

The Bulletin

of the Society for American Music

FOUNDED IN HONOR
OF OSCAR G. T. SONNECK

Tacoma 2021, Virtually!

Gwynne Kuhner Brown



Mount Rainier. Photo by [Wei Zeng](#).

Although the SAM 2021 conference will be taking place online, the Local Arrangements Committee nonetheless welcomes members near and far to Tacoma, Washington. We urge conference attendees to envision themselves enjoying the city's fresh air, stunning natural beauty, and diverse cultural milieu. Tacoma is located 32 miles southwest of Seattle and 42 miles northwest of Mount Rainier. In real life, clouds sometimes obscure the view of this 14,411-foot stratovolcano, but in your mind's eye the view is invariably spectacular.

Our virtual conference site is located on the ancestral homeland of the Puyallup Tribe. The Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854 forcibly removed Native peoples to clear the way for colonial settlement, but the Puyallup Tribe has cared for and lived on these lands since the beginning of time and continues to do so today. The Society for American Music sends gratitude to the Puyallup Tribe. We recognize that this land acknowledgement is one small step toward true allyship, and we commit to uplifting the voices, experiences, and histories of the Indigenous people of this land and beyond.

Tacoma has been the site of many notable events, musical and otherwise. In 1873, it became the western terminus of the transcontinental Northern Pacific Railway. In 1903, Bing Crosby was born in his family's Tacoma home. In 1940, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge ("Galloping Gertie") [collapsed](#) dramatically into Puget Sound. And in March 1988 at Tacoma's [Community World Theatre](#), a band called Nirvana performed for the first time.

Present-day Tacoma offers a panoply of possibilities for visitors, from indoor attractions like the [Museum of Glass](#) and [Tacoma Art Museum](#) to outdoor enticements including the 760-acre [Point Defiance Park](#) with its forest trails, beach, gardens, zoo, and aquarium. Conference attendees can look forward to experiencing all of this for real in [2025](#)! In the

Volume XLVII, No. 2

Spring 2021

Contents

[Tacoma 2021, Virtually!](#)

[Tacoma 2021:
From the Program
Committee](#)

[From the President](#)

[Student Forum](#)

[Upcoming JSAM Contents](#)

[Call for Contributions](#)

[Book Reviews](#)

[Call for Dissertation
Abstracts](#)

[About the Bulletin](#)

meantime, rest assured that the Local Arrangements Committee is assembling a feast of clickable “excursions” and performances by Tacoma musicians. We’ll do our best to give you a taste of the real thing.

We are excited to share that the annual Perlis Concert will feature early works by the composer, artist, and visionary [Harry Partch](#), performed by Charles Corey and Bonnie Whiting on the unique instruments Partch created. Vivian Perlis interviewed Partch in 1974 as part of her Oral History of American Music project, making his music particularly appropriate for the concert. All of the Partch instruments are currently housed in Marysville, Washington.

We also eagerly look forward to the presentation of an honorary SAM membership to Pacific Northwest native Carrie Brownstein. A founding member along with Corin Tucker of the band Sleater-Kinney, she was a major force in the Riot Grrrl movement that began in Olympia, Washington in the 1990s. Brownstein’s many achievements range from singing, guitar playing, and songwriting to acting, writing, and directing. From 2011 to 2018 she and Fred Armisen co-created and starred in the TV series *Portlandia*.



2021 SAM Honorary Member Carrie Brownstein. Photo by [Andy Witchger](#).

Tacoma is a vibrant city in a beautiful part of the world, and we would love to host you here in person this year. Nevertheless, we are excited to share some of what Tacoma has to offer as we gather virtually in celebration of this region and its musicians. The Local Arrangements Committee consists of Matthew DelCiampo, Joshua Gailey, Ellen George, Sarah Kolat, Susan Neimoyer, Kerry O’Brien, Mark Rodgers, and Gwynne Kuhner Brown (chair). We, along with conference host institution [the University of Puget Sound](#), offer the Society for American Music our warmest virtual welcome to Tacoma.

Tacoma 2021: From the Program Committee

Nancy Yunhwa Rao, Program Committee

The Program Committee for the 2021 Tacoma Virtual Conference wishes to invite you to join us for a great diversity of presentations, topics, and scholarly approaches. From Riot Grrrl to soccer chant, Google to NPR, *Sweet Land* to *Bambi*, women blues to string band, William Grant Still to Leonard Bernstein, Covid to 9/11, the meeting offers [a wide range of subjects and themes that truly reflect the vitality of scholarship in American music](#). There will be two keynote plenary events. A multimedia project by Samora Pinderhughes will reflect the deeply personal intertwined with the radically political—incarceration, violence, injustice—in his performance, to which Shana L. Redmond will provide a response. A roundtable led by Katherine McKittrick, a scholar on Black cultural production, post-colonial geographies, and liberatory ontologies, will discuss her recent book, *Dear Science*, with responses from three discussants. We look forward to seeing you in virtually in June.

From the President

Tammy L. Kernodle

Dear Colleagues,

It was my hope that my last Presidential letter would occur after a robust and exciting face-to-face conference on the ground in Tacoma, Washington. However, the continuous onslaught of a global pandemic and the devastation from wildfires last fall dictated that we shift the modality of our conference once again. As disappointing as that might be, I am excited to



Tammy L. Kernodle, SAM President

report that our conference team is working hard to launch an online conference that will expand beyond what was experienced during the 2020 meeting. SAM 2021 will be a more interactive conference that will feature musical performances as well as more opportunities for networking and intellectual engagement. Special thanks to our conference team!!

Our Local Arrangements Committee, chaired by Gwynne K. Browne, is working to bring the robust and diverse cultural life of Tacoma to our virtual format. Short musical performances will close out each conference day and serve as points of transition into a number of receptions. I'm very happy to announce that Friday afternoon will feature two major events—an Awards Ceremony and the Vivian

Perlis Concert. This year the Awards Ceremony will be separated out from the official business meeting in an effort to reflect on and celebrate our award winners. We hope that this ceremony will also include newest Honorary member, guitarist/vocalist/actress Carrie Brownstein. Brownstein was one of the founding members of a collective of musicians that launched the Riot Grrl Movement.

This year's Perlis Concert will feature Charles Corey performing the music of Henry Partch. This concert shifts from a traditional format in that the selected repertory will be interspersed with clips from Perlis's 1974 interview with Partch.

The Program Committee, chaired by Nancy Rao, has been diligent in constructing a conference program that stretches across disciplinary boundaries. I've already begun mapping out how I'm going to navigate the exciting schedule of paper sessions, lecture-recitals, and poster sessions.

I want to urge you all to attend three major plenary sessions that reflect an effort to engage our membership in constructive and meaningful conversations about equity, inclusion, trauma, and liberation ideologies. On Friday afternoon, our Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Committee is sponsoring a panel discussion entitled "Beyond Tokenism: A Music History Redo." This session will explore new pedagogical tools that advance social justice as well as diverse voices and musical genres in the classroom. Also on Friday, there will be a plenary session featuring Dr. Katherine McKittrick, whose works explores post-colonial geographies and liberatory ontologies. Lastly, on Saturday June 11, the Plenary will consist of a keynote address and musical performance by composer/pianist/vocalist Samora Pinderhughes.

The conference business meeting will mark the end of my tenure as President. This was never a role that I envisioned serving in, but I'm grateful for the opportunity. In early 2019, prior to transitioning into this role, I began a season of concerted and deliberate prayer. While I never could have anticipated a global pandemic, I understood that I should not enter into this season unprepared. One of my prayers was that God would surround me with individuals who had wisdom, perspective, integrity, and knowledge and that God would give me the wisdom and humility to listen to them. I can say without a doubt that my prayers were answered.

I want to express my deepest appreciation to the Executive Committee (Christina Baade, Leta Miller, Maribeth Clark), the Board, and Executive Director Megan McDonald for the support, cooperative spirit, and vision you brought to each meeting and decision that had to be made. SAM's ability to weather the storms and changes of recent years has been because of you.

I want to acknowledge transitions in the leadership of SAM that will take place at the Conference. Amongst the many things outgoing Vice President Christina Baade has done in the course of her two terms in that role, she has been significant in formulating a more comprehensive communications strategy for the organization. Jessica Sternfeld and Mark Katz will be ending their tenures as Board Members. Each has served as important liaisons to our nexus of committees. Thank you for your service! Although Secretary Leta Miller, Treasurer Maribeth Clark, and Board members Horace Maxile, Sarah Gerk, Kristen Turner, and Birgitta Johnson will continue with the next administration, I want to acknowledge their work and support. Thank you!

There are not enough words to express what I feel for my super shereos—Joice Gibson, Paula Bishop, and Megan MacDonald!! These ladies make so much happen behind the scenes and they have been so significant in the progression of our operational infrastructure.

I want to welcome new Board members Mark Buford and Marian Wilson Kimber, Vice President Beth Levy, and President-Elect Daniel Goldmark!!

In closing, I would like to thank the membership for their support and trust during the last two years and I look forward to working behind the scenes to continue promoting SAM and its mission.

Student Forum

McKenna Milici and Erin Fulton, co-chairs

Hello, students of SAM! Please mark your calendars for the Student Forum panel on the second day of the virtual conference. Join us in session 5e on Thursday, June 10 for a panel discussion on public musicology featuring Randye Jones, Gabriel Kastle, Sharon Mirchandani, Colleen Phelps, William Robin, and Richard D. Walter. As interest in extending musicological work outside of the academy continues to grow, students seek models of outward-facing scholarship, skills that can be developed during graduate school to support this work, and advice on accessing and developing frameworks beyond the conventional infrastructures of university teaching and academic publication. The speakers on this panel have a range of experiences in public musicology to share, including museum studies and librarianship, performance, broadcasting, journalism, and traditional academia. Following a brief introduction from each panelist, we look forward to a collective discussion and Q&A for all in attendance.

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Articles

"I'm on My Way to a Heav'nly Lan'": *Porgy and Bess* as American Religious Export to the USSR

Lena Leson

The ASCAP-BMI Feud, Status Panic, and the Struggle for Cold War Consensus

John Brackett

Singing "Past, Present and Future": Music in Early American Commemoration

Laura Lohman

Ethnic Irony in Melvin B. Tolson's "Dark Symphony"

Elizabeth Newton

Christopher Moore and Philip Purvis, eds., *Music and Camp*

Matthew J. Jones

Adam Patrick Bell, *Dawn of the DAW: The Studio as Musical Instrument*

Jasmine A. Henry

Frank Lehman, *Hollywood Harmony: Musical Wonder and the Sound of Cinema*

Nathan Platte

Media

Che Apalache, *Rearrange My Heart*

Christina Azahar

Sydney Pollack, *Amazing Grace*; Kevin Macdonald, *Whitney*

Kirsty Fairclough

Reviews

Books

David Schiff, *Carter*

Daniel Guberman

Call for *Bulletin* Contributions

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

Book Reviews

[*Transforming Women's Education: Liberal Arts and Music in Female Seminaries*](#). Jewel A. Smith. University of Illinois Press, 2019. 292 pp. ISBN: 9780252084003.

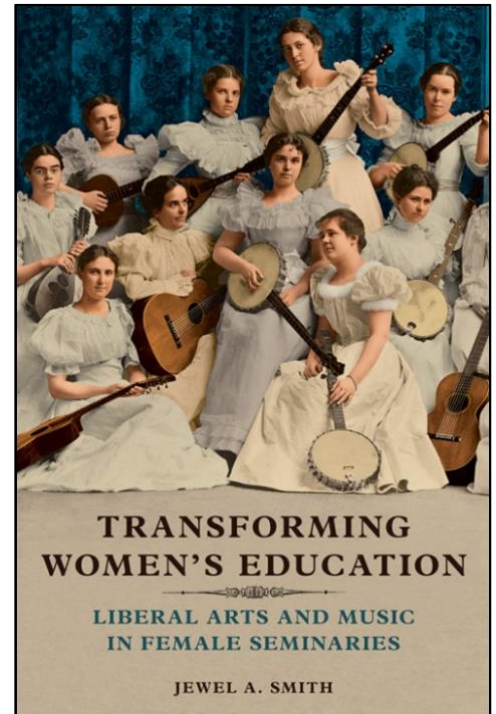
Natalia Alexis Perez, University of Virginia

Jewel A. Smith's *Transforming Women's Education* tells the story of women's educational institutions in the mid to late nineteenth century. The book presents the role of music and other liberal arts in the creation of a new kind of Republican woman, one who needed a proper education to serve her family and home and one that could, if need be, stand on her own financially. As the twenty-first century witnesses a revival of single-sex education, the book seems long overdue. As Smith points out, histories of American education tend to focus on male academic institutions.

Smith grounds her book in the histories of four institutions: the Litchfield Female Academy, Troy Female Seminary, Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, and the Music Vale. Smith investigates the importance of education for women as a gateway to romantic, intellectual, financial, and social success; she chronicles the trailblazing accomplishments of the individuals at the forefront of these institutions and describes the challenges they faced to legitimize women's education at the time. Smith's narrative ultimately stresses the charged nature of women's place within and beyond the domestic sphere.

Smith describes *Transforming Women's Education* as the sequel to her first book, *Music, Women, and Pianos in Antebellum Bethlehem Pennsylvania: The Moravian Young Ladies' Seminary* (2008). *Transforming Women's Education* reaches beyond the Moravian community toward the larger female seminary movement, positioning the female seminary as a vital steppingstone in the development of women's higher education in nineteenth-century America. The book argues that studying music specifically in these institutions was considered not only a fashionable hobby, but also a means of edification and social uplift. Her book contributes to a growing body of scholarship on women's music-making and academic training in early America and the implications of this training for a woman's social and domestic roles. Smith's work fits in with recent musicological literature like Marian Wilson Kimber's *The Elocutionists: Women, Music, and the Spoken Word* (2017), Glenda Goodman's *Cultivated by Hand: Amateur Musicians in the Early American Republic* (2020), and Sarah Eyerly's *Moravian Soundscapes: A Sonic History of the Moravian Missions in Early Pennsylvania* (2020).

Transforming Women's Education unfolds over eight short chapters, an introduction, and an afterword. Chapter 1 contextualizes the rise of the female seminary movement and the shifting perception of women's education in the years both leading up to and immediately following the formation of the earliest women's educational institutions, like the Ursine Convent for women in New Orleans (1727) and the Moravian Young Ladies' Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (1742). Rooting colonial America's educational philosophies in European Enlightenment thinking, she outlines competing perspectives for women's education: those who believed men and women had similar mental and intellectual capacity, like John Locke and René Descartes, and those who argued for women's mental inferiority, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau. While some thinkers still endorsed excluding women, by the post-Revolutionary period, changing cultural conditions and understandings of religion, motherhood, and womanhood made women's education key to cultural progress. Women had to at least be literate enough to read the Bible and to be suitable mothers and wives. Chapter 2 describes the integral role music played in women's seminaries, understood to be a vehicle for physical health, emotional wellbeing, intellectual betterment, taste-making, and if necessary, financial independence. In these institutions, music was treated as seriously as any other academic subject. Chapter 3 introduces the reader to the three significant women of Smith's study and their efforts to establish their own educational facilities: Sarah Pierce's Litchfield Female Academy, Emma Willard's Troy Female Seminary, and Mary Lyon's Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. Though it was not established by a woman, Smith includes Orramel Whittlesey's Music Vale Seminary in Salem, Connecticut as a fourth case study because of its significant role as the first music conservatory in the United States established exclusively for women, offering an invaluable academic and cultural



standard for the burgeoning sphere of women's music education. This chapter acts as a turning point in the progression of the book, taking the reader from the more contextual aspects of women's education at the time to the particularities of each institution and the aims and priorities of each founder and school. Chapters 4 and 5 compares each seminary's structure and curricula, respectively. The former outlines the staff members, students admitted, and their demographics; the latter explains the academic subjects each institution offered and what was considered "ornamental curricula," like drawing, painting, dance, and calisthenics. The last three chapters focus on the structure of the musical education at these seminaries. Whereas Chapter 2 rationalized the inclusion of music instruction at these schools, Chapter 6 delves into the curriculum and daily schedule of each school, describing the fees associated with private lessons, the availability of musical ensembles (if any), the introduction of guest performers, and the concert programs offered. Chapters 7 and 8 respectively offer brief descriptions of the instrumental and vocal music genres performed at the seminaries.

Transforming Women's Education is a refreshing read. Each chapter is made up of several clearly labeled subsections, which accommodates the readers who are using the text for quick reference. For those reading cover to cover, the book's organized and delineated structure maintains the reader's attention, evinces clarity, and makes for a quick, palatable, and pleasurable read. Among the strengths of Smith's book is her ability to encapsulate the complex and changing role of women's education in the turn-of-the-century moment in such a concise and streamlined manner. By drawing scholarly attention to the female seminary movement in the nineteenth century, Smith opens up vital questions about the gendered dynamics of music-making in early America and the significant role music played as an arbiter of moral goodness, intellect, and refined taste in a woman's social upbringing. She offers an important snapshot of a transformative moment in women's social roles, documenting early precursors to what was shaping up to be first-wave feminism.

While convenient for some readers, the book's hyper-organization is perhaps less appealing for others looking for a more layered historical account. Smith's ample use of subsections reduces a complex cultural history into neat and tidy categories, which belies the interconnectedness of each unit. Beyond the brevity of each section leaving the reader wanting more detail, this approach leaves the reader to make these connections independently. Similarly, the structure of Smith's book places artificial boundaries around concepts that are deeply intersectional, which cause her to leave a few significant and relevant avenues of thought unexplored. Early in the introduction of her book, Smith explains that the women (and few men) admitted to these seminaries would have been from the upper and middle echelons of society but does not consider the implications of such a demographic beyond that, disregarding the conspicuous fact that most of the women admitted to such financially-exclusive institutions would have been white and that the new womanhood her book describes would have been limited to white women.

The intersectional nature of gender, class, and race makes it difficult to write a book about class and gender without addressing race. Smith devotes a single sentence to indicate the absence of "issues of slavery or of African American students," but the racial implications of the female seminary movement—the repertoires performed and subjects studied—and the shifting role of women's education resonate so strongly through the book's subtext that a reader may wonder why she shied away from even a brief analysis of race, especially at a time of such fraught racial tension. Given the recent emergence of musicological studies linking whiteness to the Western classical tradition, an explanation of how the repertoires prioritized at these seminaries potentially reinforced the structures of race, class, and gender that maintain and bolster white supremacy would have been powerful addition to this literature, revealing how the seminary movement—along with overall approaches to education at the time—would have been deeply implicated in constructions of whiteness. Even with Smith's mention of class and gender, there is an interconnected story of white womanhood and racism that remains tacit.

Transforming Women's Education is an exceptionally well-researched and welcome addition to the literature surrounding women, music-making, and education in the nineteenth century. Answering important questions about women's education at a time when women's rights were in flux and defending music's social import within these structures, Smith carves out a place for future studies about the role of music in the development of K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and conservatories. Her book serves as a rationale not only for music's inclusion in the greater scholarly literature surrounding education, but also the need for further inspection of the role it plays in the intellectual and social upbringing of young Americans. With *Transforming Music Education*, Smith has provided a clear, concise, and necessary history of the education of white women and has created opportunities for others to expand on her work into the broader role of sound in public education, but the relationship between white womanhood, slavery, and their internal structures of white supremacy demands more scrutiny.

[*The Letters of Cole Porter*](#). Cliff Eisen and Dominic McHugh, eds. Yale University Press, 2019. 672 pp. ISBN: 9780300219272. Hardcover.

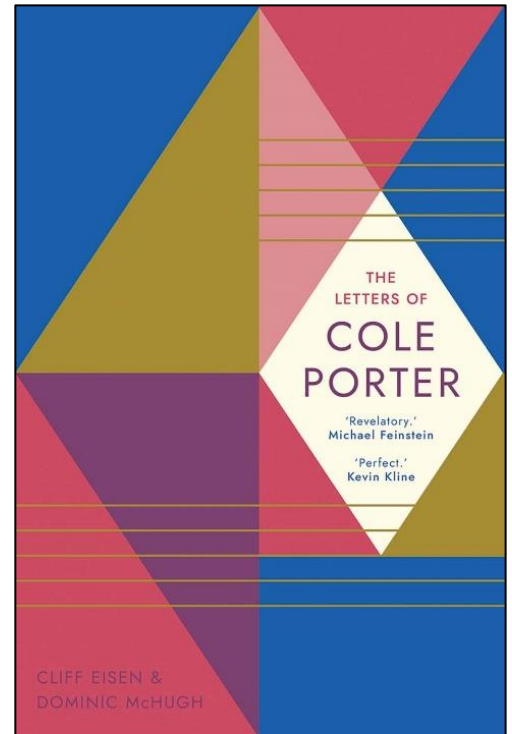
Hannah Neuhauser, California State University, Long Beach

Broadway aficionados may quite mistakeably regard Cole Porter (1891–1964) as a distant, private, and often unsuccessful Broadway composer outside of *Anything Goes* (1934) and *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948). I myself was one of them until recently. Cliff Eisen and Dominic McHugh's *The Letters of Cole Porter* delightfully proved me wrong by offering the first comprehensive collection of letters written by one of the most iconic American songwriters of the twentieth century. In addition to the composer's letters and diary entries written during productions of his musicals, Eisen and McHugh include newspaper articles, reception reviews, interviews, photographs, advertisements, telegrams, and letters dictated by family and friends to create a chronological, holistic portrait of the composer. Through these correspondences, Porter is revealed to be a constant money worrier, a social butterfly venturing on multiple international excursions, an affectionate lover, a dedicated husband, an endearing friend with a habit of elaborate gift giving, and a prolific songwriter with a hit song in each decade of his life.

The first chapter, "From Peru, Indiana to Broadway, 1891–1919," contains a few letters dictated by a young Cole Porter and largely functions as a biographical introduction. Eisen and McHugh's detailed annotations enrich not only the reader's brewing personal connection to the subject, but also enhances their knowledge of Porter's early life. Much of the chapter is dedicated to the letters of his mother, Kate Porter, and his schoolmaster, Daniel Webster Abercrombie, from Worchester Academy. Both expressed that from an early age, Porter was incredibly social, stretching himself across various interests, but remained partial to music more so than his academic studies. At Yale, Porter's eagerness for composition exploded with "Bulldog! Bulldog!" which became the Yale Fight Song in 1913, and his musical, *The Pot of Gold*, with story by Alment Jenks. Although superior and more memorable works were bound to follow, Porter's strengths and weaknesses as a composer can be gathered from this early production.

One of Porter's greatest strengths stemmed from his healthy appetite for collaboration and social interactions. Despite Porter's occasional gripes with producers, such as Jack Warner of Warner Brother's studios, Porter always demonstrated supportive encouragement and a professionalism that resulted in several longstanding relationships between fellow composers and artists. His congratulatory remarks to Irving Berlin, Frank Loesser, Richard Rodgers, and Alan Jay Lerner on their successful Broadway shows, as well as well wishes to actresses Ethel Merman and Jean Howard, are heartwarming. (If Porter lived in our modern era, he would have received a tremendously expensive phone bill for texting too much and often replying from international locations, such as his home in Paris.) In Chapter 2, "Cole Porter in Europe, 1918–1928," Eisen and McHugh's footnotes aid the reader immensely in keeping up with Porter's social life, including clarifications as to whom Porter referred to with nicknames like "Beardy" for his friend from Yale, Monty Woolley, and small biographies on the briefly dropped names of Porter's numerous acquaintances, lovers, stars and directors, as well as elongated anecdotes about Porter's relationships. While Eisen and McHugh provide context to Porter's homosexuality, most notably in this chapter through the correspondence between Porter and former lover, Russian librettist Boris Kochno (54–71), it is his deep friendship with his wife, Linda Thomas, that is the primary relationship explored throughout the remaining collection.

Linda's influence on Porter's life is prevalent in the majority of his letters, which help to detail the affectionate nature between them. They were perfectly at ease with each other, hosting elaborate parties in their New York apartment and spending extended lengths of time apart while they worked on their respective projects. In sickness and health, they were at each other's side. After Porter's riding accident in 1937, which is detailed in Chapter 4, "Settled—And Injured—In New York, 1937–1944," Linda, Porter's treatment, and his new musical *You Never Know* were seen as saving graces. In Chapter 7, "From *Kiss Me, Kate* to *Out of this World*, 1949–1950," Linda's own declining health appeared as a constant worry and the topic overrides comments on his work. He kept days open in his schedule in case he had to fly over from Los Angeles at



a moment's notice to offer his companionship, and he reached out to friends, including Ethel Merman, who serenaded Linda with "You're the Top" on her radio show. Another notable anecdote of their relationship recounts Linda gifting her husband a gold cigarette case on the opening night for each of his shows (321). This collection culminated in twenty-one cases before her death on May 20, 1954. Had Linda lived up until Cole Porter's death in October of 1964, there would have been nearly thirty.

In a featured interview with *The New York Times* in 1955, Porter openly discussed his working methods, inspirations, and limits as a composer. Porter was a genius wordsmith—his satirical lyrics were, by his own admission to the press, undoubtedly influenced by Gilbert and Sullivan—but he was not a natural storyteller. He confessed that Rodgers and Hammerstein had "made it harder for everyone else" because their scores were tightly woven to the libretto, whereas he had to be a book hunter. In the same article, he revealed that his "sole inspiration is a telephone call from a producer" (499). Once asked to write a new song, Porter would spring into action. He would first think of an idea, fit it to a title, find a melody to highlight the title, and from there write the lyrics. This process never included the piano, but Porter meticulously considered each aspect of a production, particularly the cast and book. From his letters and production diaries, Porter's diligence often crossed the border between overexcitement and controlling. He frequently jumped the gun, editing his work before other parties could address initial comments. Evidence of this behavior is heavily documented within the remaining chapters: his production diary for MGM's *Born to Dance* (1936) in Chapter 3, "Porter's Return to the United States, 1928–1937," the entirety of Chapter Six, "*Kiss Me, Kate* 1948," and his letters to Abe Burrows when working on their stage musical *Can-Can* (1953), which is highlighted in Chapter 8, "From Limbo to the Writing of *Can-Can*, 1951–1952."

Many of Porter's shows are not remembered today due to lukewarm receptions at their premieres and a lack of revivals, likely because the music and/or books may appear outdated in comparison with the contemporary caliber of Broadway musicals. Eisen and McHugh provide well-balanced commentary on Porter's musicals by including a multitude of sources that express mixed reception as well as occasionally outright negative criticism that Porter's music was cliché or old hat. More than once, critics wondered if Cole Porter was washed up as a composer. That is not to say that Porter has not been successful. Porter's shows may have fallen out of favor with the public, but his songs possess a timeless quality and continue to be performed today. According to Porter, it could take two to three months to see if a song would be successful on its own. He never knew if he was writing a hit, merely that he was writing a song to enhance the beauty of a set or to pad time for costume changes. Nevertheless, hits from Porter's past musicals, such as "Let's Do It, Let's Fall in Love" from *Paris* (1928), "Night and Day" from *Gay Divorce* (1932), and "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" from *Leave it to Me!* (1938) remain known as classic American tunes. Other single hits were included in later versions of his successful shows. "From this Moment On" from Orson Welles's *Out of this World* (1950) was added to the 1953 film version of *Kiss Me, Kate* due to its popularity, and it has continued to be sung in recent revivals.

For readers who may have overlooked Porter's music, this book sheds new light on the success and impact of his work. Eisen and McHugh's *The Letters of Cole Porter* brilliantly captures the essence of the American composer and his profound influence on Broadway. Their careful framing of his letters and additional remarks provide crucial detail to fill in the blanks of Porter's life while allowing the reader to form their own opinion of the composer. Furthermore, their clearly outlined structure and inclusion of years in chapter titles marks this collection as accessible and easily digestible to any researcher pursuing this book for specific works. Porter's letters run rampant with lyrical content, but with one photographic exception, this collection does not contain autograph scores, manuscripts, or transcriptions of songs. Additionally, chapters lack in-depth synopses of his musicals, which may cause some confusion for readers as they devour behind-the-scenes knowledge of a musical they have never seen or heard of prior to reading this book. For readers unfamiliar with Porter's work, I recommend listening to [the Cole Porter Anthology presented by Wilfried Van den Brande on YouTube](#). (Better yet, support community theaters the next time they put on a Porter production.) Van den Brande's collection coincides perfectly with the chronological appearances of Porter's music in this book and, I hope, may "Begin the Beguine" once more for avid Porter fans.

[*American Music Documentary: Five Case Studies of Ciné-Ethnomusicology*](#). Benjamin Harbert. Wesleyan University Press, 2018. xiv + 300 pp. ISBN: 978081957. Paperback.

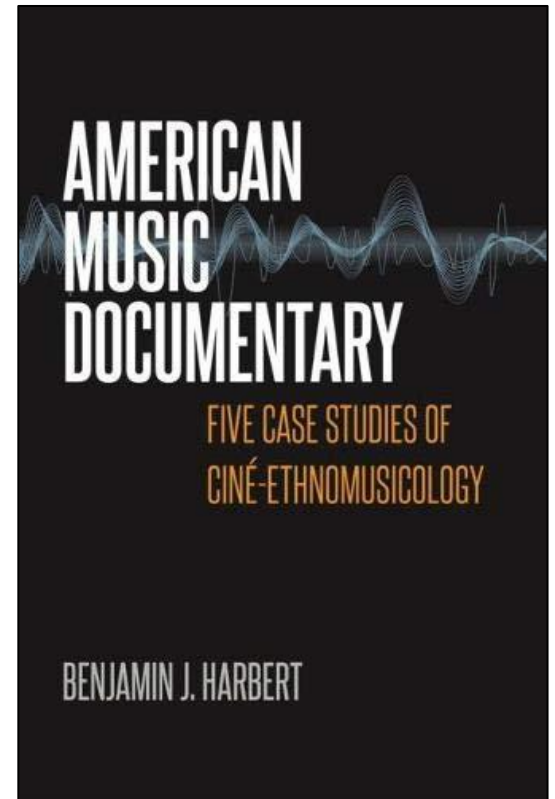
Basile Koechlin, University of Virginia

Discussing the relations between music and film is not new among music scholarship, and studies paying close attention to these articulations have been published for more than half of a century. However, this field of research has occupied a marginal position in academic discussions thus far, and study groups dedicated to it are relatively new, emerging within the last decade.¹ *American Music Documentary: Five Case Studies of Ciné-Ethnomusicology* (2018) thus represents a welcome book-length contribution to this growing field, in which Benjamin Harbert explores the potential of documentary filmmaking for conveying academic arguments on musical phenomena. Being both a music scholar and a filmmaker,² Harbert draws on this double sensibility to further advocate for the academic recognition of filmmaking as a sound form of scholarship, a mode he terms “Ciné-Ethnomusicology.”

In the introduction, Harbert clearly chooses to favor a handful of music documentaries rather than a historical survey of the genre in order to encourage a sustained discussion of individual films, each of which is the subject of a chapter. The book unfolds, however, along the chronological order of their respective releases, which allows the author to convey a sense of history and outline trends that shaped American documentary filmmaking. To build his argument, Harbert essentially draws on three kind of materials: interviews with the filmmakers (most of them conducted by the author), detailed descriptions of specific sequences, and theoretical frameworks that cross disciplinary boundaries. Among these, the author does a good job excavating vivid anecdotes from the interviews to expose the particular ways each filmmaker gradually builds an understanding of their musical subject through preparing, shooting, editing, and distributing a film.

The book opens with a discussion of *Gimme Shelter* (1970), directed by Albert and David Maysles, which gives an account of the Rolling Stones’ 1969 tour of the USA, culminating with the tragic outcomes of the Altamont Free Concert. Harbert aptly correlates the film’s portrayal of the music with the filmmakers’ embrace of “direct cinema,” a cinematographic approach that emphasizes the notion of verisimilitude and essentially casts the filmmaker in an observational role. He discusses, for instance, their particular attention to diegetic sound and their strategy to equate musical events with body gestures, including close shots of musicians listening back to their songs in a recording studio or facial expressions of audience members conveying the contradicting feelings emerging from Altamont’s tumult. This first chapter also introduces the collaborative nature of filmmaking to a readership unfamiliar with this medium, notably by foregrounding the crucial contributions of the editor Charlotte Zwerin in arranging the sound and images recorded by the Maysles brothers.

Chapter 2 discusses Jill Godmillow’s *Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman* (1974), which addresses the life of Antonia Brico, who in 1938 became the first woman to conduct the New York Philharmonic. Offering a counterpoint to the “direct cinema” of the Maysles brothers, Harbert demonstrates the presence in *Antonia* of early elements of Godmillow’s “post-realism,” which positions both the filmmaker and the audience as active participants in the meanings emerging from the film. Building on his interview with the filmmaker to bring her authorship to the fore, he discusses her techniques to provoke specific responses from Brico during the shooting, notably the anger and frustration stemming from the conductor’s career-long struggles with patriarchy. Harbert also encourages Godmillow to imagine the changes she would make in retrospect to her film, which triggers valuable insight into her creative process.



¹ See, for instance, the American Musicological Society (AMS) Music and Media Study Group, the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) study group on Audiovisual Ethnomusicology, and the Society for American Music’s Music, Sound, and Media interest group.

² See, for instance, his feature-length documentary *Follow Me Down: Portraits of Louisiana Prison* (2012).

Chapter 3 presents Shirley Clarke's experimental portrait *Ornette: Made in America* (1985), which weaves together the organization and performance of Ornette Coleman's piece *Skies of America* with his band Prime Time and the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, amateur reenactments of some of his childhood memories, interviews with people who inspired him such as William S. Burroughs or Buckminster Fuller, and sequences of video art. Discussing Clarke's editing processes, Harbert neatly demonstrates her denial of tidy narrative to portray Coleman's career in favor of "biographical shards" left for the audience to piece together. Using editing as a critical commentary on Coleman's life, she juxtaposes shots of the concert hall with scripted scenes in the black neighborhood of his youth to evoke the simultaneity of different times and spaces of the musician's identity. Linking Clarke's aesthetics to Coleman's core notion of "harmolodics," which suggests the simultaneous sounding of disparate elements, Harbert presents an evocative example of the agency of filmmaking to embody musical ideas.

Chapter 4 analyzes D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus's *Depeche Mode 101* (1989), a filmic road trip that follows the band's 1988 tour across the USA and a group of young fans who accompanied the journey by winning a contest. Harbert shows the strategies employed by Pennebaker and Hegedus to convey processes of alienation and estrangement linked to the 1980s rise of consumerism in the music industry. In this regard, the parallel editing of shots featuring either the band or the fans create sequences presenting them as two connected yet separated stories. Harbert also usefully relates the filmmakers' cinematographic practices with other audiovisual representations of music of the time, discussing Hegedus's choice to favor long shots as a deliberate critique against the rising influence of MTV and its particular aesthetics of fast cuts and rapid rotation of images to keep the audience's attention.

The last chapter explores Jem Cohen's *Instrument* (1999), which portrays the seminal post-hardcore band Fugazi and, by moving away from a narrative structure presenting great music performed by charismatic musicians, attempts to subvert the promotional politics of "rockumentaries." Analyzing the film as both a continuation of the 1980s' second wave of punk and a reaction to its mediatization in the 1990s, Harbert nicely ties these extra-musical processes to cinematographic elements of *Instrument*, demonstrating how both the punk DIY ethos and a critique towards the industry standards of image quality can be reflected in the integration of concert footage made by audience members. The author also punctuates the chapter with evocative anecdotes about the collaboration between Cohen and Fugazi, giving a sense of both the fluidity and the creative tensions that can emerge from such approach.

Overall, this book provides a detailed yet accessible reflection on the value of filmmaking to demonstrate not only the sound components of a musical phenomenon, but also its connections to broader contexts. In addition to its theoretical and contextual analysis, the book's major contribution lies in its discussion of a diverse array of processes and techniques involved in filmmaking without getting lost in technical terms. By breaking down specific sequences into their constitutive parts, Harbert efficiently shows how sounds and images can be assembled in a film to convey specific arguments about music, an aspect further illustrated by the short glossary of technical terms provided in the appendices covering central camera, sound, and editing techniques. While the book develops a detailed and sustained attention to cinematography, it doesn't engage sound production with the same depth and could have further foregrounded the contributions of sound recordists and editors.

Addressing his final thoughts to the academic realm in the epilogue, Harbert reflects on the causes of the minor position of filmmaking in music scholarship, stressing the negligible and marginal presence of screenings in academic conferences as well as the general lack of film literacy among music scholars. In this regard, the five case studies addressed in this book provide both theoretical and practical tools to understand how cinematic arguments can be made about music. Along with recent and up-coming works, such as Leonardo D'Amico's historical overview of audiovisual ethnomusicology or Norton Barley's critical suggestions for future academic engagements with filmmaking,³ this book provides fertile ground for music scholars who not only wish to sharpen their analytical skills to engage the articulation of sound and image, but might also consider using filmmaking as a critical tool to formulate their arguments and share them with academic and broader audiences.

³ Leonardo D'Amico, *Audiovisual Ethnomusicology: Filming Musical Cultures* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2020); Norton Barley, "Ethnomusicology and Filmmaking," in *Music, Dance and Anthropology*, ed. Stephen Cottrell (Hertfordshire: Sean Kingston Publishing, [Forthcoming]).

Call for 2020-2021 Dissertation Abstracts

The *Bulletin* will be introducing a new segment in the Fall 2021 issue: the Dissertation Roundup. If you are a SAM member and you completed and defended your dissertation during the 2020–2021 academic year, the society would like to know about it! Please submit an abstract of no more than 80 words [to the General Editor](#) by no later than 15 August. Please ensure that your abstract includes your name and the title of your dissertation. If desired, you may incorporate a hyperlink to a full abstract.

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