounds in diverse faith traditions. Panelist 5, who has taken students to Ireland 10 times over 30 years, will discuss the process of extensive preparation, working closely with a local institute, and engaging students in a reflective essay upon their return.

07E. Friday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Sound Archives as Knowledge Infrastructures: Reframing Ethnomusicology in the U.S. Southwest and the Global South

Rodrigo Chocano; Javier Marin-Lopez; Peter J. Garcia - Universität Wien; Universidad de Jaen; California State University Northridge
Chair(s): Brenda M. Romero - University of Colorado Boulder

This panel examines the "knowledge infrastructures" (Edwards 2010; Larkin 2013) that underpin field recording archives, arguing that they are not neutral repositories but active mediating formations that have shaped

ethnomusicology's objects, methods, and authority. Drawing on Science and Technology Studies and critical archival scholarship, we show how mid-twentieth-century institutional arrangements—missionary networks, university patronage, state funding, and transnational circuits—imposed specific epistemic logics on Indigenous and Hispanic vernacular musics from the U.S. Southwest, particularly New Mexico, and the Global South. Following Derrida (1996) and Stoler (2009), we treat archives as historically situated structures that condition what can be collected, classified, circulated, and heard. These infrastructures did more than preserve traditions: they organized "whose memory" counted, stabilized genre taxonomies, and naturalized hierarchies of value that continue to shape disciplinary discourse and heritage narratives. Confronting these legacies requires ethnomusicology to reckon with the material and institutional conditions of its own knowledge production and to engage ongoing debates on archival responsibility and epistemic accountability. Presenter 1 analyzes how knowledge infrastructures in the U.S. and Peru conditioned the extraction and framing of recorded repertories. Presenter 2 traces the archival mediation of Juan Bautista Ralliere's repertory in the Robb and Cobos collections, contrasting institutional taxonomies with devotional networks and oral transmission. Presenter 3 reconsiders the John Donald Robb Archive, examining how Robb's professional profile and collaboration with Vicente T. Mendoza structured Southwestern regional memory. The Discussant synthesizes these interventions to address their broader methodological and historiographic implications for the discipline.

07E:1. Friday, 2:15 PM.

Uncomfortable Pillars: Knowledge Infrastructures and the Colonial Legacy of Field Music Recording Archives

Rodrigo Chocano - Universität Wien

Archives of Global South folk and Indigenous field recordings from the early twentieth century are an uncomfortable part of the disciplinary legacy of ethnomusicologists. Despite their foundational role in the discipline, many resulted from colonial practices that extracted knowledge from dominated groups and reframed it under ethnocentric categories that reproduced racial and cultural hierarchies. While ethnomusicologists have critically engaged with this legacy from ethical and epistemological perspectives (e.g., García 2019; Ajotikar and Van Straaten 2021), it also bears an understudied infrastructural component. These archives resulted not only from colonial mindsets but also from imperial resources, institutional arrangements, and networks that enabled the extraction, accumulation, and scrutiny of foreign musical knowledge. Studying these infrastructures is important because they framed the scope of what researchers could actually do, and hence foundational inquiries, methods, and theories of the field. Drawing from Science and Technology studies, this paper addresses the importance of knowledge infrastructures to the construction of field recording archives of folk and indigenous music during the mid-20th century. Defined as the institutionalized assemblages that enable knowledge production (Edwards 2010; Larkin 2013), knowledge infrastructures both reflect existing colonial power structures and the conditions of possibility for knowledge production. Focused on cases in the U.S. and Peru, the paper explores how colonial knowledge infrastructures may impact the research inquiries, methods, and theories, and the role of archives in these infrastructures. It also problematizes the infrastructural legacy of both field recording archives and ethnomusicological practice, whose foundational resources still sustain ethnomusicological practices in non-obvious ways.

07E:2. Friday, 2:45 PM.

Archival Mediation and the Afterlives of Nuevomexicano Song: Juan Bautista Ralliere's Repertory in the Robb and Cobos Field Recordings

Javier Marin-Lopez - Universidad de Jaen

This paper examines the New Mexican musical repertory compiled by Juan Bautista Ralliere (1834–1915) as preserved and reactivated in two major U.S. Hispanic sound archives: the John Donald Robb and Rubén Cobos collections (1940s–1970s). A French-born Catholic priest who served in Tomé, New Mexico for over fifty years, Ralliere compiled nearly one thousand sacred and secular melodies in manuscript notebooks and in his devotional songbook Cánticos espirituales, issued in at least fifteen editions, attesting to its wide circulation. As John Koegel notes, these compilations document the intersection of Mexican, French, and Anglo-American influences that shaped an emerging Nuevomexicano musical culture at the turn of the twentieth century (Koegel 1997). Ralliere's work constitutes the first systematic effort to record this tradition. Drawing on archival research in Ralliere's manuscripts and printed editions,

alongside comparative analysis of Robb's and Cobos's recordings and field notes, my paper traces the recurrence of specific alabados, hymns, and secular songs across manuscript, print, and sound. The Robb Archive (University of New Mexico), foundational to his published corpus (Robb 1980), reflects an institutional project privileging genre taxonomy and musical transcription. The Cobos Collection (Colorado College), shaped by pedagogical and linguistic concerns, foregrounds dialect speech, oral transmission, and socially embedded performance, emphasizing women's central role in devotional networks (Levine & Chace 1999). Building on scholarship that understands archives as historically situated mediating structures (Derrida 1996; Sterne 2003; Stoler 2009), I argue that these projects reframed Ralliere's repertory through distinct epistemic logics that articulated competing models of tradition.

07E:3. Friday, 3:15 PM.

"Whose Memory" in the Southwest Hispanic Folk Music Archive: Re-Considering John Donald Robb and Vicente T. Mendoza's Ethnographic Encounters, Fieldwork Tactics and Collection Strategies

Peter J. Garcia - California State University Northridge

Throughout the twentieth century, major archives were created to document U.S. Southwest Hispanic and Indigenous musics at a moment when Spanish and Native languages were being displaced by English. Early collectors framed their work as an urgent effort to preserve Indo-Hispano, Native, and Genízaro repertories as part of both regional heritage and U.S. national culture. This paper argues that such archival practices did more than safeguard musical traditions: they actively shaped "whose memory" was preserved and structured how Southwestern musics entered ethnomusicological discourse. Focusing on the John Donald Robb Archive of Southwestern Music—one of the largest repositories of U.S. Hispanic and Indigenous music, comprising roughly three thousand field recordings—my paper examines the institutional and intellectual forces behind its formation. John Robb (1892–1989), Harvard-trained in law before joining the University of New Mexico at forty-nine, served as collector, archivist, cellist, conductor, composer, and dean of the College of Fine Arts (1942–1957) (Rivera 2015). Approaching the repertories not as a formally trained musicologist but as a composer and administrator, Robb's professional profile shaped the archive's scope and interpretive framing. A key intervention came in 1945, when he invited Mexican musicologist Vicente T. Mendoza and Virginia R. Mendoza to UNM, addressing an epistemic gap and leading to influential publications based on the collections (Robb 1980; Mendoza & Mendoza 1986). Situating these archives within a critical, decolonial, and "Greater Mexican" framework (Paredes 1958; Limón 1998), the paper analyzes how institutional authority structured the production and circulation of Southwestern musical knowledge.

07F. Friday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Listening as Ontological Practice in More-Than-Human Worlds

Marie Comuzzo; Finley Woodson-Gammon; Anya Shatilova; Gabriel Andruzzi - Brandeis University; University of Nevada, Reno; Wesleyan University; University of Maryland College Park
Chair(s): Marie Comuzzo - Brandeis University

This panel explores the ways sound acquires meaning depending on who, how, when, and where it is produced. How is human culture impacted by the ways in which we make meaning of the more-than-human musical output? From land to water, and from massive to microscopic, collectively we examine how sonic listening practices have produced new ethical relationships of care amid growing awareness of human ecological impact in the late twentieth century. These encounters—between humans and whales, humans and plants, and between composers and land—reveal that meaning-making is never neutral, but is rather shaped by gendered ideologies, aesthetic concepts of beauty, and ontological concerns on what it means to be a human. While studies on more-than-human musicalities tend to prioritize species who vocalize in ways that appeal to Western musical taste, there are remarkable examples of composers' sensibilities that attempt to move beyond those canonical ways of listening and instead interrogate how new ethical relationships can emerge from listening closely to and with human-damaged land and ocean. The first two papers explore how meaning-making in the ocean is produced by focusing on gendered and musical beauty in the repertoires of humpback and bowhead whales. The second half of the panel turns to land and plants, interrogating how listening to damaged landscapes and vegetal life reframes ethical responsibility and exposes the ontological stakes embedded in our listening

practices. Ultimately, this panel positions listening as an ethical mode of attunement that reshapes ecological responsibility and human self-understanding.

07F:1. Friday, 1:45 PM.
Listening into Transcendence: Gender, Genius, and the Cultural Politics of Whale Song
Marie Comuzzo - Brandeis University

What are the moral conditions that enable a life to matter as a life and how do music and gender play into those conditions? By drawing parallels between the symphony's elevation as the pinnacle of human culture and the reception of humpback whale song since the 1970s, in this talk I argue that humpback whale song became culturally relevant within a Western context because of the specific musical aspect they contain—large-scale form, thematic repetition, and extended duration, —as well as what they ask from the listener—protracted concentration, emotional engagement, and intellectual discernment. Centering personhood as interconnected with meaningful musical output, I show how culturally and societally the composing humpback whales had to necessarily be males, a gendered framework that derives both from evolutionary theories and Western classical music ideologies embedded with nineteenth-century values. I highlight the coherence of discriminatory gendered ideologies throughout species, including humans, and how their musical significance entered meaningfully into the sciences and musicology only after second wave feminism. For example, just as female bird song has long been excluded from large birdsong surveys, female and collective whale vocal expressions have been marginal and relegated to the non-song realm. Ultimately, I address how humpback songs function semantically and culturally similarly to symphonies and how their framing, discovery, and study, repositioned whales not as bodies to be extracted as lifeless profit, but rather as mysterious and endlessly fascinating non-human pinnacles of intelligence.

07F:2. Friday, 2:15 PM.
Bowhead Song and the Disappearing Acoustic Habitat of the Arctic
Finley Woodson-Gammon - University of Nevada, Reno

Bowhead whales (Balaena mysticetus) sing and navigate in close relationship with sea ice, using leads and areas of thinner ice to surface, breathe, and orient across the deep Arctic winter. This paper asks what happens to bowhead vocal culture when the acoustic environment it depends on is itself disappearing. As Arctic sea ice diminishes in extent and seasonal duration, the underwater soundscape bowheads sing into is changing materially: ice cover that once structured sound propagation is replaced by open water increasingly filled with shipping traffic and industrial noise. Drawing on phenomenological approaches to listening and sound, alongside recent Arctic bioacoustic research documenting the scope and seasonal variability of bowhead song, I argue that climate change should be understood not only as a threat to bowhead populations but as an ongoing transformation of the acoustic conditions under which their song exists at all, and a loss of acoustic habitat that runs alongside, and is entangled with, the loss of physical habitat. This reframing resists a purely biological account of vocal behavior and instead treats bowhead song as an aesthetic and relational practice unfolding within a specific, rapidly vanishing sonic environment. I position this argument within the blue humanities and within ecomusicological work on soundscape and environmental change, asking what ethnomusicology's tools for listening to musical environments can offer climate research as a model for thinking climate loss through sound rather than only through visual or statistical registers of disappearance.

07F:3. Friday, 2:45 PM.
Listening to Nuclear Landscapes in Eurasia: Sound, Ecology, and More-than-Human Temporalities
Anya Shatilova - Wesleyan University

This paper explores how sonic and musical practices engage nuclear landscapes as sites of ecological vulnerability, ethical responsibility, and more-than-human relationality. Drawing on theories of nuclearity, it examines how music and sound participate in forms of environmental attunement and response in a nuclear age, particularly in contexts shaped by the ongoing ecological afterlives of Soviet nuclear modernity. The paper juxtaposes works by composers shaped directly by late Soviet cultural contexts such as Alfred Schnittke's Nagasaki with transnational and contemporary reinterpretations of nuclear catastrophe, including Hildur Guðnadóttir's score for the Chernobyl miniseries and recent experimental

projects such as Galya Bisengalieva's Polygon and Marina Herlop's Pripyat. This grouping allows me to trace how nuclear imaginaries move from late Soviet artistic responses to catastrophe toward twenty-first-century ecological and media-saturated reinterpretations across Eurasian and contexts. Rather than treating these works as representations of nuclear sites, I ask: How do they make nuclear environments sensible? How might listening itself function as a mode of engagement with irradiated landscapes and damaged ecologies? Methodologically, the paper turns to sound ethnography not only as an analytical framework but as a listening practice attentive to environments, bodies, infrastructures, and more-than-human agencies. Instead of positioning sound as a reflection of place, I approach it as a medium through which nuclear landscapes are mediated and imagined.

07F:4. Friday, 3:15 PM.

Sounding the Vegetal: Imaginaries of Consciousness, Communication, and the More-Than-Human World

Gabriel Andruzzi - University of Maryland College Park

This paper explores how sounding and listening provide ways of imagining and knowing and modes of enacting human relationships to plant life. Through ethnographic and archival research, I examine practices and discourses related to plant-data sonification from the 1970s and the 21st century, showing how human-plant relations reveal, reflect, and inscribe imaginaries about consciousness, communication, sound, and the more-than-human world. I situate my research in relation to 19th and 20th-century alternative religious practices, cybernetics, and what Theresa Castro refers to as the "1970s Plant Craze" (2020), a milieu in which plants were considered intelligent and sensitive to human thoughts and feelings. I ask how contemporary plant-data sonifiers construct meaning through listening to plants, and why they consider sonic plants a unique challenge to normative boundaries between species and conceptions of nature, culture, and consciousness. This research contributes to scholarship on the entwinement of nonhumans with human musicking (Seeger 2017; Levin 2006; Steingo 2024), the "plant turn" in humanities scholarship and popular literature (Hall 2011; Kimmerer 2013), and recent interest in the vegetal within music studies (McGhee 2024). I assert that while sounding and listening to plants provokes imaginaries of a consciousness unbound by species and positions plants as authors, collaborators, and agents within sonic assemblages, such efforts to decenter the human may actually reinforce the anthropocentrism they seek to challenge.

07G. Friday, 1:45 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Who Gets Heard? Rap, Identity, and Recognition

Abimbola Kai-Lewis; Julia Monaco; Spencer Stevens; Ailish Quinones Rivera - Berklee College of Music/Hofstra University; University of Toronto; University of North Texas; The University of Texas at Austin
Chair(s): Abimbola Kai-Lewis - Berklee College of Music/Hofstra University

07G:1. Friday, 1:45 PM.

"Blue Check Fame": Rap Narratives and Social Media Addiction

Abimbola Kai-Lewis - Berklee College of Music/Hofstra University

Emcee Chosan's song "Blue Check Fame" interrogates the pursuit of clout and influence through attaining blue check verification status on social media platforms. Appearing on his 2023 album, Me Against the Algorithm, it is part of Chosan's broader narratives about the benefits and drawbacks of algorithms, artificial intelligence, and social media usage. Inspired by the title of rapper Tupac Shakur's 1995 release, Me Against the World, Chosan uses the songs featured on Me Against the Algorithm as commentaries about our increasingly digital lives.

"Blue Check Fame" is Chosan's exploration of public perception and social media addiction. The track's lyrics propose that the coveted blue checks create addictive behaviors as well as extreme fixations with achieving public popularity and visibility. Chosan emphasizes that after 2022, many social media users opted to pay monthly subscriptions to garner blue check recognition, and the emblem's significance was irreversibly transformed.

Based upon lyrical, musical, and video analyses, this presentation investigates Chosan's examination of blue check verification status and its impact on social media users. It incorporates details from interviews and personal communication with Chosan about "Blue Check Fame"between 2023 and 2025. Moreover, it integrates data gathered

from a co-facilitated 2025 lecture with Chosan about Me Against the Algorithm. The presentation also draws upon theories of social media as a behavior modification tool (Lanier 2018) and motivator for chasing virality (Newport 2025). By these means, it uses "Blue Check Fame" as an example of a rap narrative critiquing social media addiction.

07G:2. Friday, 2:15 PM.

"Es que existes por lo que haces": Care Practices and Audibility in the Work of "El Mulato" Muñoz

Julia Monaco - University of Toronto

This paper examines the work of hip-hop artist and cultural worker Brayan "Mulato" Muñoz in the city of Pasto (Nariño, Colombia). I argue that while musicians in Pasto often struggle to sustain long-term careers within its dense soundscape—marked by intense competition among numerous regional artists—Mulato has remained audible by embedding practices of care (Hobart and Kneese 2020) into his work. Mulato's impact is evident not only in his success as an artist, but in his cultivation of transformative community spaces.

Drawing from interviews conducted with Mulato, I explore how he emerges from an "overpopulation of sounds" (Schafer 1977) while staying grounded in the vision that guides his organization Surprise City Foundation. This includes creating and sustaining spaces dedicated to youth expression and education, human rights advocacy, citizen participation, and sexual and reproductive rights. I pay particular attention to the annual event, Encuentros Hip Hop por la Paz (Hip-Hop Encounters for Peace), which exemplifies an initiative designed as both entertainment and community development through skill-building workshops. The skills and knowledge acquisition fostered through these programs shape broader community development efforts by expanding access to opportunity (Harrison 2020).

Ultimately, I show how Mulato' work exemplifies that creative practices rooted in care can serve as forms of resilience and long-term community-building. Mulato's work responds directly to institutional shortcomings in his city through community-oriented action. By foregrounding interdependency, he demonstrates that listeners are worthy of care from the artists they support. Reciprocally, artists are sustained by attentive and engaged audiences.

07G:3. Friday, 2:45 PM.

Rockist Critical Aesthetics of Seriousness, Accessibility, and Kendrick Lamar's GNX (2024)

Spencer Stevens - University of North Texas

GNX (2024) has largely failed to attain the same near-universal critical acclaim as Compton rap star Kendrick Lamar's previous records. This is best evidenced by an infamous review score from Pitchfork: 6.6/10. As critic Langdon Hickman wrote, "By pre-existing metrics Kendrick has more than willingly slotted himself into, of course GNX would be a disappointment." This paper investigates these "pre-existing metrics," revealing how twentieth century conceptions of rockist seriousness still guide critics today. I argue that two metrics of seriousness remain pervasive: 1) the (concept) album as the most valuable format of musical expression, and 2) a perceived oppositional orientation towards the "mainstream." To demonstrate this, I provide comparative analyses between the critical reception of GNX and good kid, m.A.A.d. city (2012), illustrating how discourses of seriousness have guided the reception of both records. I engage primarily with the historiographical work of Keightley (1995), Lindberg et al. (2005), and Brennan (2017) pertaining to rockist critical aesthetics. I also engage with a critique of hip hop politics as applied to Lamar's older records by Burton (2017), illustrating how Lamar has updated his messaging to a new mode of political expression that is predominantly implicit and thus largely illegible to critics. I conclude by asserting that GNX teaches us about the aesthetic value of accessibility in popular music. Ultimately, this investigation reveals a new politics of seriousness that has taken hold in contemporary popular music, politics which are no longer beholden to the rockist idea that seriousness and accessibility are mutually exclusive.

07G:4. Friday, 3:15 PM.

Who sounds Puerto Rican? Bad Bunny, Tego Calderón, and the politics of local racialized folklore.

Ailish Quinones Rivera - The University of Texas at Austin

Bad Bunny references traditional Puerto Rican genres—bomba, plena, and música jíbara—on Debí Tirar Más Fotos, which many have described as his "most Puerto Rican album yet." The use of barriles (bomba drums) and panderos (associated with plena), layered with reggaetón rhythms and salsa samples, grounds the album in local musical heritage. While this project marks a new level of commercial and critical success for Bad Bunny through its embrace of traditional sound markers, such fusions are not unprecedented. Throughout his career, Tego Calderón has incorporated elements of bomba and salsa into his rap compositions, particularly on El Abayarde. Building on Bruno and Victoria's concept of "productive nostalgia" in Un Verano Sin Ti, this paper compares Debí Tirar Más Fotos and El Abayarde, focusing on their use of samples and sonic markers drawn from bomba, plena, and música jíbara. I argue that both albums engage with representations of Puerto Rican identity shaped by state institutions and grounded in ideals of racial democracy through mestizaje. Through his deployment of traditional genres, Bad Bunny often reinforces state-sponsored narratives of racial harmony, whereas Tego Calderón foregrounds Black sonic epistemologies that challenge these discourses. Using frameworks of productive nostalgia, acoustemology, and Black Sound Studies methodologies, this study examines how each artist mobilizes local sound to negotiate, contest, or reimagine hegemonic constructions of Puerto Rican identity in the archipelago and its diaspora.

07H. Friday, 1:45 PM. Organized Panel

Mobility, Affect, and Style: Cross-Border and Trans-Oceanic Identity Politics in South Asian Frame Drum Practices

Zoe Sherinian; Stephanie Lou George; Chris McGuiness - University of Oklahoma; The Graduate Center, City University of New York; City University of New York / Universität Zürich
Chair(s): Jim Sykes; Zoe Sherinian - University of Pennsylvania; Oklahoma University

The South Indian frame drum (called parai, tappu, and dappu) varies in shape, style and rhythmic patterns across South Asia and its diasporas, while performed in similar ritual functions and contemporary political and folkloric contexts. This panel presents emerging musical dialogues linking frame-drum practices across state/land borders of South India and its trans-oceanic diasporas—in Mauritius, Réunion, Malaysia, Guyana, and the U.S. We engage themes of contemporary political movements, caste, religion, racial discourses, cultural contact, folklorization, and the complexities of postcolonial identity. Panelist One uses a digital music-mapping framework to analyze distinct style elements linked to place and histories of cultural contact arguing language, subcastes, and location form the boundaries of style in Tamil Nadu while Saivism driven by class mobility is reshaping practice in its diasporas. Panelist Two examines a diasporic performance in which Indo-Caribbean "Madrasi" tappu drummers spontaneously join Tamil-speaking Singaporean Hindu drummers. They argue that such collaborations enable Indo-Caribbeans to mobilize performance to legitimate belonging within South Asian American diasporic culture particularly when facing casteist-racial criticism of Kali trance practices associated with Madrasi tappu. Panelist Three examines the "dappu" in Telangana, India, arguing that when remediated on Bonalu PA systems, it not only transduces electricity into air pressure, but also into public affects which bolster claims about urban space. Noise pollution and its concomitant, social organization are redefined through aspirations to develop Hyderabad into a global city. This panel expands research on South Asian folk drumming to nuance its complex contemporary socio-cultural and musical identities.

07H:1. Friday, 2:15 PM.

Mapping the parai frame drum's contemporary diversity and historical retentions

Zoe Sherinian - University of Oklahoma

This paper presents survey and fieldwork results from a collaborative digital music-mapping project on the parai frame drum of the Dalits (formerly "outcastes") of Tamil Nadu, India. Our dataset includes 75 in-person surveys and 15 interviews of senior drummers, gathered using participatory fieldwork methods and comparative musical analysis across seven styles zones in Tamil Nadu. It is supplemented with comparative rhythmic data from the nineteenth-century

indentured Tamil diasporic communities in Mauritius and Réunion, who continue to play the "tappu" (a predecessor of parai). We argue that the sonic manifestations of ritual and social purpose (adi rhythmic patterns) are affectively linked through style to distinct places and histories of culture contact, which we demonstrate through geographically pinpointed audio-visual analysis (Hsu 2014: 3). Our analysis functionally and demographically contextualizes rhythmic patterns to comparatively show how they vary in different locations resulting in distinct style zones. We observe that adi patterns for the same function, drum nomenclature, and other style markers differ most significantly between language groups (Telugu vs. Tamil), subcastes, and locations with distinct cultural contact influences (e.g. Western military bands). Yet, rhythmic patterns for village goddesses (Mariamma and Kali) persist in former indentured communities and are traceable to locations in Tamil Nadu reinforcing their geographic origins. However, these rhythmic patterns face attrition as Saivism shaped by class mobility and Brahminization reshapes diasporic practice. These findings underscore the rich diversity of historical and contemporary parai performance in Tamil Nadu and its diasporas, and the importance of supporting its continued transmission among artists.

07H:2. Friday, 2:45 PM.

Mobility, Affect, and Style: Cross-Border and Trans-Oceanic Identity Politics in South Asian Frame Drum Practices

Stephanie Lou George - The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Tappu drumming is emblematic of Indo-Caribbean "Madrasi Religion" that reverberates throughout New York City where it has proliferated and been revitalized in Guyana and Trinidad despite decline due to migration (Vertovec 1992). "Madrasi" was a British appellation for the minority of indentured laborers who embarked for the New World via the southern port of Madras (1838-1917). Negative associations of Kali worship, mostly by mainstream Sanatan "Hindus," with backwardness and blackness (Williams 1990) as linked to Madrasis, produce ambivalence about similarities of ecstatic sonic practices with Afro-Caribbean religions. Today, devotees mitigate anxieties by emphasizing an "ancient Tamil" origins narrative from Tamil Sangam literature (Sherinian 2024:193). This narrative disavows Indo-Afro mixing, reifying deeply entrenched notions of racial purity alongside religious hierarchy from British colonialism within post-emancipation plantation indentureship and post-independence contexts. Indo-Caribbean Madrasis, who encounter discrimination from South Asian Americans as having "lost" their culture, seek to reclaim respect. I argue that they mobilize tappu performance to gain prestige as they seek forms of belonging within South Asian American diasporic culture. I analyze an example of Madrasi tappu drummers joining Tamil-speaking Singaporean drummers for an impromptu performance playing particular rhythms, "Permaul" and "Victory Dance," that interlocked with urumi melam drummers (Sykes 2015). This provides Indo-Caribbeans proof of Madrasi Religion's Tamil origins and shared history of alterity within South Indian tappu/parai drumming culture. This unprecedented performance and my analysis contribute to ethnomusicological theorization of sonic density as "copresence of layers of temporalities" (Jankowsky 2010:130) and transformation through entrainment (Becker 2004 and Clayton 2013).

07H:3. Friday, 3:15 PM.

Skin to Subwoofer: Transducing the Dappu Frame Drum and the Affective Politics of Bonalu Festival in Hyderabad, India

Chris McGuiness - City University of New York / Universität Zürich

The dappu is a frame drum historically associated with religious rituals, communication, and folk musics among India's Telugu-speaking scheduled castes. For the last century, its musical repertoire has been mobilized by activist groups, identity-based organizations, and, most recently, the Telangana state movement, leading to the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014. Telangana is viscerally audible during Bonalu, a government-sponsored festival in which percussion ensembles and DJ trucks move throughout Hyderabad, asserting both the dappu's repertoire and the city's sonic architecture. These large public address (PA) systems, paradoxically, are socially constructed in how they remediate dappu recordings, yet are also deterministic in that they replace live drummers, empowered by their own technological capacities. This essay intervenes in debates between technological determinism and social constructionism by foregrounding the concept of transduction (Helmreich 2007). I argue that transduction – the transfer of energy between media – is a mutually constitutive process in which: 1. aesthetic decisions are made around loudness, density, and

distortion; 2. acoustic pressure waves reconfigure sonic movement (Eisenlohr 2021) in the city. Ultimately, the dappu, as remediated on Bonalu PA systems, not only transduces electricity into air pressure, but also into public affects which bolster claims about urban space. As such, noise pollution and its concomitant, social organization, are redefined through aspirations to develop Hyderabad into a global city. Drawing upon ethnography between 2014–26 in Telangana, this work traces the distribution of agency among technological artifacts, repertoire, aesthetic evaluation, and relations of production.

07I. Friday, 1:45 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Beats and Belonging in Contemporary Music Cultures

Susan Jacob; Corin Duey; Forest Jordan; Scott Currie - University of Hawai'i at Mānoa; Boston University; Duke University; University of Minnesota

Chair(s): Liz Przybylski - University of California-Riverside

07I:1. Friday, 1:45 PM.

Mana Wāhine at the Mic: Establishing a Framework for Hawai'i Hip Hop Feminism

Susan Jacob - University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

21st-century hip hop feminist scholarship now spans beyond Black American idioms to include global gender dynamics. However, US-centric racial frameworks often obscure local constructions of power and gendered systems. A nuanced understanding of international hip hop feminism requires analyzing the interplay between localization and gender expression. Positioned as a geographic and culturally distinct outlier to the mainland United States, Hawai'i offers a compelling case study on the intersection of domestic status and outsider identity, underpinned by a local culture rooted in Indigenous Hawaiian values that seek to reclaim power as opposed to equality within a colonial patriarchal system. This paper serves as an initial investigation into establishing a theoretical basis for a Hawai'i hip hop feminist framework. I argue that the Hawai'i emcees analyzed in this study localize hip hop music through processes that intertwine equitable gender values (mana wāhine), sovereignty narratives (ea), and deeply felt place-based connections (aloha ʻāina) to the point that one becomes inseparable from the other. Through the analysis of lyrical texts, vocal techniques, and embodied practices I suggest that the potential for gender parity could serve as a definitive characteristic of Hawai'i hip hop, thereby distinguishing it within the global hip hop landscape. This research is based on observations at live performances, cyber ethnography, and interviews with artists recently active in the city of Honolulu. In this presentation, I expand upon extant studies on sonic resistance strategies in the Pacific by providing an in-depth analysis on how female gender expression contributes to this discourse.

07I:2. Friday, 2:15 PM.

Repetition and Iteration: Network Formation and Sustenance in Boston's Underground Techno Scene

Corin Duey - Boston University

In light of recent attempts by city officials to rejuvenate Boston's nightlife economy, this paper examines one subcultural scene—underground techno—with a foundational role in global nightlife culture, yet a complicated relationship with Boston. I investigate how the city's material and regulatory constraints shape the formation and sustenance of underground techno, highlighting the importance of local collectives. Despite a young and transient population, a comparative lack of infrastructure, and strict legal codes, the scene has nonetheless persisted. While existing scene studies tend to highlight either the social (community, identity) or the spatial (urban geography, venues), this paper analyzes how material constraints force the social to adapt to external pressures, revealing how distributed agency across human and non-human actors contributes to subcultural scene formation. Actor-Network Theory, Dynamical Systems Theory, and spatial theory help identify the emergent self-organization of socio-material networks, reframing genres, collectives, and scenes as dynamic processes rather than static categories. Drawing from autoethnography and interviews with organizers, DJs, and dancers, I argue that subcultural scenes materialize through the repetition and iteration (both key sonic aspects of techno) of networks—the same process by which space becomes place. As humans confront a rapidly shifting technological horizon compounded by increasing isolation, understanding the forces that keep people connected becomes crucial. Ultimately, it is the momentary 1-to-1 connection between two individuals confirming each

other's realities that seeds any network, which through continual reproduction and iteration, reaches temporary states of consolidation that we register as genres, collectives, scenes, and places.

07I:3. Friday, 2:45 PM.

No Room to Party: Sound Ecology and Queer Collisions at Furry Conventions

Forest Jordan - Duke University

Queer subcultures have seen various degrees of resurgence post pandemic. The furry community has had to grapple with a sudden surge in convention attendance, caused in part by rising popular musicians identifying as furry artists. Issues surrounding growing attendance numbers, seen recently at Bewhiskered and Anthrocon, go beyond financial. Organizers for these recent furry conventions have outright banned the existence of "room parties", a practice that has historically included do-it-yourself music performances to showcase independent Furry artists, pointing to concerns of safety, optics, and noise. The relationships between hierarchies of sound ecology are cross-examined with hierarchies of queer coalition building. Fieldwork and archival footage lead to listening to furry convention sound ecology as a site for coalition building through points of collision with history, space, the intrapersonal, and the institutions of music. History's collision is addressed through comparative sound analysis of archival recordings of furry convention spaces in the 80s and 90s with field recordings at Bewhiskered 2026 and Anthrocon 2026, highlighting how changes in community structure dictate sound ecology, which in turn dictate one's intrapersonal relation to identities. Convention organizers thus reinforce institutions of music through their committal to top-down structures, causing fissure with previously established networks of DIY events by enacting officially organized concerts and raves at conventions. Tracing how larger discourses of queer optics actualize themselves as sonic objects and absences lead to a problematization of queer hierarchical community structures and their power to shape space as a field for identity building and queer coalition.

07I:4. Friday, 3:15 PM.

From Boogie to Ba-Ba-Boom: Re-Indigenization and Cosmopolitanism in Rocksteady Bass Conception

Scott Currie - University of Minnesota

From hip hop to reggaeton to bhangra, the autonomous bass-and-drum grooves providing the foundation for global dance beats follow precedents set by Jamaican dancehall rhythms, whose earliest manifestations reveal aesthetic roots in the brief but pivotal period of stylistic innovation glossed as rocksteady. While often represented as little more than a transitional style between ska and reggae, due to the "essential Americanness" that such researchers as Lloyd Bradley hear in its soul-influenced vocals, rocksteady looms large in oral-historical accounts of prominent musicians, who place the emergence of the foregrounded, often percussive electric basslines and the one-drop drum-set conception—which Kenneth Bilby considers fundamental to the "re-indigenization" of the music—firmly within its seminal developmental ambit. In this paper, I draw upon artist interviews, ethnographic field research, and musicological analysis to cast new light upon the development of rocksteady's startlingly original bass conceptions, which abandoned the walking basslines of African American jazz and boogie-woogie, in favor of locally conceived paradigms evincing noteworthy affinities to roots-drumming traditions like nyabinghi, while owing surprisingly little to the Motown/Stax-era soul models avowedly embraced by the musicians. As I demonstrate, from the time of their appropriation by the Muscle Shoals production team in the States—predating reggae's rise to international prominence with Bob Marley's "I Shot the Sheriff" or Jimmy Cliff's "Harder They Come" —rocksteady rhythms helped set in motion cycles of cross-fertilization blurring the boundaries between local and global, national and international, and ultimately leaving a distinctive Jamaican imprint upon cosmopolitan dance culture worldwide.

07J. Friday, 1:45 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Rethinking Instruments: Materiality, Ethics, and Aesthetics

Sunday Oluwaseun Ukaewen; Gene Lai; Thirukumaran M.L.; Benjamin Skoronski; Mohammad Geldi Geldi Nejad - Harvard University; ; Cornell University; Brown University
Chair(s): Althea SullyCole - McGill University

07J:1. Friday, 1:45 PM.

How the Membrane Makes Voice: Material Emergence in Yorùbá Dùndún Drumming

Sunday Oluwaseun Ukaewen - Harvard University

Among Yorùbá drummers in southwestern Nigeria, the Dùndún drum is described as Òkú Ewúrẹ́ Tó ń F'ọ̀hùn Bí Ẹ̀nìyàn—"the dead goat skin that vocalizes like a human." This formulation locates vocality within the drum's membrane rather than in human technique alone. While scholarship on Dùndún richly documents its social functions and speech imitation, it often treats the instrument as acoustically neutral, overlooking how the membrane's physical behavior conditions vocal expression. This paper argues that Dùndún vocality emerges through the material responsiveness of goat skin under shifting conditions of pressure, tension, heat, and touch. Drawing on four months of performance-based ethnography in Ìlorà, Òyó State, I employ a method I term material tracing: tracking how physical changes in the instrument—such as fluctuations in elasticity—shape performance decisions. Through analysis of archival recordings, Yorùbá proverbs that encode material knowledge, and interviews with master drummers, I demonstrate that the membrane moves through multiple material states that yield distinct vocal registers, including melorhythmic (àlùjó), nasal, ohùn agogo, and speech-surrogate vocality. Drummers actively regulate these states through environmental and tactile interventions, such as applying solar heat to tighten slack skin or binding twine around tension cords to recalibrate response. Vocality thus arises not from inert matter but through dynamic engagement with a responsive membrane. By foregrounding this material encounter, the paper reframes instrumental voice as a relational achievement in which sound, meaning, and agency are co-constituted across human and material bodies.

07J:2. Friday, 2:15 PM.

Negotiating Ethical Aesthetics: Moral Evaluation and Musical Value in Turkmen Dutar Performance

Mohammad Geldi Geldi Nejad - Brown University

Throughout the world, people evaluate music in ethical terms, and ethnomusicologists are learning how subtle and all-pervasive the moral view of music is (McGraw 2023). This is also true in Turkmen music, a fact which has gone unnoticed until now. Drawing from fieldwork insights and performance experiences with dutar players in Turkmenistan, I argue that the aesthetic ideals of dutar performance transcend merely what is played and sounded on the instrument, but are aligned with Turkmen moral and ethical values. Given the connection between these cultural codes, dutar players must negotiate carefully between contrasting ethical expectations. For example, dutar music is technically demanding and virtuosic, and expert listeners appreciate performances that meet these exacting standards with praise such as "ýerine bardy," meaning "it went all the way." Yet audiences may also interpret excess sound or exaggerated body gestures as "ýeňil," implying pretentiousness. Facilitating an aesthetic response from listeners requires fulfilling their expectations of high musical accomplishment while coming across as unpretentious. In this paper, I analyze specific sequences of dutar pieces to identify key moments that shed light on these evaluations.

07J:3. Friday, 2:45 PM.

Beyond the Limits of Materiality: Rethinking Instrumentality through the Quills

Benjamin Skoronski - Cornell University

Musical instruments are material things—but is that all they are? The so-called "material turn" within music studies has brought renewed attention to the physicality of technologies, bodies, and particularly instruments (Bates 2012; Dawe 2015; Allen 2023). However, material-turn organology still presumes instrument stability, tending to treat instruments as materially coherent entities rather than unstable assemblages sustained through practice, technological flexibility, and cultural memory.

Building upon Emily Dolan (2025), I will probe the "limits of materiality" through the nineteenth-century African American panpipes, or "quills." Through an archive of extant instruments, commercial and field recordings, textual accounts, and oral histories, I demonstrate that the quills were realized through a dizzyingly wide variety of materials, tunings, and number of pipes. Strikingly, wind instruments that would be taxonomized separately by later scholars—single-pipe fifes, edge-blown panpipes, and end-blown fippled flutes—were all understood by practitioners as different material manifestations of quills. What links these diverse manifestations is the characteristic method of playing, itself

extending beyond the material instrument: "hooting," the practice of vocalizing pitches in alternation with blown notes, deriving from sub-Saharan reedpipe traditions.

I argue that the quills reveal musical instruments to be more-than-material assemblages, sustained through embodied practice, cultural memory, and technological flexibility, thereby challenging organological models grounded in material fixity. This paper therefore asks the material turn in music studies to reconsider where instrumentality resides; not solely in objects and their physical properties, but in practices and imaginaries that endure beyond any single material form.

07J:4. Friday, 3:15 PM.

When the *Paṟai* Travels: Diaspora, Local Pedagogy, and the Making of a Singapore-Style Tamil Frame-Drum Tradition

Gene Lai; Thirukumaran M.L. - National Institute of Education, Singapore; Nanyang Technological University

This paper addresses a significant gap in scholarship on the ancient Tamil paṟai frame drum. Existing ethnomusicological research has primarily focused on the instrument's performance practices in Tamil Nadu, where it is closely associated with the Tamil Dalit community, addressing topics such as anti-caste oppression, social justice activism, and identity empowerment. Conversely, few studies examine how the paṟai's role is repositioned when it circulates beyond South India and enters diasporic and multicultural contexts. This study responds to that gap by examining paṟai practice in Singapore, a cosmopolitan city-state in Southeast Asia. Drawing on participant observation, interviews, and documentation of drumming workshops and staged performances, this paper examines how the paṟai's role has been reconfigured in Singapore under the direction of Thirukumaran, a leading Tamil drumming pedagogue and founder of Damaru Singapore. Thirukumaran combines performance styles from Madurai, Tanjavur, and Chennai, which are usually kept separate in Tamil Nadu, into a single Singapore paṟai style. He further develops an ensemble performance format inspired by Brazilian street percussion, integrating layered rhythmic patterns and coordinated dance movement. In Singapore, paṟai drumming has only recently been revitalized, and the absence of gatekeepers or learned audiences has given Thirukumaran the freedom to experiment with blending regional paṟai drumming styles. This makes Singapore a distinctive site for examining how paṟai drumming is reshaped beyond its place of origin in Tamil Nadu. The study contributes to the discourse on how musical practices acquire new meanings as they cross borders.

07K. Friday, 1:45 PM. Roundtable

A Legacy Supreme: Making Meaning of the John Coltrane Centennial

Anyabwile Love, Salim Washington - UCLA, Doug Carn, Maya Cunningham - American University
Chair(s): Maya Cunningham - American University

One hundred years after the birth of John Coltrane, this roundtable asks what his legacy signifies in the present and how it might orient the future. This panel takes a rare, nuanced, Africana studies-centered, ethnomusicological approach in convening tradition bearers, scholars, and practitioners across generations to discuss the meaning of his Centennial anniversary. Hour one will include a presentation by a leading contemporary tenor saxophonist who will reflect on how Coltrane shaped his current practice and the colossal, lasting impact on younger generations in the jazz saxophone lineage. Then a senior jazz tenor saxophonist and a Black music scholar will dialogue with a living legend/jazz elder who worked with Coltrane, exploring a firsthand perspective on his practice. To close the first hour, an Africana studies scholar will present his film "Speakn' Trane," (20 minutes). The film is a visual conversation exploring the revolutionary spirit behind Coltrane's "A Love Supreme." Through themes of meditation, nature, and Black musical cosmologies, the film honors Coltrane's spiritual journey and his deep connection to Philadelphia, returning home to reclaim lost parts of himself, in the spirit of Sankofa. This conversation will engage Coltrane as a revered musician and cultural ancestor within the Black music continuum. During the second hour, the audience will be asked to engage with the presenters by asking questions that consider how his legacy asks musicians, artists, scholars, and communities to imagine more expansive futures, treating Coltrane's legacy not as a monument but as an unfinished project into the next 100 years.

07L. Friday, 1:45 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Haunted Acoustemologies: Witches, Ruins, and the Supernatural

Caitlin Brown Romtvedt; Melissa Miller; Johnathan Rhodes; Isobel D'Cruz Barnes - University of California, Berkeley; University of the Basque Country; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; University of North Texas; University of Pennsylvania

Chair(s): Anne Rasmussen - College of William & Mary

07L:1. Friday, 1:45 PM.

Singing Basque Witches: Linguistic Colonization, Auto-Exotification, and the Affordances of the 'Master's Tools'

Caitlin Brown Romtvedt - University of California, Berkeley,;

University of the Basque Country

Decolonial movements and postcolonial theory have long debated the possibilities and hazards of using ideologies and strategies implicated in colonialism, acknowledging their affordances while warning of their pitfalls (Chatterjee 1986; Fanon 1961; Mignolo 2000; Quijano 2007). The Basque Country is a stateless nation on the Iberian Peninsula that has long resisted outside domination and music is one way in which Basques develop alternative visions for their future. In this project, I examine the repertoire, imagery, and performance techniques of the all-female Basque pop band Neomak, a group who began as back-up singers and percussionists in a project called "Kepa eta Sorginak" (Kepa and the Witches). In the Basque Country, the colonization of consciousness has occurred through restrictions and impositions upon the Basque language and through the portrayals of, and associations with, sorginak ("witches") and other pre-Christian Basque figures. Through an in-depth examination of their eponymous 2022 album and a 2026 live concert, I explore how Neomak's use of and promotion of the Basque language and Basque cultural autonomy through auto-exotification, sexualization, and the mannerisms, structures, and formulas of global pop music is not an anticolonial attempt to "dismantle the master's house," but rather an attempt to use "the master's tools" to build their own home (Lorde 1984, 112). I seek to reveal how ethnomusicological research can offer insights into the difficulties of enacting meaningful change to oppressive systems and highlight the ways in which such actions can still be powerfully positive.

07L:2. Friday, 2:15 PM.

Witches and Other Border-Crossers: Sonic Pathways of Solidarity Through Transcarpathia in the Works of Alina Pash

Melissa Miller - University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Ukrainian witches take many forms. One commonality that rises from their diverse practices is their ability to reach across the boundary between worlds. Like Baba Yaga's one leg of bone and one of flesh, the Ukrainian witch straddles the boundaries between life and death, civilization and wilderness, the everyday and the supernatural, as well as the self and the other. Barbara Creed argues that such depictions of "monstrous" femininity can be wielded with the intent of challenging the patriarchal symbolic order and seeking alternative modes of being (2023). Others note that witchcraft serves as a last resort when one has no other recourse against oppression (Boudovskaia 2017; Kivelson 2013). This paper examines musical representations of witches in the works of Ukrainian singer and rapper Alina Pash during Russia's war on Ukraine. My analysis demonstrates that, by using occult symbolism and folk belief to oppose Russia's hegemonic claims, Pash's music challenges colonial notions of ownership, belonging, and monolithic cultural and linguistic unity that have served as Vladimir Putin's justification for the war. While Pash roots much of her work in Transcarpathian diversity, her sound is also internationally engaged, informed by collaborations with multiple international artists, genres, regional instruments, and languages. In this way, Pash's witches contribute to a rich and diverse Ukrainian musical landscape whose lineages and solidarities can be traced both locally and globally. She displays the creative and political potential of crossing and dissolving sonic boundaries of identity and belonging that patriarchal aggressors seek to manipulate in their favor.

07L:3. Friday, 2:45 PM.

Listening to Ruin: Aural Hauntings and the Phenomenology of Dereliction

Johnathan Rhodes - University of North Texas

Building upon Akhil Gupta's theories on urban decay, this paper positions urban soundscapes as a continuum of decay and ruination that shape acoustic experiences and reconfigure one's orientation in place. Through soundwalks of abandoned environments in Dallas, Texas, I examine how the acoustic dimensions of derelict environments facilitate a mode of perception shaped by acoustic hauntings, uncanny atmospheres, and remnants of past human activity. Rather than treating abandoned and ruined soundscapes as static backdrops, I view urban soundscapes through Tim Edensor's theory that ruined environments are dynamic, arguing that abandoned places function as ever-evolving acoustic fields marked by constantly shifting spatial and temporal horizons. Defined by the mnemonic traces of their former lives and the remnants of material environments that dwell within them, ruined places function as continuously evolving loci of collective memory, where temporality and spatiality collapse, creating a fragmented phenomenological experience of overlapping acoustic fields. By viewing urban soundscapes through the lens of ruination and decay, we can begin to understand how these auditory environments function as a process, rather than a location where sounds and silences are collected. This paper challenges the dominant human-centric assumptions of placemaking by demonstrating how soundscapes evolve beyond human habitation, resulting in an uncanny discord between their past lives and unrealized future horizons. By recentering acoustic experiences around displacement, absence, and loss, this phenomenological framework reconceptualizes the human relationship with sound, place, and temporality in contemporary urban soundscapes

07L:4. Friday, 3:15 PM.

Hearing Things: Haunted Acoustemology and the Sound of Supernatural in Postcolonial Malaysia

Isobel D'Cruz Barnes - University of Pennsylvania

Hantu (ghosts, spirits and/or demons in the Malay language) occupy an important place in Malaysian traditional belief and contemporary popular culture alike. From Malaysia's significant production of pontianak (female vampire-ghost) films to infamous real-life instances of demon-induced mass hysteria in young women and girls, hantu have also come to represent Malaysia internationally, on and off the screen. This paper connects the changing role of spirit entities in postcolonial Malaysia with shifting local attitudes toward music and sound. I explore how music and sound are still today used to summon, negotiate and repel hantu as well as what these entities themselves "sound like" to modern Malaysians—following anthropologists such as Aihwa Ong and Emily Ng in taking ghosts seriously as an object of research. Indeed, while spirit possession, folklore, and belief in the supernatural are well documented in anthropological texts on Malaysia, and representations of such entities are an emerging topic in screen, media, and film studies, scholarship focused on music and sound in this area is relatively scarce. Working across texts in music and sound studies, hauntology, screen studies, postcolonial studies and folklore studies, I use ethnographic data collected in two fieldwork periods in 2025 to discuss the place of hantu in contemporary Malaysia. Through conversations with Malaysian musicians in both traditional (mak yong, wayang kulit) and popular music contexts, I argue that attitudes toward hantu are inextricably linked to music and sound's subjugated and heavily-regulated place in Malaysian society.

08A. Friday, 4:00 PM. Organized Panel

Háblame de Miami: Sonic Citizenship and the Negotiation of Diasporic and Indigenous Belonging

Hannah Junco; Mike Levine; Madison Allwein; - University of Pennsylvania; Christopher Newport University; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill;
Chair(s): Marysol Quevedo - University of Miami

Miami has functioned as a hemispheric crossroads where migration, media circulation, and cultural production reshape identities across national, racial, and political boundaries. This panel examines how musical and sonic practices mediate belonging among diasporic and Indigenous communities, positioning Miami not as a site of exile or enclave but as an center of cultural transformation. Through sound, ritual, and embodied experience, music generates forms of citizenship, spirituality, and collective identity.

The panel highlights three interconnected musical formations. Hannah Junco examines Colombian plant medicine practitioners affiliated with the Inti Runa Native American Church, showing how ceremonial music and altered states foster pan-Indigenous identities that transcend national origin. By transforming historically criminalized plants into sacred musical conduits, participants claim belonging while articulating prophetic visions of hemispheric reunification grounded in Indigenous relationality.

Mike Levine analyzes the circulation of Cuban reparto between Havana and Miami, arguing that the genre enables migrants to renegotiate diasporic citizenship under unstable legal and territorial conditions. As reparto moves across digital and physical spaces, it connects migrants to memories of Havana while re-centering Miami as a hub, revealing how diasporic subjects reconfigure cubanidad, belonging, and authenticity.

Maddy Allwein examines audience embodiment at the Miami Montreux Jazz Festival, where dance programming elicited minimal visible movement. She argues that surveillance, class dynamics, and multicultural spectatorship produced unity through restraint, demonstrating how belonging is enacted through the disciplined management of bodily presence.

Together, these papers show how Miami's sonic landscape enables diasporic and Indigenous communities to reimagine identity, territory, and life through music.

08A:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

Where the Condor and Eagle Fly Together: Miami's plant medicine music subculture and the postcolonial deconstruction of identity politics and indigeneity in South Florida

Hannah Junco - University of Pennsylvania

In the aftermath of the cocaine wars of the 1970s—1990s, Miami's Colombian community has remained culturally marginalized in South Florida while media portrayals exoticize a violent history. Furthermore, the Colombian diaspora in Miami lacks the spatial and symbolic anchors afforded to other Latino groups through neighborhoods like Little Havana. When Miami's wellness culture entered the neo-shamanic imagination, Colombian medicine musicians and ceremonialists cultivate a spiritual subculture of social healing, cultural redemption, and musical confluence. Here, ritualized altered states of consciousness enact a symbolic reversal of the war on drugs, reconfiguring stigmatized psychoactive plants – particularly coca – into sacred medicines and musical conduits of ancestral knowledge. Through ethnography and collaboration with Colombian medicine musicians affiliated with the Inti Runa Native American Church in Miami, I explore ceremonies that highlight how North American and Latin American indigenous communities have forged relational pathways through sharing of medicine practices and music. This convergence is understood in indigenous prophetic terms, where the reunification of the Condor (South America) and the Eagle (North America) reveal how plant medicine music in Miami articulates a pan-indigenous identity that transcends national boundaries while offering Colombians a sense of place within the city's fragmented cultural geography. Local medicine musicians become central to the process of constructing pan-indigenous belonging by weaving together musical elements and aesthetics of Amazonian, Andean, and North American Plains music; these musicians also guide plant medicine ceremonies that connect mestize immigrants to the broader Native American identity.

08A:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

Diasporic Citizenship and Puente Libertad: Reparto, Mobility, and Belonging between Havana and Miami

Mike Levine - Christopher Newport University

Since 2023, Pascal, a Cuban arrival living in Hialeah, Florida under parole, has regarded his tenuous existence within the United States as a fragile bridge between a homeland he can't revisit and a hostland that won't accept him. For viewers like Pascal, the 2026 music video Puente Libertad—featuring Cuban artists Jacob Forever, Yotuel, and El Chacal—embodies both continuity and rupture, reimagining national belonging while reflecting the precarious mobility shaping contemporary Cuban migration. This presentation examines how the song reconfigures diasporic citizenship, as artists

and audiences navigate unstable legal, territorial, and cultural boundaries. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and a close reading of the song and its video, I analyze how Puente Libertad reshapes ideas of Cuban diasporic citizenship. Specifically, I juxtapose its visual and musical representation of transnational mobility by foregrounding connections between Havana and Miami amid the aspirations, uncertainties, and crossings that structure contemporary Cuban migration. The video's AI-generated images of free movement, family return, and consumer spaces like an imagined McDonald's and Walmart in Havana render migration not merely as displacement but as a collective aspiration for mobility, prosperity, and participation in global modernity. I argue that Puente Libertad reflects a broader transformation in Cuban diasporic belonging. As Miami no longer functions solely as exile and Cuba itself becomes increasingly transnational, the video enables viewers like Pascal to renegotiate cubanidad beyond territory, raising questions about how Cuban popular culture and its audiences articulate citizenship, memory, and hope amid political and legal precarity.

08A:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

Producing Place, Packaging Diversity: The Montreux Jazz Festival Miami and the Neoliberal Politics of Multiculturalism

Madison Allwein - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The Miami iteration of the Montreux Jazz Festival was in its second iteration when I arrived in February 2025. Like the original Swiss festival, the Miami Montreux Jazz festival is jazz in name, but includes few strictly jazz acts on its lineup. While my initial aim was to investigate political commentary on stage, my focus quickly shifted to a lack of visual embodiment I observed in the audience. Though political speech and expression by performers was no longer the focal point of my investigation, the timing of the event mere weeks after Donald Trump's 2025 inauguration contributed to a layer of political undertone to the evening.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation across one evening of programming, I analyze how class, race, surveillance, and genre expectations shaped audience comportment within an ostensibly celebratory Latin music setting. I argue that the contradiction between the dance-music programming and lack of overt dancing during the festival can be explained by a combination of factors including the festival's multiculturalism, illusion of social safety, and surveillance.

I draw upon García-Mispireta's idea of liquidarity, "a fluid togetherness that manages to hold the shape of a heterogeneous and unconnected crowd," to theorize how this ethnically diverse, yet socioeconomically homogeneous audience negotiates unity and solidarity to the detriment of dance and corporal expression.

08C. Friday, 4:00 PM. Organized Panel

Sonic Afterlives and the Politics of Audibility in Post-Protest Hong Kong

Elizabeth Lawrensen; Samantha Sasaki; Winnie W. C. Lai - Stony Brook University; Princeton University; University of Hong Kong
Chair(s): Winnie W. C. Lai - University of Hong Kong

In the years following the 2019 pro-democracy movement and the enactment of Hong Kong's National Security Law, public protest has been curtailed, yet sound continues to register political life in altered, often subdued forms. This panel discusses how power, memory, and resistance are mediated through sound, silence, and material practices in post-protest Hong Kong, asking how audibility itself becomes a site of governance and dissent.

The first paper develops the idea of sonic hauntology to describe how political trauma and state authority linger in everyday life through both sound and enforced silence. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research, it traces how censorship, euphemism, and self-censorship give rise to ghostly presences that shape musical and artistic expression. The second paper turns to the transformation of July 1—from a day of mass protest into a carefully managed state spectacle—examining how legislation, spatial control, and curated repertoires reconfigure the city's soundscape. While projecting stability and patriotism, these sonic interventions paradoxically underscore the absence of protest. The third paper listens to the afterlife of the protest anthem "Glory to Hong Kong" through a music box, showing how collective memory and affect persist through small-scale, domestic, and diasporic listening practices.

Together, these papers listen for how sound, in its muted and mediated forms, sustains political subjectivity, historical memory, and collective feeling beyond the moment of protest. Attending to echoes, silences, and mediated resonances, the panel contributes to ethnomusicological debates on power, affect, and the sonic afterlives of protest.

08C:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

Sonic Hauntology: Hong Kong's Ghostly Voices After The National Security Law

Elizabeth Lawrensen - Stony Brook University

This paper investigates forms of political and sonic haunting experienced by Hongkongers after the passing of the National Security Law (NSL) in 2020. I use haunting to mean two things: a metaphysical, spiritual haunting, interacting with ghostly presence, and a metaphorical haunting that engages with the residues of political traumas (Gordon 2008; Good et al. 2022). Haunting manifests as ghostly presence, but also as absence, notably by limiting political speech through state-enforced censorship or silence. Drawing on five years of ethnographic and archival research, I propose a framework of "sonic hauntology" to describe how the state's voice is amplified in the public sphere, by stifling of individual or dissenting voices, and in haunting the private minds of citizens, provoking self-censorship. In this way, specters haunt through both presence and absence, sound and silence; specters arise both from state control and from dissenting voices of resistance. 'The People's Voice' especially haunts those who participated in the 2019 Pro-Democracy protests. I explore how political discourse functions in public using replacement words through euphemisms or "algospeak," or metaphors from other geographic regions. Interviews with musicians, artists, and community organizers highlight how Hongkongers navigate a post-NSL public sphere where explicit freedom of speech or artistic expression are severely limited.

08C:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

From Street Protest to State Ritual: The Politics of Sound on Hong Kong's July 1

Samantha Sasaki - Princeton University

Public holidays and state-sponsored festivals are notable in the post-protest Hong Kong soundscape given the tight control the government has over the sonic dimensions of these events. One of the most significant and transformed public holidays is July 1st, the anniversary of the 1997 handover of Hong Kong from British to Chinese governance. For over two decades, this holiday was characterized by a street protest from Victoria Park to Admiralty that drew in thousands of Hongkongers (Lee and Chan 2018). In this paper, I examine how the Hong Kong government has attempted to dismantle the protest soundscape of July 1 by neutralizing Victoria Park's status as a "contentious political space" (Kwok and Chan 2022). While the Hong Kong police and protesters abided by co-created spatial and sonic norms in the park prior to the 2019 protests, the passage of the HKNSL in 2020 catalyzed the government's forceful transformation of the space to limit dissent. Through legislation aimed at controlling public assembly and the reclamation of former protest venues, the soundscape of Victoria Park has been (theoretically) de-politicized. Drawing on ethnographic accounts and sound recordings of the July 1st holiday, I posit that this top-down approach from the Hong Kong government aims to restrict the possibilities for protest by transforming the acoustic ecology of the holiday. However, even though the Hong Kong government aims to construct stability through its strict control of sound and space, its tactics for silencing bely a continual reminder of the city's protest sounding.

08C:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

Cranking Dissent: Object Agency and Precarious Collectivity after "Glory to Hong Kong"

Winnie W. C. Lai - University of Hong Kong

This paper examines the "Glory to Hong Kong" music box as a nonhuman mediator through which political memory and collective affect persist amid legal suppression. Composed during the 2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Protests, "Glory to Hong Kong" became a choral practice of assembly and political subjectivation, extending Foucault's account of embodied practices and power relations to collective musicking as a technology of political self-formation (Foucault 1982; 2008). After the Hong Kong Court of Appeal's May 8, 2024 interim injunction restricting acts related to the song's dissemination and performance, the music box produces a different politics of audibility: small-scale, domestic, and diasporic.

I theorize the music box as a Latourian mediator—an actant that translates the anthem across law, platform governance, home interiors, and transnational circulation, reshaping its scale and temporality (Latour 2005). I argue that the object's "vibrant" capacities (Bennett 2010) reconfigure intentional musicking by redistributing agency across human-object relations through tactile, repetitive, quiet engagements that blur performance, listening, and everyday life—forms less legible as public assembly.

To explain how the music box binds listeners into a precarious collectivity, I take up the quasi-object (Serres 1982), while engaging object-oriented critiques of relationalism (Harman 2009). Drawing on an interview with the song's composer and analytic reflections on the embodied practices of cranking and listening, and in dialogue with Andrea F. Bohlman's account of cassette infrastructures as material circulations of solidarity and affect (Bohlman 2017; 2020), I explore how the music box operates as a micro-infrastructure of dissent.

08D. Friday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Histories of Ethnomusicology: Knowledge, Translation, and the Politics of Difference

John Gabriel; Yi Ching {Kevin} Tam; Vit Zdralek - University of Melbourne; University of Pittsburgh; Department of Musicology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Chair(s): Margaret Sarkissian - Smith College

08D:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

Untangling the "Mongolian-Javanese-Celtic-Nordic-Anglosaxon": The Ethnomusicological Origins of Percy Grainger's "A General Study of the Manifold Nature of Music"

John Gabriel - University of Melbourne

Since John Blacking did so in a 1987 book, Australian-American composer and pianist Percy Grainger (1882-1961) has often been labelled an underappreciated pioneer in ethnomusicology. This claim mainly rests on two of Grainger's activities: First, his innovative approach to folk song collecting, and second, his 1932 NYU class "A General Study of the Manifold Nature of Music," one of the first university World Music surveys. But while Grainger's methodology for folk song collection bears detailed examination (e.g., he was an early advocate of wax cylinder recording, and his transcriptions sought to capture microtonal variation and rhythmic nuance), his NYU class is more likely to be praised only for its inclusive approach to world music. His categorization in the class of the world's musics into two racial-ethnic categories, "Mongolian-Javanese-Celtic-Nordic-Anglosaxon" and "East Indian-Arab-Moorish," is generally dismissed as arbitrary and unscientific. In this paper, I argue that while Grainger's framework was indeed arbitrary, he nevertheless constructed it out of what he believed to be a methodologically rigorous combination of scholarship in comparative musicology with his substantial firsthand experience with traditional Asian and Pacific music and European folk music. I identify the comparative-musicological sources of Grainger's ideas, primarily the writings of Karl Bücher and Joseph Yasser, and analyze how Grainger adapted their arguments to present students with a racialized model of the world's musics across two semesters. In doing so, I broaden our understanding of the history of ethnomusicology and complicate the history of World Music teaching in the US academy.

08D:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

"Doubtless the Chinese think our harmony barbarous": Problematizing Eurocentrism through Christian Universalism in Mary Martin Richard's *A Paper on Chinese Music* (1907)

Yi Ching {Kevin} Tam - University of Pittsburgh

By analyzing A Paper on Chinese Music (1907) by Mary Martin Richard (1843-1903), a Scottish Baptist missionary in late Qing China who uncharacteristically adapted "un-Westernized" local Chinese musics for devotional purposes, this paper presents a case study that, I argue, shows clear evidence of a sympathetic attitude and open-minded approach towards Chinese musics and their practitioners from the perspective of a Christian-European expatriate in the age of high Western imperialism and "scientific" racism. Unsurprisingly, Eurocentrically culturalist and/or racist ideas and attitudes are commonly found in late 19th and early 20th century European texts on Chinese music, such as J.A. Van Aalst's Chinese Music (1884). I show how A Paper on Chinese Music differs from similar texts in one crucial aspect: while the author does not completely dispense with the commonly held idea of "civilized vs. barbarous," she at times reflexively

relativizes and, thus, de-Eurocentricizes it. This is clearly shown in her discussion of the lack of harmony in Chinese music: after pointing out that European harmony, typically regarded as an emblem of European musical superiority then, "is said to have come from Northern barbarous hordes," she claims, in an as-a-matter-of-fact manner, that "doubtless [the Chinese] think [our harmony] barbarous" (17). I further suggest that her problematization of Euro-supremacism and Euro-exceptionalism was ideationally grounded in a Christian-universalist worldview. Theoretically, I hope to shed some light on the complex and not always harmonious relations between Eurocentrism(s) and Universalism(s), which tend to be lumped together in discussions within contemporary Anglophone music studies.

08D:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

The Curtain that Never Quite Fell: (Geo)politics of Teaching and Translating Ethnomusicology for East-Central Europe

Vit Zdralek - Department of Musicology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University

This paper examines teaching ethnomusicology in a post-socialist East-Central European country as a situated practice marked by a constant effort of translation between languages, cultural and geopolitical histories, and academic traditions. This involves translation between English and a local language, but also between ethnomusicology as a 'global' Western academic discipline—whose theoretical discussions are largely shaped by postcolonial and decolonial discourses—and its 'local' practice in the transforming post-socialist (Ghodsee and Orenstein 2021), "white but not quite" (Kalmar 2022), semi-peripheral and disenchanted (Krastev and Holmes 2019) East-Central Europe, which occupies a precarious geopolitical position between others' imperial and colonial aspirations (Feinberg 2024). Historically without colonies but sharing aspects of the colonial imagination towards the Global South (and sometimes their inner Others), and through their membership in (or candidate status for) the EU and NATO, these countries today experience their own "point zero of decolonization" (Barša 2020). Against this backdrop, I have had to negotiate my position as both a teacher and a translator of ethnomusicology at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, for more than a decade. To support Czech-speaking students, I translated Rice's Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction (published in Czech in 2020), and I initiated and serve as the main academic editor of the Czech translation of Rommen's and Nettl's Excursions in World Music, 8th edition (forthcoming). The paper offers grounded reflections on teaching and translating ethnomusicology as situated cultural practices and critiques epistemic schemes organizing ethnomusicological knowledge that sometimes lack nuance regarding the East-Central European situation and replicates Cold-War stereotypes.

08E. Friday, 4:00 PM. Workshop

Dancing the Cycle of Life: An Introductory Workshop on Cambodian Dance and Movement

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Chair(s): Rane Prak; Allan Zheng

In this 90-minute workshop, participants will learn the basic Cambodian dance hand gestures to explore the cycle of life cycle. Textual documentation, iconography, and oral histories explain that the art of Cambodian classical dance is over a thousand years old and a form of prayer performed in temples for rain and fertility, essential to the Cambodian agrarian society. Since the Khmer Rouge genocide (1975-1979), Cambodian performing arts have reached new heights because artists who survived and transmitted these cultural traditions. Using gestural metaphors rooted in various stages of growth from the plant life cycle, such as planting, growing, young leaves, flowering, and ripe fruit, Cambodian dancers embody the transformations in nature. Dancers evoke the serpent's spirit in their bodies by imagining rivers, transforming into life-giving water cutting across the earth and tying back the practice to local Khmer spirituality. The first part of the workshop will introduce classical dance stretches and basic hand gestures that narrate the cycle of life metaphor. Then, we will teach the dance, "Flowers of the World," a dance taught to young and beginner dancers to solidify foundational techniques. Lastly, we will end the workshop by teaching a popular dance called romvong. The story of the plant cycle, as told through dance, can be interpreted as a metaphor for present-day Cambodian creatives who thrive from the resilience of surviving artists and teachers. Now, dancers choreograph dances in Cambodia while using traditional practices to reclaim cultural identity and heal from the trauma of war, genocide, and displacement.

08F. Friday, 4:00 PM. Organized Panel

Sounding Developments, Potentialities, and Power within the Contemporary Background Music Industry

Ryan Blakeley; Amy Frishkey; Paul Allen Anderson - Northeastern University; University of Texas at San Antonio; Indiana University

Chair(s): Amy Frishkey - University of Texas at San Antonio

In his watershed Ethnomusicology article from 1997, "Sounds Like the Mall of America: Programmed Music and the Architectonics of Commercial Space," Jonathan Sterne launched commercial background music as a serious subject of ethnomusicological study and, with it, not only "sound studies" as an academic field of inquiry but a lively subfield devoted to "ubiquitous listening" and its varying degrees and weights of attention (Goldschmitt 2020; Kassabian 2013; Larkin 2014; Stoever 2016). However, ethnomusicological engagement with the background music industry has been fleeting since that time, despite the fact that it has experienced socially telling changes that both reflect and affect how businesses conceive the effectiveness of recorded music as a component of experience design. This panel provides a corrective with three examples of research devoted not only to more recent developments but also to new vantage points on established business models and programming practices. The first presentation considers the continuities and sea changes represented by the rise in AI-generated background music use. The second explores meanings behind the weakening of Christmas-season holiday standards as a pillar of U.S. background music programming beginning in the 2020s. The third examines a new blurring between background and foreground music by streaming services and its effects upon listeners and listening practices. All three presentations address not only the diminished earning power of content creation and curation in the background music industry but also, more generally, the relationship between ubiquitous listening and aggressively neoliberal socioeconomic moves.

08F:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

Automating Atmosphere: Generative AI in the B2B Background Music Industry

Ryan Blakeley - Northeastern University

For nearly a century, recorded music has been used in retail environments to stimulate sales, bolster branding, and influence customer mood and behavior. Due to the cost and complexity of music licensing, many businesses rely on B2B (business-to-business) background music providers to manage compliance, report usage, and distribute royalties. The recent rise of generative AI, however, has led to several startups – including Purilian, Rightsify, and Soundraw – advertising royalty-free, AI-generated background music. While still in early stages, some retailers have started experimenting with AI music, raising questions about labor and economics in the contemporary background music industry. This paper explores the growing use of generative AI for background music by analyzing B2B platforms and their marketing materials. It demonstrates that this phenomenon is an extension of earlier industry logics seeking to minimize licensing fees and maximize control, from Muzak's in-house recordings in the 1930s to the expansion of production music libraries for commercial use. However, AI-generated background music is unprecedented in its scalability and adaptability, meaning that widespread adoption could reduce demand – and thus revenue – for artists. This use of AI is particularly pernicious precisely because it is in the background, masking the consolidation of economic and creative power in platforms.

08F:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

Holiday Music as the Frontlines of the Dying Art of Background Music Curation

Amy Frishkey - University of Texas at San Antonio

In 2022, I experienced the most striking shift in nearly a decade as a B2B background music curator: a marked increase in U.S.-based businesses foregoing Christmas-season holiday music altogether. With no shortage of new recordings, the experience design industry inferred oversaturation as the cause: genre distinctions within holiday music output were becoming blurred, and retailers were eager to avoid customer burnout. However, I assume Jonathan Sterne's assertion (1997) that engagements with programmed music exist beyond "whatever the statistical and scientific rhetoric of marketing research might suggest" and posit motivations eluding such easy and easily sold observations. Specifically, I suggest that considering how well the world evoked by holiday standards aligns with present-day realities in the U.S.

provides a pathway into these motivations; in other words, recent trends beg the question, "What ideals does this music sell alongside goods and services?" Supported by participant-observation, interviews with former co-workers, and survey results, my presentation examines the past five years of retail-and-hospitality holiday music's diminishing returns in light of holiday programming strategies in place since the 1990s. I argue that the nostalgia these strategies promote and the attitudes they normalize are no less neocolonial than post-Reconstruction plantation songs or missionary hymnody. As historically the most in-demand service provided within the U.S. background music industry, holiday programming's decline reflects not only the rise of e-commerce post-Covid but also entrenched choices that sustain background music curation's death knell in streaming's wake and just ahead of generative AI's impact.

08F:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

"Spotify-core" as "Neo-Muzak": Shifting between Background and Foreground Listening

Paul Allen Anderson - Indiana University

In her 2025 book The Mood Machine, Liz Pelly identifies a new genre called "Spotify-core" that emerged as Spotify ramped up for a blockbuster IPO. It privileges middle-to-slow tempos, even dynamics, emotional warmth, and calmingly mellifluous vocals in the vein of indie-folk, female-identifying singer-songwriters. These aesthetic qualities make Spotify-core playlists as fitting for commercial background music programming as for foreground music driven by personal taste, prompting streamers like Spotify and Pandora to launch "Soundtrack Your Brand" and "Pandora for Business," respectively, to compete for additional income with B2B background music industry giants like Mood Media (which acquired Muzak, DMX, and Trusonic in 2012 and Play Network in 2021). While Pelly addresses how shifts from foreground to background music, and vice-versa, impact streaming royalties for content creators, the effects of these shifts upon listeners and listening cultures remain to be considered. For instance, Muzak playlists of the past were constructed to increase productivity among workers and energetic shopping among store visitors; however, Spotify-core – which I conceive of as at-home "neo-Muzak" music – encourages a darker, more reflective mood. In my paper, I ask how ethnomusicologists and sound studies scholars can approach emergent aesthetics that respond to and reinforce mixed attention and attentional drift (background listening) amidst the ubiquity of private listening via earbuds and headphones (foreground listening).

08G. Friday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Sounding Relations: Music, Gender, and More-than-Human Worlds in West Africa

Scott Linford; Sarah Politz; Margaret Rowley - University of California, Davis; City College of New York; University of Iowa

Chair(s): Sarah Politz - City College of New York

08G:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

Sing Hard: Wrestling and Masculine Vocal Aesthetics in Southern Senegal

Scott Linford - University of California, Davis

Wrestling is a compulsory ritual of manhood for young men of the Senegalese Jola ethnic group. Featuring signature rhythmic patterns, pre- and post-match dance styles, and friendly song competitions, it is also an intrinsically musical social field. Every young Jola man has personal songs made about his wrestling career, which not only reflect his strength and bravery but inspire him to embody those values. These songs accompany men through their lives, becoming markers of gendered reputations that persist long after their wrestling days are over. In this presentation, I demonstrate that wrestling music teaches young men to envoice Jola masculine aesthetics. Specifically, wrestlers learn to "sing hard" (kakijiyen laal) and "sing abundantly" (kakijiyen gnë), producing deep, resonant vocal timbres that both index and vocally enact masculine ideals of strength (sembe) and vigor (eser). In turn, singing collectively in a community of men feeds back to publicly affirm Jola masculine values and vocal aesthetics. In this sense, wrestling songs link individual lives and ways of vocalizing with broader cultural values. The heightened stakes of ritual performance ingrains these gendered vocal norms so powerfully that they carry forward into everyday speech contexts, teaching young Jolas that they must "speak like a man" and verbally "demonstrate rigor" at all times to generate respect. Based on interviews

and observations of wrestling events during fifteen years of fieldwork in southern Senegal, this presentation contributes to voice studies as well as foundational research on athletics, ritual, and gender.

08G:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.
Afrocentric Eco-feminism in the Music of Angelique Kidjo
Sarah Politz - City College of New York

In this paper, I explore how the Beninese star Angelique Kidjo has developed philosophies and aesthetics that are both Afrocentric and eco-feminist over the course of her long career. Focusing in particular on two albums, Ayé ("Life," 1994) and Mother Nature (2021), I draw on interviews with Kidjo and fieldwork in Benin to unpack her deepening ecomusicological vision. Notably, Kidjo wrote the material for Ayé when she was pregnant with her daughter Naïma, and the album reflects the ways that becoming a mother crystallized her identity as an artist-activist. She expresses this new positionality through the imagery of vodun Dan, the serpent who holds up the earth in the cosmology of southern Benin. I also discuss the ways that the album creates an Afrofuturistic sound world using innovative studio technologies. Kidjo's album Mother Nature, written during the COVID-19 pandemic, finds her contemplating again the intersections of her own feminist position with the deepening environmental crisis, now through the sounds of contemporary Afrobeats music. I suggest that Kidjo is doing the work of an ìyálóde, a figure in Yoruba culture known as a "public mother," a spiritually powerful, respected political agent who manages conflict, represents women in political affairs, and oversees the market. I place Kidjo's work in conversation with African eco-feminism, including the Nigerian scholar Catherine Acholonu's (1995) concept of "motherism," which she calls an "Afrocentric alternative to feminism." I seek to bring this discussion of gender and motherhood to bear on ecomusicological questions about nature, culture, and sound.

08G:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.
"A Human Should Act Like a Human": Interspecies Divine Community in Senegal
Margaret Rowley - University of Iowa

A recent more-than-human, multinaturalist turn in ethnomusicology attends to living, sounding beings, often positioning them non-hierarchically. Likewise, as Senegalese Islamic proverbs and stories consistently demonstrate, humans are part of a Divine community which includes animals, trees, and the ocean, among other creatures. But humans are considered unique in their place within Divine community because of their freedom of choice to disobey God, a choice which—Leopold Sedar Senghor said—makes the act of being human both "a question and a worry." For humans imbued with this singular responsibility, listening and hearing are essential. Individuals must attend to the sounds of advice, social norms, and non-humans in the surrounding world, in order to fashion an ethical humanity where people live in community with each other, non-humans, and God. This paper explores the sonic constitution of Divine community in Senegal through proverbs, stories, and ethnographic work centered around the Islamic holiday of Tabaski (Eid al-Adha) in the urban capital of Dakar. In the days leading up to Tabaski, the city fills with the sounds of preparation, generosity, and sheep, followed by the sounds of slaughter and preservation, offering a temporal window in which to hear Divine community. This paper prods at the crafting of humanity within this community—as modern, sociable, and ethical—through the sonic.

08H. Friday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session
Resonances and Erasures: Sounding Histories of Iran
Armaghan Fakhraeirad; Mehdi Rezania; Nasim Ahmadian - University of Pennsylvania; N/A; University of Alberta
Chair(s): Mehdi Rezania - N/A

08H:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.
Between Sounds and Silences: Black Slavery, Abolition, and Public Sounding in Southern Iran
Armaghan Fakhraeirad - University of Pennsylvania

This paper examines a strand of Black music history in southern Iran from the late Qajar to early Pahlavi era, focusing on the entanglement of slav ery, abolition, and the agency of Black musicians in shaping religious and non-religious

music across public and semi-public spaces. Framed by the contemporary resonance of loud, collective, male-only dammām drum ming during Muharram and Safar in Bushehr, it considers how this his tory is narrated today by local performers and scholars, and how these narratives intersect with, or diverge from, historical accounts. I draw on historical accounts in which the presence of Black people is most often de scribed through musical moments. These sources reveal how music linked to marginalized communities circulated between religious and non-reli gious settings, often inhabiting liminal positions—between sound and si lence, freedom and unfreedom, visibility and invisibility—especially in the years immediately after abolition, when former slaves navigated new so cial and economic roles. By rereading these fragmentary sources alongside contemporary oral histories, I discuss an alternative way of thinking about the past of this collective music, one that bears the history of life in a port city shaped by the Indian Ocean slave trade and layered with geopolitical upheavals. The paper concludes by returning to the present-day dammām drumming of Bushehr, which endures not only as an audible trace of the past but also as a vessel for its silences, erasures, and the shifting bound aries between what is remembered and what is forgotten.

08H:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

Listening as Decolonial Mediation: Golha, Balanced Modernity, and the Feminine Principle in Iran

Mehdi Rezania - N/A

This paper examines the mid-twentieth-century Iranian radio program Golha (1956–1979) as a project of mediated modernity that challenges dominant colonial and developmentalist narratives of tradition and modernity. Scholarship on Middle Eastern music has often framed modernity as rupture—an inevitable displacement of classical forms by media, nationalism, or Westernization. By contrast, Golha demonstrates a distinctly Iranian model of balanced modernity in which radio functioned not as a vehicle of cultural erasure but as a mediating instrument for ethical continuity.Conceived by Davud Pirnia, Golha embedded Persian classical music within poetry, interpretive commentary, and disciplined listening practices. Rather than popularizing or folklorizing art music, the programs cultivated what I call an ethics of listening—an aesthetic formation grounded in moderation, relationality, and care. Central to this formation was the emergence of the "unseen feminine voice": female announcers whose disembodied yet authoritative presence reconfigured sonic gender without relying on visual visibility. Here, femininity operates not as identity politics but as epistemology—a logic of balance and receptivity that structures the relationship between music, poetry, and listener.Drawing on decolonial theory and feminist ethics of care, I argue that Golha anticipates contemporary debates on decolonizing archives and media by modeling sound as relational rather than extractive. Its recent digital revival through the Golha Project extends this ethic transnationally, transforming archival practice into shared stewardship. By centering listening rather than spectacle, Golha offers ethnomusicology a case of modernity without rupture, authority without domination, and mediation as resistance.

08H:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

The Fade of *Reng* in Iranian Classical Music Since the Late Twentieth Century: Social Aesthetics, Ideology, and Reformed Identities

Nasim Ahmadian - University of Alberta

This paper examines the social aesthetics of reng, a precomposed instrumental form in Iranian dastgāh music, and its gradual decline since the late twentieth century. Historically associated with dance (raqs), reng functions as a lively piece in duple or triple meter at moderate to fast tempos in Persian classical music (Farhat 2004, 22). For centuries, reng's connection to dance embodiment, courtesan culture, and theatrical entertainment contributed to its lower artistic status under Islamic rule. During the early twentieth century, however, the modernist reforms of the Pahlavi era and new developments of Iranian art music elevated both the musical complexity and cultural standing of reng. It emerged as a respected independent composition, valued for rhythmic vitality and stylized syncopation, and frequently concluded prominent vocal genres such as tasnīf or an entire dastgāh performance (Azadehfar 2011; Zonis 1973). The compositional innovations of master-musicians, including Ali-Naqi Vaziri, Abolhassan Saba, Ruhollah Khaleqi, Darvishkhan, and Faramarz Payvar, further consolidated its pedagogical and performative significance. Despite these developments, reng entered a new phase of decline in the late twentieth century. Through analysis of selected musical examples, this study traces this fading to broader socio-cultural transformations: emergent waves of traditionalisms

enhanced by orientalist discourses of spirituality, the marginalization of the popular 6/8 idiom (shish-o-hasht), and cultural reforms intensified after the 1979 revolution. I argue that shifts in social aesthetics, embodied ideologies, and reconfigured identities have decisively shaped the fortunes of reng in contemporary Iran. This study contributes to the broader debates on music, aesthetics, and cultural transformation.

08I. Friday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Between Humans and Machines: Technology, Performance, and Musical Imagination in East Asia

Yiqing Ma; Conner Singh VanderBeek; Heather Couture; Markos Koumoulas - Texas Lutheran University; University of Sydney

Chair(s): Lei Ouyang - Swarthmore College

08I:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

A Cyborg Destruction: Feminine Vocality, Techno-Pessimism, and Death of Humanity

Yiqing Ma; Conner Singh VanderBeek - Colby College; Davidson College

In the seminal "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985), Donna Haraway argues that technological advancement ushers in a utopian age that dissolves the categories of race and gender and the distinctions between man, machine, and nature. Post-bubble Japanese media, whether psychological sci-fi anime or vocaloid music, repudiates this stance (Uno 2008); as time goes on, the cyborg becomes less human but more feminized and more racially marked (Eidsheim 2019). This paper considers the music of Vocaloid utaite (cover singer) Ado and her harsh vocal, lyrical, and visual critiques of the Japanese idol industry as a case in which technological advancement reifies and exacerbates the social, gendered, and material conditions that produced it. We explore cybernetic women as a hyper-feminized, posthuman subject in Japanese popular culture by drawing parallels between Ado's recordings and sci-fi anime Ghost in the Shell (1995) and Serial Experiments Lain (1998). We argue that the fetishized feminine figure, modified by the male gaze and the manipulation of the voice and physical body by technology (Black 2012, Lam 2016), ushers in a society in which intimate, sexual relationships between humans are replaced with parasocial relationships between male and machine (Aoyagi 2005). Ado, and other Vocaloid singers like yama and Kenshi Yonezu, comprise a system wherein humans imitate machines emulating humans, all while losing their humanness in the process. Vocaloid singers' voices become subjects of fetishization: as the ultimate site to fulfill a fantasy about female bodies, and as a cyborgian projection of the futile future of humanity.

08I:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

K-pop Viewer Hunters: "K-pop in Public" and the Globalized City

Heather Couture - Texas Lutheran University

A stroll down the avenues of the Xinyi or Ximending shopping districts in Taipei will yield quite a few busking shows ranging from musical performances to terrifying acrobatics. And if it's a nice Saturday, there will be at least 10 amateur dance troupes vying for a performance spot to film their next "K-pop in Public" cover for YouTube. These dance troupes are not buskers. They do not request permits, ask for money, or even interact with crowds. While they help to define the spaces in which they perform, they are more a part of a global community associated with the "K-pop in Public" trend – in which dance troupes ranging from amateur to semi-professional imitate K-pop dance videos in public spaces for online consumption. While the use of "irl" spaces in these videos affects the physical community that they are a part of similar to buskers, the larger impact lies elsewhere – a sort of grassroots cultural export that brings the place into online spaces and communities and highlights aspects of local culture even as it participates in and reifies a global phenomenon. This paper will utilize studies on place and space, globalization and glocalization, mediascapes, performance practice, identity, and Taiwanese and Korean studies to argue that Taiwanese youth are not only reifying Taiwanese identity and creating locality through their participation in "K-pop in Public", but are also protecting and future-proofing Taiwanese identity as artifacts of both identity and place continue to travel ever more broadly through a globalized mediascape.

08I:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

Exploring human creativity in AI-generated J-rock

Markos Koumoulas - University of Sydney

Research by computer engineers on the technical and scientific aspects of AI music generation has expanded rapidly in recent years (Cros Vila et al. 2025; Hernandez-Olivan and Beltran 2021; Mycka and Mańdziuk 2024; Rowe 2020; Yang and Lerch 2020; Zhao et al. 2025). However, few studies have examined AI as part of a collaborative creative process (Knees et al. 2020; Newman et al. 2023; Rohrmeier 2022). Existing examples of AI-based artists show that coherent musical output is possible (King and Earl 2025; Kleinman 2025; Lozo 2026; Vaziri 2025), but research rarely documents the artistic processes or reflects critically on human choices in AI music generation (Gioti 2020; Micchi et al. 2021). Studies examining AI as part of a human-led approach, in which composers guide and transform commercial AI-generated material, have yet to be conducted. Addressing this gap, this paper examines AI-assisted music-making through hokutone, a virtual Japanese rock band and AI music project that serves as a platform for practice-based research into human and AI collaboration. It investigates how human composer-songwriters work with AI-generated music as a creative tool, considering its advantages, limitations, and the ethical concerns surrounding intellectual property. Central to this process is the design of prompts or written instructions that commercial AI platforms such as Suno rely on to generate music. This paper explores human interaction with AI-generated music, analyzing how composers experiment with creative choices, express their artistic identity, and the extent to which AI contributes independently, revealing the complex dynamics of creative collaboration with technology.

08J. Friday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Sonic Worldmaking: Sonic Worldmaking: Experimental Practices of Protest, Curation, and Ecological Imagination

Mark Mahoney - Cornell University
Chair(s): Tony Perman - Grinnell College

08J:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

"Sound Awareness": Robert Northern and the Ecological Dimensions of Black Experimentalism in the 1970s

Mark Mahoney - Cornell University

In recent years, a significant body of scholarship has been devoted to critiquing the settler-colonial epistemologies embedded in 'acoustic ecology,' particularly in relation to R. Murray Schaffer and the World Soundscape Project (Robinson 2020; Hagood 2021). While this work has illuminated the indigenous erasure and environmental imaginaries shaping late twentieth-century listening listening practices, comparatively little attention has been paid to parallel ecological discourses within Black music. Many artists associated with the 1970s jazz avant-garde developed novel ways of theorizing relationships between human and non-human actors, instantiating them in new musical and pedagogical forms.

This presentation examines these questions through the music and pedagogy of Robert Northern (Brother Ah). After performing with leading jazz artists in the 1960s, Northern developed a set of relational listening practices in the early 1970s that he referred to as "sound awareness," an encompassing philosophy of ecological listening shaped by his travels across the African continent and by Afrocentric thought. As an instructor at Dartmouth College (1970-73), he developed pedagogical practices oriented not only toward trained musicians but toward "anyone who would awaken to music in the natural world."

For Northern, communion nature and with an ancestral homeland were inseparable; nature's real or imagined wholeness served to counteract the violent rupture of diaspora, providing rootedness to those who have been forcibly uprooted. Situating Northern alongside contemporaries such as Sun Ra, and drawing from theorists Fumi Okiji and Kodwo Eshun, this paper reframes 1970s Black experimental music as a crucial, yet overlooked, site of ecological thought.

08J:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

The People's Resonance: The Use of Zouglou as Music to Enact Political Change in Côte d'Ivoire

Ken Harris; Sofía Diaz - independent scholar; Northern Illinois University

The struggle for democracy and stability in Côte d'Ivoire began within the education system in its capital, Abidjan. Students at the University of Abidjan faced economic and political struggles that stemmed from public universities' mismanagement of funds, crowded classrooms, lack of faculty, and poor public infrastructure which gave way to student protests at the times, and the birth of Zouglou from those very same ideals of the student protesters. Zouglou's music and its lyrics provided a direct message that was able to successfully convey their struggles and frustrations with the Ivorian government. The lyrics that were popular amongst students held merit as an instrumental piece in their advocacy. The socio-political message from students' activism from the 1990s is recognized and affirmed by the explicit nature of the language of Zouglou and its lyrical message. Though afterwards with the rise of the Ivorite policy and ethnic ties it had changed to be in support of a new regime's government. Eventually resulting in its ever changing political nature to become dormant. This paper compiles books, articles and interviews to document the nature of Zouglou compared to the changing political climate of Cote d'Ivoire. This research aims to examine the shared history between Ivorian politics and the changing political language of Zouglou.

08J:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

Music, Image, and the Museum: Curating the Chicago Dzviti Collection

Jennifer Kyker - University of Rochester

This paper presents my experience curating a public ethnomusicology exhibition at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. Titled "Chicago Dzviti: Portrait of Zimbabwe/Mifananidzo yeZimbabwe," the exhibition presents the work of Chicago Dzviti (1961-1995), a pioneering Zimbabwean photographer whose archive offers an extensive visual record of Zimbabwean musical and social life, with special focus on the mbira. As a result of his untimely passing, Dzviti's archive was lost for several decades. Co-curated with Fadzai Veronica Muchemwa, my exhibition brings his exceptional images of Zimbabwean music into public view. I analyze the successes and challenges of our collaborative approach to physical and digital curation, ranging from ethnographic feedback interviews with musicians portrayed in the exhibit - and conducted by a team of scholars, students, and family members – to the commissioning of new work including a performance piece. Audio visual playlists, physical instruments, and ephemera further contributed to bringing the exhibition alive in an experiential, multimedia format. I also discuss our strategies for reaching a wide audience in Zimbabwe and beyond. Finally, I suggest how Dzviti's photographs ask us to perceive musicality in new ways by refiguring the rich acoustic world of Zimbabwean music in a visual format. This exhibition contributes to histories of music and visual arts in Zimbabwe, and to the global art world's growing interest in photographers from across the African continent. It also offers a unique depiction of Zimbabwean musical life as viewed through the eyes of a pioneering Zimbabwean visual artist.

08K. Friday, 4:00 PM. Organized Panel

Practices of Translation: Negotiating Identity and Agency in African Art Music

Seyi Ajibade; Echezonachukwu Nduka; Kamilla Arku - Columbia University; University of Pennsylvania; New York University

Chair(s): Sunday Oluwaseun Ukaewen - Harvard University

African art music is frequently framed by debates over interculturality, hybridity and authenticity. This panel shifts the focus from whether the genre is "authentic" to how it actively theorizes culture through compositional, institutional, and social practices. We argue that "Africanness" is not a stable attribute but a product of translation—a dynamic process occurring across institutions, instruments, and gendered histories.

Three papers examine distinct manifestations of this process. Presenter 1 analyzes institutional mediation through the Àkójọpọ̀ commissioning project, demonstrating how infrastructure—including rehearsal practices and curation—translates cultural imagination into a lived Pan-African identity. Presenter 2 theorizes "African pianism" as a sonic and perceptual act of translation. Introducing the "translative imaginary," he shows how pianistic gesture and texture

reconfigure rhythmic imaginaries associated with broader African instrumental traditions through the interplay of performance and listening. Presenter 3 examines translation as a social and ideological process. Using intersectional feminist theory, she explores how colonial restructurings of gender roles became embedded in musical institutions, shaping twentieth-century canon formation and the exclusion of women from compositional discourse.

Together, these papers propose that African art music is a site of layered translation. By integrating ethnographic fieldwork, performance-based research, and feminist theory, the panel offers a methodological intervention into global music scholarship. We move beyond treating Africanness as a static trait, showing instead how it is actively composed, mediated, and negotiated through sound, social structure, and human agency.

08K:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

Mediation in African Art Music: Insights from Àkójọpọ̀'s African Art Music Commissioning Project

Seyi Ajibade - Columbia University

Over the past three decades, scholars have explored African art music through compositional studies and research, yet debates persist regarding its place in African music, particularly concerning identity and authenticity. This presentation examines the 2023 African Art Music Commissioning Project (AAMCP) organized by Àkójọpọ̀, which premiered works by eight composers from Brazil, Ghana, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United States, demonstrating how the organization expands African art music practice across borders.

Building on Georgina Born's concept of mediation—which clarifies how music acquires meaning through the social, institutional, and technological processes shaping its production—I examine how Àkójọpọ̀'s institutional structures serve as a form of mediation. By analyzing the selection of musicians, the compositional process, rehearsals, and dialogues among diverse composers, I demonstrate how these stages shape and negotiate authenticity and identity.

I argue that Àkójọpọ̀'s AAMCP, through mediational practice, challenges exclusive notions of African art music, resituating it as a Pan-African and transnational form of artistic expression. This analysis reflects on my 2023 ethnographic experience in Lagos, Nigeria, drawing on my direct involvement as a musician, rehearsal director, scholar, and member of the production team.

08K:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

"It Feels Like Drums:" African Pianism and the Logic of Translative Imaginaries

Echezonachukwu Nduka - University of Pennsylvania

The growing interest in the performance, recording, and appreciation of African pianism broadens the scope of scholarly inquiry within and beyond African art music discourse. While scholars have underscored the creative processes of composing and performing African pianism, its aesthetics and significations within the African art music tradition, it remains to be practically tested what works of African pianism mean to diverse audiences. This paper interrogates the idea of the piano as a surrogate instrument, the impressionistic perspective of African pianism, and the involvement of audiences in meaning-making processes. With excerpts from works of West and North African composers, it foregrounds translative prospects situated within the broad lenses of composers' intention, performance practices, and the perception of audiences. Critical questions include what it means to hear the piano and listen beyond the instrument, the possibilities and limits of imaginative listening, and the significance of cultural knowledge or memory in the appreciation of African pianism. The paper therefore describes the translative imaginary as a meaning-making process for composers, performers, and listeners based on different methods of translation reinforced by imagination. Methodologies include descriptive analysis, interviews, and survey results. Ultimately, the paper underscores the translative perspective of African pianism, its complexities and contradictions, and argues for it as an approach towards the making of meaning.

08K:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

Women, Gender and African Art Music

Kamilla Arku - New York University

How does African art music negotiate gender? While scholars have explored the genre's relationship to traditional music, intercultural style, and the classical canon, the literature has rarely centered women and gender. This presentation bridges this critical gap, arguing that the historical exclusion of women in African art music was shaped by colonial restructurings of gender that intersected with the institutionalization of Western tonality.

I locate gender in the 20th-century repertoire of pivotal figures such as Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole, Akin Euba, and Joshua Uzoigwe. Analyzing their music through an intersectional feminist lens, I emphasize how colonial narratives fundamentally shaped gender concepts in the African musical imagination. I argue that the resulting exclusion of women during colonial rule was mirrored and reinforced by the arrival of Western art music frameworks—a "nested oppression" that led to the sonic sidelining of African women.

Moving toward new creative frameworks, I draw on my experience as a performer and composer to chart inclusive paths forward. I introduce "creative autoethnography," which marries Akin Euba's creative ethnomusicology with Patricia Hill Collins' Black feminist epistemology. This approach centers autoethnographic writing as a starting point for musical composition, acknowledging the work of contemporary African women composers while addressing their historical absence from the canon. Through this blend of scholarship and practice, I aim to contribute to larger conversations regarding the empowerment and visibility of African women in music.

08L. Friday, 4:00 PM. Individual Presentation Session

Recording, Revitalization, and Gendered Musical Authority Across Eurasia

Sonia Tamar Seeman; Sona Nalbandian; Dr Razia Sultanova - University of Texas Austin; Royal Holloway, University of London; Cambridge Muslim College, 14 St Paul's Rd, Cambridge CB1 2EZ, UK

Chair(s): Sonia Tamar Seeman - University of Texas Austin

08L:1. Friday, 4:00 PM.

Recording Industries and Craftmanship: What Romani musicians tell us

Sonia Tamar Seeman - University of Texas Austin

Chair(s):

Recent studies of recording industries have begun to shift from focusing on corporate structures and technology to increasing inclusion of the impact of such technologies on the musical craftsmen (Hesmondhalgh 2019; Stahl 2013). Compensatory studies that attend to musicians in studios reveal the extent to which music industries exploit creative joy for the sake of profit margins at the cost of human well-being and economic stability. In Türkiye Romani communities have been socially, politically and economically marginalized since the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires into the contemporary Republic period, yet throughout these periods have provided crucial services in niche occupations---musicianship constituting the most prestigious and audible work. By focusing on the role of Romani musicians in the changing structures of the Ottoman-Turkish recording industries, I propose a deeper understanding of the role of creative laborers whose musical production has been a crucial yet hidden factor in recording history. From 1890 to the present, the Ottoman to Turkish recording periods evidence dialectical influences by which musicians' subjectivities were shaped, as well profoundly impacted the structures of recording practices. In this way I expand upon Sterne's 2013 insight into the mutual development of technology, fidelity and liveness into the co-development of musicians' craftsmanship, subjectivity and recordings. Drawing upon field research and archival materials, I propose 5 areas of investigation: 1) local values and traditions of craftsmanship; 2) mimesis in terms of dialectical relationship between "live" and "recorded" sound; 3) genrefication; 4) tensions between commercial -v- state discourses; 5) transnational distribution networks.

08L:2. Friday, 4:30 PM.

Armenian Heritage Language Revitalization Through Music

Sona Nalbandian - Royal Holloway, University of London

In 2010, UNESCO classified Western Armenian as a "definitely endangered" language, highlighting the need for language revitalization in Armenian diaspora communities. This research examines a community-centered approach to revitalizing Armenian heritage language through the integration of folk songs that remain active in modern-day Turkey, Armenia, and diaspora communities worldwide. Many of these songs are preserved in Western Armenian dialects such as Hamshen, Gyumri, and Akhalkalak. Hamshen folk songs, now republished in contemporary musical formats like Black Sea Rock, increase their relevance and accessibility for younger generations. Folk songs, being communal, offer a supportive environment for diasporic Armenians to reconnect with their heritage language, helping to counteract the insecurity that often hinders language use. Research by Salcedo (2002) and Engh (2013) shows that language acquisition thrives in low-anxiety environments, and music can lower emotional barriers, enhance vocabulary recall, and improve pronunciation. Folk music's deep connection to heritage language reinforces cultural identity, making it a key element in diaspora language education. This research includes ethnographic fieldwork conducted between October 2025 and March 2026 in various diaspora communities, participatory action research through folk singing workshops in diaspora communities, and analysis of interviews with the diaspora's older generations and music educators, and performances. It uses frameworks from ethnomusicology, heritage language education, and affective theory in second language acquisition to explore how musical participation fosters linguistic confidence and emotional ties to Armenian identity. Ultimately, folk song practices in diaspora communities can serve as vital tools for sustaining Armenian heritage language and fostering a sense of collective belonging.

08L:3. Friday, 5:00 PM.

Gendered Sonic Authority: Female Islamic Singing between Asia and Europe

Dr Razia Sultanova - Cambridge Muslim College, 14 St Paul's Rd, Cambridge CB1 2EZ, UK

This paper examines female Islamic singing in the Balkans through a comparative perspective linking Southeast Europe with Central Asia. If Islam is transmitted not only through doctrine but also through sound—recitation, lamentation, devotional poetry, melodic formulae—then women's vocal practices become important sites of religious continuity and lived knowledge.Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina and comparative research in Uzbekistan, I explore devotional genres such as ilahije, na't, nesheed, salavat, mevlud and Hudoyi recitations, and zikr-related repertoires as gendered sound worlds of faith. In both regions, women's singing often takes place in semi-private, domestic, yet socially meaningful settings. These performances cultivate what Mahmood (2005) calls pious agency—forms of ethical self-making shaped through devotional practice. Following Sugarman's (1997) insight that singing produces subjectivity rather than simply expressing it, I argue that female devotional performance actively shapes religious identity. Through vocal timbre, maqam-based melodic patterns, poetic language, and performance context, women articulate moral commitment and communal resilience.The comparison highlights shared Islamic sound principles—clear delivery of sacred text, melismatic expression, modal organisation—alongside different historical experiences. In Central Asia, women's Islamic singing adapted to Soviet secularism; in the Balkans, it responded to war, displacement, and post-socialist revival.Placing Balkan devotional singing within a broader Islamic acoustic tradition (Asad 1993; Hirschkind 2006), this paper argues that women's voices function as forms of sonic authority through which piety, resilience, and religious meaning are sustained across Asia and Europe.

Friday, 7:00 PM. Section/SIG Meeting
Education Section Keynote
Amanda Minks - University of Oklahoma

"Aesthetic Socialization at a Crossroads"Amanda Minks, The University of Oklahoma Presenter: Amanda Minks, The University of Oklahoma

Title: Aesthetic Socialization at a Crossroads

Abstract: In the past three decades, ethnomusicological work on childhood and education has grown in size and impact, largely thanks to rich transdisciplinary exchanges. The term "aesthetic socialization" is one way of encompassing the multimodal practices and pedagogies that shape cultural learning across the lifespan. This talk will revisit some of the early transdisciplinary dialogues in this area which still offer lessons for us today. We will also reflect on political, technological and generational challenges of the current moment and why aesthetic socialization still matters.

Friday, 7:00 PM. Special Event
What makes a good article for the journal Ethnomusicology? A Workshop with the Journal Editors
Andrew Snyder; Katherine Brucher; Jenna Przybysz - Universidade Nova de Lisboa; DePaul University; Stanford University

This workshop, designed for anyone interested in submitting to Ethnomusicology, offers an opportunity to meet the editors and an overview of the journal's publishing process. Join the outgoing and incoming journal editors as well as other members of the editorial team to learn more about the peer review process, editing, timeline to publication, and review publications. We'll address common questions such as, how does one best prepare a manuscript for submission? Why do things take so long? What are peer reviewers' responsibilities? How does one make constructive use of reviewers' feedback? What happens after an article is accepted? How do you submit items for review in the journal, such as books, digital humanities projects, exhibits, films, podcasts, or sound media? How are review authors recruited? In addition to addressing these questions and more, we'll provide useful tips for preparing your article manuscript for submission and navigating University of Illinois Press's submission software Scholastica.

Friday, 7:00 PM. Section/SIG Meeting
Society for Arab Music Research Keynote
H.Sinno - Dartmouth College

This conversation focuses on the double bind facing Arab cultural producers in the current moment, as they navigate the pressure to perform a "visibly other" Arabness for global platforms on one hand, and on the other are being policed into sonic essentialism by well-intended decolonial frameworks that prescribe what Arabness should sound like. At a moment when Lebanon is being re-colonized and Palestine is under siege, metaphors of "decolonizing sound" feel inadequate against the weight of really-existing colonialism. We sit with this discomfort, refusing easy resolution while asking what it means to care for sound in and from the region right now.

H. Sinno is a writer, musician, and performer. Former front-person of indie rock band Mashrou' Leila, their recent solo work has been showcased at The Met, Barbican Centre, and National Sawdust. They are a visiting lecturer in Sonic Practice at Dartmouth College.

09B. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Roundtable
Critical Insights for the Study of Music, Sound, and Sport: Power, Politics, and Pedagogy
Luis Achondo; Jon Dueck; Max Jack; John Michael McCluskey; Matthew Mihalka; Joshua Tucker -
Chair(s): Jordan Zalis

What does basketball sound like? Football? Baseball? Soccer? Indigenous sports? This roundtable examines how music and sound shape the performance, experience, and understanding of sport across various arenas, real and imagined. In this age of surgent nationalism, sports soundscapes play an increasingly significant role in public discourse as scenes of

social, political, and epistemic struggle and expression, and as sites for negotiating ideas, identities, ideologies, and ontologies across a diversity of situated and large-scale social contexts. While the intersection of music, sound, and sport has long been an object of ethnomusicological inquiry, brought to the fore with important works by Tim Cooley and the late Ken McLeod, the field demands further investigation as halftime shows, crowd singalongs, DJs, organs, chants, and cheers demonstrate the critical role of the aural in sport's global mediascape. This roundtable brings together six scholars conducting cutting-edge research and developing innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching these materials. Drawing on fieldwork across North America, Europe, and South America, participants examine basketball, football, baseball, soccer, and Indigenous sporting practices. Their research spans the late nineteenth century to the present, employing methodologies from historical archival research to sensory ethnography and research-creation. Collectively, they address the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of their work along with the sociocultural and political implications of their teaching and writing. Following ten-minute position statements, presenters will discuss how sports soundscapes serve as sites of power, politics, and pedagogy, setting the stage for extended audience discussion with the field's most pressing questions and future directions.

09C. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Resources in the study and performance of African music in American Academies.

John Njenga; Kevin Kimtai; Sylvester Makobi; Jean Kidula - Ball State University; University of Florida; Indiana University; University of Georgia

Chair(s): John Njenga - Ball State University

Studies about and production of African music have been vibrant agents in ethnomusicological scholarship and performance in the global academy. While the anthropological turn, codified in the work of Alan Merriam, provided the gateway that emphasized functionalism and other utilitarian positions, the installment of drum traditions of West African took center stage in many institutions of higher learning in North American for most of the 20th century in part through Mantle Hood's advocacy regarding performance for tangible musical experiences. Meanwhile, music educators in their quest to broaden students' experiences at different learning levels introduced select repertoire and methods of teaching these resources using systematic endeavors through organizations such as the Smithsonian library and developments initiated by educators such as Patricia Campbell.

Recent debates about music (mis)appropriation, culturally responsive teaching and the reductionist role of notation as well as phobias regarding copyright infringement has on one hand led to fear of performing musics of other cultures while at the same time amplified the need for guidelines for those seeking to explore different creative musical systems as part of global exchanges for good. This panel provides responses by culture bearers to expanding resources to mitigate both fear and adoption of African musical arts by drawing on examples from Kenyan repertoire for choral production, vocal music and popular song.

09C:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

Expanding the American Choral Curriculum Through African Choral Music: Arrangements of Kenyan Folk Songs.

John Njenga - Ball State University

African choral music is becoming a common selection of repertoire around the United States, with American choirs from all educational levels to community and professional choral ensembles. However, from an observation of the Midwestern American Choral Directors Association conference, every choir that had an African piece in their set, it was from South Africa. There is an extensive variety of choral music from Africa that has not been explored. Yet it is accessible from transcriptions and arrangements by composers from around Africa. Choral music directors in the United States, however, seem to face a dearth of resources to assist in teaching and rehearsing these pieces due to fears such as cultural appropriation, mispronunciation of new languages, and other challenges. This creates a need for an accessible multimedia guide to assist in teaching and rehearsing these pieces.

In this presentation, I seek to provide a possible guide to teaching African choral music, particularly from Kenya to American choirs as a stepping stone to diversify the American choral curriculum with more African music. As one who

has been extensively immersed in Kenyan choral music traditions by performing and teaching a variety of songs in different languages, I will discuss the challenges and outcomes of the rehearsal techniques used in teaching repertoire from Kenya. I will exemplify this methodology through the process I experienced when I taught Ngulo, a song in Kikamba, a Kenyan language, that has been arranged for SATB at Ball State University with the University Choral Union.

09C:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM.
ulturally Responsive Pedagogical Strategies from African Choral Directors in U.S Universities
Kevin Kimtai - University of Florida

Multicultural musics are increasingly becoming a part of choral music and music education curriculum in U.S. higher learning institutions as part of the larger effort to incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices. Most music educators in the U.S. teach these musics as cultural outsiders, and little has been written about those who teach the music as cultural insiders. There has been an increase in African choral educators in the U.S. educational, community, and religious spaces, whose primary formation is in an African country and who are viewed as custodians and transmitters of their national musical traditions. The pedagogy of African choral music in Western academic and other settings, therefore, raises significant questions of authority, authenticity, and the positionality of these educators. How do they teach African choral music? How do they negotiate authority as culture bearers? How do they diversify their repertoire selection? How are their pedagogical strategies culturally responsive?

Using the data from qualitative semi-structured interviews, I will discuss how these choral directors negotiate their identity as culture bearers, particularly as they work with diverse ensembles, institutional expectations, and audiences' perception of African music. I posit choral pedagogy as a cultural mediation site, where the questions of authenticity, representation, and musical ownership emerge in teaching and performance practices. By focusing on the lived experiences of these educators, this study contributes to the existing discussion on culturally responsive teaching, ethical performance practices, and intercultural choral performance.

09C:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.
Singing in (Ki)Swahili: Mitigating Challenges in Meaning and Understanding
Sylvester Makobi - Indiana University

KiSwahili is one of the fastest-expanding African languages, spoken by more than 200 million people worldwide. Its phonetic structure, with most words pronounced exactly as they are written, makes the language very accessible. This accessibility has encouraged non-Swahili-speaking artists, composers, and conductors to incorporate KiSwahili songs and texts into their creative works and performances. Notable examples include Amiri Baraka's Kutoa Sifa, the opening of Michael Jackson's Liberian Girl, Christopher Tin's Baba Yetu, and Beyoncé Knowles-Carter's Spirit.

One of the best-known Swahili songs, Malaika, has been covered by more than seventy artists, with Miriam Makeba's version having the most popularity. However, various pronunciation s have circulated among performers, some of whom adopted Makeba's cover of the song. This highlights the need for a pronunciation and performance practice guide for singers, whether in popular, choral, or classical music context for clearer communication and more genuine interpretation of the text.

I will discuss some textual and musical miscommunications that arose from covers of Miriam Makeba's rendition of Malaika. I will then explore the first documented Kiswahili song cycle "Kumbukumbu za Utotoni" by Eddie Baraka Mony by providing both translations and IPA phonetic transcriptions of the work, and also demonstrating the spoken literal and poetic delivery of the songs in order to disclose how and when meaning, understanding and interpretation are compromised when presentations are based on merely reading the text, deciphering notation or by relying on covers without an understanding of idiomatic performance practices.

09C:4. Saturday, 10:00 AM.

Open Portals: Invigorating African music studies in the US music departments.

Jean Kidula - University of Georgia

African music as a course in many universities in the North America is experienced in performance ensembles, as a unit in a larger introduction to Africa, African American or 'World Music' course, or as a stand-alone course. Because of distance from quotidian, linguistic and other African lived musicking, a possible understanding of the music for performance and other usage is often achieved by virtually situating the space, people and repertoire, using descriptions and explanations of events, or invoking translation of lyrics. Often, songs with the fewest lyrics are preferred and coupled with other artistic forms in order to engage students and other audiences.

Building on the educational axiom of moving from known to unknown, I will discuss, habilitate and trouble the use of popular music as an entry point into the technicalities of African music performance. I draw from 'rehabilitated' Congolese Rumba repertoire that has been part of the Kenyan soundscape since the 1960s. The music has been re-interpreted in Kenyan spaces and refurbished in continuity. Or else, it interacts with indigenous, urban, and international popular musics to create new genres, some of which are referred to generically as afropop for commercial expediency. An analysis of the components of cosmopolitan African repertoire becomes an 'open portal' that unlocks African musics stylings at the interstices of resources that are the amalgam of a given piece. I will explore the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of this approach to the study and teaching of the music of Africa.

09D. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Performing Greece: Media, Communities, and Traditions

Yona Stamatis; Gabriel Zuckerberg; Spiros Delegos - University of Illinois Springfield; Brown University; Sibelius Academy, Uniarts Helsinki

Chair(s): Yona Stamatis

09D:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

My Big Fat Greek Stereotype: The Sonic Production of Greek America on Screen

Yona Stamatis - University of Illinois Springfield

This paper examines how Greek American film constructs ethnic identity through sound, attending to the musical materials that make "Greekness" immediately audible. Focusing on the 2002 film My Big Fat Greek Wedding and situating it within a broader diasporic media environment that includes festival promotion, reality television segments, and independent diaspora productions, this paper traces how a small repertoire of sonic elements including bouzouki timbres, syrtaki/hasapiko dance rhythms, and modal melodic figures, circulates across genres and platforms functioning not simply as background detail but as central narrative tools framing characters, shaping emotions, and guiding viewers' understandings of cultural belonging.

I argue that these sounds operate as ambivalent sonic stereotypes stabilizing legibility for mainstream audiences while opening a "third space" of negotiation (Bhabha) for diasporic listeners. Drawing on Martin Stokes's work on music, place, and social boundaries, I demonstrate how sound cues perform boundary work—indexing spatial and familiar imaginaries through which Greek American identity is recognized. Building on scholarship in film music and affect (Kassabian), I demonstrate how the same materials that risk flattening difference can also secure powerful diasporic identifications. Methodologically, the paper combines close listening, cue cataloging, and paratextual analysis with attention to production practices that blend "Greek-coded" sonorities and Hollywood scoring conventions. The result is a theorization of diasporic audibility where stereotype and affective resonance are not opposites but co-produced sonic signs of "Greekness" that codify and continually remake the terms of diasporic belonging.

09D:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM.

***Vióma* and Stylistic Identity in the Festival Music of Greek Pogoni**

Gabriel Zuckerberg - Brown University

Panigýria (summer village festivals) in Pogoni, a region on the Greek-Albanian border and the site of my dissertation fieldwork, are typically analyzed as sites of ritual collectivity and imagined community (Nitsiakos 1995; Alexakis 2001). Yet, existing scholarship offers few musical or phenomenological accounts of for how village communities continually recreate their aesthetic identities at these festivals. I find that the increasingly popular concept of vióma is used to make sense of individuals' participation in this process. Vióma is a colloquial term used by Greek-speaking musicians and festivalgoers to signify "lived" or "embodied experience." Functioning as a discourse, vióma indexically links together one's autobiographical memory, subregional identity, and personal musical-dance aesthetics. My interlocutors insist that "having" vióma is crucial to playing or dancing "genuinely." In contrast to the standardized, folkloristic "authenticity" of professional dance groups (Kotsouba 1997; Panopoulou 2001), the concept of vióma celebrates and moralizes personal authenticity. A personally authentic musical "style" is said to be co-created through the dancer-musician dialogue. Festivalgoers are expected to be tastemakers in their family village's community through their paraggelíes (paid song orders) and performative dance-leading, while musicians are expected to meet the dancers' unspoken desires on the level of ornamentation and stylistic adjustment. However, recently, large-scale shifts toward commercialization, urbanization, and postnationalism are feared for altering which musical choices seem desirable, which are profitable, and whose vióma is authoritative. I argue that vióma both clarifies and conceals the ways in which contemporary individuals have agency in contributing to the process of local stylistic distinction.

09D:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.

A Modal Heterotopia in Rebetiko: Performative Responses to Theoretical Incompatibilities

Spiros Delegos - Sibelius Academy, Uniarts Helsinki

Rebetiko is an urban popular musical tradition that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, linked to Greek-speaking communities within a cosmopolitan and translocal sphere spanning the Greek nation-state, the Ottoman Empire, and the United States. In this context, phenomena of musico-cultural amalgamation associated with the musico-cultural trajectories of rebetiko figures and their work remain inadequately assessed and are frequently confined to ethnocentric and hegemonic readings rooted primarily in the East–West dichotomy and its implicit expressions. Through the lens of historical ethnomusicology and drawing on Foucault's notion of heterotopia as an analytical and interpretive tool, this paper re-examines the concepts of makam modality and chordal harmony, focusing on how their theoretical incompatibilities are negotiated and transcended through performative practices of rebetiko musicians. Contextualizing the philosophical concept within the musico-cultural field of rebetiko, heterotopia is understood as a subject-centered theoretical model: representation-contestation-inversion. This heterotopic framework underlines how the performers enact the representation of modal and harmonic topoi, contest them as they are inverted, thereby engendering a new, other topos: a modal heterotopia as an expression of musico-cultural amalgamation in rebetiko. To do so, I examine the makam Saba and its pertinent guitar harmonization through musical-textual analysis of representative gramophone recordings and their interpretation within historical musico-cultural contexts. The terms "equal-tempered makam" and "idiosyncratic harmonization," introduced as manifestations of modal heterotopia in rebetiko, illustrate the transcendence of the theoretical incompatibility between makam modality and chordal harmony through rebetiko musicians' performative practices, offering a fresh lens for decolonizing rebetiko discourse.

09E. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Counterpublics in the Americas: Atmospheres, Ethics, and Resistance

Zachary Moreau; Paige Carter Dailey; Tai Nelson; Cody Case - Florida State University; University of Michigan; University of Maryland, College Park; Loyola University New Orleans
Chair(s): Erin T. Allen - Ohio State University

09E:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

Understanding Outrage: Intersectional Marxism, Punk, and Revolutionary Echoes

Zachary Moreau - Florida State University

In The Black Jacobins, C. L. R. James centers Black revolutionary agency in the Haitian Revolution, challenging European class-reductionist models of Marxism and demonstrating that race and colonialism fundamentally shape revolutionary struggle. Taking James's intervention as a point of departure, this paper asks: What does it mean to invoke "Black Jacobins" in a contemporary U.S. punk scene? How do anti-capitalist musicians mobilize revolutionary history in the present? And how might ethnomusicology theorize the relationship between class struggle and identity-based politics?

I examine the song "Black Jacobins" and its music video by the Tallahassee-based punk band Degenerate State. Shifting between syncopated bass grooves and thrashing hardcore textures, the song references the Haitian Revolution before pivoting to the refrain, "Wake up, it's a world revolution." Drawing on participant observation in the Tallahassee punk/DIY scene—including shows, reading groups, protests, and mutual aid events—as well as interviews with band members, I situate the song within a local culture of Marxist-Leninist organizing.

Building on Barbara Foley's theory of Intersectional Marxism (Foley 2019), I argue that Degenerate State's work refuses the presumed opposition between class analysis and identity politics. All members of the band identify as Trans or Non-Binary, and their revolutionary aesthetics emerge within a regional political climate shaped by legislation such as Florida's HB 1069. An intersectional Marxist lens, I suggest, allows ethnomusicology to theorize contemporary musical outrage as both structural critique and embodied survival.

09E:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM.

"Play the Fight Riff!": Affect and the Ethics of Moshing in Hardcore Punk

Paige Carter Dailey - University of Michigan

In describing various aggressive styles of dance collectively glossed as "moshing," participants in the hardcore punk subculture often claim that the music "makes" them move without conscious thought. Such "involuntary" responses to musical gestures echo common descriptions of affect as precognitive or pre-discursive (Desai-Stephens and Reisnour 2020). Drawing from ethnographic research in United States hardcore punk scenes, this paper thus considers how affect might be productively mobilized to theorize music's capacity to initiate moshing. I argue that affect, in dialogue with subcultural practices and discourses, spurs specific movements in the mosh pit, and that these embodied experiences are integral to participants' engagement with the subculture. Utilizing Garcia-Mispireta's concept of "sonic tactility" (2023) and Kapchan's "aesthetics of proximity" (2021), I suggest that affect acts as conduit between proximal sounds and bodies in the mosh pit. Through specific sonic gestures, musicians engage in a sensory dialogue with audience members to encourage particular, often physically violent kinds of movement, retained in participants through an ongoing process of affective entrainment. I discuss affect's role in fostering community and intimacy through moshing, while paradoxically normalizing violent behavior. I thus consider how these sonic and affective intensities inform nuanced subcultural ethics surrounding the acceptable threshold for violence in the mosh pit. Following recent scholarship on the "affective turn" in music studies, I posit that a deeper understanding of the music's affect lends crucial insight into the role of sound in reflecting subcultural politics, which often aim to subvert normative behaviors and cultural formations.

09E:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.

"Burn it Down": Folk Punk Performance and Anarchist Action in Washington, D.C.

Tai Nelson - University of Maryland, College Park

A few nights a month, members of the D.C. folk punk scene gather in a small venue or bar to sing and mosh together to the sound of banjos, mandolins, accordions and horns. Amidst original songs outlining the future anarchist revolution, artists lead the room in impassioned choruses of leftist anthems like "Solidarity Forever" and "Bella Ciao." Many folk punk artists intentionally reference songs from the past when performing in the district in order to convey a sense of continuity between the subculture and anarchist and leftist movements at large. However, I argue that by also leading

group singing about events taking place in D.C., the local band Trash Boat and the Ambush link the notion of an anarchist revolution to actions that can be taken against the U.S. government by scene members in their immediate community. I focus on performances of two of their original songs: "The Ballad of Rahul Dubey" and "Burn it Down," which are situated in the recent past and imagined future of D.C. respectively. This paper, based on ongoing ethnographic research, makes a significant contribution to scholarship on folk punk, as published work on this topic is limited to one recent article (Fox 2024). It also builds on related scholarship on anarcho-punk (Mattern 2016, Dunn 2012) and dynamics of participatory music making (Turino 2008) as part of a larger project on the intersection of folk punk scene participation and anarchist resistance in the U.S.

09E:4. Saturday, 10:00 AM.

Surrounding BaianaSystem's Pirate Ship: Calculated Climax and Synchronized Chaos in Salvador, Brazil

Cody Case - Loyola University New Orleans

Soaked in sweat and rain, my voice hoarse from singing, and my body numb with exhaustion, I came to fully understand the appeal of BaianaSystem's epic Carnival parades. Every time the heavily political popular music fusion band leads a parade in Salvador's Carnival season on their pirate ship float—rain or shine—one will see thousands of fans bouncing wildly in synchronized chaos. Partly based on my experience and participant observation of this parade in 2025, this paper will explore how the band carefully calculates moments for sonic and corporeal climactic unity through massive synchronization namely by playing key, unifying melodies that require audience participation during the parade's most climactic moments. The presentation remarks how BaianaSystem builds their parade upon a desfile de paz (parade of peace) that condemns fighting, pushing, and moshing to the music—which often occurs in many other parades. Instead, the fans are encouraged to jump up without harming others, collectively uniting to manifest the musical-political resistance and release through peaceful demonstration. I argue that this resistance is reminiscent of the Black Radial Tradition initially proposed by Cedric Robinson (1983), that has recently reemerged in ethnomusicology literature (Barson 2025, Harris 2022), and that I argue appears in Salvador's Bloco Afro movement starting in the 1970s (Case 2024, 2025). Having recently earned a Latin Grammy for their album released in early 2025, right before Carnival, the crowd was especially ready to collectively unite in synchronized chaos and Black resistance around BaianaSystem's pirate ship.

09F. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Ethnomusicology Beyond the Human

Juan Fernando Velasquez; Jack Harrison; Rachel Mundy; Julianne Graper - University of Houston; University of Warsaw; Rugters University - Newark; Indiana University Bloomington
Chair(s): Julianne Graper - Indiana University

Ethnomusicology has historically defined itself as the study of "humanly organized sound" (Blacking 1973). While this definition served a purpose in decentering Western Classical Music, scholars in a wide range of fields have recently questioned the figure of "the human," its function in humanities discourses, and the historical inequities it implies (Boiserron 2018; Haraway 2008; Jackson 2020). Adding to an emergent interest in multispecies ethnomusicology (Silvers 2020; Steingo 2024; Mundy 2018; Feld 1982), this panel asks what a multiplicity of approaches to the role of the human in ethnomusicology might look like, seeking to situate the more-than-human in frameworks as disparate as sound studies, feminist science and technology studies, ecomusicology, Indigenous ontologies, and Black studies. In addition to decentering scientific and colonial conceptions of "the human" that continue to govern ethnomusicological study, this panel is deliberately interdisciplinary with the goal of forging new methodologies, inspired by Sylvia Wynter's calls for a "new science" to address the complex nature-cultural problems of the 21st century (2003). Thus while the topic of the panel is non-human engagements within ethnomusicology, its implications for the field are methodological as well as topical, considering the role of academic knowledge-making practices in reifying certain structures through continuing to center "the human." This panel derives from a 2024 symposium and forthcoming volume titled Ethnomusicology Beyond the Human (Oxford University Press).

09F:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

Interspecies Musicality and the Sentipensante Subject: Rethinking Agency in Human–Bird Sonic Relations

Juan Fernando Velasquez - University of Houston

The study of how sound shapes human–bird relations allows researchers examine how sonic practices define, negotiate, and unsettle the boundaries between human and non-human worlds. While ecoacoustic approaches frame avian–human relations as a series of interactions in which sound functions as both a biological bridge and a site of environmental tension, acoustemological perspectives foreground a dialogic engagement with the more-than-human rather than mere imitation. Less examined, however, is how artistic experimentation grounded in territorial coexistence intertwines human and avian sonic spheres, generating nuanced understandings of musicality and relational listening that challenge interspecies boundaries. This paper analyzes how interactions with the bay wren (Cantorchilus nigricapillus) and the great kiskadee (Pitangus sulphuratus) have informed the works of Latin American composers Simón Castaño and Adina Izarra, to explore how experimental music challenges anthropocentric assumptions about musical agency and authorship. Drawing on the notion of sentipensante beings—subjects who think and feel in integrated, relational ways—it approaches both humans and birds as embodied participants in shared acoustic ecologies. From this perspective, birds are not reducible to sonic resources, nor are composers detached mediators; rather, both participate as sentipensantes whose creative practices emerge through affective attunement, situated listening, and ecological entanglement. Ultimately, by engaging birds as co-present and co-constitutive agents, these works exemplify how reciprocal perception and coexistence can position experimental music as a critical site for reimagining music-making as a multispecies encounter and relational epistemology.

09F:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM.

Like Mother, Like Daughter: Horses, Inheritance, and Musical Anthropomorphism at the British Dressage Winter Championships

Jack Harrison - University of Warsaw

This paper argues that the musical anthropomorphizing of horses at a dressage riding competition in the UK (where riding skill was demonstrated through the performance of intricate riding movements to the accompaniment of a music track) afforded the staging of kinship—specifically, the kinship between a mother and daughter and between the women and their horses—as a matter of pedigree. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork at the 2018 British Dressage Winter Championships, the paper examines the performance of a young rider who competed using the same Glenn Miller music track to which her mother had previously ridden. In contemporary dressage culture, musical accompaniments to riding are typically bespoke tracks tailored to the personality of a specific horse and the tempo of its gaits. The rider's reuse of her mother's track—originally designed for a different horse—therefore raised questions about sound's use as a tool by which to measure and compare bodies. The paper situates this ethnographic moment within scholarship on equestrian culture and pedigree (Cassidy 2002; Dashper 2017), animal studies debates on anthropomorphism (Parkinson 2020), and (ethno)musicological research on musicality and nonhuman animals (Mundy 2018; Steingo 2024). Building on the work of geneticists Jablonka and Lamb as well as feminist philosopher Donna Haraway, the paper also aims to move beyond listening for pedigree, defined as the measurement and control of blood's flow across generations, through its theorizing of "epigenetic listening"—an acoustemology that listens for the emergent, multispecies processes by which kinship might be nurtured otherwise.

09F:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.

Canaries in the laboratory: silent voices of neuroscience

Rachel Mundy - Rugters University - Newark

It is one of the classic tales of neuroscience. In the early 1980s, Fernando Nottebohm asked why canaries sing a new song every year. In order to answer this question, Nottebohm raised twenty male canaries over the course of the year, strategically killed them at varying moments during their song cycle, and examined slices of their brains. The result was astonishing: over the course of a year, nearly 30% of a male canary's brain appeared to die and regenerate. The classic tale, however, is incomplete, for it is missing critical voices. These include the canaries' songs, which were ostensibly the

original subject of the study. Years later, those songs fueled Nottebohm's regrets about his dead canaries. On closer inspection, his regrets are complicated by yet another missing voice, that of a young woman who was struggling to succeed in his laboratory at the time of the study. In this talk, I draw on the theme of silenced voices shared across our panel, suggesting in counterpoint with recent work by Marion Thomas that the emotional conflicts exemplified by animal laboratory science provide a compelling model for re-thinking the relationship between discovery, reason, and emotion in scientific knowledge-making.

09F:4. Saturday, 10:00 AM.

On Being Human in Ethnomusicology

Julianne Graper - Indiana University Bloomington

The advent of sound studies dramatically destabilized ethnomusicology's first assumption, "music." What about ethnomusicology's other assumption, however, "the human"? This talk highlights the urgency of addressing this question by glossing the many different theoretical currents employed by recent scholars. Rather than taking separately issues of animal communication or musicking; sound and the environment; Black and Indigenous ontologies of sound; and creative methodologies, this talk argues that the collective force of such interventions challenges the very foundations of the field. More than simply summary, however, this talk also addresses the institutional forms of knowledge production have historically precluded such disciplinary shifts, including discussion of how nation-wide protests on college campuses, which occurred concurrently with the symposium that inspired this panel, highlight some of the concerns discussed throughout. Without proposing definitive answers, this talk suggests a pressing need to think across disciplinary boundaries to address the future directions of the field of ethnomusicology.

09G. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Roundtable

Reflections on the Returning Workshop: For Collections in Need of Communities

Kimberly Marshall; Alan Burdette; Amanda Minks; Heather Sloan; Will Madison - University of Oklahoma; Indiana University; University of Oklahoma; University of Oklahoma; Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History

Chair(s): Andrea Decker - American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

In 2026, the pre-conference organizers for the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology tried something new. Instead of curating a mini-conference, they created the "Returning" Workshop for Collections in Need of Communities. This workshop, conceived as a direct response to the call of our colleagues during the 2023 Seeger Lecture, was designed to provide hands-on training for any practicing ethnomusicologist interested in connecting communities with their recorded music, dance, language, and other cultural heritage held in archives. The 2026 Workshop returns us to our roots as a discipline, where collections of sound recordings were created as part of standard professional practice, and provided a pathway for wide-scale participation in the shared obligation to help with return.

This roundtable reflects on the major lessons of the pre-conference and invites the audience to collectively consider how best to continue the work of return. Panelist 1 will discuss the vision and planning for the Workshop, addressing the collective responsibility for the rift that separated songs, sounds and other media from their communities of origin in a political-economic context that has stripped resources, increased workloads, and fostered precarity among professional archivists. Panelist 2 will speak about the impetus for the preconference and plans for ongoing initiatives by SEM. Panelists 3, 4, and 5 will share their experiences as presenters and mentors for return. They will reflect on the histories of extraction and ethics of return, about potential models for proactive return, and the hands-on training they provided.

09H. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Reimagining Korean Music: Circulation, Translation, and Transformation

Mingyeong Son; I Putu Swaryandana Ichi Oka; Iljung Kim; Mi Kyung Hwang - Asian Music Research Institute of Seoul National University; University of British Columbia; N/A; University of Arizona

Chair(s): Iljung Kim - N/A

09H:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

Reimagining *Arirang* Across the Border: Musical Circulation and Collaboration Between North and South Korea

Mingyeong Son - Asian Music Research Institute of Seoul National University

This paper examines how musicians from North and South Korea have articulated gestures of reconciliation through the circulation of composed Arirang across the divided peninsula. Recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2012, Arirang embodies the Korean affect of han and historically carried collective sentiments under Japanese colonial rule. Since the Korean War, the song has been continually adapted and reinterpreted on both sides. Rather than treating Northern and Southern musical practices separately or framing them within ideological binaries, this study highlights works that cross borders, including performances in the opposing regime, transnational exchanges, and inter-Korean collaborations.

Three case studies illuminate these dynamics: (1) North Korean composer Choi Sung-hwan's Arirang Fantasy (1976), which premiered in Japan, was later performed in South Korea, and conducted by Lorin Maazel with the New York Philharmonic in Pyongyang; (2) Handol's Arirang Alone (1989), sung during Cho Yong-pil's 2005 Pyongyang concert at North Korean request and later performed by a North Korean art troupe at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics; and (3) the 2019 "Arirang Medley" collaboration between South Korean haegeum performer Jeong Gyeo-woon and North Korean so-haegeum performer Bang Dal-hwa.

Through score analysis, performance reviews, and interviews, the paper argues that Arirang functions not only as shared cultural memory but also as a medium of empathetic listening—one that invites gestures of unity by challenging boundaries between tradition and modernity, nationalism and transnationalism. Its transborder trajectories exemplify a "deterritorialized cultural flow," (A. Appadurai 1996) fostering new affective communities despite enduring political division.

09H:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM.

Beyond Borrowing: The Cultural Epidemiology of Korean Rhythms in Balinese Baleganjur

I Putu Swaryandana Ichi Oka - University of British Columbia

Baleganjur is a traditional Balinese gamelan genre featuring drums, gongs, and cymbals, long used to accompany cremations and other rituals. This paper examines how Korean rhythms influence Balinese contemporary baleganjur composition. Putu Hiranmayena (2022) discussed the cross-cultural resonances of baleganjur with metal music, though scarce musical analysis has been conducted to explain how such aesthetic fusions operate. Additionally, there are other emerging cross-cultural influences in contemporary baleganjur, namely the presence of Korean samulnori rhythms in recent compositions by I Wayan Sudirana, I Wayan Diana, Dewa Gede Wijaya, and myself.

In this paper, I explain how this trend began and how it has developed through a generational approach. Focusing on baleganjur ngarap—a ceremonial cremation processions genre—I analyse works from the four composers and identify distinctive ways that these composers incorporate samulnori rhythms due to their different degrees of exposure to Korean music. To do so, I introduce four Balinese terms—nyuang, ngidih, nyemak, and nuduk—as emic categories for levels of rhythmic transmission.

Through McGraw's (2013) adaptation of Sperber's (1996) concept of an "epidemiology of representations," I argue that these rhythmic ideas spread not only from formal study, but also through mediated processes of listening, imitating, repetition, and embodied practice. As these rhythmic ideas circulate, musical forms change and gradually lose their direct connection to original sources. The analysis shows how Korean rhythmic ideas have been transmitted, transformed, and localized into Balinese musical practice. Rather than threatening tradition, this process is crucial in supporting ongoing creativity in baleganjur.

09H:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.

A hybrid notational system for Korean Buddhist chant and its potential for further applications

Iljung Kim - N/A

Beompae, a collective term for Korean Buddhist chant used in specialized rituals, is an oral tradition that has been transmitted since the 9th century, when it was first introduced from the Tang Dynasty. Comprised of long melismatic phrases, it is often performed solo without any accompaniment. In a recent study, I devised a hybrid notation to transcribe several beompae songs, enabling more effective analysis. It combines the conventional staff notation with digitally generated line notation, thus providing detailed musical information and a visually enhanced representation. I demonstrated its efficacy as an analytical tool by addressing seemingly arbitrary rising pitches in a structural framework. In this paper, I aim to explore the hybrid notational system's potential beyond serving as an analytical tool for beompae. First, it is well-suited for transcribing various vocal traditions, in which sounding precise pitch is not a priority. It can contribute to cross-cultural comparative analyses of Buddhist traditions, such as Japanese shōmyō and Tibetan dbyang, which have rarely been discussed in ethnomusicology. Second, it offers pedagogical benefits for beompae, as its initial design was mindful of beompae practitioners' learning method of using line-notated supplements. With close collaboration with active practitioners, I consider various practical and conceptual aspects of the hybrid notational system as possible learning supplements for beompae.

09H:4. Saturday, 10:00 AM.

"Painted Sounds for Western Eyes: Music, Gender, and Ritual in Kim Jun-Geun's Genre Paintings in the Chosŏn Open Port Period (1876–1910)"

Mi Kyung Hwang - University of Arizona

Kim Jun-Geun's genre paintings, produced for Western buyers at Korean open-port cities during the late nineteenth century, constitute an underexplored visual archive of Korean musical life. This paper contends that Kim Jun-Geun's paintings serve as rare and vital ethnomusicological documents of late Chosŏn Korea. Through close visual analysis of samhyun youkgak (traditional six-piece instrumental ensemble), kisaeng (female entertainer) performance, sadangpae itinerant entertainers, and religious and shamanistic ritual music, this paper reconstructs sonic practices, organology, and gendered musical space that written records have largely overlooked.

While these paintings have attracted some scholarly attention, existing studies have examined Kim Jun-Geun's work from art historical, postcolonial, and cross-cultural perspectives; the musical dimensions embedded in these images have remained rarely investigated, particularly in English-language scholarship. This paper addresses that significant gap, offering the first systematic ethnomusicological examination of music, gender, and ritual performance as documented in his visual archive.

Drawing on close visual analysis of specific paintings, this paper reveals how women musicians — kisaeng, sadangpae performers, and ritual specialists — occupied contested performance spaces that Confucian social order sought to suppress, yet Kim Jun-Geun's brush preserved. Beyond performance, this paper also investigates how music intersected with women's daily labor and marriage rituals, illuminating the broader sonic landscape of women's lives across social classes in late Chosŏn Korea. This paper reframes genre painting as primary ethnomusicological sources, advancing methodological conversations about visual evidence in music historiography while recovering silenced women's musical agency in Korean history.

09I. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Making Brazil Audible: Sound, Sexuality, and Power

Cibele Moura; Leticia Burtet; Patrick Murphy; Pietro Antonio Pizzatto - University of Miami; University of North Texas; Habib University; University of North Texas
Chair(s): Cibele Moura - University of Miami

09I:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

Sonic Propriety and the Erotics of the Ethnographic Imagination

Cibele Moura - University of Miami

In 1927, Brazilian novelist and (ethno)musicologist Mario de Andrade undertook a journey to northern Brazil. The journey was meant to culminate in a visit to the Wari', inhabitants of the Uru-eu-wau-wau Indigenous Land. When this visit proved impossible, Andrade wrote a fictional ethnography, imagining the encounter. The highs and lows of this venture appear in O turista aprendiz, a travelogue that merges memories and fiction. Rather than offering an amusing tale about the curious behavior of the Other, Andrade's fiction estranges Western norms of sonic propriety and parodies positivist ethnography.

This talk examines these issues in two parts. Part I considers Andrade's earwitness account of a world where sound "is the ultimate sexual gesture." Andrade's insertion of polite society's mores into this imaginary world opens a space to interrogate how sound governs sexual practices and hygienic imagination. In analyzing the practices dramatized in the fiction, I introduce the notion of "sonic propriety" to describe civilizing regimes that discipline bodily noise. Part II turns to the fiction's parody of late 19th-century ethnographies, revealing how ethnographers translated Western fascination with the Other's sexual practices into scientific knowledge. The fiction, thus, points to an ethnopornographic tradition (Sigal, Tortorici, and Whitehead 2020) in which the erotic practices of those deemed Others became objects of inquiry. By positing ethnopornography as a constitutive formation of scientia sexualis, I suggest that the latter developed not only in Europe (Foucault 1976) but also in sites of (neo)colonial extraction. Nevertheless, as Andrade's parody indicates, these discourses were inevitably contested.

09I:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM.

Bringing Worlds into Being: Ritual Sound and Ontological Practice in Brazilian Umbanda

Leticia Burtet - University of North Texas

Umbanda, an Afro-Brazilian religion shaped through historically uneven crossings among African diasporic cosmologies, indigenous epistemologies, and Euro-Christian spiritist frameworks, unfolds ritually in the terreiro, the communal space where drumming, singing, mediumship, and embodied participation enable encounters among human and spiritual beings. Here, sound does not merely accompany or represent sacred presence; it participates in establishing the conditions through which such encounters unfold. Taking this claim seriously, however, requires rethinking not only how ethnomusicology theorizes ritual sound, but from which epistemological grounds such theorization proceeds. Drawing on Simas and Rufino's Ciência Encantada (Enchanted Science) and Pedagogia da Encruzilhada (Pedagogy of the Crossroads), I approach the terreiro as a site in which sound, presence, and their efficacy are actual matters of ritual knowledge and reflection. Through ethnographic memoir, embodied recollection, and dialogic remembering from my years as a ritual singer and medium in Southern Brazil, I examine pontos cantados (sung chants) as sonic practices that call, sustain, redirect, and withhold sacred presence. My positionality as singer, medium, community member, and ethnographer further foregrounds the sonic, corporeal, and ethical conditions of listening, remembering, and knowing. Accordingly, I argue that listening in Umbanda is an embodied practice through which sound can act before its effects are fully available to discursive interpretation. In this reversal of theoretical direction, the paper asks what becomes possible when Afro-Brazilian ritual knowledge itself directs ethnomusicological theorization of sonic efficacy, ontology, and presence, making phenomenological notions of being-with interlocutors with - and answerable to - epistemologies sounded from the terreiro.

09I:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.

Sonic Dominance during Rio de Janeiro's *Bailes de Corredor*: Sovereignty and Masculinity in Contexts of Criminal Governance

Patrick Murphy - Habib University

Drawing on fifteen months of fieldwork in Brazil, this paper examines bailes de corredor (corridor events) hosted in the 2020s, focusing on sound and attendee sensorial structuring; sound and masculinity; and the effects of sounds associated with criminal governance on attendee behavior. Organized since the 1990s, corridor events feature fighting between two

opposing sides separated by a space called the "corridor." Each side is comprised of galeras (crews), groups of dozens of people who represent neighborhoods and, in perpetuity, Lado A (A-side) or Lado B (B-side). After the state criminalized events in 2000, organizers moved them to areas under criminal governance. During contemporary events, criminal groups often order the shutting off of music and, also, fire gunshots in attempts to control attendee behavior in a setting of overlapping sovereignty with the state—a setting in which criminal groups hold disciplining power but fail to command absolute authority. This lack of absolute authority shapes attendee responses to gunshot sounds and structures attendee sensorial capabilities while supporting attendee opposition to criminal groups. Engaging scholarship on sound and criminal governance (Cavalcanti 2008; Gilsing 2020; Lippman 2021), this paper shows how participation in contemporary corridor events shapes attendee sensorial capabilities in settings of overlapping sovereignty in areaas under criminal governance, framing attendee interactions with criminal groups.

09I:4. Saturday, 10:00 AM.

From the Favelas to The World: Anitta and The Internationalization of Brazilian funk

Pietro Antonio Pizzatto - University of North Texas

This paper examines the globalization of Brazilian funk through a case study of Anitta's 2024 album Funk Generation, analyzing how a historically marginalized genre rooted in Rio de Janeiro's favelas is re-signified within transnational pop circuits. While genres such as samba and bossa nova have long projected curated images of Brazilian national identity, funk carioca has often been criminalized and framed as "sonically illegal." Building on the cultural analyses of Hermano Vianna and Débora Costa de Faria, and drawing on Stuart Hall's theory of identity as negotiation, this paper argues that Funk Generation functions simultaneously as cultural memory and strategic global branding.

Through close musical and visual analysis of tracks such as "Cria de Favela," "Double Team," and "Ahi," I examine how Anitta mobilizes foundational elements of baile funk (funk ball)—such as the tamborzão beat, multilingual code-switching, and ostentação (ostentation) aesthetics—while adapting them to global pop markets through collaborations, smoother production, and digital cultural translation (e.g., her "Dicionário do Funk"). This negotiation raises critical questions about authenticity, class mobility, commodification, and gatekeeping within global music industries.

Methodologically, the paper situates itself within ethnomusicology by foregrounding funk as lived cultural practice, attending to sound, embodiment, circulation, and discourse rather than treating the music as text alone. By tracing how local sonic identities travel and mutate, this study contributes to ethnomusicological debates on hybridity, globalization, cultural memory, and the politics of representation in contemporary popular music.

09J. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session; Film

Music That Moves: Memory, Protest, and Belonging Across Indian Worlds

Aditi Deo; Alan Kagan; Ying Diao; Inderjit Kaur - Ahmedabad University; University of Minnesota; Falcon Heights/MN; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Chair(s): Anna Schultz - University of Chicago

09J:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

Gaao Mere Mann: Indian Senior Citizens and the Repertoire of 'Old' Hindi Film Songs

Aditi Deo - Ahmedabad University

This paper studies the engagement of urban elderly adults with popular music from their youth as one mode through which they negotiate the multiple personal and social shifts associated with aging. It draws upon ethnographic research in the city of Ahmedabad, India, with senior citizens who listen to and sing 'old' Hindi film songs ('puraane gaane')—the repertoire of Hindi film songs from the mid to late twentieth century. For these participants, the repertoire evokes nostalgia, offers solace and animates music-centered sociability. The paper has two related concerns. One, it explores how these senior citizens actively attempt to redefine their identities in their old age by cultivating singing and listening as 'serious leisure' (Stebbins 2001), even as they manage societal and domestic expectations related to age/gender, personal losses, and empty nests. Two, it examines the diverse modalities through which these songs—which are anywhere between thirty and eighty years old—have sustained as a cultural resource for almost two generations of

elderly Indians. More broadly, the paper locates these musical activities within the present moment which brings together recent music-related technologies (mobile phone Karaoke apps, small Karaoke studios), and implicit discourses about 'successful aging' that encourage senior citizens to turn towards leisure activities (Samanta 2023).

09J:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM. Film

My Brother's Keeper: Tabla Provided Grief Therapy for the Performer

Alan Kagan - University of Minnesota

The film, My Brother's Keeper, was produced by Rikshaw Films in 2025, is in English and is 17.5 minutes in length. This documentary is the personal account of an American musician's life-journey in becoming a tabla performer. A former student of mine, a percussionist, experienced grief over the 1970 death of his older brother in the Vietnam war. Seeking relief by traveling there, he encountered awesome tabla playing in India. Upon returning home he entered the Indian music performance program at the University of Minnesota. The visiting tabla teacher encouraged him to continue study in India and this activity served as mental health therapy, preparation for attaining a professional level of Indian musicianship, and a bonding with his teacher. This film is a moving document of this musician's transformation and healing through the rigors of tabla study and career. The soundtrack is his tabla playing as he expressively narrates his life story. The film visually portrays his performances with many musicians and includes scenes of his brother's military experience in Vietnam. This draws the viewer into understanding the deep personal loss to the narrator and how he found the musical solution to his grief. It is gratifying for the ethnomusicologist to experience this transformation of the narrator's state of mind through his engagement in becoming a musician of another culture. The full showing of the film leaves time for discussion.

09J:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.

To Move, One Must Be Grounded: Ragamala Dance Company and the Generative Force of Tradition in Diaspora

Ying Diao - Falcon Heights/MN

Within the U.S. performing arts ecosystem, dance companies rooted in culturally specific forms are often categorized as "traditional" or "ethnic," labels that can obscure their experimentation and innovation. Founded in 1992 in Minneapolis and led by mother and daughter Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy, whose lives and careers span South India and the United States, Ragamala Dance Company has spent more than three decades creating original stage works in Bharatanatyam while bringing this Indian classical dance form into contemporary performance contexts. Drawing on archival research and a year-long ethnographic study of the Ramaswamys' creative practices, this paper examines how they negotiate the tension between artistic mobility and what I term "immobility."

While diaspora scholarship has often privileged movement, circulation, and hybridity as markers of transformation, the Ramaswamys' artistic practices combine geographical, cultural, and institutional mobility with deep roots in lineage, technique, and culturally specific knowledge and practice. I understand this rootedness as artistic immobility—not the opposite of movement, but a generative force for new creative possibilities. Drawing on details from the conception, rehearsal, and production of Sacred Earth and Fires of Varanasi, I show how the Ramaswamys work with, reinterpret, and put pressure on tradition as an active condition of artistic making rather than a fixed inheritance or constraint on innovation. By foregrounding (im)mobility as a lens for examining creative practice, this paper unsettles the assumption that movement is always the defining condition of diaspora, showing instead how mobility and immobility are mutually constitutive in diasporic artistic production.

09J:4. Saturday, 10:00 AM.

How Sounds Mean: Protest Songs of the 2020-2021 Indian Farmers' Movement

Inderjit Kaur - University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

The Indian Farmers' Protest of 2020–2021 has been recognized as one of the longest and largest in the history of independent India (Moliner and Singh 2024). For over a year, hundreds of thousands of farmers and supporters are said to have participated in what has been hailed as a victorious mass movement of unity and resilience. Thousands of

protesters camped for months at the outskirts of the Indian capital in harsh weather conditions until the government repealed the three "farm bills" that farmers argued would put them at the mercy of large corporations capable of manipulating grain prices to maximize profits at the cost of farmers' incomes, resulting in impoverishment that would only exacerbate the huge current social problem of farmer suicide in India. At the camps, amateur and professional musicians chanted and sang poetry for spiritual nourishment and as caustic critique of the government (Abbi 2022; Moliner 2024). They also played protest song-videos recorded by popular musicians since before the encampments, with over five hundred songs released over the course of the movement; these garnering hundreds of millions of YouTube views (Kalra 2024). Reporters and scholars have commented on how the songs enlisted and represented people across social and political divides such as religion, caste, landownership, gender, age, ableness, and border. In this paper, I analyze a few key sounds from these songs, for an interdisciplinary exploration of how sounds carry meaning—across time, space, and boundaries, and how this opens up a sensory history.

09L. Saturday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Cantonese Sound and Identity Across the Transnational Cantosphere

Tsz-ching Tung; Joshua Ching Yuet Kan; Bernice Hoi Ching Cheung; Adam Kielman - The University of Hong Kong; The Chinese University of Hong Kong; University of Toronto; The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Chair(s): Bernice Hoi Ching Cheung - University of Toronto

This panel brings together three papers that examine how identity, memory, and expression are negotiated across what we call the Cantosphere—the transnational cultural and sonic world of Cantonese-speaking communities in Hong Kong, East Asia, and Canada, building on Shih Shu-mei's "Sinosphere." Focusing on Hong Kong and its North American diasporas, the panel examines how Cantonese sounds persist or change as communities navigate assimilation pressures from shifting cultural regimes, religious norms, and dominant "Chinese" identities. The first paper examines early twentieth-century Hong Kong through the lens of gongchepu, a traditional notation system for Cantonese regional instrumental music. Yau Hok-Chau's deliberate modifications of gongchepu amid the rise of cipher and staff notation demonstrate how musical notation became a contested site where cultural identity, caught between Western cultural influence and mainland Chinese ideologies, was actively negotiated. The second paper turns to contemporary Protestant worship in Hong Kong and migrant congregations in North America. Through unpacking ethnographic and historical accounts surrounding the reappropriation and popularization of Cantonese opera music for religious practices, this paper shows how the conception of Cantonese sociolinguistic identity is entwined with local sonic memories, regional Cantonese language, and global Christianity. The third paper traces a fifty-year history of Cantopop in Canada, drawing on ethnography and archival work to show how it circulates, takes root, and sustains cultural continuity within the Canadian Cantosphere. Together, these papers show how Cantonese sound anchors memory and identity across the Cantosphere, revealing how everyday musical practices carry connection and continuity as communities move across regions.

09L:1. Saturday, 8:30 AM.

Resisting Assimilation: Gongchepu and Cultural Identity in Early 20th-Century Cantonese Music

Tsz-ching Tung - The University of Hong Kong

Gongchepu was a widely used musical notation system in China, particularly in the south, where it served as a mnemonic aid for Cantonese opera singing and instrumental music. Using Chinese characters to record notes, it conveyed limited information and functioned more as a memory device than a detailed compositional tool (Chan 1999; Wu 2024). In the early twentieth century, this tradition came under pressure with the introduction of cipher notation. By the 1920s, newly published scores of Cantonese music in mainland cities such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Tianjin increasingly adopted the new system. In contrast, Yau Hok-Chau in Hong Kong published seven collections between 1916 and 1934 in which he consistently adhered to Gongchepu. His practice, however, was not a simple continuation of tradition. He modified the system by incorporating elements from Western notation and even developing his own symbols. This hybrid approach reflected both resistance to Western influence and the pressures of modernization, while also signaling his opposition to assimilation into the cultural policies of the mainland regime (Yu 2024). Gongchepu remains active in Hong Kong's Cantonese opera circles today, standing apart from mainland practices (Chan 1999; 2020; 2022). This

paper argues that Yau Hok-Chau's accommodation of Eastern and Western notational systems, and the inconsistent application of scores in contemporary practice functioned as a deliberate negotiation of cultural identity. By situating Gongchepu within broader debates on modernization and resistance, I demonstrate how notation itself became a site of cultural contestation in the early twentieth century.

09L:2. Saturday, 9:00 AM.

"Reclaiming Our Cantonese Childhood": Navigating Identity Through Traditional Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong Protestant Worship

Joshua Ching Yuet Kan - The Chinese University of Hong Kong

This paper examines the complex entanglement of sociolinguistic, religious, and cultural identities among Cantonese-speaking Protestant Christians in Hong Kong and its migrant communities in San Francisco and Toronto through their worship practices. It analyzes the recent phenomenon of Fukjamjyutkuk (福音粵曲 Gospel-themed Cantonese opera), a genre that sets Christian lyrics to traditional Cantonese opera music. Once shunned by the Chinese Christians, Cantonese opera music has been reappropriated as a vehicle for worship, devotion, and evangelism. My previous study has illustrated that Fukjamjyutkuk stirs its local elderly audience with nostalgic musical elements from their childhood and Biblical text to express their new faith. This paper further discusses how Fukjamjyutkuk balances sonic, literary, and spiritual priorities to foster collective identity formation in multiple Cantonese-speaking communities. My research employs multiple approaches - historical, ethnographical, musical, literary, and theological. It traces how nineteenth-century Chinese converts first discarded traditional opera music as they adopted new spiritual and cultural identities as Chinese Christians. After mainland Chinese churches relocated to Hong Kong in the 1940s, these identities transformed when new societal and spiritual concerns developed. The Cantonese topolect's rise to prominence in the 1970s added sociolinguistic priorities that spoke new life to an old music repertoire. This is further developed as Cantophone congregations migrated overseas. By demonstrating how these communities, local or migrant, sonically navigate identity between traditional values and global Christianity, my study connects and expands on prior scholarship in ethnomusicology, Cantophone studies, and congregational studies. (Chong, 2011; Lam, 2022; Yeung, 2023)

09L:3. Saturday, 9:30 AM.

Tracing a Half-Century of Cantopop in Canada

Bernice Hoi Ching Cheung - University of Toronto

This paper traces a fifty-year history of Cantopop in Canada—a cultural presence that has remained largely undocumented despite its formative role in the lives of diasporic Hong Kong communities. Drawing on thirty months of ethnographic fieldwork in the Greater Toronto Area, including sixty interviews across immigrant generations and archival research in Chinese- and English-language newspapers and radio programs, I examine how Cantopop has circulated, been consumed, and sustained cultural continuity since the 1970s. The paper demonstrates how popular music functions as a site of memory, sociolinguistic connection, and belonging within Hongkonger diasporic life. Scholarship on Chinese and Hong Kong diasporic musicking in North America has largely centered on Cantonese and Peking opera (Zheng 2010; Ng 2015; Rao 2016), taiko ensembles (Lau 2004; Wong 2004), and martial arts (McGuire 2014), with limited attention to popular music (Lum 1996; Wang 2018). Research on Mandarin and Taiwanese pop (de Kloet 2005; Jones 2020) similarly overshadows Cantopop, while umbrella notions of "Chinese popular music" (Lee and Wong 2017) obscure linguistic and political distinctions central to Cantopop's meanings (Berger 2003). As a result, Hongkongers' cultural practices remain underrepresented in diaspora studies, even as recent sociopolitical shifts intensify efforts to articulate identities distinct from "Chinese." By recovering this overlooked history, I position Cantopop as a lens for understanding how cultural identity, belonging, and everyday forms of resistance are negotiated transnationally, and call for greater attention to popular music in Hongkonger diasporic communities. -

10A. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Languages and Multilingualism

Damascus Kafumbe; Panayotis League; Yun Emily Wang - Middlebury College; Florida State University; Duke

University
Chair(s): Yui Tim Timothy Yu; Kathryn Minyoung Cooke - Florida State University; Columbia University

Rising Voices in Ethnomusicology: A Student Journal is pleased to organize a panel session titled "Languages and Multilingualisms" at this year's SEM Annual Meeting. The notion of languages has been of great significance to ethnomusicologists since the advent of our discipline. Many ethnomusicologists have to speak another language other than their native tongue(s) when conducting fieldwork. At the same time, there are just as many researchers who conduct fieldwork in their native language(s) while ultimately writing scholarship in English or other languages with wider academic appeal. Most graduate students nowadays must learn and be tested in their fluency of a second or third language as part of their programs' graduate requirements. Additionally, foreign language tests are often mandatory for international students who study abroad, which often come with exorbitant fees. With these issues in mind, the editors at Rising Voices have convened a roundtable of scholars whose works engage with multilingual communities and field sites. Our team is hoping to use this panel as an opportunity for faculty members and graduate students to exchange ideas on the complexities of using, perceiving, and learning languages.

In particular, we ask our participants: what are the ethics, compromises, and/or strategies regarding translation and the documentation of multiple languages and dialects? What are some fieldwork experiences of our own that have been shaped by multilingual communities and ways of interacting? How do we wrestle with languages that are both spoken and unspoken, and what are some means of expressing and perceiving language? How do professionals in the field peer-review and edit works by scholars whose first language is not English?

10C. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Present Dynamics in African Music: Liturgy and Pedagogy, Practice and Paradigms

Joseph Kunnuji; Jonathan Crossley; Toyin Ajose - Odeion School of Music, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa; Department of Music Technology, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom; University of Wurzburg, Germany
Chair(s): Kayode Samuel - University of Ibadan

What constitutes African music and how it is encountered, both in and outside Africa, keeps changing, reflecting its temporalities (Agawu 2014; Kubik 2010; Omojola 2012). These dynamics make African music a living, shifting and historically situated form, shaping how people produce, live and experience it across spaces and times. Our panel explores the present dynamics of African music through the frameworks of liturgy and pedagogy, practice and paradigm. In doing so, we draw on ethnographic research in Africa, Europe and USA to advance conversations about the contemporary experience of African music in educational, religious and migratory contexts. By paying attention to the issues of agency, localities, transnational mobility, power relations and neoliberalism, we investigate why African instrumental music is absent from the musical practices of African diaspora churches and how this erasure perpetuates colonial legacies. Also, we examine how African music is currently experienced as a tokenistic, inclusive practice in Africa's tertiary music institutions and chart a path forward for an African music curriculum that transcends such tokenism. Furthermore, we investigate the contributions of non-African, particularly Europeans to African choral music and transnational music making in Germany. We aim to contribute to ethnomusicology theories on African music's circulation across diasporic linkages, its adoption in intercultural contexts and its appropriation in ritual and educational spaces. Together, our panel demonstrates the ways that the 'present' presents new paradigms to encounter the past and look forward to the future of African music.

10C:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.

Ethnomusicology in South Africa: Beyond the tokenistic inclusion of African Music

Joseph Kunnuji - Odeion School of Music, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Given the country's history of racialised separate development, the South African present is marked by both a departure from its apartheid past and a still uncertain path toward a curriculum suitable for the recontextualisation of African music within tertiary institutions. This paper traces the roots of this issue to a pre-tertiary African music curriculum that devalues indigenous musical expressions, drawing on the extensive work of Mandy Carver. Building on empirical

research involving interviews with ethnomusicology experts in South Africa and beyond, I identify a path forward for African music curriculum development that moves beyond the tokenistic inclusion of expressive practices sourced from different geographies within the continent, under the banners of 'decolonisation' or 'transformation' in South Africa's post-student-protests present. The paper engages with Meki Nzewi's concept of 'humanning' and Choi et al.'s framework of critical consciousness (2015) through music education, arguing that crafting a clear and robust language for the teaching and adjudication of African music is a necessary starting point for a curriculum that genuinely transcends a tokenistic inclusion of African musical practices in post-apartheid South Africa.

10C:2. Saturday, 11:15 AM.

Liquidating Localities: Christian Contemporary Worship as Cultural Colonialism

Jonathan Crossley - Department of Music Technology, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

This paper considers patterns emerging from an ongoing research project titled Investigating the Exclusion of Traditional African Instruments in Worship. Surveys conducted with 200+ congregants in theologically diverse churches across the UK, USA and South Africa probed the continued exclusion of traditional instruments in either African or predominantly African diaspora churches, a legacy of colonialism. Kofi Agawu considers the 'civilising missions to Africa' (2023) noting impositions of western music 'amount to a musical violence of a very high order, a violence whose psychic and psychological impacts remain to be properly explored'. Almost all churches surveyed here use Christian Contemporary Worship (CWM/CCM), with these works originating from a small writer pool, connected to Australian or US based evangelical churches. 18–25-year-old respondents, who have grown up in churches, identified CWM as their musical and cultural heritage, unaware of traditional musical heritage. John Lindenbaum (2013) notes that, 'while CCM is just one of many forms of sacred music, it is more likely than others to produce neoliberal subjectivities because of the particular temporal and spatial contexts in which CCM fans encounter neoliberal discourses and projects.' A cultural amnesia reflected in responses from young African congregation members suggests that the global adoption of CWM continues colonial era practices of musical heritage erasure. Adorno and Horkheimer famously proposed that the Culture Industry 'infects everything with sameness'; the pervasiveness of CWM liquidates localities, erasing traditional heritages for young church members at the speed of global, Christian capital.

10C:3. Saturday, 11:45 AM.

Hearing Africa in Europe: African Music and Transnational Choral Practices in Germany

Toyin Ajose - University of Wurzburg, Germany

How is African choral music shaping transnational choral practices in Germany? What are the roles of German choral conductors in facilitating such practices? Previous ethnomusicological works on African music in Europe have focused on African migrants' initiatives towards the promotion of African indigenous and popular music on the continent (Carl 2011; Stokes 2020). Few of the studies have established how such projects facilitate transnational musical exchanges between the continents (Cimardi 2022). Yet, how African choral music participates in such exchanges, particularly in Germany's choral music scene, has not been fully discussed. In responding to these questions, I explore how African choral musical practices by German-led African choirs contribute to transnational music making in Germany. This study draws from an ethnographic research between June 2024 and December 2025, involving interviews with choir directors, singers and drummers as well as participation as a singer, drummer and facilitator at different concerts and workshops organized by the choirs. Through regular performances in religious events, concerts and recordings, German-led African choirs are transforming old and creating new spaces for the practice, circulation and consumption of African choral music in ways that transcend its popular exotic and stereotyped positions. By extending the conversation on transnational music and African music, the study offers new ways of thinking about and interpreting Afropeanism through the framework of ethnomusicology. I argue that exploring African choral music in Germany opens fresh vistas for elevating sidestepped views in global music studies.

10D. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Negotiating Black Musical Life, Faith, and Identity in Educational Spaces

Jordan Hugh Sam; Carlehr Swanson; Marvin McNeill - UCLA; University of Virginia; Emory University

Chair(s): Marvin McNeill - Emory University

10D:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.

Vocalized Style-Shifting: A Sociophonetic Study of HBCU Students Negotiating Faith, Professional Opportunity, and Black Identity through Singing Style

Jordan Hugh Sam - UCLA

At Virginia State University (an HBCU), a student's singing voice rarely stays the same from Sunday worship to Monday voice lesson. Faculty state classical technique "provides a foundation for all singing" and is necessary to "compete with students from Julliard" a framing that establishes an ideological hierarchy. Drawing on two years of ethnography, I examine how VSU music students use singing style to articulate individual identity, orient towards specific forms of Blackness, and navigate institutional pressures. Adopting approaches from linguistic anthropology (Harkness 2014; Lie 2022), I employ sociophonetic recordings and vowel mapping to analyze how students phonetically distinguish classical and gospel singing, and the social values attached to each. Through participant observation of students and interviews with faculty, I trace students' deployment of singing style in day-to-day interactions as well as the institutional ideologies attached. Classical singing is framed as a professional pre-requisite, yet for many students it conflicts with gospel singing which enable their expression of faith. Students strategically shift between styles to access different social and professional opportunities. I contend this vocal flexibility, what I call vocalized style-shifting, is a form of embodied social navigation. Phonetic choice becomes a site of Black identity negotiation indexing competing orientations towards respectability, faith, and the HBCU community. Building on Newland's "racialized vocality" (2014) and approaches from voice studies (Eidsheim 2019; Meizel 2020) this paper foregrounds an agential approach to students singing Blackness and answers the call within music studies (Hadley 2025; Kernodle 2025) to center HBCUs as sites of knowledge production.

10D:2. Saturday, 11:15 AM.

Church Spaces and Places: Black Voices, Gospel Music, and Placemaking at the University of Virginia

Carlehr Swanson - University of Virginia

Black musical traditions have long served as sites of resistance, community formation, and political expression. This paper examines the founding of the University of Virginia's Black Voices Gospel Choir and its 50-year history to highlight its integral role in cultural placemaking during the University's era of racial integration. Founded in 1972 by Nehemiah Brown after he was denied entry into the University's all-white glee club, Black Voices emerged amid campus hostility, racial exclusion, and limited institutional support for Black students. Using archival research and oral histories, this paper connects the choir to broader histories of Black student activism. It emphasizes the role of Charlottesville, Virginia, a small, urban-suburban Southern city often overlooked in gospel research, which typically focuses on metropolitan centers.

I argue that Black Voices was not only a vehicle for spiritual and cultural expression but also served as a mediator between the University and local Black community members, complicating traditional "town-gown" dynamics. The choir's multiple roles give rise to what I theorize as a "church space," an environment that evokes community and deep spiritual intensity without being confined to a church building or an exclusive Christian framework. This term provides insight into how relationships between students and the choir have evolved. Lastly, this paper highlights how Black people have utilized Black musical traditions to produce place, identity, and political meaning despite institutional structures that try to render them placeless.

10D:3. Saturday, 11:45 AM.

"The Tunnel": Exploring a Sense of Belonging, Interconnectedness, and Unity Through the Study of an HBCU Marching Band Ritual.

Marvin McNeill - Emory University

The question of community, unity, and continuity in the context of ruptures experienced by Indigenous populations—such as oppression, genocide, forced displacement, and cultural erasure—has been widely debated across fields including ethnomusicology, musicology, sociology, and anthropology. Scholars have argued that inclusive music-making can contribute to the creation, maintenance, and sustenance of community (Perman and Fiol, 2024; Harris, 2020). However, the relationship between music and community within the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) marching band tradition has been underexplored. This paper, grounded in African and African American philosophy, offers a nuanced examination of how a sense of belonging, interconnectedness, and unity is manifested and reinforced through active participation in an important ritual of HBCU marching band culture, "The Tunnel." How does one become fully human in a society that does not recognize them as fully human? How can African American youth culture express individual and collective "somebodyness" through movement and music-making in a marching band setting? Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with the "Magnificent Machine" of Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, this paper suggests that ways of learning and understanding what it means to be in community with others are embedded in the active processes of music and movement. Invoking the South African philosophy of "ubuntu," which emphasizes the duality between the individual and the community, this paper considers the HBCU marching band tradition as a cultural phenomenon rooted in ancestral traditions and in the understanding of the self within and through a collective identity.

10E. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Roundtable

Doing Ethnomusicology in Times of Crisis: Companions in Conversation

Krystal Klingenberg; Laurie Lee; M. Myrta Leslie Santana; Tamar Sella -

Chair(s): M. Myrta Leslie Santana - UC San Diego

In her recent book How We Write Now (2024), Black feminist critic Jennifer Nash considers how Black feminist writers, in the face of profound Black loss, have cultivated a singular voice that is beautiful. Nash articulates a kind of "living-with" this reality of loss that is "about an ethic of companionship that … animates the Black feminist archive." In this roundtable, we are inspired by Nash's engagement with loss, beauty, and creativity to imagine how we might live with one another and this moment as ethnomusicologists. Specifically, we are curious about how ethnomusicologists—through our research and writing, teaching and mentorship, and curation and collaboration—can work together in a context of mass deportation, transphobic policy, expanding imperialism, global antiblackness, ecological catastrophe, and dystopian technologies. We speak from diverse institutional and geographic positions in the field, both within and outside of the university, in order to: consider histories of intellectual censorship in higher education, revisit artists' responses to related crises in the 20th century, propose collective avenues for applied ethnomusicological work today, and share strategies from the music classroom that strive to meet students' current needs. Throughout, we listen to Nash's Black feminist archive to resist exceptionalist renderings of our current moment by historicizing contemporary trends, foreground humility and collaboration through tough questions rather than providing quickly satisfying answers, and encourage acts that interrupt the imperative to continue with business as usual in higher education in these times. Together, we ask: What is the work of the ethnomusicologist in times of crisis?

10F. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Listening for Silenced Narratives: Sounding Counter-Histories in Latin America

Chair(s): Joshua Tucker - Brown University

This panel explores how musicians use popular and folkloric musics to "sound" silenced histories and systemic concerns in Mexico, Colombia, and Peru. In these settings where epistemological divisions structure musical categorization and functions, practitioners engage creative sonic strategies to disrupt hegemonic discourses and resist preconceived binaries of rural/urban and traditional/modern musics, among other structural problems. These three ethnographic studies foreground the materiality of musical practices, detailing how various sound systems, labor logistics, and instrument histories inform the circulation and reception of these musical cultures. Paper #1 examines how Peruvian cumbia norteña musicians "sound" popular concerns about the growing citizen insecurity crisis without singing about it explicitly. This paper examines how musicians and audiences alike mobilize popular media to make political interventions in a context where government institutions have proved inefficient. Paper #2 considers the

recontextualization of 'traditional' African musics in Barranquilla, Colombia, examining how the circulation of these repertoires challenge racial and ethnic imaginaries. Centering the characteristic sound systems (picós) as the sites where these identities and histories are negotiated, this paper demonstrates how musicians engage 'foreign' repertoires to make sense of highly local identities and resist epistemologies of purification. Paper #3 details how practitioners of Mexican son jarocho provide an acoustemological intervention through their engagement with the quijada instrument. This paper centers the quijada as both object and discourse that counters the erasure of Afro-Mexico. This panel ultimately demonstrates the varied strategies for exerting creative agency to make silenced histories audible.

10F:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.

"No Queremos Morir": Cumbia Norteña Music and Citizen Insecurity in Lima, Perú

Valeria Chavez Roncal - Northwestern University

This paper examines cumbia norteña music and the politics of Peru's citizen insecurity crisis. Developed by hobbyist musicians in northern Peru throughout the 1970s, cumbia norteña entered Lima's commercial mainstream during the 'cumbia boom' of the early 2000s. Scholars have described cumbia norteña as a commercialized and politically mild style compared to its Andean and Amazonian cumbia counterparts (Quispe Lázaro, 2016; Tucker, 2013). However, this commercial success has rendered cumbia norteña musicians vulnerable to extortion. I argue that cumbia norteña ensembles have become central figures in the politics of insecurity. As extortion rates disproportionately affect the popular districts where cumbia performance is concentrated, musicians are forced to "collaborate" with extortionists to protect their performances from violent retaliation. I draw upon a year of ethnographic fieldwork to demonstrate how musicians leverage their public status as a powerful symbol and means of popular resistance—without necessarily singing about it. Turning to popular music and media as an alternative avenue for making sense of the crisis, I argue that musicians and audiences alike engage in "the art of making do" (Pine, 2012) as they navigate the pervasive insecurity that government institutions have been unable to manage. Violent attacks against cumbia norteña musicians have catalyzed a presidential impeachment and national protests to date, the first unified under the hashtag #NoQueremosMorir ("We don't want to die"). Ultimately, this paper asks how a musical genre that seldom references violence in its lyrics has come to both represent and advocate for the popular publics most affected by it.

10F:1. Saturday, 11:15 AM.

Música Folclórica and the Recontextualization of 'Traditional' African Music on the Caribbean Coast of Colombia

Jacob Sunshine - Rhodes College

Since 1968, the massive, custom-built, vividly painted sound systems of Colombia's Caribbean Coast—known as picós—have circulated and popularized vinyl recordings of African guitar music (champeta africana) at outdoor street parties called verbenas. While genres such as soukous and highlife are widely understood by listeners as "popular" music, picó repertoires also include what participants call música folclórica, an umbrella term for acoustic African and Afro-diasporic traditions. These tracks are typically deployed at the dramatic climax of a verbena, catalyzing distinctive forms of collective dance and gesture among the largely working-class, racially mixed audiences that picós convene. Whereas champeta africana enables picoteros to narrate a connection to African heritage—often described as something that "runs in the blood"—música folclórica paradoxically becomes a vehicle for articulating affinities with a perceived rural indigenous past. Drawing on ethnographic research in Barranquilla, this paper examines the circulation and reception of three emblematic recordings in Colombian sound system culture: the Congolese rumba track "Mekua Mu Murako," the Togolese xalam piece "Edzade Tom Doa," and a field recording of a Brazilian Umbanda ceremony, "Ogum Beira Mar." Contrasting the listening practices of picoteros with those of Colombian "lettered elites" —who distinguished the "folkloric" from the "popular" to situate themselves within 20th-century modernity (Ochoa 2006)—I argue that picoteros strategically redeploy foreign recordings of "traditional music" to unsettle such practices of purification. In cultivating popular imaginaries of the folkloric in an urban scene that prizes technological innovation, picoteros complicate global antinomies of race, rural and urban space, and tradition and modernity.

10F:1. Saturday, 11:45 AM.

Scrape, Rattle, Tap: Sounding Silence and Blackness Through the Quijada in Son Jarocho

Randella Jones - City University of New York, Graduate Center

The quijada, an instrument made out of the jawbone of a donkey or a horse, is one instrument used in the Afro-Mexican musical, dance, and poetic tradition of son jarocho. In an area of Mexico traditionally associated with cattle ranching that was the site of entry for enslaved Africans brought to New Spain, the materiality and sonic qualities of the instrument reflect local realities and legacies of both ranching and African heritages among son jarocho community members in Veracruz. Despite the rich potential for exploration in and outside of son jarocho, the quijada has received little scholarly attention. In this paper, I argue that the quijada emerges among my interlocutors as both an object and a discourse in and of itself that counters the historic silencing and erasure of Afro- Mexican communities and experiences. Building on scholarship that considers the quijada in the context of son jarocho (Vargas Garcia 2016) and as a Black musical instrument (Petrulis 2023), I incorporate ethnographic data drawn from interviews and participant observation to explore how the personal relationships that community members have with the instrument underscore an acoustemology (Feld 1996, 2015) that foregrounds afrodiasporicity. In the landscape of son jarocho, my interlocutors perceive the quijada to sound blackness and represent a form of Afro-diasporic ancestrality both through its connection to other Afro-diasporic groups, its musical application within son jarocho, and, as I argue, through its timbral quality of a "buzz aesthetic" (Merriam 1962, Driver 2017) privileged in African and Afro-diasporic musics.

10G. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Under the Lid: The Extra-Musical Skills of Instrument Makers and Technicians

Juliet Glazer; Devanney Haruta; Jayme Kurland - Boston College; Brown University; George Mason University
Chair(s): Lisa Beebe - University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

This panel features three groups of musical instrument makers and technicians—violin repairers, piano technicians, and Fender guitar factory workers—to highlight the skills required in each specialized craft. We build on ethnomusicological scholarship on labor and material culture to bring needed attention to musical instrument making, maintenance, and repair. While these workers make musicking possible, their skills are often extra-musical in that they extend beyond sound-making. Moreover, their practices are sometimes near-invisible in terms of both musical practice and physical trace, meant to disappear inside instruments' bodies. We consider the following questions: What are the multisensorial and relational skills that contribute to musical instrument making and maintenance economies? How do workers learn and teach these embodied skills? How do such skills and practices intersect with gendered and racialized identities, hierarchies of authorship, and our understandings of musicking more broadly?Our papers investigate: 1) contemporary violin makers' practices of learning and using visual techniques to craft and evaluate instruments in the Northern Italian city of Cremona; 2) the emotional labor that piano technicians perform when mediating relationships between piano owners and their often beloved instruments; and 3) the labor of Latina workers at the Fender Factory who wound electromagnetic pickups, drawing in part on their gendered expertise with sewing machines. Diving "under the lid," we attend to these workers and their highly specialized embodied skills and knowledge—often distinct from the embodied skills of music performance—to argue for a broader understanding of the intersections between musical labor and craft.

10G:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.

Instruments before Sound: Bringing to Light Violin Makers' Visual Techniques

Juliet Glazer - Boston College

Music studies scholars often consider musical instruments foremost as tools for producing sound and music. Yet, I suggest this obscures many of the ways that violin makers engage with the instruments they create and care for. My research shows that among violin makers, looking at instruments is often more important than listening to them, for the purposes of making, repairing, and evaluating them. In this paper, I follow violin makers by setting aside listening (for now) to ask what we can learn about sounding and musicking from the ways they interact visually with instruments. I explore violin makers' visual techniques through an ethnographic account of the process of learning to make a violin at a lutherie school in Cremona, Italy. There, student and professional violin makers use visual techniques in the workshop

during every step of the violin making process. When students and teachers look at antique instruments' outlines and surface textures, visual techniques enable them to see evidence of music histories. When students learn from teachers to use light and shadow as tools to see the shapes of the curves they carve in blocks of wood, visual techniques emerge in relation to contemporary technologies, materials, and bodies. Meanwhile, violin makers' hopes for their instruments' future musical sounds are yet-inaudible sonic potentials that motivate their visual and tactile labor. I argue that sounding and musicking with violins relies not only on musicians' and audiences' audile techniques, but also on instrument makers' visual techniques. In other words, sound is more-than-sonic.

10G:1. Saturday, 11:15 AM.

From Piano to "Piano-Shaped Object": Piano Technicians and Emotional Labor

Devanney Haruta - Brown University

Pianos are perhaps one of the most recognizable musical instruments worldwide, yet piano technicians – the craftspeople who keep pianos in tune and in working order – are nearly absent from ethno/musicological literature. In this paper, I present an ethnography of this understudied yet essential group, to examine piano technicians' relationships to the instruments they work with on a daily basis. I argue that technicians – particularly those who service pianos in domestic settings – develop a skill of "desensitization," as one technician described it, which helps them better objectively evaluate an instrument's repair needs. Terms such as "Piano Shaped Object" (or PSO), which refers to a piano that is beyond repair and slated for disposal, as well as medical terminology that describes piano technicians as doctors or surgeons operating on their piano "patients," reflect the need for technicians to emotionally distance themselves from the piano. I reveal how technicians operate as mediators between pianos, owners, and players, negotiating conversations about piano maintenance, care, regulation, and even, at the end of an instrument's life, disposal. This research draws from my fieldwork as a participant in a North Bennet Street School class, interviews with piano technicians in New England, piano tuning manuals, and a Facebook group for licensed piano technicians. Investigating how people form and intentionally break emotional connections to instruments can help us better understand the meaning of musical instruments in our personal lives, and the presence (or lack) of emotion in how we treat and care for instruments.

10G:1. Saturday, 11:45 AM.

Sewing Skills, Reframed: Refashioning Women's Labor at Fender

Jayme Kurland - George Mason University

After experimenting with parts from various domestic appliances, electric guitar innovator George Beauchamp settled on a sewing machine motor to power the machine on which he made his first electromagnetic pickups in the mid-1930s. Other tinkerers followed suit: Paul Bigsby's and Leo Fender's respective machines and their processes resembled sewing machines and their operations: the user pressed their foot on a pedal to regulate the winding mechanism's speed. Instead of thread, they wound a thin copper wire around an oblong bobbin. Thus the sewing machine, a symbol of women's domestic labor, became the perfect machine to fabricate the devices at the core of the twentieth century's most masculine musical symbol, the electric guitar.During Fender's Golden Age (1946-1965), several Latina women workers were responsible for winding electromagnetic pickups. This presentation examines the skills which Fender's female employees brought to their work. Oral histories bring the perspectives and experiences of these workers into dialogue about their labor, revealing how the Mexican American women workers who wound pickups for Fender were skilled at sewing, a craft which requires considerable practice, planning, precision, and engineering. The Fender company benefited from their ability to problem solve and fix finicky machines, find better ways to complete their tasks, and recruit and train women from their familial and social spheres. Their expertise both illuminates and complicates fetishistic discourses about their labor.

10H. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Music in Motion: Diaspora, Policy, and Translocal Communities in Germany

Madlen Poguntke; Loab Hammoud; Sean Prieske - Seoul National University;

Hochschule für Musik und Theater München; University of Würzburg; University of Cologne

Chair(s): Guilnard Moufarrej - United States Naval Academy

10H:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.

Who Gets to Be a Composer? Rethinking Musical Authority in Germany and Korea

Madlen Poguntke - Seoul National University; Hochschule für Musik und Theater München

Who is recognized as a composer - and why does the category so often appear gender-neutral until women enter it? This paper interrogates the cultural construction of "composer" through a comparative analysis of Germany and South Korea, examining how musical authority is historically produced, institutionally maintained, and discursively marked. Drawing on archival research, institutional histories, and contemporary discourse analysis, the study shifts attention from the recovery of marginalized figures to the normative assumptions embedded in the category itself.

In German art music traditions, canon formation and aesthetic ideologies of autonomous authorship have consolidated a masculinized model of compositional authority that remains structurally unmarked. In Korean contexts, the position of historical figures such as gisaeng complicates Western-derived distinctions between composition, performance, and authorship, revealing alternative configurations of musical agency that have not consistently been integrated into modern art music historiography.

The persistent labeling of "female composer" exposes the asymmetry of recognition and raises broader questions about how musical value and legitimacy are assigned. By situating naming practices within broader regimes of cultural validation, this paper argues that "composer" is not a neutral descriptor but a historically contingent category shaped by power, pedagogy, and canon formation. Rethinking who gets to be called a composer invites a reconsideration of musical authority and the epistemological foundations of ethnomusicological scholarship.

10H:2. Saturday, 11:15 AM.

Paper title: New Locations New Sounds: the experiences of Syria refugee musicians in Germany.

Loab Hammoud - University of Würzburg

How do Syrian musicians performing with German musicians and for German audiences selectively alter their music to accommodate Western musical sensibilities? How do encounters between Arabic and Western musical traditions generate new aesthetic expressions for both Syrian and German musicians? This study addresses these questions through a case study of the Syriab Ensemble, a group of Syrian and German musicians performing diverse musical styles. While existing research has examined Syrian popular music in Germany and musical practices in refugee contexts (Brunner 2022, Pistric 2020), little attention has been paid to the strategies Syrian musicians use to adapt to new cultural and professional environments, or to the ways Arabic musical practices shape German performers' approaches. As an Arab scholar and 'ud player, I offer a perspective often underrepresented in European-dominated scholarship. Drawing on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork, including performance observations and interviews, this study explores how Syrian musicians reshape their repertoires for German audiences and how German musicians learn to engage with maqam-based music. Musical examples from the ensemble's repertoire are compared with performances from Syria to assess the effects of migration and intercultural collaboration. The analysis focuses on harmonization techniques, maqam theory, rhythm, genre, style, and performance context. I argue that the ensemble's musical practices reveal complex processes of negotiation, adaptation, and reciprocal exchange rather than one-sided assimilation. By highlighting these dynamics, the study contributes to broader debates in ethnomusicology, world music analysis, and minority music studies, emphasizing migration as a site of creative transformation and mutual influence.

10H:3. Saturday, 11:45 AM.

Music exchange and cultural policies between Germany and the Mashreq

Sean Prieske - University of Cologne

This paper focuses on musical exchange between Germany and the Mashreq region from the 1950s until present time. The emphasis is on music exchange and "music diplomacy" (Davenport 2009) that emerged through long-term interaction at the personal and institutional level in the second half of the twentieth century. These forms of music transfer manifested themselves in the diverse exchange and migration of musicians, texts and objects (Fosler-Lussier 2010). Taking into account formal and informal cultural and knowledge exchange, selected musical actors and institutions are examined as examples of the driving forces behind these interactions. Although music diplomacy between Germany and the eastern Mediterranean region has a long history (Öğüt & Prieske 2024), it has only been researched to a limited extent to date. In my paper, I argue that state-funded institutions like the German Goethe Institutes or German schools in the Eastern Mediterranean act as cultural hubs for international music networking. In countries where there are few state-funded cultural activities, these German institutions play an important role in the local music scene, promoting music in line with Germany's cultural policies. These processes of music diplomacy and exchange in the Mashreq region are being researched for the first time using archival sources on German and Arab music diplomacy as well as interviews with musicians and former government staff. By combining methods of historic musicology with field research in the Mashreq and Germany, the research highlights the history and continuity of German-Arab cultural ties that are often unknown or have been forgotten.

10I. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Performing Beyond the Machine: Music, Technology, and Creative Communities in East Asia

Cody Black; Victor Arul; Matthew Haywood - Vanderbilt University; Harvard University; Macau University of Science and Technology

Chair(s): Jeongin Lee - University of Southern California

10I:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.

Singing Before Deaf Machines: *Noraebang*, Arbitrary Scoring, and the Poetics of Quantitative Refusal in South Korea

Cody Black - Vanderbilt University

This paper listens to the deaf machine—and to those who sing before it. In South Korean noraebang (karaoke rooms), the transmediated voice is scored by rating systems whose quantitative assessments bear no systematic relation to vocal performance—scores are generated randomly, unconnected to any measurable quality of the sung voice. Yet despite widespread awareness of this arbitrariness, scores continue to orient performance, inciting competitive transformations as singers modify their vocal delivery to appease what they believe the algorithms of deaf machines can discern. Drawing from fieldwork in Seoul, I examine how the persistent sociality of random scoring extends the pervasive audit culture (Shore & Wright 2024, Strathern 2000) that infiltrates Korean subject-formation through compounding regimes of examination, ranking, and spec accumulation (Cho 2015). As the neoliberalization of language reduces communicative faculties to assessable skills (Park 2021, Urciuoli 2008), and semiocapitalism abstracts language from affective bodies (Berardi 2018), I trace how even leisure sociability—where the voice might otherwise exceed productive functionalization—becomes saturated with the competitive logics of quantitative comparison. Singers perform simultaneously for the machine and for the room, compressing the poetic intensities of sung language into discrete, machine-legible aesthetics that double as competitive display. Such logics go largely unremarked in the ordinary sociality of noraebang. Yet when my interlocutor, Seohyeon, disabled the system to sing without numerical subjection, her quiet refusal (Campt 2017) of the quantitative assessment momentarily reactivated the affective excess of poetic language and the communal intimacies of song otherwise obscured by Korea's broad culture of audit and comparison.

10I:2. Saturday, 11:15 AM.

Performing Rupture in the Soundscape: Community and Aesthetics in Pokémon Glitch Culture

Victor Arul - Harvard University

This presentation explores how online retro gaming communities reconstruct the aesthetic value of sonic glitches, shifting them from technological s to coveted musical artifacts. While traditional ludo-musicological frameworks largely analyze video game sound through the lens of intended player input and deterministic design (Collins 2013; Summers 2016), this approach overlooks the vibrant, participatory culture of "glitch hunting" and speedrunning. Focusing on Pokémon Yellow Version (1998), this digital ethnography investigates how player communities across both English and Japanese online spaces evaluate and celebrate audio anomalies, specifically the "Red bar glitch" and encounters with glitch entities like "MissingNo." and "C1."

In Japanese RTA (Real Time Attack) communities, where system exploits intersect with the culture of urawaza (secret tricks), and within English-speaking speedrunning networks, unpredictable sonic phenomena are not discarded as programmatic failures. Instead, stochastically generated timbres and emergent rhythmic complexities are actively encouraged and prized. They serve as coveted auditory markers of successful systemic manipulation and shared community knowledge. Drawing upon actor-network theory (Latour 2005) and extending concepts of "vibrant matter" (Bennett 2010) into digital social spaces, I argue that the glitch engenders a distinct, cross-cultural value system.

By analyzing transnational community discourse and shared gameplay recordings, I demonstrate how players collectively renegotiate the boundaries of the intended ludo-sonic environment. Ultimately, this presentation illustrates how these communities construct a post-humanist sonic aesthetic where the deterministic architecture of the game code is subverted, and the technological "" becomes a celebrated site of shared cultural meaning.

10I:3. Saturday, 11:45 AM.

Signifying Locality in China's Age of Technofuturism, Nationalism, and Traditionalism

Matthew Haywood - Macau University of Science and Technology

How are localities represented when technofuturism, nationalism, and traditionalist revivalism converge? Macau 2049, a large-scale stage performance directed by Zhang Yimou, combines robotics with Chinese traditional performance arts and offers a compelling case study. This paper advances two main arguments. First, I interpret the show as symbolically staging China's pursuit of modernity in its most contemporary and idealized form. Scholars have already noted that China's modernity is marked by the celebration of national milestones and the reform of traditional performing arts. Macau 2049 is examined as articulating these themes while also embodying a newer trajectory in which the incorporation of AI and robotics into traditional performance marks the latest stage in a modernist narrative that celebrates technological innovation as the means of reforming tradition. Second, I analyze how locality is reconfigured within this technological, artistic, and ideological assemblage. Although Macau, a Special Administrative Region of China, is invoked in the show's title, serves as its exclusive performance site, and is cited as the home of several performers, the city itself remains curiously elusive on stage. Drawing on Ackbar Abbas's concept of "disappearance," I argue that the intersection of technofuturism, nationalism, and traditionalism situates localities such as Macau in a simulacral mode of existence: they are signified, yet what they signify remains ambiguous, functioning as a circulating sign within a broader techno-traditional-national imaginary. In doing so, the performance gestures toward a projected future for China's localities, where technological spectacle rearticulates their signification within a broader modernist national vision.

10J. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Diasporic Asian and Pacific Islander Sound Worlds: Heritage, Identity, and Transnational Imaginaries

James Gabrillo; Christi-Anne Castro; Heather Cooper - University of Texas at Austin; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; The University of Arizona
Chair(s): Christi-Anne Castro - University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

10J:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.

Inside the Installation: Ethnographic Listening in Asian Diasporic Art

James Gabrillo - University of Texas at Austin

This paper develops "screened listening" as an ethnomusicological analytic for understanding how installation art structures how people hear and move within exhibitions. Building on Blesser and Salter's concept of aural architecture (2009), I argue that the screen in installation environments functions as an acoustic boundary that organizes movement, access, and authority in space. Focusing on works by three Asian diasporic artists, I ask how feedback systems, caption infrastructures, and museum acoustics compose perspective for differently positioned listeners. In Nam June Paik's TV Buddha (1974), the camera–monitor loop encloses visitors within a tightly regulated "now," converting gallery noise and electronic hum into an intensified mode of listening. In Christine Sun Kim's Close Readings (2020), which I encountered at the Whitney Museum, Deaf-authored captions overwrite studio subtitling norms, redistributing sonic authorship across competing textual soundtracks. Wu Tsang's Anthem (2021), experienced through participant observation at the Guggenheim, suspends Beverly Glenn-Copeland's voice in the museum's spiraling rotunda, where circulation along the ramp continually recomposes the mix. Drawing on fieldwork and interviews, I show how visitors describe these installations less through musical style than through shifting sensations of proximity, legibility, and collective presence. By bringing ethnographic method into dialogue with sound studies, Deaf and disability scholarship, and media-infrastructural approaches, the project reframes installation art as a site of infrastructural listening. It advances new directions for ethnomusicology in museums and galleries, foregrounding how exhibition technologies calibrate intimacy, access, and diasporic collectivity in contemporary public culture.

10J:2. Saturday, 11:15 AM.

Hijacking Diaspora: FilAm Popular Songs as Home in the Transnational Imaginary

Christi-Anne Castro - University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

In 2021, Ez Mil went viral with his single "Panalo," a rap song that smashes together text in three languages, a trap beat, and a Philippine folk dance. The song has garnered over 87 million views on YouTube; however, a historical in its lyrics highlights existing tensions between the Philippines and Filipino Americans (FilAms). Twenty years earlier, Apl.de.ap of the Black Eyed Peas sampled the first verse of a political song by the Filipino folk group Asin in his "The APL Song." Two years later, he released "Bebot," which re-emerged in 2026 as a Tiktok trend but triggered conversations about racism. The Philippine subject matter in these songs has made waves throughout the diaspora with comments praising them for engendering pride while also serving as flashpoints for complex issues.

This paper analyzes these songs through the framework of diasporic consciousness, engaging with a wider scholarly debate about the theorization of a specific FilAm diaspora (Espiritu 2003; Okamura 2013) vs. FilAm ethnicity amid multiculturalism. At issue is the degree to which FilAms identify with a Philippine homeland and whether this bilateral imaginary extends to the reality of a global diaspora. I contend that recapturing the word "diaspora" from its ubiquity and narrowing its usage based on consciousness allows for a productive definition of FilAm diasporic music implicating US-Philippine history. In our current moment of anti-immigration, this consciousness is as much about homelessness as it is about home and the ability of music to nurture a sense of rootedness.

10J:3. Saturday, 11:45 AM.

Punake in the Diaspora: Cultural Stewardship and the Sounds of Tongan Heritage Across the United States

Heather Cooper - Snow College

Punake—poet, composer, and orator—bear the responsibility of sustaining language, history, and culture in Tonga and around the world. While the punake in Tonga have long served as cultural stewards, their work in diaspora settings takes on new urgency as communities confront linguistic erosion, generational shifts, and changing relationships to tradition. Drawing on extensive interviews with the punake and community members across nine U.S. states, this paper examines how contemporary punake navigate creativity, responsibility, and cultural preservation in the U.S. diaspora. I explore how the punake conceptualize their creative process, particularly the significance of original compositions as vessels for genealogy, language, collective memory, and spiritual meaning. Original compositions are not only creative expressions

of culture but also acts of service that honor ancestors and strengthen communal identity. The study further highlights how diaspora contexts reshape the work of the punake through community expectations as linguistic translation becomes more complex, and support networks shift as the punake collaborate across distance and negotiate gaps in cultural knowledge. By foregrounding the voices gathered through individual interviews of three punake, this paper shows the diverse pathways through which they learn, create, and teach. Their experiences demonstrate how musical creativity becomes a strategy for cultural and language continuity, allowing Tongan communities abroad to hear, feel, and embody their heritage. Ultimately, this research shows that the punake in the diaspora serve as both culture bearers and innovators that bridge the past and present.

10K. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Forbidden Voices, Resonant Resistance: Music, Gender, and Politics in Iran

Hesam Abedi; Mina Neizari; Siavash Mohebbi - University of Florida; Cornell University; University of Virginia

Chair(s): Payam Yousefi - University of Florida

10K:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.

Silenced Voices: The Ban on Female Solo Singing in Post-Revolutionary Iran as Political Trauma

Hesam Abedi - University of Florida

After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the ban on female solo singing in Iran became a form of political violence against women artists as an effort to shape a new national-religious identity for Iranian society. It not only restricts women's artistic expression but also sends a clear message that women's voices should not be publicly heard, reinforcing gender inequality and male dominance in Iranian music. As a form of symbolic and hidden violence, this policy has had deep psychological and social consequences, including the suppression of artistic identity and repeated experiences of marginalization and trauma. Although feminist ethnomusicologists have discussed the general impact of this ban, fewer studies frame it through trauma studies, particularly within the wartime context of the 1980s. This project addresses that gap by examining how female musicians responded to these structural injustices and political violence, focusing on the social consequences of their decisions to emigrate or remain.

Under these conditions, female solo singing itself becomes a form of resistance. Over more than four decades of restriction, women have developed various strategies to maintain their presence in music production. With the expansion of the internet and social media, new platforms have allowed women to amplify their voices collectively, contributing to recent social changes, especially the women-led movement "Woman, Life, Freedom." Overall, this research explores the relationship between gendered sound and political power, highlighting how artistic resistance challenges political restriction and also serves as a vehicle for trauma recovery.

10K:2. Saturday, 11:15 AM.

Resonant Resistance: Sonic Agency, Gender, and the Re-sounding of Sacred Spaces in Iran

Mina Neizari - Cornell University

This presentation examines women's resistance in contemporary Iranian public space, focusing on the dome of the Shah Mosque in Isfahan. It explores this symbolic structure, celebrated since the Safavid era as an architectural masterpiece and acoustic space designed to amplify religious sounds and male religious authority, and argues that this site has become an important stage for sonic and political resistance. Drawing on how recent actions, particularly women singing beneath this dome and circulating videos on social media, have transformed the space's symbolic meaning and traditional function, this presentation demonstrates how these performances, which directly challenge the post-1979 restrictions on women's public singing, are not merely artistic acts but constitute a socio-political gesture. Methodologically, this research analyzes the Shah Mosque dome not as an architectural structure, but as an active medium whose acoustic properties have become a tool for resistance, allowing historically excluded voices to resonate. This qualitative study is positioned at the interdisciplinary intersection of ethnomusicology, sound studies, spatial theory, gender studies, and media studies. It draws on an interview, autoethnography, analysis of sonic-spatial situations, and a case study of a widely circulated social media performance. The theoretical framework builds on Brandon LaBelle's concept of "Sonic Agency," showing how sound becomes a tool for resistance and negotiation with systems of domination, and is

extended through Laudan Nooshin's work on Iranian musical cyberspace to account for the online dimension of these performances.

10K:3. Saturday, 11:45 AM.
Music-making and Shifting Notions of Dissidence in Iran: The case of Shervin
Siavash Mohebbi - University of Virginia

This paper discusses how Iranian musicians navigate continuous crises in successive waves of protest, repression, and war since 2022. I argue that an increasingly radicalized political atmosphere has pressured Iranian artists to take a side in a perceived binary of "overthrow" versus "reform." This paper centers on the music and reception of Shervin to trace these shifting political conditions shaping music-making in Iran. He first rose to almost instant fame when he released "Baraye" ("Because of"), whose lyrics are a collage assembled from tweets posted under #MahsaAmini, a viral hashtag through which users articulated their reasons to protest during the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. Through rapid circulation, the piece became a sonic emblem of the uprising, even as Shervin was immediately arrested and pressured to delete it from Instagram. This placed Shervin's subsequent online presence and musical releases under heightened attention. Since then, Shervin has faced not only state surveillance but also close scrutiny from dissident audiences unwilling to tolerate any perceived compromise with the regime—whether in his songs, social media contents, or career decisions such as applying for official permits. Drawing on an ethnography of social media, I ask what it means to sustain a musical persona amid persistent uncertainty shaped by arbitrary state restrictions and shifting public expectations. Building on Miriam Cooke and Lauren Berlant, I listen to the ways that musicians negotiate music-making, dissidence, and the affective politics of contested claim-making in Iran.

10L. Saturday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session
Sonic Politics in Modern Turkey
Ceyda Cekmeci; Erol Köymen; Egemen Kesikli - UC Berkeley; ; Colorado State University
Chair(s): Jon Bullock - University of Notre Dame

10L:1. Saturday, 10:45 AM.
Dissent's Afterlives: Aesthetics of Opposition in Turkey's Authoritarian Turn
Ceyda Cekmeci - UC Berkeley

The past decade has witnessed the consolidation of authoritarian forms of governance within formally democratic frameworks across multiple political contexts. Within this reconfigured political landscape, regimes stage authority through spectacle and affect, while oppositional actors craft sonic and aesthetic forms that render dissent creative and expressive. Taking Turkey as an analytic lens, I trace a repertoire of such oppositional practices that emerged with particular intensity during the 2013 Gezi protests and has persisted since, even as the protests were suppressed and political horizons narrowed under intensifying authoritarian consolidation.

This paper asks what becomes of such oppositional forms when political transformation stalls yet their aesthetic force endures. I argue that their continued circulation signals a form of cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011), in which aesthetic attachment to change endures beyond its material feasibility. This reveals the contours of a broader political impasse, one in which a carnivalesque aesthetic of dissent is desperately attached to even when it can no longer promise change. Framing Turkey not as a regional exception but as a paradigmatic site, this paper advances a musical account of political aesthetics in the twenty-first century under conditions of entrenched authoritarian consolidation increasingly recognizable well beyond Turkey.

10L:2. Saturday, 11:15 AM.
Polyphonic Governmentality: Toward a Global Concept History of *Çok Seslilik* in Modern Turkey
Erol Köymen - Florida State University

Polyphony has famously served as a metaphor for fields of postcolonial difference (Bakhtin 1984, Said 1993). More recently, scholars have explored polyphony as an agent of European colonization (Irving 2010, Irving 2024). But can

polyphony itself become a site of difference? In this paper, I explore that question in the context of modern Turkey. Modern Turkey's secularist bourgeoisie promoted polyphony (çok seslilik)—as embodied in Western art music and contrasted to traditionally heterophonic Turkish musics—as a means to clarify and cultivate secular modern domains such as the democratic public sphere and (neo)liberal economy. Drawing on the method of global concept history and recent rethinking of secular myth (Sartori 2008, Keum 2025), I argue that a distinct concept of polyphony emerged from changing global structural conditions to become integral to Enlightenment governmentality in modern Turkey. Through analysis of early Turkish Republican era music journals and pedagogical materials as well as participant-observation ethnography with listeners to WAM, I show how a myth of polyphony as figure of ordered complexity was mobilized to codify individual polyphonic bodies with a bourgeois, subject-object orientation to the world and a polyphonic body politic oriented by secular Enlightenment values such as rationality and progress. This paper thus brings foundational ethnomusicological insight to invocations of polyphony in canonical cultural theory and the emerging field of global musicology: where theorists have mobilized implicitly universal concepts of polyphony to open fields of postcolonial difference, I reveal polyphony itself to be a conceptual site of cultural difference in modern Turkey.

10L:3. Saturday, 11:45 AM.

Is This *Makam*Music?: Genealogy and Politics of "Aşkın Aldı Benden Beni" in Saygun's *Yunus Emre*

Egemen Kesikli - Colorado State University

The incorporation of Turkish makams into polyphonic forms through the equal-tempered approximation of microtonal inflections remains among the most fraught issues in Turkish music discourse: to what extent can modal affect and identity survive into the structures and conventions of Eurocentric polyphonic art music; what is lost in the process of abstraction and resignification? This article addresses these questions through the history and afterlife of the ilâhi (Sufi hymn) "Şol Cennetin Irmakları," which Ahmed Adnan Saygun adapted as "Aşkın Aldı Benden Beni" in his oratorio, Yunus Emre (1942). Drawing on Turkish makam theory, recent musicology, and field and commercial recordings, the paper traces the melody's contested genealogy, Saygun's alterations to its melodic and rhythmic organization, and its subsequent circulation across folk, popular, and devotional repertories. The ilâhi's ironic trajectory from oral tradition into Saygun's polyphony and back into effectively anonymous communal repertoire demonstrates that musical authenticity in modern Türkiye is not stable or singular.

Saturday, 5:00 PM. Section/SIG Meeting

Sound Studies Gaming Session

The SEM Sound Studies Section invites you to attend our first-ever gaming session, "Playing with Sound: How Do You Listen?" on Saturday, November 7. The meeting provides an interactive gaming space that brings together participatory scores, improvisation, role-play, and collaborative sound-making. Through play, we aim to explore how gaming can transform listening into a situated, embodied form of knowledge. Participants will explore inquiry, affect, contingency, relationality, and failure - factors that make sound both a medium and a method. Open to all possible sonic encounters, musical and nonmusical experience alike, the session welcomes gamers to listen with and through others, experiment ethnographically, and discover new possibilities for understanding sound, social connection, and collective creativity.

11A. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Roundtable

"Bad Ecomusicology" and Dissident Environmental Affects

Fabian Almazan; Tyler Yamin; Brooks Toliver; Bailey Hilgren -
Chair(s): Elizabeth Frickey

Mainstream environmentalism has a reputation as gloomy, nostalgic, or self-righteous, but environmentalist work outside these modes has potential to be more inclusive and effective. Nicole Seymour's Bad Environmentalism (2018) makes this case through an examination of ecological art and performance that use what she calls "bad affects" to advance an alternative green politics. Inspired by Seymour, this roundtable gathers scholars to engage in "bad ecomusicology" and consider music and sound art that mobilize irreverence, mundanity, queerness, playfulness, or sexiness as part of environmental discourse.

Presenter 1 examines Stevie Wonder's 1979 album Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants, arguing that its marginalization reveals narrow cultural expectations about environmental sound and who can create it. Panelist 2 explores an Aotearoa New Zealand competition for saxophone compositions designed to get the endangered kākāpō "in the mood," sounding out how humor, romance, finance, and conservation intertwine through biopolitical investments in "amatonormativity" (Brake 2011). Panelist 3 examines Tom Lehrer's subversive 1950s and 60s comedy, demonstrating how his songs offered audiences humorous yet provocative ways to confront environmental and existential crises while operating within the mainstream. Panelist 4 analyzes Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens's 2024 audio installation "Forest as Lover" to show how their ecosexual approach uses intimate, typically private sonic practices to transform the forest into a playful and erotic site.

11B. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Listening for Care: Gender, Labor, and Social Reproduction that Sustains Musical Worlds

Ezgi Benli-Garcia; Anchal Khansili; Ellen Hebden; Vivianne Asturizaga - George Mason University; Florida State University; Syracuse University; California State University

Chair(s): Ezgi Benli-Garcia - George Mason University

Ethnomusicological debates on gender, labor, and social reproduction focus on different facets of labor, yet they seldom engage with practices and ethics of care. In this panel, each of the presenters explores how performance practices are sustained through gendered forms of care labor. The diverse musical worlds discussed in this panel demonstrate that feminist practices of "caring with," or attending to others, operate as an infrastructure that makes the social reproduction of musical life possible. Taken together, the papers argue that gendered labor is ethically complex, unevenly valued, yet foundational to collective life across religious, political, environmental, and professional contexts. Drawing on ethnographic research in Turkey, India, Mozambique, and Bolivia, each paper examines different sites and scales of care, from small, intimate religious gatherings to institutional and professionalized settings, collective sonic action, and researcher-interlocutor connections in the afterlives of an environmental movement. By examining women's care labor, the papers collectively reveal that musical worlds are not representations or performances alone. Rather, they are sustained through forms of social reproduction shouldered primarily by women. Yet this affective, organizational, activist, and artistic labor largely remains invisible to institutional metrics of productivity tied to the success of an event. This panel prompts us to consider: When does care labor enable collective life and solidarity and when does it perpetuate structural inequality within communities and musical worlds?

11B:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Sustaining Togetherness: Gendered Labor in Alevi Muhabbet Gatherings

Ezgi Benli-Garcia - George Mason University

Alevi communities, the largest religious minority in Turkey, gather in intimate settings where music, conversation, commensality, and storytelling cultivate what is known as muhabbet. Regarded as spaces of love, affection, and mutual care, muhabbet gatherings are typically organized spontaneously in both private and public settings, creating a profound sense of togetherness (tr. üç can, bir cem) among practitioners. While these gatherings are considered part of broader Alevi devotional practices and have often been discussed in relation to collective music-making, few studies critically examine the gendered labor that enables these temporary sanctuaries. Drawing on extensive ethnographic research with Alevi practitioners in Turkey, I argue that women's unevenly distributed practices of care—ranging from organizing domestic and social spaces to sustaining the acoustic conditions of gathering—constitute the very possibility of muhabbet. By attending to women and their reflections, the paper shows that this work is neither habitual nor taken for granted. Rather, women express a clear awareness of muhabbet's ethical, religious, and social significance and describe their labor as a responsibility for sustaining community continuity amid state-sanctioned discrimination and sectarian violence. By centering women's care labor, I reframe muhabbet as a socio-religious and affective practice sustained through gendered labor rather than as a primarily performative expression of Alevi ritual life. In doing so, this paper contributes to feminist ethnomusicological debates on gendered labor, social reproduction, and the conditions under which musical and ritual life is sustained.

11B:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

"This Is All I Can Do For You": Negotiating Care and Gendered Labor in Chipko's Afterlives

Anchal Khansili - Florida State University

Recent scholarship in humanities has reexamined care ethics through ethnographic attention to lived realities of human and more-than-human worlds. This paper brings that conversation into a dialogue with the Chipko movement, a grassroots environmental movement in the 1970s Uttarakhand, India, in which villagers embraced trees to prevent state-led logging. Although many villages participated, its most widely recounted episode occurred in Reni village, where, in the absence of male villagers, women confronted forest officials and halted the felling of trees. During the movement, women sang songs of protest, and on the global platform, their voices and participation revealed a new applied practice of ecofeminism through care. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2024 and 2025 in Reni, Lata, and Fagti villages, I analyze two encounters with women (singers) that reveal contrasting forms of care: one expressed through ethical obligation, the other through restraint amid social risk. Grounded in care ethics and feminist political ecology, I examine how women negotiate the decision to share Chipko songs as a form of care with a researcher from their same state. This paper assesses the consequences attached to it, thereby intensifying care and revealing it not as an automatic outcome of affect, but as a contingent practice structured by obligation, risk, memory, and relational tension. Songs within this context emerge as sonic archives highlighting gendered forms of labour during the movement. Based on these interactions, I argue that care in Chipko's afterlife emerges as multidirectional and unevenly shaped by gendered labor, social reproduction, and vulnerability.

11B:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

Sound, Care, and Gendered Labor in Mozambique during Crisis

Ellen Hebden - Syracuse University

Following Mozambique's contested 2024 election, nightly panelaço (pot-banging) protests in urban Maputo mobilized domestic sound-making as collective dissent that included people from all levels of society. At the height of the protests, a widely circulated image reimagined the Mozambican flag, replacing the AK-47 with a cooking pot. As a domestic tool largely associated with women's work, the pot's inclusion implicitly recognized seemingly invisible forms of labor as foundational to collective crisis response and community well-being. In this paper, I situate the panelaço protests alongside other forms of audible, gendered labor that enact care in times of crisis in Mozambique. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research in the rural district of Pebane, I examine how women's dance associations performing tufo—a popular performance genre along the northern Muslim coast—have developed infrastructures of care that help sustain communities navigating prolonged instability, including war and recurring environmental disasters. Though tufo dancing is often (dis)regarded as a women's leisure activity, I analyze dancers' care activities, such as programming songs that lift audience morale, or planning and hosting celebratory events, as affective, organizational, and moral labor. Building on feminist theories of social reproduction and care labor, I argue that women's care work creates connections during and after crises by maintaining social relations, producing collective feeling, and sustaining the networks that allow communities to endure and rebuild. I conclude by connecting the panelaço protests and tufo dancing as complementary sonic responses to crises, revealing how gendered care labor sustains communities beyond formal political and economic frameworks.

11B:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM.

Between Scores and Cradles: Reproductive Labor and the Professional Musician in Bolivia

Vivianne Asturizaga - California State University

What happens when motherhood enters a profession defined by precarious employment, informal labor arrangements, and expectations of complete artistic devotion? This paper examines how women musicians in Bolivia negotiate reproductive labor within a musical field that assumes constant availability and stability. Drawing on ethnographic interviews and case studies with performer-mothers working in orchestras, conservatories, and freelance contexts, the study asks how caregiving reshapes artistic time, mobility, and professional opportunity in a society where institutional support is limited and gendered expectations of care persist. By treating motherhood as reproductive labor rather than a

private life circumstance, this paper reveals how the practices sustaining musical production often depend on hidden infrastructures of care that remain invisible to institutional metrics of productivity. It also contributes to feminist ethnomusicological discussions of labor, temporality, and gender by demonstrating how social norms about care work intersect with professional musical cultures and challenge dominant models of the autonomous artist. This analysis has broader implications for understanding structural inequalities in musical labor and the gendered politics of artistic practice.

11C. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

String Band Worlds: Bluegrass, Belonging, and Musical Exchange

Joseph O'Connell; Holly Riley; Siying Su; Donald Bradley - Duke University; Middle Tennessee State University; The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen; Indiana University

Chair(s): Holly Riley - Middle Tennessee State University

11C:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Bluegrass, Noise, and Railroad Memory at Monon World Headquarters

Joseph O'Connell - Duke University

The last trains passed through Salem, Indiana in 2008. This paper examines the enlistment of noise in the production of local railroad memory. I draw on participant-observation at the Depot, a public museum that invites visitors to imagine the heyday of Indiana's Monon Railroad. The artifacts on display, from mail hooks to dining car dinner ware, testify to a time when passenger trains stopped along a corridor of nearby farm communities. I argue that a key to the Depot is its appeals to the ear. In this presentation, I turn to an elder volunteer named Jim Smoak as a primary interlocutor and expert practitioner of "train sound." During the 1950s, Smoak was among a small handful of three-finger banjo stylists to make it in Nashville. At 91, now living in Indiana, he splits his music time with volunteer shifts at the Depot. I approach the social world of the Depot through Smoak, describing multiple activities that elicit locomotive acoustics in the space of the museum. These curatorial gestures range from the performance of loco-motivic bluegrass music to the demonstration of a pneumatic train whistle. Interpreting acoustic practices as a channel of local critique, I consider the sound culture of the Depot alongside authorized social analyses of the railroad soundscape (Leo Marx, Michel DeCerteau, R. Murray Schafer). Additionally, I offer the Depot case as a way to rethink the connection of soundscape to musicality, granting popular traditions of machine mimicry greater purchase with respect to one of ethnomusicology's core theories: acoustemology.

11C:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

Institutionalizing the Hang: Conferences, Community, and the Meeting Spaces of String Band Music

Holly Riley - Middle Tennessee State University

This paper examines the gathering spaces of string band music as sites where questions of legitimacy, sustainability, and cultural authority are negotiated amid shifting practices of formality and institutional affiliation. As traditional American folk musics increasingly intersect with institutional frameworks, particularly within higher education, new modes of convening have emerged alongside longstanding practices such as fiddlers' conventions, jam sessions, and regional and national festivals. I analyze multiple institutionalized gatherings across this spectrum, from large, industry-centered bluegrass events such as IBMA to subgroups within existing academic conferences, as well as independently organized meetings including the String Band Summit and the Black Banjo Gathering. These meeting spaces provide a lens through which to analyze the evolving relationship between traditional music communities and the academic and professional institutions that both support and study them.

Through ethnographic inquiry and my ongoing practices of being-in-community as both scholar and participant, I examine how these spaces balance accessibility with tradition, expansion with preservation, and institutional support with grassroots values. While conferences and summits may provide resources and scholarly legitimacy, they also introduce hierarchical structures that can challenge the participatory and intergenerational dynamics central to string band practice. This work builds on and contributes to an ongoing body of scholarship on old-time, bluegrass, and

related string band traditions that has reflexively examined the bidirectional impacts of institutionalization on community-based music making.

11C:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

Resituating the Banjo: Performance, Authority, and Stylistic Fusion in Béla Fleck's Music

Siying Su - The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen

This paper argues that stylistic fusion in Béla Fleck's banjo practice operates not primarily through genre hybridization or stylistic borrowing, but through the renegotiation of instrumental roles, technical practices, and performance authority across musical contexts. Through comparative analysis of two contrasting projects—Perpetual Motion (2001), which adapts Western art music repertoire for banjo-centered ensembles, and Thrown Down Your Heart (2009), a documentary project documenting Fleck's collaborations with West African musicians—the paper examines how fusion is enacted through shifting configurations of leadership, learning, and ensemble interaction. In Perpetual Motion, Fleck's arrangements of works by composers including Bach, Beethoven, Liszt, and Debussy involve the development of new banjo techniques and ensemble orchestrations that substitute bluegrass instruments for classical ones, resituating Western art music within an American vernacular performance framework while maintaining the banjo's central musical authority. In contrast, Thrown Down Your Heart positions Fleck as a participant-observer within local musical systems, where authority and decision-making are frequently ceded to collaborating musicians, reshaping both musical outcomes and modes of transmission. By foregrounding sonic structure, instrumental technique, and interactional dynamics, this paper demonstrates how Fleck's fusion practices reconstitute the banjo from a conventionally leading bluegrass instrument into a flexible, context-responsive musical agent. More broadly, the paper proposes an ethnomusicological approach to fusion that emphasizes performance roles and instrumental identity as socially negotiated processes rather than stable genre categories.

11C:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM.

Imagining Americana in Japanese Engagement with Bluegrass Music

Donald Bradley - Indiana University

Since the mid-19th century, Japan and the United States have participated in political and cultural exchanges that have influenced Japanese identity. Americana in Japan is a useful means of analyzing Japan's relationship with the United States and U.S. culture. I argue that Bluegrass music, which has been performed in Japan since the mid 1940s, as a kind of americana offers a particular articulation of imagined class-based, regionalized, and racialized articulations of U.S.-ness. These imagined articulations of U.S.-ness, both temporally contingent and enmeshed in broader cosmopolitan dynamics. By focusing on the imagination, I attend to the complex processes through which Japanese musicians and enthusiasts constitute their identities. 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 music as a type of americana 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.

11D. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Voicing the Unresolved: Listening at the Thresholds of Life, Death, and History

Fidel Glitch; Landry Krebs; Kristine Barrett; Juan David Rubio Restrepo - UC Berkeley; UC Berkeley; UC Berkeley; UC Berkeley

Chair(s): Juan David Rubio Restrepo - UC Berkeley

What does voice do when grief cannot be completed, pain cannot be repaired, and the past cannot be settled? Across ethnographic, archival, and theoretical approaches, this panel explores voice as a medium for inhabiting unresolved social worlds—worlds structured by war, disappearance, ecological catastrophe, diasporic listening, and the unsettled

presence of the dead. In this panel, we approach vocality as an ethical, material, and relational practice. Voice takes shape where mourning is suspended, where listening becomes theory, where distributed audiences co-create sonic meaning, and where singing mediates relations between the living and dead in their situated historical and ecological environments. Our cases range from the singing practice of a Kurdish woman inhabiting unresolved loss, to postwar Kosovar Albanian film that stages voice at the threshold of life and death, to Ukrainian ritual polyphony that negotiates ecological and ancestral relations in contaminated landscapes, to transnational listening communities organized across Latin America. We argue that voice is not simply a sign of presence but a practice that inhabits absence, binds dispersed listeners, and materializes historical wounds without resolving them. By attending to vocal practices that dwell in indeterminacy—between life and death, event and aftermath, sound and listener—the panel foregrounds voice as a medium through which communities inhabit ongoing histories of violence, memory, and care.

11D:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Inhabiting Indeterminacy: Singing, Absence and Unsettled Time in Kurdistan

Fidel Glitch - UC Berkeley

What compels someone to begin singing late in life? In Kurdish condolence practices, women collectively sing to commemorate their deceased relatives, reconstituting the dead as an active presence among the living. Yet in cases of death related to the Kurdish resistance, mourning was often obstructed by the colonial violence of the Turkish state through the withholding of bodies or restrictions on public commemoration. For most of her life, E., a Kurdish woman from Mardin on the Syrian-Turkish border, did not sing. In the early 1990s, when she was in her sixties, her son left to join the resistance and was never heard from again. From within this silence and uncertainty, E. began to narrate and sing, improvising words and melody simultaneously—sometimes alone, with no one present, and sometimes in the presence of listeners, but often while performing everyday tasks. Although E. also circulated collective stories as a storyteller, her singing was not organized as linear narratives with clear beginnings and endings but consisted of fragments, repetitions, and scenes from her own life. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2018, shortly before her death, and drawing on psychoanalytic and critical theory, I argue that E.'s vocal practice unfolds in a temporality in which death cannot be settled and loss cannot be fixed in the past, thereby rethinking singing less as an expression of completed grief than as a way of inhabiting indeterminacy and living within unsettled time.

11D:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

Voicing a Home in the Wound: Pain, Listening, and the Afterlives of War in Zana (2019)

Landry Krebs - UC Berkeley

Released in 2019, Zana (dir. Antoneta Kastrati) is set in the aftermath of the 1998-99 Kosovar war. Following Lume, an Albanian woman grieving the wartime killing of her daughter, the film stages psychiatric, spiritual, and political grammars as attempts to render her suffering legible that ultimately do not forestall her own death. While often framed as narrating "post-war trauma" in a patriarchal landscape, Zana's acousmatic and diegetic renderings of voice shift attention from representation of trauma to the conditions of listening in the afterlives of irreparable violence. In this presentation, I argue that Zana stages voice as the site through which a history of wounds becomes audible and pain is sustained as ethical relation outside humanitarian teleologies of violence (Asad 2000). I examine three voiced moments suspended between dreaming and waking—the opening hum, the wailed lament, and the closing lullaby—as sonic enactments of pain that sustain an ongoing moral relationship between voice and listener beyond grammars of repair and redemption. What modes of listening are beckoned when voice does not speak for suffering, but instead sits at the threshold of life and death in irresolvable vulnerability? Drawing on Stefania Pandolfo's (2018) work on voice and agony in Islamic healing, alongside scholarship on the relationality of voice (Hirschkind 2021; Abels 2022; Weidman 2014, 2015), this paper proposes an ethical-historical listening attuned to voicings of the "unspeakable" in the afterlives of war. Zana, I argue, compels viewer-listeners to inhabit pain as an ongoing condition of relation in the wake of genocidal violence.

11D:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

Resonances of the Restless Dead: Voice and Transcorporeality in Ukrainian Rusalki Songs

Kristine Barrett - UC Berkeley

In Ukrainian folklore, rusalki are the restless souls of women who have experienced a violent, premature, or unjust death. An amalgamation between nature spirit, ancestral being, and the anonymous dead, rusalki exist across multiple social and ecological landscapes. Their plurality is a key feature—reflecting how the dead become materially subsumed within soils and other-than-human bodies and their socialities. Reappearing annually in June, rusalki exact violence (usually towards men) or bestow blessings. I suggest their seemingly capricious natures hold in check excesses of gendered/ecological violence. "Farewell ritual" (provody rusalok) polyphonic songs are performed by women at the end of "Rusalka Week" while processing through various landscapes, culminating at burial grounds where the rusalki are then laid to rest. This paper will explore voice as a "transcorporeal" medium used to communicate with (and contain) the restless dead. Examining the aural and "intermaterial" (Eidsheim 2015) features of polyphonic "farewell ritual" songs from the Kyïvan Polissia—an area located within what is now the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone following the 1986 nuclear disaster—I explore the entangled ecological and social relations negotiated through singing. Through the concept of "transcorporeality"—that interrogates assumed boundaries between social and ecological worlds (Alaimo 2010)—I will analyze how "efficacious" vocal timbres/textures, resonance, and structured speech/lament produce material/cosmological transformations. My aim is to critically examine the ways vocality, the body, and ecological-social relations (recognizing the dead as situated within/across both) are co-constructed, unmade, and re-constituted through voice.

11D:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM.

Listening in the presence of…: Distributed aurality as theory

Juan David Rubio Restrepo - UC Berkeley

For the better part of a decade I have been researching, listening, thinking, and writing about Ecuadorian singer Julio Jaramillo (1935-1978). A truly transnational star, Jaramillo performed and recorded across the American continent for over twenty years. His voice stands at the crux of his Pan-American intimacy, sonically bounding a heterogeneous region. How to make sense of Jaramillo's vocality? As I enter the latter stages of this project, I have returned to my fieldsite, now a telematic forum, to listen to Jaramillo along with some of his most avid contemporary listeners. Inspired by de la Cadena's (2021) concept of "co-laboring," this presentation reflects upon the listening sessions I have conducted with a number of jaramillistas (Jaramillo buffs) located throughout the American continent. Through these sessions, I have sought to query how the inexhaustibility of music and sound (Cimini and Moreno, 2016) manifest itself in the polyvalent aurality Jaramillo fosters. Ethnomusicology has been key in positioning the act of listening in the so-called auditory turn. Concomitantly, ethnomusicologists have advocated for collaborative models of academic knowledge-production (Guilbault and Cape 2014, Díaz and Feliciano Pecanha 2024). I seize on this juncture, centering communal listening and conceiving it as theory proper. The analytical insights emerging from these listening sessions expand and complicate many of the insights of my ongoing work on Jaramillo.

11E. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session; Film

Audible Histories: Music, Memory, and Identity Through Film

Janie Cole; Shameela Seedat; Colin Harte; Jun Feng; Xiaohui Liu - ; Bard College- Bronx; SOAS, University of London; the University of Texas at Austin

Chair(s): Maria Mendonca - Kenyon College

11E:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Film

WE ARE NOT AFRAID: Music and Resistance in Apartheid Prisons **(Captions: full subtitles.Original languages: English, Xhosa, Zulu. Runtime: 65 mins)**

Janie Cole; Shameela Seedat - University of Connecticut

Set against South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, WE ARE NOT AFRAID explores music's critical role as resistance for political prisoners incarcerated in apartheid prisons over three decades (1960-1990), especially at Robben Island

(which held Nelson Mandela for 18 years) and the Johannesburg Women's Jail. Narrated by former political prisoners, with unseen historical archival footage, it shows how music performance–from indigenous African genres like isicathamiya, maskanda and mbaqanga to Cape jazz, migrant work songs, freedom songs, Western classical, rock, reggae and Indian ragas–provided resistance, community-building, therapy, collective memory, and identity-formation for political prisoners, transcending political, linguistic and ethnic differences to unite an oppressed people against a common enemy. Women's narratives and songs expose the deadly gender-based violence that underlay structures of state violence and express their fight against both racial and gender oppression and dehumanizing prison experiences, which are historically overshadowed in liberation narratives. Through these resilient individuals, new testimonies and music, the film touches on broader questions about cultural expression as advancing social change and the uses of music by individuals protesting the violation of human rights under oppressive patriarchal regimes at the intersections of music, resilience, power, violence, gender, race, trauma and human rights.

The film excerpt focuses on highlights from the entire film that touch on the intersecting themes as described in the above abstract. The introduction/discussion will focus on South African field methods for capturing survivor/perpetrator testimonies, ethical approaches to ethnographic research and media-making in trauma-related research, and the importance of documenting crimes against humanity.

11E:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM. Film
Performing Black & Green: The African and Irish Musical Roots of Montserrat
Colin Harte - Bard College- Bronx

"Performing Black & Green: The African and Irish Musical Roots of Montserrat" is an ethnomusicological documentary exploring the intertwined histories of African, Irish, and English influences on the Caribbean island of Montserrat. Through a deep dive into the island's musical traditions, the film examines how African and Irish cultural elements shape Montserratian identity, particularly during the annual St. Patrick's Festival.

The documentary highlights the festival's dual significance—celebrating Irish heritage while commemorating a failed African slave revolt that took place on St. Patrick's Day in the late 1700s. With a focus on the towns of Salem and Brades, key sites of resistance and cultural expression, the film captures performances, oral histories, and ethnographic insights that bring Montserrat's unique African-Irish legacy to life.

Filmed between 2023 and 2025, the documentary is currently in post-production. It integrates historical research, interviews, and immersive fieldwork to explore the deep connections between music, identity, and resistance in Montserratian culture.

11E:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM. Film
Songs of Living: Musical Life and Creativity among Twentieth-Century Village Women in Central China
Jun Feng - SOAS, University of London

The in-progress film, titled My Heart Is Not Above My Liver, has an estimated length of 40 minutes. It explores the musical lives of village women from Hubei Province during the 20th century. Within a patriarchal social structure, instrumental ensembles, mostly consisting of suona (double-reed aerophone) and percussion and performed for rituals and ceremonies, are dominated by male villagers, while women often sing as entertainment. The initial filming began in response to the author's grandmother's request to document songs remembered by her elder sister, from whom she had originally learned them. Through revisiting these songs, which include wedding/funeral laments, didactic songs, and group songs, a full landscape of village women's lifelong experiences gradually unfolds, narrating happiness, sorrow, and moral and marital life. Focusing on the life trajectory of Grandma Wu Jinlan (1934-2023), who was raised as a child bride, this film foregrounds the musical life and creativity of ordinary people (Nettl 2015), arguing for the affective support of song and its significance in revisiting life trauma. The film is in editing, with an experimental attempt to engage ethnographic film as a writing practice, exploring its possibilities above an alternative to a research report or an adjunct to fieldwork (Baily 2009). The excerpt discusses how the subjectivity of actors might be returned from the

filmmaker during filming and editing, and how to balance scholarly aims with accessibility for a broader public audience. Conversations and songs in the film are in the local dialect, with bilingual subtitles in Chinese and English.

11E:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM. Film
Who Has Seen the Sound?
Xiaohui Liu - the University of Texas at Austin

Within the epistemological framework of Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism, sound is understood not merely as the product of vibration, but as a manifestation and carrier of consciousness. For many Tibetans, sound exceeds the boundaries of hearing: it emerges from multispecies encounters with animals and ritual practices, while also holding affective intensities and sedimented histories.

This short film follows Bayang, a Tibetan environmental activist in Nasuoni village, Qinghai province, China, as she listens for and records the sounds of her homeland. Rather than treating sound as mere atmospheric background, the film approaches it as both method and medium—an ethnographic and cinematic practice of entering local lifeworlds. Through recording, attentive listening, and sonic narration, we accompany Bayang in rediscovering Tibetan ways of knowing: their nuanced classifications of wild animals and profound multispecies bonds; their cosmological understandings of death and the soul; and the ways sound provides a safer pathway for expressing both individual and collective memories of trauma.

By foregrounding listening as both method and cinematic form, the film invites viewers to encounter a world in which sound is not secondary to image, but a living force that binds environment, memory, and Tibetan modes of being.

11F. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel
The Sonic and Aesthetic Politics of Japanese Anime
Cheuk Yu; Hakeem Watson; Avery Wright; Garrett Groesbeck - University of California San Diego; Duke University; University of North Texas; Wesleyan University
Chair(s): Cheuk Yu; Hakeem Watson; Avery Wright

Anime is usually defined by its machinic conventions delivered through visible elements such as world-building, character design, and storytelling. This panel decenters the visual mode by exploring how sonic and auditory modalities influence the embodiment and perception of subjectivity. Through four case studies of contemporary anime works and their reception by varied audiences, we ask how the politics of race, gender, and sexuality materialize through aesthetic engagement with an animated genre imbricated with Japanese aesthetics. Paper #1 presents a case study on the reception of anime voice dramas to explore voice as an analytical medium, addressing a transmedia production of women's bodies. Paper #2 investigates discussions surrounding Gachiakuta's adoption of a Black cultural movement to define identity, examining the positive reception to representations of 'authentic' Blackness within Blerd (Black nerd) communities. Attention to voice and representation continues in paper #3, drawing connections between vocal audition in Japanese anime voice acting and the Black aesthetic practice of imaginary black coding to examine how politics of race shape Blerd fandoms. Paper #4 uses a psychoanalytic lens to investigate the use of sound/music and its reception among fans in two shounen romance anime that ultimately question music's ability to situate the listener within a gendered ideological position. The panel aims to present possibilities of thinking through anime, which antagonize the binaries of real and imagined, and how subjective listening in liminal spaces mediates condition. We hope this panel generates consideration in ethnomusicology for genres like anime that ambiguates through allegory and aurality.

11F:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.
Transmedia Women's Bodies in Japanese Anime Voices
Cheuk Yu - University of California San Diego

Through a case study of Japanese anime voice dramas, this paper explores a transmedia approach to address the ongoing heteronormative, binary, and patriarchal production of women's bodies in contemporary Japanese anime. Women's preference for the vocal and men's preference for the visual comprise a historically embedded binary constructed by

anime production companies. Japanese anime fans and scholars of popular media have correlated the growth in anime voice production since the 2010s with the rising status of Japanese women audiences. Women audiences have a growing number of product choices to pursue their aural fantasy and form communities to share their support for anime voices. Drawing from historical and ethnographic materials, this paper presents a paradox in this "liberation" of women audiences. I reference "ornamentalism" (Cheng 2018), which recognizes Asiatic feminine bodies as "superficial, detachable, migratory" ornaments, in the context of contemporary multimedia anime. In doing so, I trace how women audiences listen to their body parts from the female character's perspective in interactive voice dramas (or "Situation CDs). Situation CDs target women audiences with the goal of "serving" them with male voices. By focusing on her feet, ears, and skin, I argue that men's voices mold the body of the female character, and simultaneously that of the woman listener. Through examining women's transmedially scattered bodies, this paper suggests voice as an analytical medium that emphasizes a transmedia approach to address the production of women's bodies in contemporary multimedia culture, not as metaphorical, but as materialized and metonymic.

11F:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

Voicing the Mukokuseki: The racial & dialectic politics of representation in anime characters and voice acting.

Hakeem Watson - Duke University

This paper situates voice as an ontological tool for understanding the imaginary politics of BIPOC or Blerd (Black Nerd) relationships with mukokuseki anime characters, figures drawn or written as ethnoracially ambiguous. The practice of imaginative black coding, assigning race to a fictional character without physical embodiment or artistic transformation, rubs against the mukokuseki's assumed statelessness in the minds of individual consumers; however. the ethnic and racial 'claiming' of characters online remains unresolved and usually relies solely on visual or narratological elements in anime. Considering the affective role voice acting plays in anime consumption helps delineate the racial, ethnic, and gendered politics of representation and real-world existence. Through my case study, I question how the voice reinforces or antagonizes imagination while pushing against the malleable borders of anime as an ethnically homogeneous genre. In teasing out one interlocutor's Afro-Latinidad connection with Mirko from the anime series My Hero Academia, I connect character interpretation to histories of Afro-Latinx representation and life experiences while tying her voice to others online in their discussion of who and what Mirko is. Research on Mirko and her voice actor shows that voice is not only part of the complicated process of meaning-making in anime but also a construction many have to mediate. I argue that the voice is a performative and discursive object that signifies corporeal and racial subjectivities, further intensifying the affective-transformative relationship between BIPOC anime fans and characters for possibilities of racial interiority and sincerity.

11F:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

Can Fan Service Be Heard? The Aural Representations of Male Desire in Anime

Avery Wright - University of North Texas

In online anime fan discourse, fan service – the inclusion of scenes that overtly sexualize the female form – is a common discussion topic due to its prevalence in various popular anime series, typically those marketed to male audiences. The series Rent-a-Girlfriend is often ridiculed for its close adherence to the male gaze (Mulvey 1975), whereas the series My Dress-Up Darling is praised for its transgressive outlook on gender and love. However, discussions of fan service and gender representations, in both academic and non-academic contexts, focus on visual and narrative modes, seldom highlighting the aural. This leads me to ask: can fan service be heard? What is revealed when we listen through scenes of fan service? I first deconstruct anime fans' affective responses to the male-oriented (shounen) series Rent-a-Girlfriend and My Dress-Up Darling found in YouTube anime review videos by identifying themes in their affective language. I then put fan discourse in conversation with academic discourses on sound, voice, and affect to investigate how heteronormative visual representations of gender in specific scenes are renegotiated through sound. My investigation reveals the capacity of sound to challenge the subject/object or male/female binary as discussed in psychoanalytic studies of anime and film.

11G. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Musical Pathways in Taiwan: Indigeneity, Technology, and Tradition

Chun-bin Chen; Chia-Yin Hung; Hsin-Wen Hsu; Yu-Fen Huang; Su Li; DJ Hatfield - Taipei National University of the Arts; PhD Candidate in Music at Royal Holloway, University of London; ; National Taiwan University

Chair(s): Chun-bin Chen - Taipei National University of the Arts

11G:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Australism: Taiwanese Indigenous Music as a Pathway for Exploring the Austronesian World

Chun-bin Chen - Taipei National University of the Arts

Austronesian-speaking peoples spread across Taiwan, insular Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Madagascar, making the realm of the Austronesian language family "the largest in geographical extent before the European colonial expansion of the past five centuries," as linguist Robert Blust pointed out (2019). While music is a prominent art form among Austronesian-speaking peoples, it has been largely overlooked in comparative studies of Austronesian cultures, and Austronesian music has never become a central subject of musicological inquiry. Under the framework of area studies, the musics of Austronesian-speaking peoples are often divided into Oceanic and Southeast Asian musics. Such a division downplays the diversity of musical traditions within Southeast Asia and Oceania and overlooks cultural and musical connections among Austronesian-speaking peoples across these regions. To address the limitations of the area studies framework, I coin the term Australism to refer to a pan-Austronesian framework that brings together research on Southeast Asian music and Oceanic music. Based on my studies of Taiwanese Indigenous chants, I propose a "PERC" model to examine how the components of "parallelism," "exchange," "ritual," and "chant/dance" interrelate in manifesting Austronesian linguistic, musical, and cultural characteristics. I argue that this model may facilitate consideration of cultural connections among Austronesian-speaking peoples and bridge diverse case studies on Austronesian musics, thereby fostering and advancing Australism as an evolving academic discipline.

11G:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

Maternal and Queer Alliances in Amis Musicking in Postcolonial Taiwan

Chia-Yin Hung - PhD Candidate in Music at Royal Holloway, University of London

This paper explores how identity, resistance, and adaptation are negotiated through Indigenous Amis music and dance, historically shaped by a heterosexual binary ontology and increasingly reconfigured within postcolonial Taiwanese contexts and queer engagements with women's agency. During the Japanese colonial period and under enduring Han Chinese patriarchal norms, maternal Amis traditions were transformed through political suppression, cultural assimilation, and religious conversion. A corollary of these processes was the shift in heritage transmission—language, surnames, land, and property—toward patrilineal inheritance, reinforcing male dominance and constraining women's agency within contemporary Amis society.

Against this backdrop of gendered restructuring, the paper asks how women cultural bearers negotiate and reinterpret, or converge with and diverge from, dualistic gender values through music-making today. Drawing on Jodie Taylor's concept of the "intimate insider" (2011), I reflect on friendships formed during fieldwork since 2019 in the Amis communities of Falangaw and Ciwkangan. These relationships reveal the complex role of (pro-)LGBTQ+ male allies—often influential in local music scenes—in facilitating women's cultural participation and reshaping gendered musicking (Small, 1999) and performative spaces (Butler, 1990).

This analysis applies Indigenous feminist and decolonial frameworks to address Thomas R. Hilder's call for deeper engagement with Indigenous feminism and cosmology (2016), while critically examining how musicking may intersect with nationalist identity protocols questioned by Roderick A. Ferguson (2004). Finally, I reflect on my positionality as a Han Chinese ethnomusicologist collaborating with younger Amis generations, foregrounding dialogic knowledge-making and avoiding appropriative representation (Robinson, 2020).

11G:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

Toward an AI-Assisted Analysis of Performance Practices in Historical Recordings of Taiwanese Hakka Folksongs

Hsin-Wen Hsu; Yu-Fen Huang; Su Li - National Taiwan University

Building on earlier discussions of computational approaches to music analysis, recent developments in artificial intelligence invite renewed reflection on how technologies reshape listening and musical knowledge. Drawing on Thomas Porcello's concept of techoustemology (2004), this study examines how AI-assisted analysis reconfigures modes of listening, analytical practice, and knowledge production in the study of historical recordings, taking Taiwanese Hakka shangezi folksongs from commercially published recordings of the 1960s as a case study. Using AI-assisted tools for vocal–instrument separation, pitch contour extraction, and phoneme-level alignment, the study conducts a detailed examination of singers' pronunciation and melodic realization at the syllabic level. While shangezi performance is conventionally expected to adhere to a standardized Sixian-accented Hakka, close analysis reveals that individual singers frequently depart from such prescriptive linguistic norms. Variations in consonant and vowel articulation, as well as tonal realization, suggest a more fluid and multilingual vocal practice than the ideal of linguistic purity implies. Rather than presenting AI as a neutral analytical instrument, this study foregrounds how the technical requirements of segmentation and alignment intensify critical listening and detailed transcription. The analytical process does not automatically determine dialectal variation; instead, it creates conditions under which discrepancies between normative expectations and embodied performance become perceptible. AI-assisted analysis is thus proposed not as a replacement for ethnomusicological interpretation, but as a reflexive techoustemological method—one that recognizes technology as constitutive of how we hear, analyze, and understand historical performance practice.

11G:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM.

Amplification and Sovereign Sensibility in Taiwanese Indigenous Communities

DJ Hatfield - National Taiwan University

In this paper, I discuss debates surrounding amplification of ritual dance musics, showing how amplification modifies sensibilities produced by dance. I focus on malikoda, a dance genre practiced by 'amis / Pangcah, one of Taiwan's 16 recognized Indigenous groups. During annual rituals, 'amis communities organize the dance spiral along distinctions between hosts and guests, gender differences, and age grade precedence in ways that compel dancers to feel the endurance of 'amis sovereignty as embedded in the age set system. Whether malikoda should be amplified is an open question. Debates about amplification often focus on ti'eciw, the call section of malikoda tunes. Generally, responsibility for ti'eciw mirrors age set precedence, with elders and other community leaders singing the call and passing this responsibility downward to younger groups. Amplification enables a single singer to lead incredibly large groups of dancers; combined with prerecorded tracks, it may even obviate human callers. In contrast, without amplification entire age sets may perform the call; and dancers must rely on kinaesthetic prompts to coordinate the dance, developing listening habits attuned to this kinaesthetic sense. Yet those on both sides of the amplification argument formed their arguments by linking aesthetic qualities of the dance to the dance's social effects, including intra-age set rapport and inter-age set mobilization. Amplification restructures relationships among senses, attenuating some social effects while facilitating others. Moving beyond notions of technologies as offering specific affordances, I employ the metaphor of attenuation to consider relationships among technology, kinaesthetic sense, and sovereign sensibility.

11H. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Expressive Defiance: Music, Dance, and Resistance

Hannaneh Akbarpour; Mehrenegar Rostami; Hiwa Hawaii; hozan hashempour; Peter Verdin - Yale University; ; University of Alberta; N/A

Chair(s): Mehrenegar Rostami - University of Tennessee, Knoxville

11H:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Musical Manifestos: Music-Making as a Practice of Disavowing ISIS in Occupied Iraq, 2014–2017

Hannaneh Akbarpour - Yale University

In June 2014, the militant extremist organization the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) seized vast areas of Iraq, initiating a three-year conflict alongside a global campaign to defeat it. Based on its extremist interpretation of Islam, the militant group's presence was marked by the implementation of extreme violence, ethno-religious cleansing, and sexual slavery. ISIS implemented its rigid ideology, including strict control over civil life and the erasure of art and music. Under conditions in which musical practice could expose individuals to draconian punishment, two artists in occupied Mosul, Ameen Mokdad and Umar Abdul Nasser, began creating tracks and publishing them online at immense personal risk. As the title of one work, First Manifesto, suggests, these tracks were more than acts of artistic creation and instead sought to declare that myriad innocent people remained in Mosul who rejected ISIS and were suffering under its occupation. As these tracks make no explicit reference to the situation, music itself is largely responsible for conveying their intended meaning. Based on my ethnography with Mokdad about his initiative and with other civilians, I focus on how music-making in this context, despite exposing its creators to immense risk, came to function as a marker of disavowal of ISIS's inhumane ideology. Building on scholarly works that argue for the inherent goodness of music, I argue that the intention behind this musical practice rests on an understanding of music as inherently signifying innocence and enacting distance from an inhumane ideology—a phenomenon I call "musical impunity."

11H:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

"Boycott or Compliance": The Soundtrack of 2026 Protests and War in Iran

Mehrenegar Rostami; Hiwa Hawaii - University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Independent

"Boycott or Compliance" is a twenty-minute documentary featuring how the sounds, noises, and silence that unfolded during 2025–26 protests and the subsequent violent conflict between the military forces of the U.S./Israel and Iran provide clues to understand the totalitarian character of the Islamic Republic. By focusing on recorded interviews with artists, musicians, and scholars who had to overcome various types of economic, ideological, social, and political obstacles in their daily lives to survive the horrific and untenable living conditions under a totalitarian regime, this short documentary sheds light on the complexity of justice in the context of a war that seemingly aimed to liberate a nation. In addition, by highlighting the reasons for which the members of Iranian art, cinema, and music communities had decided to either boycott or comply with the Iranian regime's top-down policies for artistic activities before the latest round of protests in the country, this documentary reveals why a careful study of the social conditions in the years preceding the 2025–26 protests is of great significance for a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons that fueled the rise of the latest round of protests in Iran. With its raw approach, "Boycott or Compliance" makes manifest the disguised angst and veiled turmoil that characterized Iranian society during an extremely challenging period in its history. A bridge between ethnographic, observational, and performative styles of documentary filmmaking, this documentary highlights important ethnomusicological issues such as the relationship between music, violence, and justice in contemporary times.

11H:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

When Silence is Enforced, Dance Becomes the most Rebellious Act

hozan hashempour - University of Alberta

On the last days of December, 2025, protests started in different cities across Iran. With more people joining the movement, the regime opened fire on civilians with a brutal force worse than ever seen before. With almost two weeks of Internet shutdown and absence of any non-regime affiliated reports, there are no official numbers of deaths, but when the state reports more than three thousand, Iranians know the actual numbers must be much more.

During the Women Life Freedom movement of 2022, revolutionary songs were released from known and anonymous artists. But in January 2026, there was only silence. Everyone knew someone who got killed in the protest. There was no place for music. But after families were able to receive the bodies of their lost loved ones, and when there were burial ceremonies, music and dance began to become part of a new uprising. Justice-seeking families wanted to be as far from

whatever the Islamic Republic stood for as possible. Instead of Quran recitals, there was music, and instead of Islamic ceremonies, there were ancestral cultures and dances. Starting from a mother doing a ceremonial dance for her lost son, this ceremony was adopted with Persian songs and dance in Tehran and Kurdish dance and culture in Kurdistan.

In this paper, I am looking at the cultural shift and role of music and dance as protest in the burial ceremonies of the protesters, while highlighting protest music during the 2022 movement and the silence during 2026.

11H:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM.

The Perilous Fight: Musical Compilations as Sites of Resistance and Collective Political Action

Peter Verdin - N/A

In December of 2025 the Trump administration initiated Operation Metro Surge and sent approximately 3000 federal agents to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area in Minnesota. The lawless behavior of the agents resulted in illegal detentions, abductions, assaults on civilians and journalists, and the murder of American citizens at the hands of these federal forces. The political institutions that ostensibly existed to curtail these sorts of authoritarian overreaches either capitulated to or were stymied by federal agencies. Consequently, resistance to the federal invasion of the Twin Cities was largely rooted in community-based organizing, as local government officials or agencies (e.g. police departments) were unable or unwilling to protect the communities they served. One particular manifestation of this grassroots collectivism was a number of digital musical compilations from organizations like Community Aid Network MN (CANMN) and record labels like Seawind of Battery. These compilations feature artists of various genres who are connected by common progressive politics. Proceeds from these digital compilations are donated to organizations like Minnesota's Immigrant Rapid Response Fund or Amnesty International. More than simply a means of fund-raising financial support for critical aid organizations, these compilations provide a model of collective action rooted in the ability of musicians to quickly mobilize, stand collectively, and affect a measurable difference. Through ethnographic interviews with artists and producers involved in a number of these projects, this paper examines how compilations of music act as sites of agency, solidarity, and collective political action in the face of failing political institutions.

11I:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Composing Place and Presence: Landscape and the Nature of Being in Jia Guoping's 2014 piece *The Pine-soughing Valleys*

Stephen Jones - Brigham Young University

In his famous ninth-century treatise, the Tang-dynasty artist Zhang Yanyuan (张彦远) wrote, "To paint landscape is not merely to depict its outward likeness; the true value lies in capturing its spirit and atmosphere." To Zhang, nature was seen not merely as place, but as a medium through which the life force Chinese call qi could be revealed.

One of the most famous examples of this type of landscape painting is Li Tang's (李唐) twelfth-century work, Wind in the Pines Among a Myriad Valleys (万壑松风), which serves as the inspiration for contemporary Chinese composer Jia Guoping's (贾国平) 2014 piece The Pine-soughing Valleys (万壑松风).

Written for sheng, zheng, and orchestra, the work is built around five core sound images that correspond to features in Li Tang's painting. In a highly detailed approach, Jia organizes its form and pitch structures to convey these sonic images. I will provide a high-level analysis of this work, specifically attempting to connect it to the concepts in Tang and Song Dynasty paintings that define their progression beyond mimesis toward the expression of qi. I will also situate this work within Jia's larger body of work, many pieces of which also seek to express concepts related to nature, landscape, and the power of harmony between heaven and humanity.

11I:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

Performing the Marriage Law: Lüju Opera, Cultural Reform, and Marital Imaginaries in Socialist China

CHEN Chen - Shandong Sport University

This paper examines how regional xiqu (Chinese opera) production became a vehicle for cultural reformation and propaganda surrounding the first Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China in the 1950s. Focusing on the Shandong Provincial Lüju Company, I trace the activities and trajectories of cultural workers who created new performances to reform local marital norms and values during the national xiqu reform period (1949–1966). I argue that the constitution of marriageability and intimate life was inextricably interwoven with national policy, local histories, and individual experience within this propaganda project.

Following the national xiqu reform, state-owned troupes across China transformed regional performance traditions to align with national cultural standards and convey ideological messages through top-down initiatives. The Shandong Provincial Lüju Company gained particular prominence by adapting the revolutionary novel The Remarriage of the Widow Li Ersao (Wang 1950) for the national stage in 1954. National media frequently cited the production as a model for integrating folk traditions with "socialist realism" and state-promoted marriage patterns. The play reinforced the implementation of the Marriage Law and circulated widely through traveling troupes and opera films. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and archival research, this paper illuminates the paradoxical negotiations among local norms, institutional practices, and collective knowledge that shaped — and continue to shape — marital imaginaries and gendered patterns in Chinese society. In doing so, it contributes to interdisciplinary conversations on the cultural politics of intimacy, the performative dimensions of cultural reform, and the enduring legacies of socialist cultural production.

11I:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

Diasporic Musical Strategies in the Context of Heritage and Commercialization: Performance Practices and Musical Choices of Chinese Clan Associations in Jonker Walk, Malacca

Manqi Ding - Xinghai Conservatory of Music

This paper explores the complex roles of Chinese dialect-based clan associations in shaping local musical culture in Jonker Walk, Malacca. Located in the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage site, Jonker Walk’s history traces back to the "Guan Chang" (official depots) of Admiral Zheng He's voyages and served as a primary settlement for early Chinese migrants. Since the 18th century, these associations have enriched Malacca’s cultural landscape with diverse traditional Chinese music. In 2000, Jonker Walk was designated as a "Tourism and Culture Street," making Chinese performance the core of its tourism industry, bringing both new opportunities and challenges to these associations.

Based on four rounds of fieldwork conducted between February 2025 and February 2026, this research combines archival study with musical analysis to examine how these associations navigate the interactions between heritage conservation, tourism development, and commercialization. The analysis unfolds on two levels: first, the evolution of musical forms and performance types within the associations and their impact on the local soundscape; second, how the external context of commercialization and "heritagization" has prompted these groups to adapt and transform their musical presentations. By integrating ethnographic data with musical analysis, this study presents the strategic musical choices made by these diasporic communities as they negotiate their practices within a commercialized heritage context.

11J. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Improvisation as Archive in Pittsburgh

Colter Harper; Jay Rauch; Lee Caplan; Eli Namay - University at Buffalo; University of Pittsburgh; Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University; University of Pittsburgh
Chair(s): Benjamin Barson - Bucknell University

Pittsburgh is a post-industrial city with a storied history of improvisation and creativity based in community venues. Tensions between echoes of this history, particularly from the decades following WWII, inform ever-developing living practices. As musical performer-organizers in this city we explore myriad ways improvisation functions as an axis for cultural memory. Our ethnomusicological approach reads across cultural geography, archive studies, black studies,

psychological anthropology, and recent scholarship on jazz. Presenter 1 theorizes improvisation in Pittsburgh's jazz scene as a community archive of venues; places where social pathways and possibilities cohered in iterative sonic practice during the 1950s and 1960s. Through the case of loft jazz collections, Presenter 2 describes how this community archive is inflected by the presence of university archives in the city's improv ecology. Presenter 3 focuses on the naming of Roger Humphries Way to show how city-led initiatives memorializing jazz history create contradictory spatial narratives. Presenter 4 details how experiences and memories of participants at a free improv jam session are embodied and distributed in Pittsburgh's DIY music scene. Across cases, improvisation positions urban change as a tension between grass-roots practices of placemaking and city-led development efforts. Due to the expansive literature on improvisation, we have created a reading list to focus our discussions of improvisation, archives, and urban landscapes. A few of these works include Living Space (Veal, 2024), Contingent Encounters (DiPiero, 2022), Abolition Geography (Gilmore 2022), The Next Shift (Winant, 2021), Loft Jazz (Heller, 2016), and The Archive and the Repertoire (Diana Taylor, 2003).

11J:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Stewarding Ephemeral Histories: Improvisation, Jazz, and the Community Archive in Pittsburgh

Colter Harper - University at Buffalo

Pittsburgh's jazz legacy, which developed in tandem with the city's industrial growth, remains a strong influence on the city's music scene. In this paper, I examine jazz improvisation as a spatial practice born of the physical and social worlds of mid-twentieth-century jazz clubs and look to Pittsburgh as a case study of challenges in maintaining this music as a living practice. The paper positions improvisation as emerging from feedback loops among performers, audiences, and built environments. I argue that limits and possibilities of improvising in Pittsburgh's jazz tradition reflects the music's link to prior sites and histories of listening as well as tensions arising from mid-century urban renewal and current real estate development. Analyzing recordings, archival holdings, and interviews, I connect the constraints of jazz improvisation to the history and social process of active listening and placemaking. By extension, I explore what it means to steward these histories as part of a community archive that is embodied, ephemeral, and sustained through scenes and practices of listening rather than through the stewardship of objects.

11J:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

Four Rivers: Archiving Loft Jazz in Post-Industrial Pittsburgh

Jay Rauch - University of Pittsburgh

The University of Pittsburgh's Center for American Music has spent the last five years accumulating collections of musicians from New York's 1970s loft jazz scene, under the direction of Michael Heller. In this presentation, I read this pivot in archival practice in the context of Pittsburgh's post-industrial shift to a care economy driven by "meds and eds." First, I contend that the enmeshment of post-war jazz with Pittsburgh's memory of industrial prosperity allows today's archivists to treat improvisation as a tool for urban placemaking, positioning themselves as care workers. Second, I trace the web of living practices surrounding the collection of loft saxophonist Sam Rivers, which was processed in 2024. Through interviews with archivists, Rivers' musical collaborators, and local musicians, I illustrate how information circulates or fails to circulate between university jazz archives and creative music scenes just beyond their walls. These accounts lay bare the challenges faced by archivists of improvised music: memorials to jazz may create a stronger sense of emplaced historicity in a city, while serving as cultural accomplice to urban redevelopment.

11J:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

The Politics of Commemorating Improvisation: Roger Humphries, Black Geographies, and Pittsburgh's North Side

Lee Caplan - Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University

Placemaking practices shape social, symbolic, and economic relations in cities. Acts of commemoration produce and renegotiate contested spatial narratives. What is remembered, where, and how, may affect lifeworlds, historical narratives, and material inequalities. This paper examines one such commemoration: the renaming of East Jefferson Street in Pittsburgh's North Side neighborhood to "Roger Humphries Way." A renowned jazz drummer, Humphries has long served as a music educator in Pittsburgh. This renaming intervenes in a North Side history marked by segregation,

displacement, and exploitation. Drawing on archival sources and recent scholarship, I argue that public commemorative events operate in contradictory ways. They gesture toward liberatory change—epistemological transformation, spatial reclamation, and ecological reimagination. At the same time, the incorporation of Black art into the cityscape can function as a form of political capture. In this context, Black cultural production is instrumentalized to reproduce private property regimes and racialized hierarchies. Embedded in urban toponymy, improvisational music plays a complex role in remaking contested urban space.

11J:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM.

"Lift Off Judgement": Social-Emotional Experience as Embodied Archive at Open Improvisation Lab

Eli Namay - University of Pittsburgh

Across many cultural contexts, sensorially rich, participatory improvisational practices cohere in living communal archives that are embodied and extended, challenging the notion of memory as mere internal archive. In Pittsburgh, similar to other rust-belt cities, as the viability of community-oriented jazz venues plummeted, anarchist and queer-influenced DIY punk and noise music scenes emerged in Pittsburgh's post-industrial landscape. I and other cultural organizers in and around the affinity-based group Pittsburgh Sound Preserve utilize this DIY infrastructure to facilitate participatory improvised music space. Though idiomatically open, this space culturally draws on both jazz and DIY legacies in the city. Informed by psychoanalysis, person-centered interviewing, and arts-based phenomenology, I present findings from experiential ethnography on how social-emotional experience and shared value is embodied and co-created at one of our main series, Open Improvisation Lab. I contextualize these experiences using oral histories and critical geographies of DIY venues, asking what strategies and environments allow for such a living archive?

11K. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Sonic Temporalities: Kurdish Music, Media, and the Reimagining of Community

Kajwan Ziaoddini; Hadas H. Bram; Azadeh Vatanpour; Sirvan Manhoobi - University of Maryland; Yale University; Emory University; University of Maryland

Chair(s): Azadeh Vatanpour - Emory University

This panel examines how Kurdish music operates as a dynamic site for negotiating nationhood, memory, sacredness, and transnational belonging across temporal and digital landscapes. Bringing together four papers, the session explores how sound mediates relationships between past and present, life and death, sacred and profane, homeland and diaspora. The first paper analyzes remix practices that digitally recombine archival recordings of twentieth-century Kurdish musicians, demonstrating how cross-temporal collaborations between deceased icons and contemporary producers reimagine the Kurdish nation. The second paper shifts to Kurdish Jews in Israel, examining how digital performances of Chopi (Kurdish line dance) generate a "Digital Kurdistan," a transnational sphere in which Kurdish identity is rearticulated across religious and geopolitical boundaries. The third paper investigates the online circulation of Yārsān sacred music, arguing that ritual efficacy and communal belonging are not diminished but reactivated through mediated interaction in digital spaces. The fourth paper focuses on a Kurdish anthem written in response to the Halabja massacre and later revived during the 2022 anti-government movement in Iran, showing how collective singing collapses temporal distance and sustains historical consciousness amid ongoing violence. Together, these papers illuminate how Kurdish musical practices challenge linear conceptions of time and fixed notions of territory. Through remix, ritual, digitality, and protest, Kurdish sound emerges as a medium of distributed agency, ethical continuity, and communal resilience. The panel contributes to broader debates in ethnomusicology by foregrounding music's capacity to produce cross-temporal solidarities and digitally mediated forms of nationhood beyond the framework of the state.

11K:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Intermundane Collaborations: Remix and the Revivification of Kurdish Musical Icons

Kajwan Ziaoddini - University of Maryland

This paper traces the recent revivification of deceased Kurdish musicians from the twentieth century to demonstrate how they, in collaboration with living music producers, continue reimagining the Kurdish nation. Ethnomusicologists have previously shown that in the absence of a Kurdish state, music broadcast on twentieth-century Kurdish radio

stations enabled the creation of a Kurdish "listening public" and "imagined nation" (Blum and Hassanpour 1996, Bullock 2022). Although most musicians of this radio era are no longer alive, their voices continue to be present—literally and symbolically—in the Kurdish musical scene through the recombination and remixing of their recordings with new sound effects, samples, and musical texts. In this paper, I ask how and why the scattered and nonlinear agency of social actors, from both sides of the life–death divide, come together to shape Kurdish music and society. Through analyses of social media and interviews with music producers and musicians, I show how the musical legacy of the twentieth century is continuously recruited, reinterpreted, and manipulated in response to contemporary sociopolitical developments. I argue that temporally transcendent creative activities between deceased icons and living social actors—their "intermundane" (Stanyek and Piekut 2011) collaboration—reproduce the imagined Kurdish nation and enact what Jon Bullock (2022) calls the "defiance of the colonial logics of place and time." This study contributes to existing debates on distributed and nonlinear agency by showing how these models help explain the reimagination of a nation through cross-temporal musical practices.

11K:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

Hebrew Chopi: Kurdish Jews in Israel and the Musical Making of a Digital Kurdistan

Hadas H. Bram - Yale University

This paper offers an exploration of the musical social life of Kurdish Jews in Israel as it unfolds on social media platforms. By examining the production and circulation of digital musical artifacts, it analyzes how online musical practices sustain communal identity while enabling transnational forms of Kurdish imagination. The paper focuses on digital performances of Chopi (Kurdish line dance), arguing that this specific dance and its music constitute a central medium through which Kurdish identity is preserved in Israel across digital and analogue contexts. Through close readings of digital Chopi, the paper investigates how real and imagined communities are constructed - communities that blur the boundaries between Kurds of different religions and citizenships. These practices generate what I term "Digital Kurdistan": a transnational, digitally mediated formation in which land, landscape, and belonging are reimagined. I argue that Kurdish Jews in Israel actively contribute to this emergent digital sphere, participating in a broader pan-Kurdish episteme. By studying this episteme, I pose critical questions regarding the diasporic or non-diasporic ties of this community to Kurdistan. Finally, the paper traces how Kurdish Jews engage, preserve, and reinterpret cultural forms historically identified with their predominantly Muslim Kurdish neighbors. Historical research testifies to the ways Jews lived within Muslim tribal contexts in Kurdistan while preserving distinct linguistic, religious, and cultural practices. The paper shows how, on social media, new modes of interaction are activated across geopolitical and religious divides, generating renewed forms of transnational Kurdish culture within contemporary Jewish-Muslim digital publics.

11K:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

Sacred Sound in the Age of Social Media: Yārsān Ritual Music and Online Mediated Identity

Azadeh Vatanpour - Emory University

This study examines how sacredness and communal belonging are reconfigured as Yārsān ritual music and sacred texts circulate within digital environments. The Yārsān, an ethno-religious minority located in western Iran and parts of Iraq, have historically maintained an esoteric religious tradition in which sacred texts along with ritual music are performed within the closed setting of the Jam ritual. In this context, sacred music generates collective solidarity, reinforces group boundaries, and sustains religious belonging. With the expansion of digital platforms, Yārsān sacred music and texts increasingly circulate beyond ritual space and initiated participants. This shift raises critical questions about how sacredness is transformed as ritual performance becomes digitally mediated and detached from physical co-presence, and how online circulation reshapes authority and belonging among geographically dispersed communities. Drawing on Randall Collins' theory of interaction rituals, this study argues that sacredness is not diminished under digital modernity but reactivated through mediated forms of interaction. When shared, commented upon, and re-engaged online, these performances function as circulating sacred objects, extending ritual-generated symbolic effects into networked space. Even without bodily co-presence, digital engagement can reproduce elements of ritual solidarity and contribute to sustaining minority identity. Methodologically, the research combines cyber-ethnography with qualitative online content analysis, examining audiovisual materials, circulation patterns, textual framing, and audience engagement. By comparing

Jam performance with its digital mediation, the study demonstrates how sacred music becomes a dynamic site where ritual, memory, and belonging are renegotiated in contemporary digital contexts.

11K:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM.

Music as Resistance: Sound, Trauma, and Historical Consciousness in Kurdish Music

Sirvan Manhoobi - University of Maryland

This paper examines the Kurdish anthem "Be Tenya Cêm Mehêlin" ("Do Not Leave Me Alone") as a living sonic site through which collective memory, survival, and historical continuity are enacted. Written in response to the 1988 Halabja chemical massacre, the song has endured through time as a resonant expression of Kurdish grief and resilience. Its reemergence during 2022 protest movements in Iran and in funerary gatherings demonstrates how music transhistorically links moments of resistance to state violence, reanimating earlier trauma within renewed contexts of collective loss. Rather than serving as a memorial to a single historical event, the anthem functions as an ongoing embodied ethical practice through which communities process recurring trauma. This anthem sustains historical consciousness both by evoking collective modes of musical narration, and by facilitating affective encounters through sound. Methodologically, the study combines close readings of music and lyrics with contextual examination of performances across time. The study also draws on media documentation and circulation patterns, showing how this song reappears in contemporary protest settings. Engaging theoretical perspectives that conceptualize music as a resource for post-catastrophic social continuity and as a sensory mode of historical witnessing, the paper argues that the anthem operates as a living archive that collapses temporal distance. By doing so, this study contributes a novel perspective on the ways music functions as a form of resistance, sustaining historical consciousness and communal resilience amid violence.

11L. Sunday, 8:30 AM. Organized Panel

Sounding In and Beyond Trauma

Deonte L. Harris; Fanyi Faye Ma; Jeffrey Dyer; Sidra Lawrence - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Duke University; Ball State University; Bowling Green State University
Chair(s): Jeffrey Dyer - Ball State University

Trauma cannot be reduced to a universalized biomedical category of distress; it takes shape, is felt, and is coped with in socially and historically contingent ways. And yet, prevailing scholarly and vernacular discourses commonly present trauma and healing in Eurocentric, masculinist, and logocentric terms that neglect non-event-based forms of suffering emanating from structural, systemic, colonial, and racial modes of violence (Kidron 2009; Lewis 2019; Summerfield 1999). This panel suggests alternative models for conceptualizing trauma and how people cope with troubling pasts. One paper interrogates the collective, intergenerational trauma African Americans experience in slavery's wake by analyzing how images, sounds, and musics in Black horror films index racialized violence while blurring fiction with reality. Another paper shows how Chinese citizens living under cyclical authoritarian traumas resolve and reenchant tabooed histories through vocal practices that delineate negative spaces of public secrecy in rapidly gentrifying urban environments. A third paper analyzes how the acoustic and non-acoustic sounds of Cambodian-Buddhist rituals help people cope with life's difficulties, including the effects of genocide, by forging relations of mutual care with deities and the dead. The final paper examines how the western binary of silence and speech creates an overreliance on linear testimony in the U.S judicial system, which adversely affects sexual violence survivors, and posits alternate modes of listening for survivor voices. Collectively, we push for an ethnomusicology of trauma that interrogates the manifold repercussions of traumatic pasts and the divergent ways people resolve, express, or live with those challenging circumstances through various sonorities.

11L:1. Sunday, 8:30 AM.

Killing Me Softly: The Traumatic Mediation of Quiet in Contemporary Black Horror

Deonte L. Harris - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In a 2015 op-ed for the New York Times, poet Claudia Rankine describes in vivid details how African Americans are haunted by the trauma that ensues from an unrelenting history of racialized violence. Connecting the dead and dying in

the hulls of slave ships to those beaten and lynched under Jim Crow, in addition to the growing litany of Black folks shot dead in the streets and killed in churches at the hands of vigilante cops and white supremacists, Rankine surmises that "The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning." Rankine's treatise on racial trauma echoed the earlier work of scholars like Saidiya Hartman (1997), Dorothy Roberts (1997), and Joy DeGruy (2005) whose research illuminates the distinctiveness of Black racial trauma as systemic, intergenerational, and integral to the social fabric of the United States itself. Over the next ten years, racial trauma became a prevalent theme in the creative artworld, especially within Black horror films and television shows. From Get Out (2017) to Lovecraft Country (2020), Candyman (2021) to Sinners (2025), each of these productions creatively use racial trauma and differing modes of Black storytelling to depict the struggle for Black life/survival amidst the afterlives of slavery. This paper investigates how contemporary Black horror blurs the line between fiction and reality through the strategic deployment of silences, quiet soundscapes, and distorted audition, creating the very foundation on which the horrors and trauma of Black being-in-the-world are constructed for audiences in ways that haunt us long after the credits roll.

11L:2. Sunday, 9:00 AM.

Listening in the Negative Space: Voice and Public Secrecy in Post-COVID Urban China

Fanyi Faye Ma - Duke University

China's zero-COVID regime collapsed in December 2022, after years of coercive control generated widespread suffering and culminated in nationwide demonstrations unseen since 1989. Its political residue quickly congealed into a familiar public secret (Taussig 1999) within China's taboo-laden political history—known, felt, and carefully unsaid. In major cities, it also left behind a legacy of expanded administrative capacity, intensified surveillance infrastructures, and economic strain, all of which renewed the state's strategies and urgency for urban redevelopment. How, then, do residents sense and make sense of authoritarian memory inside a tightly governed, rapidly gentrifying urban core? This paper juxtaposes two hyper-local voices in one urban neighborhood of Shanghai: (1) a public-housing resident who routinely screams fragmented accounts of neighborhood-level corruption and dispossession from her window, and (2) a villa-dwelling socialite—descended from a persecuted pre-1949 bourgeois family—who now leads neighborhood history tours in collaboration with the local propaganda bureau. I highlight how these voices—one disruptive yet publicly ignored, the other sanitized and valorized—materially shape their surroundings and reorganize listening relations. Together, they render palpable colliding temporalities of cyclical political trauma. In tracing how these voices are cultivated, heard, managed, and talked about, I theorize a "negative space" of public secrecy through which residents co-exist with, domesticate, or reenchant tabooed histories in order to survive—and sustain—the post-socialist neoliberal present.

11L:3. Sunday, 9:30 AM.

The Acoustic and Non-Acoustic Sounds of Mutual Care

Jeffrey Dyer - Ball State University

At the outset of Buddhist rituals, artistic performances, and even to start each day, many Cambodians use music, whispers, or the acoustically silent vocal practice of "speaking in the heart" (niyāy knung citt) to engage ancestors, deities, and deceased teachers. Those practices' acoustic and non-acoustic sounds effect ontological conjunctions of living and dead, the then and there brought into the here and now in a continual play of difference. By examining those practices, this paper reaches beyond acoustics to show a different way of conceptualizing sound that flows from a form of subjectivity largely absent in prevailing understandings of emotions, wellbeing, and temporality, when living people, deities, and the dead are co-constituted through relations of mutual care. Moreover, by situating those practices within Cambodia's fraught climate of post-genocide commemoration, the paper offers a counterweight to the prevalent notion that healing from trauma occurs through a universal psychotherapeutic process built on liberal models of political agency and testimonial voicings of past violence, which humanitarian activists and scholars have prescribed for Cambodians. Instead, I demonstrate that emotional responses to violence and other challenging events can exist within people's lifeworlds and should not be considered part of a separate psychosocial domain. By ethnographically exploring those lifeworlds, and by expanding ethnomusicological considerations of voice to include speech uttered in the heart and

words spoken by incorporeal entities, I offer that Cambodians' longstanding practices of sounding relations of mutual care with the dead help them cope with the effects of Cambodia's late-twentieth-century violence.

11L:4. Sunday, 10:00 AM.
Your Silence Speaks Volumes: Testimonial Injustice and the Perils of Narration
Sidra Lawrence - Bowling Green State University

This paper discusses the limitations of testimony as the sole site of liberation for survivors of sexual violence. In the U.S. judicial system, emphasis is placed on sounding, as dichotomous to silence. The idea of "giving voice to" one's pain, or "speaking one's truth," are idiomatic examples of how lexical, narrative, speech is correlated with 1) liberation and empowerment, 2) the pursuit of justice, and 3) providing a credible account of one's experiences. The emphasis on the individual capacity to sound one's truth reflects a belief that everyone can be heard, everyone can speak, and that narrative recall is both possible and preferable. Here, linear narrative testimony is prioritized as a form of sounding that demarcates credibility and truthfulness, and correlates to liberation, healing, and justice. Within western judicial systems, the entrenched idea is that proclaiming "one's truth" through narrative utterance is, in and of itself liberating, just as silence is cast as disempowering or shameful. Based on research that delineates the effects of trauma on recall and memory processing as fragmented, disjunctive, and incomplete, (Ehlers & Clark 2000; Chatterjee 2018; Westera et al. 2017), I explore how survivors are often placed in danger of re-traumatization and harm within judicial procedures, and take stock of the limits of verbal language in the narrative of remembered violence. This paper provides insight into the dichotomous positioning that limits the capacity to hear survivors fully and posits a vulnerable listening model that invites expansive expression into framings of healing and justice.

12A. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Roundtable
Haunted Economies: Ethnomusicology beyond Liberal Democracy
Rasika Ajotikar; Benjamin Barson; Ana Hofman; Samuel Araujo -
Chair(s): Michael Birenbaum Quintero - Boston University

Today, the West's promise of liberal democracy subsists in a normalized state of crisis: disaster capitalism, privatized infrastructures, widened inequality, proxy wars, and profits flowing to political elites through the military-industrial complex. Within ethnomusicology, rethinking democracy, freedom, and liberation requires revisiting the Cold War paradigms that shaped the field's epistemologies and methods. As the post-1945 Western capitalist world cast itself as postcolonial and modern—an age of independence, democracy, and development—ethnomusicological scholarship often aligned itself with this liberal project, privileging diversity, cultural difference, identity, and agency while sidelining political economy, division of labor, and socio-economic class.

This roundtable asks how ethnomusicology, as a listening praxis, cocreates shared pasts while also producing silences: forms of selective, institutionalized forgetting that shape the field's present. Building on scholarship that has traced ethnomusicology's entanglements with representation, geopolitics, and institutional power, we consider how materialist concerns were pushed to the margins and why they now return with renewed urgency at a moment when liberalism's contradictions are impossible to ignore. The discussion centers on persistent questions of labor, ownership, collectivity, and emancipation. Four participants explore: contributive ethnomusicology and the possibilities and limits of participatory action-research in Rio de Janeiro's favelas; the imperialism of the German Left and the impossibility of musical solidarity; popular front movements in Cuba and Haiti under U.S. occupation and post-occupation hegemony; and musical amateurism as a political project of popular emancipation under Eastern European state socialism. The session consists of four ten-minute position papers followed by a forty-five-minute moderated discussion with audience Q&A.

12B. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel
Aquatic Mediations: Toward a "Blue Ethnomusicology"
Justin Patch; Kim Kattari; Ryan McCormack - Vassar College; Texas A&M University; University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Chair(s): Ryan McCormack - University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The concept of water, much like the river it materially constitutes, is impossible to step into the same way twice. Given the vast cultural scope of its material, political, and cosmological connections, any true "blue humanities" (a term coined by historian John Gillis) must scale from the subatomic through the oceanic, all the while navigating dialectics of overabundance and scarcity, immersion and erosion, hypernatremia and hyponatremia. It must grasp something that, in the esoteric language of Michel Serres (1997), is "inhabiting both banks [of the river] and haunting the middle where the two directions converge." The participants will wade into the "blue humanities" from the banks of our own disciplinary experiences. We move from shore to depth with each successive paper and engage with a medium that suffuses ethnomusicology through symbolic capital, even as questions of its essence and agency often flow through the literature in the field without sufficient scrutiny. Specifically, we explore how references to the coastline in Jamaican roots reggae exhibit a mentality resonant with a holistic bioethical system; how electronic music can create immersive and empathetic spaces to listen through water; and how an oceanic channel that facilitates the apparatus of modern sonic surveillance also reinvigorates older, mythical conceptions of the mysterious hadopelagic deep. A discussant will help us frame a conversation about invigorating the quiddity in liquidity and sparking a dialogue toward what the contours of a "blue ethnomusicology" might resemble.

12B:1. Sunday, 10:45 AM.

Island Logic: Roots, Reggae, and Postcolonial Critique

Justin Patch - Vassar College

The mention of Jamaica in the tourist imagination often conjures images of beaches with white sand bordering a sparkling blue ocean. Yet this beach also housed two forms of liberatory working-class culture: the secular reggae sound system and the sacred Rasta gathering. This paper investigates the intersection of roots reggae lyrics, Rastafarianism's postcolonial critique, and Van Rensselaer Potter's Global Bioethics through lyrics about the coast. It shows that bioethical thought is not restricted to Western-defined fields of science, medicine, and philosophy, and that historical experience, social analysis, political action, and spiritual yearning can yield insight. The paper also shows that the repositories and purveyors of this thought can be found in the arts. Potter imagined bioethics as a bridge between science and social science, wisdom and knowledge. Rasta also acts as a bridge, from experience and history to utopia. In its concern for the quality of all life, its emphasis on a holistic approach that considers the dignity of life, the sustainability and ethics of economic practices, and human connections to the natural world, Rasta is an interesting point of comparison to the holistic bioethical system envisioned by Van Rensselaer Potter in his Global Bioethics.

12B:2. Sunday, 11:15 AM.

Watery Vibrations and Hydroacoustic Transformations

Kim Kattari - Texas A&M University

Biosphere's Substrata (1997). William Basinski's Watermusic (2000). Tim Hecker's score for The North Water (2021). Tomer Baruch's Synthesized Sounds of the Sea (2022). Drawing Water On Matching Teal Surfaces by Abul Mogard & KMRU (2023). These are just a few of the examples of electronic music compositions that meditate on water, representing an increased attention to climate change through sound. How can electronic music change the way we think about water in our everyday lives? Drawing on interviews with electronic music listeners and composers, as well as ethnographic experiences at electronic music events and artistic installations, this presentation explores how composer-performers facilitate opportunities for listeners to change or challenge their perception of water, and their interaction with it. I consider how ambient and experimental pieces foster an altered awareness and interpretation of topics ranging from water scarcity to water pollution, from oceanic biodiversity to global warming. Through a deep dive into listener experiences of representative examples, I argue that the medium of electronic music offers unique possibilities for environmental storytelling with the potential for transformative impact. Drawing on Ben Green's theory of peak music experience (2022), Dacher Keltner's inquiry into the power of awe (2023), and Pauline Oliveros' practice of deep listening (1971), I frame these compositions as having the ability to produce affective shifts by transporting listeners through fluid soundscapes. This paper argues that immersive sonic environments can generate ecological empathy and action by teaching us how to listen deeply to water.

12B:3. Sunday, 11:45 AM.

So Close, SOFAR: Terrible Intimacy and Sound Below the Ocean's Okeanos

Ryan McCormack - University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The Sound Frequency and Ranging (SOFAR) channel is a quirk of nature, serving as a synecdochic conduit for the ocean's aural architecture since its discovery by military scientists in the 1940s. Most people were probably unaware of its existence before the implosion of the OceanGate Titan submersible. Nevertheless, listening to SOFAR has been consequential in immanentizing the ocean as a place that humans can aurally experience in its totality. This contributes to a sense of oceanic intimacy that has justified various techniques of destructive aural extraction (see Ochoa (2024) and Steingo (2024), for example). I contend that SOFAR resists this sensibility by bifurcating the ocean into two realms: a sensible ocean above with which humans can engage, and a compressing ocean below which is constantly trying to obliterate the terrestrial pockets humans must construct to survive the depths. This idea builds from an intriguing conceptual resonance between the SOFAR channel and another, older myth: Okeanos, the pre-Socratic "ocean" which served as a barrier dividing the sensible and habitable world from the underworld and the cosmos. Below the cusp of SOFAR, the ocean's Okeanos, lies the obliterative impulse of the deep ocean defined by what I call "terrible intimacy." Signified by the sonic traces of the dead (i.e. a submarine implosion), terrible intimacy makes us contend with some difficult but important ethical questions regarding any attempts to cultivate or remix the potent sonic artifacts it creates.

12C. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Beyond Jazz: Cuban Experimentalisms in Gender and Genre

Marysol Quevedo; Ruthie Meadows; Mark Lomanno - University of Miami; University of Nevada, Reno; University of Miami

Chair(s): Ruthie Meadows - University of Nevada, Reno

In his seminal work, "Cubano Be, Cubano Bop: One Hundred Years of Jazz in Cuba," saxophonist and scholar Leonardo Acosta noted that Cuban musicians involved in "jazz" scenes on the island from the 1920s onwards were defined most of all by their versatility (versatilidad), in other words, by an ever-shifting aesthetic dexterity towards and bridging of classical art and experimental music; U.S. American, "Cuban" and "Latin" "jazz;" Cuban popular music and Afrocuban ritual genres; electronic music and synthesizers; and beyond. In this panel, we explore the consolidation of the idea of a "Cuban" "jazz" canon on the island beginning in the 1980s, addressing the foundational aesthetic porosity of many of its central figures and troubling the gendered and aesthetic mores of the label. Through an analysis of preeminent "Cuban jazz" legend Chucho Valdés, for example, we explore Valdés's pre-Irakere experimentations with electronic synthesizers and his emplacement within a network of musicians and institutions that cultivated artistic experimentation, troubling his canonization as a 'Cuban jazz' artist and advocating for locating artists within the broader artistic contexts in which they circulate. Looking at contemporary "Cuban" "jazz" "pianist" David Virelles, we likewise explore how Virelles resists all three descriptors in a career bridging Cuba and its diaspora, engaging Virelles's practices of critical archiving and imaginative, deconstructive play. Finally, we trace the rise of a generation of women instrumentalists and bandleaders from Cuba's revolutionary art schools in the 21st century, excavating both their repetitions of and interventions into male-dominated mores of gender and genre.

12C:1. Sunday, 10:45 AM.

'Sonidos siderales': Synthesizing Traditions in Cuban Music

Marysol Quevedo - University of Miami

In his seminal work "From the Drum to the Synthesizer" Leonardo Acosta emphasized Cuban musicians' aptitude at combining the use of electronic instruments with the musical practices of Cuban classical and popular music. In his essay Acosta singles out Irakere as the exemplary ensemble that successfully combines two approaches: the use of modern electronic instruments and technology and the incorporation of "ancestral Afro-Cuban rhythms." In this presentation I focus on the figure of Cuban pianist, composer, and arranger Chucho Valdés and his activities prior to the foundation of Irakere, to demonstrate that Valdés's musical experimentation predated his work in Irakere thanks to a network of musicians and institutions that cultivated artistic experimentation. I examine his work at the Teatro Musical de La

Habana, where he collaborated with Leo Brouwer and Federico Smith, his interactions with Juan Blanco, who introduced him to the world of electronic synthesizers, and his participation in the Orquesta Cubana de Música Moderna and the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC). I analyze "Sonidos siderales" from his 1970 combo album Chucho Valdés as a prototype of the musical experimentation with electronic instruments he would further develop after founding Irakere in 1973. Through this study I demonstrate how porous the boundaries between classical, electronic, and popular music were and still are for Cuban musicians, and I trouble the categorization of Valdés as a 'Cuban jazz' artist, encouraging us to push against industry-determined labels and locate artists within the broader artistic contexts in which they circulate.

12C:2. Sunday, 11:15 AM.

"The 'New Vanguard': Cuban Women in Jazz and Fusion (Fusión)"

Ruthie Meadows - University of Nevada, Reno

In Cuba, a new generation of women instrumentalists and bandleaders are emerging from Cuba's elite Revolutionary art schools, intervening into male-dominated jazz and fusion (fusión) scenes and commanding audiences as bandleaders. Composers and vocalists Daymé Arocena and Haydée Milanés; batá percussionists Brenda Navarrete and Magdelys Savigne; set drummer Yissy García; violinists Elizabeth Rodríguez and Yilian Cañizares; pianists Camilla Cortina Bello, Melvis Santa, and others have formed experimental collectives that are transforming Cuba's increasingly audible and transnational jazz scenes. Amid the heightening economic, artistic, and political crises afflicting Cuba since the global pandemic, these women also represent an entire generation of artists who have fled Cuba en masse to the United States and elsewhere, a historic migration representing a "wartime"-level displacement of an estimated twenty percent of the island's population since 2022. Here, I explore this new generation of women in Cuban jazz and fusión. I trace how their increasing visibility since the 2010s builds, in part, on their proper performance of ideals of Cuban jazz masculinity that helped canonize their male peers on the island beginning in the 1980s. At the same time, I explore divergences in these women's performances, excavating novel forms of experimentalism and gendered audibility and visibility enacted through ritual critique, the centering of the batá ritual drums, and queer aesthetics and visions. Ultimately, I interrogate how these women's performances trouble the gendered and sexual frames — as well as definitional terrain — of so-called "Cuban," "Latin," and U.S. American "jazz."

12C:3. Sunday, 11:45 AM.

"At the Thresholds of Memory: Technologies of Transmission and Tools of transformación in the Recombinant Pianism of David Virelles"

Mark Lomanno - University of Miami

In pianist and composer David Virelles's view, politically and commercially motivated attempts to commodify music and uproot it from its cultural, social, and historical contexts have perpetuated centuries of violence against and erasure of minoritized communities in his native Cuba and around the world. In contrast Virelles grounds his artistic projects by simultaneously honoring the cultural traditions he invokes (and the generations of artists who have nurtured them) and innovating on them. Drawing examples from three projects—Antenna (2016), Transformación del arcoiris (2017), and Igbo Alákorin, v.3 (2025)—my presentation illustrates how Virelles composes, performs, and records music that crosses genres, eras, instrumentations, media, the analog/digital divide, and existential planes. Virelles augments the sonic environments he creates for these projects with history lessons, storytelling, visual art and animation, and even fictional characters like Santiago Slim (the cartoon alligator trickster from Igbo Alákorin v.3 who quips and cajoles on Virelles's Instagram profile) and Los Seres (the imaginary drum ensemble performing the tracks Virelles programmed on Antenna). Operating in a music industry that labels him a "Cuban jazz pianist," Virelles resists all three descriptors and the boundaries that institutions and industry actors have imposed on him and his work throughout his career. Through a range of sound production, recording, and processing technologies, historically-informed artistic concepts, scholarly research, immersive multimedia presentations, and social and political commentary, Virelles curates alternative spaces into which he welcomes audiences to join in what I characterize as critical archiving, speculative Indigeneity, and imaginative, deconstructive play.

12D. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Roundtable

Ethnomusicology and Music Teaching and Learning

Amanda Soto; Loneka Battiste; Kyra Gaunt; Carrie Danielson; Sonja Lynn Downing -
Chair(s): Stephanie Espie - University of Pittsburgh

This roundtable will provide a space to discuss resonances between ethnomusicology and music teaching and learning. Positioned at the intersection between these domains, the Education Section has long been interested in generating conversation about past, present, and future convergences between SEM and music education. Participants will reflect on the Education Section and their work in both informal and formal music teaching and learning; K-12, higher education, and life-long contexts. Participant one will review the history and ongoing activities of the SEM Education Section, highlighting its evolving mission, initiatives, and contributions to the field. Participant two will discuss the Education Section's mission to promote "intercultural music education and instruction," arguing that the future relationship between music education and ethnomusicology would benefit from centering musicality and pedagogies of musical traditions rather than a sole focus on the music itself. Participant three will consider Black girls as curriculum architects and knowledge producers, not merely subjects of culturally responsive music education. Centering Black social dance as embodied practice, their stance will cultivate relational intelligence attentive to interoceptive awareness and social-emotional learning. Participant four will ask how we can build curricular structures that make community music and folklife practices more accessible and sustainable while training students to engage music learning as collaborative, community-grounded practice. Participant five will expand these considerations into higher education, addressing the benefits and challenges of teaching ethnomusicology at the undergraduate level. All five participants will reflect on the ongoing relationship between ethnomusicology and music teaching and learning in our contemporary climate.

12E. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Remapping Listening Publics Across the Global South

Tomal Hossain; Kira Mackey; Melissa Camp - University of Chicago; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Trinity University
Chair(s): Kira Mackey - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In the past two decades, scholars in "New Citizenship Studies" have developed an interdisciplinary vocabulary that takes on citizenship's "violent histories and imaginative possibilities" in addressing the imbalances of socio-political status (Hydes & Spires, 2024). Concomitantly, musicologists have connected citizenship with audibility, noting music and sound's centrality to questions of "listening in assembly" (Stokes, 2023). Building on this convergence, this panel examines how communities constitute themselves politically through listening, especially in territories that do not meet the standard criteria for nationhood. Voice, as a symbol of individual autonomy, vehicle for public discourse, and proxy for democratic representation, has long served as an analytical category within discourses on Euro-Western modernity. But in the Global South, where representative institutions have been historically foreclosed and human rights unevenly applied, listening emerges as an embodied and enacted political practice through which communities form against or despite a centralizing polis. The papers in this panel chart how listening practices and their everyday technologies structure political subjectivity across terrain marked by colonial violence. Taking Patrick Wolfe's formulation of colonialism as a structure rather than an event, we combine historical and ethnographic methods to interrogate architectures of listening in three acoustemologies: the present-day Rohingya-language mediascape, Palestine's system of media capitalism during the Great Revolt (1936–39), and discourses of gendered nationalism in Post-Imperial Egypt. We ask, what can listening reveal as an index of collective agency that, like voice, is grounded in particular cultural phenomenologies? And how might this reframe, or remap, understandings of sonic modernity?

12E:1. Sunday, 10:45 AM.

From Public to Counterpublic: Rohingya Listening Practices and Nationalism Since 1961

Tomal Hossain - University of Chicago

In 1961, the Burma Broadcasting Service—first established by the British in 1946—added regular Rohingya-language broadcasts to its "Voice of Myanmar" radio program. In 1965, several years after General Ne Win's military coup in

Burma, the Rohingya-language broadcasts were discontinued. Within four short years, a distinct Rohingya listening public in post-independent Burma had formed and dissolved. However short-lived, the Rohingya-language broadcasts reinforced the notion that the Rohingya people were indeed an officially recognized ethnic minority group of Burma/Myanmar. The present-day Rohingya-language mediascape involves a wide array of Rohingya content creators and uploaders on YouTube and social media platforms living primarily as displaced, stateless persons. While contemporary Rohingya-language media is more abundant and accessible than ever before, the present-day realities of mass statelessness, displacement, and incarceration that define contemporary Rohingya life render nearly all forms of public life and formal political participation impossible for most Rohingyas. In this paper, I explore how contemporary Rohingyas—the majority of whom are pre-literate—constitute themselves as political subjects through various listening practices despite their formal political disenfranchisement. I ask: How does the Rohingya listening public of Burma in the early 1960s relate to contemporary Rohingya listening counterpublics (Fraser 1990) in diaspora? Using an experiential and performative understanding of the political (Hirschkind 2006; Arendt 1958), I argue that Rohingya listening counterpublics have played a crucial role in the formation and evolution of Rohingya national consciousness and Rohingya nationalist discourse.

12E:2. Sunday, 11:15 AM.

Consumer Voice: Radio, Listening Publics, and the 1936 Palestinian Strike

Kira Mackey - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Seventy years before the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, the first phase of strikes during the Great Palestinian Revolt of 1936–39 set the precedent for ethical consumption as a tenet of Palestinian nationalism. Radio played a key role in sustaining the strikes because of its capacity to shape collective action through the imagined simultaneity of "media capitalism" (Fahmy 2011). This entanglement of capitalist exchange with nationalist politics is evident in a 1936 controversy surrounding the famous Butaji department stores in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Jaffa. As political parties united to convene the strike, Emil Butaji issued a radio statement expressing his concern for Arab merchants. Public outcry forced him to publish a newspaper retraction that assured readers he would close his stores in solidarity with national demands. Using archival phonograph and radio advertisements from Butaji's stores alongside a repertoire of strike songs and chants, this paper argues for the role of Palestinian "listening publics" (Bullock 2022; Blum & Hassanpour 1996) in the production of nationalist discourses. Loab Hammoud (2023) has shown how Palestinian elites developed modernist social practices through the idealization of Western "music and auditory technologies." Through my theorization of "consumer voice," I extend his analysis to non-elite spaces like the cafe and village guesthouse, where Palestinians adapted colonial media tools and systems to produce indigenous epistemologies of communication and entertainment. In this context, listening became a form of political expression that transformed everyday engagement with media technologies into sites of political action, without the formal structures of nationhood.

12E:3. Sunday, 11:45 AM.

A "Merciful" and "Compassionate" Voice: Mediating Gender and Nation in Egyptian Women's Magazines (1922–1952)

Melissa Camp - Trinity University

In 1927, an Odeon advertisement for the magazine Misr al-Hadīthah (Modern Egypt) featured a young woman singer, Fathiyya Ahmed (1898–1975), whose "merciful" and "compassionate" voice entranced listeners. Despite her label as the "Sultana of Tarab and Eastern Music," Ahmed retired from the spotlight two years later to get married and become a mother. In the Kingdom of Egypt (1922–1952), magazines and newspapers appealed to Cairo's upper-class Egyptian women who wanted to shape the "New Egyptian Woman" as a pious, Muslim mother who guided the country away from its colonized past and into a modern future. Arab women singers such as Ahmed, Munira al-Mahdiyya, Umm Kulthum, and Layla Murad gained celebrity status for their performances both live and on 78-rpm shellac records. Yet they also faced scrutiny from the readership for their different portrayals of feminist, modern women. In this paper, I analyze advertisements and reviews of these women singers to discuss how the sonic perceptions of women's voices were heard not only as emotional and enchanting, but also as symbols of the New Egyptian Women's movement. Building upon scholarship on advertisements (Baron 2005; Russell 2010), sound (Fahmy 2011), and music (Danielson

1994; Racy 2003) in revolutionary Egypt, I argue that phonograph companies' advertisements contributed to Egyptian listening publics by reifying the patriarchal structure in the nationalist movement. This paper further shows how listening to gender within the context of the anti-colonial nationalist movement in Egypt is crucial to understanding broader perspectives of modern history in the SWANA region.

12F. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Roundtable

Materiality and Meaning of Instruments and Instrument-Building in Africa

Adebola Ola; Althea SullyCole; Dexter Story; Eric Schmidt -

Chair(s): Nathaniel Braddock - Boston University

This roundtable features five scholars presenting original research drawing upon social associations, affective meanings, symbolic inventories, and material economies of musical instrument construction in different regions of the African continent. Individual areas of study include the following: the feminine gendering of the inzad fiddle and tende drum among the Tuareg of Niger, and the subversion of mores by the internationally renowned interethnic group, Etran Finatawa; the materiality and politics of local scarcity and global visibility in the construction of the electric likembe (Bakongo lamellophone) and baguitare ya biso awa in contemporary Kinshasa, DRC; the postcolonial negotiation of meaning and intangible cultural heritage surrounding a collection of musical instruments gathered from the Mandé region of West Africa and currently held in New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art; the role of the individual and community memories of builders and players of the àgídìgbo (Yorùbá lamellophone), and how this dialogue articulates issues of physical and social infrastructures; and the sonic development of the abangala (Kunama chordophone of Eritrea) that is mutually constitutive with the ceremonial inscription upon and adornment of specific instruments as a musician progresses to mastery. For this roundtable, the panelists will contextualize their work within their analytical approaches in short presentations. The table will then expand to general discussion with a senior scholar acting as respondent, and then open to general discussion with attendees.

12G. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Making Home Through Music: Diaspora, Heritage, and Belonging in North America

David Alexander; Sasha Desberg; Victor Xavier Vieira Goulart - University of Sheffield; University of California, Berkeley; University of Colorado Boulder

Chair(s): Fernando Orejuela - Indiana University

12G:1. Sunday, 10:45 AM.

Elective Heritage: Identity Construction among Highland Bagpipers in Texas

David Alexander - University of Sheffield

This paper examines how Highland bagpipers in Texas construct individual and collective identities through participation in a diasporic heritage music practice. Drawing on qualitative survey data from pipers across the state and informed by scholarship on music and identity (Stokes 1994; Turino 2008; Frith 1996), it argues that piping functions not merely as musical performance but as a socially embedded process of elective cultural affiliation and self-fashioning. The analysis demonstrates that participants engage the Great Highland Bagpipe as a symbolically charged instrument through which belonging, authenticity, and personal transformation are negotiated, often independent of direct Scottish ancestry. While prior research has explored musical identity in diasporic and subcultural contexts, Highland piping in the American South remains underexamined. Findings show that pipers mobilize tradition, competition structures, and band participation to construct layered identities that are simultaneously heritage-oriented and locally situated. The study further reveals that musical self-concept and community participation operate in a recursive feedback loop, reinforcing commitment and social cohesion. These results contribute to ethnomusicological debates on elective ethnicity, participatory music-making, and the adaptive life of heritage traditions, suggesting that Highland piping in Texas represents a dynamic site where global symbols are recontextualized within regional cultural ecologies.

12G:2. Sunday, 11:15 AM.

Creating Home(land) in the Bay Area: The Diasporic Presence of Amazigh Musical Communities

Sasha Desberg - University of California, Berkeley

In the Northern California Bay Area, the band Terga creates a site for connection for several North African diasporic communities, most notably the sizable Amazigh diaspora, a broad term encompassing North African indigenous groups. Choosing most of their repertoire from traditional songs and the music of prominent North African artists, the band's interpretations of these pieces both connect the members of the diaspora with the idea of home(land) and generate structures of cultural emplacement specific to this community. Scholars in ethnomusicology have located the idea of diasporic community maintenance within musical scenes (Fuarros 2013, Goli 2019) while Amazigh studies has primarily focused on the importance of linguistic, cultural, and legal recognition of the Amazigh people within North African countries. (El Guabli 2023, Lazhar 2017) Grounded in these fields, in this paper, I expand the discussion surrounding diasporic music communities to the context of indigenous groups outside of the United States (Shah 2010) and their patterns of movement in relation to the postcolony. (Mbembe 2001) Drawing on several months of fieldwork in the Bay Area, I situate Terga's performances and performance practice within this framework to show the complex interplay between sites of cultural articulation in the creation of homelands (and the associated imaginaries) and the work inherent to establishing an Amazigh diasporic presence. Doing so, I trace my interlocutor's modes of engagement to understand the work of recontextualizing the idea of self and homeland within the context of diaspora.

12G:3. Sunday, 11:45 AM.

Building a Home Away from Home: Brazilian Diasporic Communities along Colorado's Front Range

Victor Xavier Vieira Goulart - University of Colorado Boulder

Recent demographic estimates suggest approximately 6,500 Brazilian residents in the state of Colorado. Within Brazilian diasporic communities in Colorado, many people engage actively in Brazilian social networks and transnational media to learn about cultural events and services and to create ties with other Brazilians. Some members of this diaspora have been especially active in promoting Brazilian cultural events along Colorado's Front Range. Scholarship on Brazilians in the United States has focused largely on major metropolitan areas and coastal states. Consequently, the musical lives and community-building practices of Brazilians in the Mountain West have remained underexplored. I argue that, in many of these events, Brazilian music functions as a key medium for building ties and negotiating belonging in the United States. This paper investigates how Brazilian migrants in Colorado integrate Brazilian events into their daily lives and what functions this integration serves, as well as how these events become sites for experiencing and expressing saudade. It also traces the history of Brazilian communities along Colorado's Front Range through Brazilian cultural organizations and their events. I treat saudade as a lens for understanding how these migrants negotiate community, belonging, and identity in Colorado. Focusing on the northern and central areas of Colorado's Front Range, particularly Denver and Boulder, I examine Brazilian pop-up markets with live music, Carnival celebrations, and Brazilian music shows at the St. Julien Hotel through participant observation, interviews, and media analysis of social media, websites, and promotional materials from Brazilian cultural organizations in Colorado.

12H. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Phantasmatic Geographies of Music, Heritage, and Cultural Lineage Across Eurasia

Shireen Nabatian; Christopher Troutman; Grijda Spiri - University of California, Santa Cruz; Artists for Community Transformation; University of California Santa Cruz
Chair(s): Sean Williams - Evergreen State University

12H:1. Sunday, 10:45 AM.

"Build Your Conservatories in the Mountains": Chasing the Phantasm of Rural Anatolia

Shireen Nabatian - University of California, Santa Cruz

Worldwide, the architects of nationalist projects and the "burning souls" (Livingston 2014) of folk music revivals have long turned to imagined rural pasts as wellsprings of cultural authenticity. At Müzik Köyü (Music Village), a summer music seminar founded in 2017 in Türkiye, amateur and professional musicians alike derive belonging, emplacement, and

meaning through music-making in various rural sites around the country while negotiating two seemingly opposed entities: the Turkish state on one hand, and anti-nationalist sentiments valuing pluralism and diversity on the other. Both positions uphold a phantasmic vision of rural Anatolia as the pure source of authentic folk music.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted at Müzik Köyü in 2023 and 2024, this paper explores the experience of musicking through the lenses of the phantasm (Agamben 1993; Favero 2003; Girgis 2007), diasporic nostalgia (Boym 2001), and Alevi cosmology as it is expressed in the lyrics of various Alevi song forms frequently played at Müzik Köyü such as nefes (hymn; lit. breath), deyiş (lit. saying) and unattributed songs like "Heredîya." The paper further examines how these Alevi musical-poetic forms articulate an affective orientation toward longing, non-arrival, and ongoing seeking. I argue that this orientation helps explain both the centrality of Alevi repertoire at Müzik Köyü and its broad resonance among participants of all backgrounds. More broadly, this paper situates music seminars within scholarship on nationalism, rural imaginaries, and folk music revivals, demonstrating how phantasmic yearnings continue to shape musical practice far beyond the Turkish context.

12H:2. Sunday, 11:15 AM.

On Top of Mount *Budalang*: Russian Minorities and the Recontextualization of Folksongs in Post-Invasion Tbilisi

Christopher Troutman - Artists for Community Transformation

In the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the city of Tbilisi, Georgia, became a major migration hub for hundreds of thousands of Russians as they left their homeland. Drawn to the city's reputation for beauty, free thought, and the arts, many young creatives decided to take up residence in the city, creating a rapidly evolving and wholly unique music scene. Among these were many members of the Russian Federation's various ethnic minority groups, whose presence further contributedTbilisi's diverse cultural and creative milieu. This paper explores the works of two of these musicians (one Buryat, one Circassian) as they grapple with the new realities of their lives in self-imposed exile. It builds on the author's doctoral research and is derived from two years of ethnographic fieldwork (2023-2024) conducted in Tbilisi. Through a media-rich presentation accompanied with video documentation and theoretical visualizations, it provides an in-depth analysis of several of their individual works, allowing for a comparative study of how they adapt their respective folksongs to meet the challenges of their new context. While these two artists come from very different regions, lifestyles, religions, and political ideologies, the author demonstrates how both are grappling with the idea of folk heritage as something static (which keeps the artist rooted in a personally-meaningful past) and dynamic (which opens up new possibilities for the future and invites others to participate). These insights expand the wider ethnomusicological discussion of the interplay between innovation and tradition.

12H:3. Sunday, 11:45 AM. Performance/Demonstration

The Instrumental Cry: Re-Voicing Albanian Women's Laments through the Solo Violin

Grijda Spiri - University of California Santa Cruz

This lecture-demonstration examines the "instrumental cry" as a medium for translating the gendered affective power of the vajtim (Albanian women's funeral lament) into the solo violin repertoire. In traditional Balkan mourning, the female voice serves as the primary vessel for communal grief, characterized by a sonic morphology of melodic sobbing, rhythmic gasping, and microtonal "breaking." This session argues that the violin, through its unique capacity for sustained tension and fluid pitch, does not merely imitate these vocal gestures but actively re-voices them in a new performative space. Through live demonstrations, I analyze how specific violin techniques—such as heavy-pressure bowing to mimic a constricted throat and downward portamenti to replicate the ritualized sigh—function as a form of "instrumental ethnography" that preserves the visceral emotional response of the original ritual. By performing transcriptions and improvisations based on rural fieldwork, I explore the ethical and aesthetic implications of moving a private, gender-segregated mourning tradition onto the public concert stage. This presentation challenges the boundaries of traditional organology by treating the violin as a secondary "female" voice capable of articulating collective trauma and memory. This work contributes to ethnomusicological discourse on affect, gendered performance, and the politics of grief, illustrating how the physical act of playing can archive ephemeral vocal gestures. The session concludes with a

performance that bridges the gap between raw ritual and formal artistry, offering a sonic meditation on the resilience of Albanian mourning traditions.

12I. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Mediating World Music: Authority, Authenticity, and Musical Tradition in a Global Age

David Hebert; Ruxin LI; Anthony Cahill - Western Norway University of Applied Sciences; Education University of Hong Kong; No.2 High School of East China Normal University; Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick

Chair(s): Revell Carr - University of Kentucky

12I:1. Sunday, 10:45 AM.

A Philosophy of World Music Instruction for the Age of AI

David Hebert - Western Norway University of Applied Sciences; Education University of Hong Kong

In most ethnomusicology graduate programs, current debates in philosophy of education tend to receive little to no attention. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the application of a new philosophy in the teaching of world music, a common responsibility of ethnomusicologists in higher education. While previous books (e.g. World Music Pedagogy, VII: Teaching World Music in Higher Education) offer helpful methods for collegiate world music instruction, the purpose of a philosophy text is to provide foundations that empower us to reconceptualize the meaning and ultimate purpose of instruction in this field, while illuminating new resources for sustained inspiration, thereby reducing professional "burnout". The presenter's twelfth book, co-authored with a Chinese ethnomusicologist (Routledge, 2026), is concerned with how music educators can respond to the array of novel challenges coming from generative AI, and serves as background for this paper. Our book applies a systems science approach to global philosophy of history by arguing how and why human narratives evolved in particular ways across time, which ultimately engenders a new perspective on musical meaning in relation to both personal identity and AI. This matters for ethnomusicologists teaching world music, particularly as the popularization of generative AI tools challenges us to reconsider what quality education entails and what we could hope world music students might learn to do and understand through our teaching. AI prompts us to rethink not only classroom activities and approaches to assessment, but also notions of creative originality, ownership, and music heritage, demanding a new educational philosophy.

12I:2. Sunday, 11:15 AM.

Reclaiming the Voice: The Naxi 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 Naxi 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.

12I:3. Sunday, 11:45 AM.

Evolution, Expressive Authority, and Politics of Mediation in the Irish Slow Air Tradition: A Case Study of *The Wounded Hussar*

Anthony Cahill - Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick

This paper examines the evolution of The Wounded Hussar from its eighteenth-century origins to contemporary circulation in Irish traditional music, using the song and its air as a lens through which questions of transmission, authenticity, and performance practice are raised. Beginning with the Romantic-era poem and early instrumental settings, the study traces the processes through which text and melody were fixed in print, detached, recombined, and recontextualized. Particular attention is paid to collectors and revivalist mediators whose editorial decisions shaped the separation of air from text and subsequent privileging of instrumental transmission. Drawing on comparative analysis of twentieth-century performances and methodologies of Irish song scholarship (Williams and Ó Laoire 2011), the paper examines how musicians negotiate declamation, ornamentation, and variation in mimesis of an implied or remembered text. These analyses reveal the relationship between air and song to be neither stable nor hierarchical but rather continually renegotiated in performance. The revivalist assertion that airs form legitimacy from fidelity to song (Ó Riada 1982) is shown to function less as fact than ideological claim embedded within discourses of authenticity. By foregrounding multiformity and the politics of mediation (Caldwell 2025), the paper contributes to ethnomusicological discourse on the construction, authorization, and reproduction of tradition. It argues that slow air performance constitutes a critical site in which archival authority, aesthetic ideology, and individual agency intersect. In doing so, the study challenges essentialist narratives of continuity in Irish traditional music and advances a more historically contingent account of stylistic evolution and expressive authority.

12J. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Individual Presentation Session

Sonic Encounters: Ritual, Race, and Cultural Pluralism in Peru

Julio Mendívil; Diego Salina; Veronica Pacheco - University of Vienna; University of Texas at Austin; University of Denver

Chair(s): Thomas Turino - University of Illinois

12J:1. Sunday, 10:45 AM.

"Hacer daño": Magic and the Gendered Withdrawal in a Cajamarca Festival

Julio Mendívil - University of Vienna

This paper examines the role of magic in shaping gendered trajectories within the Huanchaco festival in Baños del Inca (Cajamarca), celebrated in honor of the Virgin of the Nativity (Cánepa Koch 1993, Martínez & Rodríguez 2014)). The ritual performance is organized around distinct dance groups: the chunchos (adult male dancers associated with Amazonian inhabitants), the pallas (young, unmarried women representing Inca maidens), and the incaicos, who are often schoolboys (Reichlen 1953). Although publicly framed as Catholic, the festival incorporates indigenous conceptions of magical efficacy.

Drawing on repeated field visits conducted over three consecutive years, I analyze how male dancers account for their withdrawal from performance. While pallas cease dancing upon marriage in accordance with norms of female chastity, and incaicos withdraw as the boys reach adulthood, chunchos often explain their discontinuation to having been harmed through magic. This belief also motivates protective practices undertaken privately by dancers and musicians in preparation for the festival or during the making of instruments.

I argue that magic operates as a discursive framework that externalizes masculine decline. Rather than interpreting bodily limitation as personal failure or social regulation, male withdrawal is attributed to occult aggression. Ritual masculinity is thus symbolically preserved even as participation becomes precarious.

12J:2. Sunday, 11:15 AM.

Feverish Lions in Lima: Atmospheres around the Chinese New year in Lima, peru

Diego Salinas - University of Texas at Austin

Performing in the Chinese New Year (CNY) celebrations of Lima, Peru is painful. The frenzied crowds push against us, and elderly women aggressively grab, and even rip at my clothing. After two years of fieldwork as a Chinese lion dancer, I have experienced firsthand the excitable atmospheres of this event, and the fervent crowd behaviors that accompany them. This paper is an examination of the atmospheres created by Peruvians around the CNY season in Lima, Peru—a perplexing fieldsite that despite having the most Chinese people in Latin America, has CNY events attended mostly by non-Chinese Peruvians.

Based on participant observation and atmosphere theory from Benjamin Anderson (2014) and Kathleen Stewart (2011), I theorize the performance of Chinese lion dance as a space around which a carnivalesque, mobile atmosphere forms. Like a planet with satellites in orbit, our traveling troupe has an atmosphere that moves (literally on wheels) and gravitates audiences towards and to move with it. However, because Peruvians invent traditions (Hobsbawm 2014), I argue that that atmosphere is effectively orientalist. As these atmospheres become more exaggerated, the barrio chino acts as a sort of amplifier whose orientalized facade fuels the audience's fervor and emplaces lion dance into its musical topophilia (Bolderman 2020). Examining this phenomenon I ask: What kind of atmospheres does orientalism make possible, and how does performance intensify that desire? In doing so, I contribute to studies on Chinese diasporas in Latin America as well as affect and atmosphere theory in ethnomusicology.

12J:3. Sunday, 11:45 AM.

Renata Flores' Indigenous Sounds of Empowerment and Rebellion

Veronica Pacheco - University of Denver

Renata Flores, a Quechua popular musician from Ayacucho, Peru, has reached stardom on international stages by combining Peruvian music with trap, rap, hip-hop, reggaeton, and other urban popular genres. A watermark of her success has been the consistent use of Quechua and local Andean sounds from rural areas, which has earned her the title of Queen of rap Andino or Inka trap, as reported by The New York Times in 2022. By examining Renata's mastery of media communication through Instagram and YouTube, this paper illustrates how this artist exercises her cultural narrative sovereignty, enabling her to engage in activism in defense of Indigenous cultural rights and environmental justice while performing on global stages. An interview with the artist and a performance at the renowned JazzCafe in London further offer a glimpse into her self-determination and Indigenous identity as an artist who bridges the past and present of Indigenous people in Peru while challenging the norms of Indigenous stereotypes.

12K. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Organized Panel

Invented Traditions: The Revival of Musical Instruments in Central Asia

Aidai Kalmamatova; Aibek Baiymbetov; Saida Daukeyeva - Wesleyan University; Wesleyan University; Wesleyan University
Chair(s): Richard Wolf - Harvard University

Ethnomusicological scholarship has long emphasized the symbolic significance of musical instruments as icons of national identity and the evocative power of their sounds in shaping collective memory (Bates 2012; Dawe 2003; Doubleday 2008; Howard 2022; Rancier 2014). This panel brings together three case studies of the revival of musical instruments in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to examine how material sounding objects become sites for negotiating history, identity, and cultural continuity in post-Soviet Central Asia. Engaging debates on musical nationalism, "invented traditions," revival movements, and the materiality and agency of objects, the panel foregrounds the social lives and entanglements of revived instruments across shifting historical and sociopolitical contexts. The cases span stringed, wind, and signaling instruments whose traditions were disrupted or transformed during the late imperial and Soviet periods and are now being revitalized within new cultural and institutional frameworks. Revival unfolds in contexts of both socialist and postsocialist modernity, where heritage regimes, state cultural policies, and global cultural flows shape the meanings attributed to instruments. The papers explore how concepts of tradition and authenticity are negotiated in

practice, and how instruments are reinterpreted as carriers of ancestral memory, living, sentient beings, and emblems of national heritage. Collectively, the panel demonstrates that instrument revival in Central Asia constitutes a creative reinvention of material sounding objects in the construction of national music cultures. By reimagining instruments as mediators between past and present, human and other-than-human realms, musicians and instrument makers construct new senses of cultural belonging and identity in contemporary social worlds.

12K:1. Sunday, 10:45 AM.
Strings of Memory: The Jetigen Revival in Kyrgyzstan
Aidai Kalmamatova - Wesleyan University

This paper traces the revival of the jetigen (plucked zither) in Kyrgyzstan and examines how the reconstruction of this once-forgotten instrument has extended beyond cultural preservation to produce national heritage in the present. The history of the jetigen is closely linked to the Kyrgyz historical homeland in southern Siberia, particularly present-day Khakassia, which Kyrgyz historiography regards as an ancestral territory. In this context, the Kyrgyz jetigen has been revived on the basis of the Khakass chatkhan, demonstrating the connection between ancestral lands and contemporary Kyrgyzstan. My study draws on autoethnography and interviews with key research participants, including Jusup Aisaev, a leading revivalist of the instrument; Sergei Charkov, a musician and artisan from Khakassia; and Kyrgyz instrument makers Mirbek Manapbaev and Eldiyar Kalenov. The paper documents the process of adapting the jetigen for contemporary musical practice in Kyrgyzstan, including decisions about construction, tuning, and performance. It also addresses issues related to the analysis and transcription of Kyrgyz kuus (instrumental compositions), highlighting prospects for further development of the repertoire. I argue that the jetigen revival demonstrates how musical instruments can articulate historical continuity while simultaneously supporting the construction of modern national identity. Drawing on scholarship on musical nationalism and Eric Hobsbawm's concept of "invented tradition," the paper situates the revival of this instrument within broader debates on heritage-making and cultural memory and contributes to ethnomusicological discussions of music revivals and post-Soviet cultural politics.

12K:2. Sunday, 11:15 AM.
From the Epic Memory to Sonic Practice: The Reconstruction of Kyrgyz Signaling Instruments
Aibek Baiymbetov - Wesleyan University

Recent scholarship in ethnomusicology has called for a shift in organological research from the human side of instrument-player interactions to the roles of instruments as both objects and subjects of social relations, endowed with agency and power (Bates 2012; Yamin 2019). Studies in ecomusicology have proposed a holistic and relational approach to examining the material world of music as "a convergence of human and non-human, technological and affectual, material and cultural fields" (Allen and Dawe 2016, 119). Informed by these perspectives, this paper explores the idea of the musical instrument as a sentient being through a case study of the Kazakh qobyz (two-stringed bowed lute). A sacred shamanic instrument of nomadic pastoralists, the qobyz was suppressed and its practitioners persecuted during the Soviet era. Its post-Soviet revival, however, has rekindled beliefs in the instrument's ability to heal, sound on its own, and mediate with the spirit realm. Drawing on fieldwork with a craftsman-shaman in Kazakhstan, the paper examines such beliefs through the lens of Tim Ingold's (2000) ecological theory. While previous studies have interpreted living musical instruments as actors within relational networks or as persons according to indigenous ontologies, I focus on the discourse of sentience itself and foreground its complex, historically contingent nature. I argue that the instrument maker's craft and his views on the sentience and agency of musical instruments offer insight into both historical transformations in local performance practice and the complexities of the social and political environment of a postcolonial nation-state in a globalized world.

12K:3. Sunday, 11:45 AM.
Sentient Instrument: Making the Qobyz in Kazakhstan
Saida Daukeyeva - Wesleyan University

Recent scholarship in ethnomusicology has called for a shift of focus in organological research from the human side of instrument-player interactions to the roles of instruments as both objects and subjects of social relations, endowed with

agency and power (Bates 2012; Yamin 2019). Studies in ecomusicology have proposed a holistic and relational approach to examining the material world of music as "a convergence of human and non-human, technological and affectual, material and cultural fields" (Allen and Dawe 2016, 119). Informed by these perspectives, this paper explores the idea of the musical instrument as a sentient being through a case study of the Kazakh qobyz (two-stringed bowed lute). A sacred shamanic instrument of nomadic pastoralists, the qobyz was suppressed and its practitioners persecuted during the Soviet era. Its post-Soviet revival, however, has rekindled beliefs in the instrument's ability to heal, sound on its own, and mediate with the spirit realm. Drawing on fieldwork with a craftsman-shaman in Kazakhstan, the paper examines such beliefs through the lens of Tim Ingold's (2000) ecological theory. While previous studies have interpreted living musical instruments as actors within relational networks or as persons according to indigenous ontologies, I focus on the discourse of sentience itself and foreground its complex, historically contingent nature. I argue that the instrument maker's craft and his views on the sentience and agency of musical instruments offer insight into both historical transformations in local performance practice and the complexities of the social and political environment of a postcolonial nation-state in a globalized world.

12L. Sunday, 10:45 AM. Roundtable

Geographies of Auto-Tune: Pitch Correction and Vocal Practice in Global Contexts

Samuel Lamontagne; Amy Skjerseth; Sarra Chahbane; Catherine Provenzano; Kiranmayi Indraganti; Noraliz Ruiz - Chair(s): Amy Skjerseth - University of California, Riverside

Few if any technologies in the twenty-first century have so profoundly impacted the production of popular musics globally as Auto-Tune. From bedroom setups to Bollywood soundstages, digital pitch correction technologies have become part of everyday production practice and are taken for granted as a strategy of vocal mediation. However, pitch correction software and artists' and engineers' labor mediate the politics of embodied identities, historical lineages of local musical practice, and imaginaries of audiences in a globalized musical marketplace. Auto-Tune is a mobile, roving representation of the politics of vocal production in the twenty-first century, even as it carries its own material and political precedents. This roundtable emerges from an anthology-in-progress with interdisciplinary scholars who study pitch-mediation genealogies across cultural, industrial, and musical contexts. We ask: in which genres and traditions has Auto-Tune become a stylistic signifier, and which accepted modes of expression do these entail? How can a range of perspectives reveal Auto-Tune's use as a mediator of vocal politics and affect? Panelists explore, in turn: Auto-Tune's role in shaping French popular music, identity, and contemporary cultural politics; "saturation" metaphors for Auto-Tuned voices that originated in oil-sounding technologies, explored through Cape Verdean Mayra Andrade's music videos and transoceanic collaborations; gendered geographies of Auto-Tune in Morocco's global rap marketplace; the use of Auto-Tune live in American megachurches; technologies of cover-ups and orchestral support in India's contemporary mainstream vocal music industries; and interviews with Puerto Rican producers who achieve international visibility by adopting Auto-Tune conventions while cultivating a distinctive Puerto Rican aesthetic.

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