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Joshua Duchan



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Contents

[Detroit 2024: From the
Program Committee](#)

[From the President](#)

[“Sound Pedagogy in Music
History: Interview with
Colleen Renihan, John
Spilker, and Trudi Wright,
by Andrew Granade \(SAM
Pedagogy Study Group\)”](#)

[Upcoming JSAM Contents](#)

[Book Review](#)

[Bulletin Board & Member
News](#)

[Call for Bulletin
Contributions](#)

[About the Bulletin](#)

The 2024 Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) is thrilled to invite you to join us in Detroit for the Society’s 50th Annual Conference! The largest city in Michigan, the “motor city” boasts over 700,000 residents, while nearly 4.3 million people call the greater metro area home. Founded in 1701 as a New France fur-trading post on land belonging to the Huron, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, the city’s growth quickened with U.S. settlement in the nineteenth century. By the early twentieth, it was the site of rapid innovation and expansion in the nascent automobile industry, from which the city took its well-known moniker.

Music has long played an important role in Detroit’s cultural life, often tied to its racially and ethnically diverse population. Significant numbers of Eastern European, African American, and Arab peoples have provided a musical legacy that, while sometimes overshadowed by the city’s renowned popular music industry, nonetheless endures. The LAC has arranged excursions to a variety of Detroit’s cultural institutions, including the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Arab American National Museum, the Henry Ford Museum, and the Motown Museum. Additional points of interest are not far from the conference hotel, including musical institutions (the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Opera House, the Fox Theatre, the Fischer Theatre, and Jazz clubs Cliff Bell’s and Baker’s Keyboard Lounge), museums (the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the Detroit Historical Museum), and civic landmarks (such as the Renaissance Center and Riverwalk,

Campus Martius, and Eastern Market). Hart Plaza, the main venue for the annual Detroit Jazz Festival and the Movement Music Festival, is just around the corner.

While known for its automobiles, there are many ways to enjoy exploring Detroit. If you're keen for a stroll, head up Woodward Avenue to find a wide range of restaurants, shops, and sightseeing. Or amble along the newly redeveloped Detroit riverfront from Hart Plaza to the Aretha Franklin Amphitheatre. Use the downtown monorail, the Detroit People Mover, to get around. Or hop on the city's new streetcar service, the Q-Line, which will take you from the Congress Street station (at Woodward and Larned, about two blocks from the conference hotel) all the way up Woodward to the Midtown neighborhood—home of Wayne State University, Michigan's only urban research university—and the New Center area.

The 2024 Vivian Perlis concert will feature musical selections in honor of George Shirley, trailblazing African American singer, Joseph Edgar Maddy Distinguished University Emeritus Professor of Voice at the University of Michigan, and this year's honorary member of the Society. The first Black tenor to perform a leading role with the Metropolitan Opera, Shirley has played more than eighty roles and sung on stages across the United States and around the world. The performance will be held in the Schaver Music Recital Hall, in the Wayne State University Department of Music and just across the street from the Hilberry Gateway, the university's brand-new, state-of-the-art performance complex that houses the Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center. It promises to be an exciting event—you won't want to miss it!

The LAC is excited to welcome you to Detroit. This year's committee includes Sally Bick (University of Windsor), Mark Clague (University of Michigan), Kimberly Mack (University of Illinois, formerly University of Toledo), Katherine Meizel (Bowling Green State University), Serena Vaquilar (Wayne State University), and Joshua S. Duchan (chair, Wayne State University). Special thanks to the Wayne State University Department of Music and College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts for their support, as well as the University of Michigan School of Music, Theater & Dance for contributions to the Perlis Concert.

See you in March "in the D"!

From the President

Douglas Bomberger, Elizabethtown College



What does Detroit mean to you? When I was in high school, it meant only one thing—the Motown Sound, which was the inspiration and consolation of my adolescent years. Since then, my knowledge of musical Detroit has broadened to include Detroit techno, Midwest hardcore, and Detroit hip hop, along with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's iconic recordings of American orchestral works and the musical philanthropy of the Ford Foundation. Did you know that the culmination of the American Composers' Concert movement of the 1880s occurred at the 1890 MTNA convention in Detroit, when the organization hired the Theodore Thomas Orchestra to present three mammoth concerts of American orchestral and choral music? In their enthusiasm for this cause, the membership voted at the Detroit business meeting to rename their organization "The American Society for the Promotion of Musical Art." These bold moves nearly bankrupted the MTNA, which quietly reverted to its original name a year later but spent years recovering financially from the gala concerts they had heard in Detroit.

From its founding a half century ago, the Society for American Music has made a practice of holding annual conferences in a diverse range of American cities, each with its own personality and culture. Among the first fifty conferences, only four have been repeat visits (Pittsburgh in 1987 and 2007; Boston in 1984 and 2016; Kansas City in 1998 and 2018; New Orleans in 1979 and 2019). This year's program contains numerous papers on the music of our host city, and the Local Arrangements Committee has planned appealing excursion opportunities for Friday afternoon. If our past history is a guide, it will be a long time before we convene in Detroit again. Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate the many musical contributions of Detroit at the fiftieth annual conference of the Society for American Music!

Spotlight on Pedagogy: “Sound Pedagogy in Music History” – Interview with Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright

Andrew Granade, SAM Pedagogy Study Group

At the Society for American Music’s 50th Annual Conference in Detroit, Michigan, the Pedagogy Study Group will host the authors of this article in a roundtable discussion of how the pedagogy of care applies to faculty life and commitments. Please join us Thursday, March 21st, at 7:30pm and bring your own best practices to share as we generate a collection of resources to help us become resilient and resourceful pedagogues in higher education.

Over the past decade, the literature around music history pedagogy has slowly shifted away from providing case studies and examples of new approaches in favor of questioning the foundations of how and why we teach and offering alternatives to classroom dynamics and content. [*Sound Pedagogy: Radical Care in Music*](#) (a new edited collection published by the University of Illinois Press and edited by Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright) furthers this conversation by asking its readers to consider alternative ways to build community in their classrooms and dismantle the oppressive systems baked into conservatory-model music training. Building off recent calls across academic disciplines for systemic change to address issues of social justice in our pedagogical training in higher education, the collection argues for a “humane pedagogy along with administrative policies and practices that value care at their core, or root.” (p. 2)

Note: the following conversation has been edited for space and clarity.

Andrew: Colleen, John, and Trudi, thank you for not just taking the time to participate in this conversation, but also for the years you have spent bringing your ideas for radical care into our academic community. Because you eloquently argue that “care pedagogy for us is teaching that prioritizes the *individuals* we are teaching—whole, complicated people with specific life stories and divergent definitions of and connections with music—above the traditions, history, and priorities of the *discipline(s)* in which we work,” I want to begin by asking about your stories and what led you to embody a pedagogy of care in your practice.

Colleen: It’s certainly interesting to think about how who we are as people affects the decisions we make in our classrooms. I am incredibly critical, from my own lived experience, of the ways young musicians are asked to put ART and MUSIC above their own selves, histories, and wellbeing. But what brought me to the issue of care in my teaching came not entirely from the problematic experiences we describe in the book as having been deemed fundamental to conservatory-model music training, but rather from several truly *wonderful* experiences in the music classroom, and in my long-held interest in trying to unpack what is needed to cause that “magic” or “wonder” in a class. I used to think about these aspects of a classroom as sort of indescribable, almost impossible to recreate elements. But after careful thought, research, and experimentation, I realized that there are fundamental elements of one’s teaching practice that, once in place, affect *everything* else in the class. In my experience, if my students and I feel collectively bound, empowered, and valued, and if we build mutual trust among us in a classroom, the best learning experiences happen. And I think it all comes down to care.

Trudi: I love this question and find that even the asking of it is a form of care. When I entered the profession of musicology twenty-five years ago, I was taught to stay strictly professional and NOT to talk about my identities: as a woman (even though that part of my identity is traditionally expressed in the way I chose to dress), not to bring up that I am a mother (this was considered a weakness on the job market—what if you couldn’t work because you were pregnant?), and certainly not the fact that I come from a religious background. I think my family’s care for one another, their deep faith (I come from a Christian family), and their strong sense of civic duty is what brought me to this work. It is a project that has allowed me to express my values and also deepen them by staying curious and open to all the ways our authors interpret care pedagogy. We compare the definition of care pedagogy to a web. There are many, important, strong strands that help support the students within our learning communities.

John: It has taken me forty-six years to unapologetically name and continue the lifelong process of exploring: I am a white, gay, fat, gender non-conforming male. I am post-Catholic, post-Mormon, and pro-liberation theology. In some systems, my mental health diagnosis is classified as a disability; I will always have to take medication and practice with a therapist to manage my diagnosis. After a sixteen-year marriage to a woman, I have been divorced for six years. I am engaged to a man, and I’m Zaddy to a really awesome high-schooler.

When I reviewed William Cheng's *Just Vibrations* in 2017, he gave voice to the lack of care I had consistently experienced. Aesthetic autonomy keeps us focused solely on the art, at the expense of our humanity. It blinds us from seeing and embracing the minoritized people who have always been foundational to music, yet we hide their rich stories, perspectives, approaches, and ways of knowing. Many who would engage with music in 2023 are forced to just go away because our halls are haunted by the specters of whiteness, patriarchy, heterosexism, and ableism.

I practice care pedagogy in search of Sondheim's and Bernstein's vision, that "There's a Place for Us." However, people with position and power will need to share their access and resources equitably with minoritized people, so that together we can mutually reshape our music work for everyone to thrive. I practice care pedagogy empowered by my dissertation advisor, Denise Von Glahn. She saw me and made space for me and waited for me to see and make space for myself. I knew I was gay in fourth grade, but there were no support systems to be gay; in fact, quite the contrary. I was taught to fear, loathe, and change the parts of me that make other people feel uncomfortable. Therefore, I have always been afraid of my gender, my emotions, my mental health, my thoughts, my queerness, my fatness, my sexual orientation.

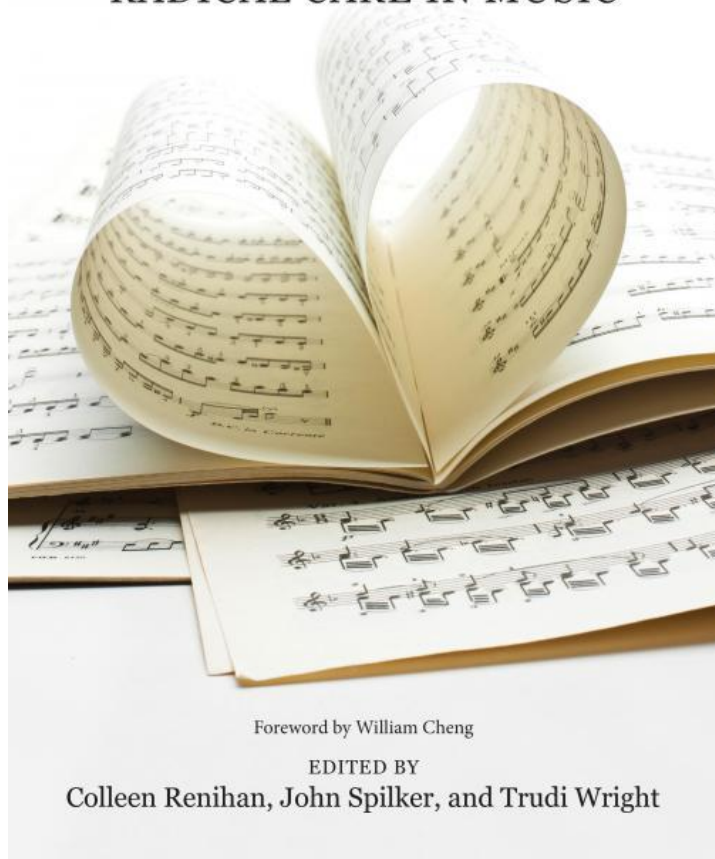
Andrew: Thank you all for sharing your stories and yourselves with us. I'm reminded of an exercise I do in my classroom where I ask students to share the musical traditions they grew up in that they believed they had to put aside when they began collegiate music study. I start by naming the 1960s folk music my parents played for me as a young child, how I sang along to an 8-track of the Carpenters, the Southern Baptist hymns that still ring in my mind, and the marching band arrangements I blatted on my trombone. The richness of their musical worlds pours forth once I give permission for them to, and they elevate our discussions for the entire semester. It brings to mind the point you make in the book about how the "values that we espouse and support in higher-education music call for perfectionism and a metric of workaholism." (p. 4) Part of that perfectionism, it seems to me, is how we contort our lives into the mold of the "Music Professor," an image we saw as students that we now let define what we share with our students about our own backgrounds. Our students imbibe those values and attempt to be the perfect music student until they continue the circle as teachers in their own right. How do we break the cycle of perfectionism and workaholism in our pedagogy?

Trudi: How do we break the cycle of workaholism and perfectionism? That is a really hard one. I find it a lot easier to mentor less workaholism than living it myself, but I am trying to live it, too. One of the difficulties I'm finding, are the many demands of my role as the Music Program Director. I've only held this position for 2.5 years and I am still learning how to do it well. What I would tell my past self is to allow more time for the learning curve. Growing into this new position reminds me of all the new things my first-year students are experiencing when they come to college and serves as a reminder to make more space in my classrooms for students to "get it." We can guide the learning experience but have to give students time to take in the material/music/concept, and so on.

I do want to share an activity that has helped with the workaholism (and again, I am a work in progress!) I have a personal manifesto that allows me to create meaningful, non-arbitrary boundaries for my life. Setting boundaries is a form of self-love we can model for our students, according to philosopher and educator bell hooks. (See chapter four of her book, *All About Love: New Visions* (William Morrow and Company, 2000)).

Sound Pedagogy

RADICAL CARE IN MUSIC



Foreword by William Cheng
 EDITED BY
 Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright

Here are a few items in my personal manifesto:

- I believe that life is a marathon, not a sprint. I celebrate “slow.”
- When I commit to something, it must be an expression of my values, my gifts, myself. I live “all in.”
- I value my family above all else and consider how my choices will impact them.

I am also team teaching a course for first-year students this year with a philosopher, Becky Vartabedian. We constructed a class around our discipline’s values: paying attention and listening. We have intentionally made this a “slow” class. We use no technology in the classroom, all readings are done on paper, and we have taken the whole semester to reflect on a few, simple questions: What does it mean to pay attention? What is good music?

John: First, Andrew, I love your assignment. You invite me to think about my musical history, which I have never written down or shared with anyone. My early childhood years featured Dad’s joy singing along to “Always Something There to Remind Me” by Naked Eyes and “Here I Am Lord.” My elementary music teacher introduced Mozart’s 40th Symphony, and I made my parents take me to B Dalton’s to buy classical music cassettes, along with Michael Jackson, Madonna, the Bangles, and Tiffany. During junior high I explored Depeche Mode, R.E.M., N.W.A., Dr. Dre, Boyz II Men, ABC, Bell Biv DeVoe, and Janet Jackson. During high school, I found a home in Nirvana, Erasure, Madonna, New Order, the Cranberries, Handel’s *Messiah*, *Les Mis*, *Phantom*, and John Rutter’s *Requiem*. My favorite undergrad music courses (and music)—20th-century music history, 16th-century counterpoint, 18th-century counterpoint, and Schenkerian Analysis—paved the way for my work.

Second, Trudi, I love your idea of a personal manifesto. I consistently work toward breaking the cycle of contorting myself through workaholism and perfectionism by using medication, therapy, emotional regulation practices, yoga, swimming, and collaboration with colleagues. It’s tough work that feels good when it’s “working,” and frustrating when it’s “not working.” Given the current climate in our society and higher education, I decided this year to pull my application for full professor in order to step away from perfectionism and workaholism. Long term, the decision will be rewarding, but short term, it shakes my identity. The emotional impact has been tough, but therein lies a clue: something about our discipline’s processes and orthodoxies really hurts some people and elevates others.

I agree we are haunted by any lack of care we experienced from our professors, especially at conferences or in publications. I think we contort our lives because of the pressure of administrative repercussions to student perceptions on course evaluations; we mold ourselves to be accepted, or even liked by our students, even though these are not markers of learning or leadership. In a discipline where the magic and thrill of the public-facing performance remains the supreme act of study, our students often are not eager to interface with musicology and theory methods or faculty; few aspects of departmental culture and disciplinary structure encourages them to learn just as deeply in our courses. Music performance provides the alluring perception that we can all be Gods or heroes if we perform the perfected, transcendent art. Furthermore, our work is exacerbated by the national and local economic crisis and political climate, in which civil servants disparage education and censor history and diversity. Blame, humiliation, and dehumanization occupy center stage in our media and cultural ethos, and we must actively resist those socialized forces when we dare to be ourselves at work. Simultaneously, institutions are struggling to survive our current economic and political climate by eliminating financial resources and any perceived risk.

Colleen: I want to heartily agree with John on the problematic notion of our discipline’s ideas about music’s transcendence. One of the biggest challenges for students and faculty in music studies is the thinking that we must give our whole selves as a vocation—as a divine calling—at the expense of ourselves as humans. This kind of thinking about “Music” with a capital M originates in the nineteenth century, and I am always dismayed when I realize that post-secondary music study is still steeped in this approach. Music for music’s sake (this harkens back to William Cheng’s discussion of aesthetic autonomy in *Just Vibrations*) also makes thinking about future employment or the financial viability of a career in music a dirty or taboo topic. I’ve been really working against this in my teaching, trying to deeply re-think not only the *whats* but also the *whys* of what we teach. I also think carefully about how to respect students’ time and energies in the music classroom. In the same way I ask myself, “what warrants my precious time and energy at this time of intense pressure in higher ed?”, I prioritize authentic assessment for my students. I give them choices to foster their agency and leadership in our field. I try to equip students to make change in the world through music and connect them with experts in the community working across the

cultural domains to illuminate a variety of ways forward, and also, hopefully, different ways of understanding music's value in our world.

Andrew: This discussion has reinforced the idea that we need these conversations right now, that it is imperative we find ways to disrupt the model we're creating of, as Colleen so beautifully put it, music's transcendence. We are fortunate in our discipline to interact with most of the students in a music program. Unlike our performance colleagues, we teach students from every degree program and have a chance to shape their perception of the music field in a practical way from early in their studies. So far, we've talked a lot about how we act, how we can share our authentic selves in the classroom while not being overwhelmed by the aesthetic perfectionism our field often demands. But what of our students? I'm challenged by Colleen's clarion call for authentic assessment. As we finish our time together, what are some concrete ways you or your contributors to the book have accomplished this kind of work?

John: I think the volume and its contributors lay out many ways to help our students experience care, and learn how to care, as partitioners of music and music studies. Stephanie Jensen-Moulton discusses the urgent need for universal design as care pedagogy. Reba Wissner calls attention to the important experiences and needs of first-generation music majors. Kate Galloway asks us to consider and care for the nonhuman musical world. In these and other essays, the central point remains this: teaching ourselves and our students how to open our musical borders beyond notes on a page, skills to operate an instrument, performances on a stage or streaming service. In this way, musicology is a pedagogical act that can have a profound humanizing impact in connection with the pedagogies of other music subdisciplines. Care pedagogy should be an interdisciplinary conversation that remains inextricably linked with intersectional equity, no matter the social climate. As an example, in May 2023, Anthony McGill partnered with Bryan Stevenson, Founding Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, to host a [gathering of classical musicians](#) at the EJI's sites in Montgomery, Alabama. One of the panelists, Alysia Lee, music educator and founder and artistic director of [Sister Cities Voices](#), underscored the vital importance of interdisciplinary learning and collaboration to strengthen our musical communities. Alysia's work represents one powerful way to live the vision of radical care in music, so powerful that the Texas Choral Directors Association recently [amplified racist comments](#) about her conducting the 2024 TCDA MS/JH All-State Choir that caused damage to her person, her reputation, and her career. TCDA [did release an apology](#), but in 2023, these things should not still be occurring. As we work for radical care in music, we all must ask "what **OF** our students?," especially when racist and sexist vitriol, collusion, and cover-up still undergird our most basic of music institutions?

Trudi: I want to echo John's celebration of the ways our authors introduce ways to experience and express care in the classroom and beyond. The neat thing about the volume is that we were able to include instances of care within the college music culture that is not necessarily experienced in the classroom. Readers will find examples of this in Fred Peterbark's chapter that expresses care of our music students from the moment they are recruited into a music school until they graduate. He is writing from his experience as a recruiting and enrollment specialist. Nathan Langfitt offers perspectives of care from his work as a mental health professional employed at a major state-funded music school. These examples shed light on the amount of care needed to sustain students through these difficult programs of study. I'm not sure those outside of a life in music grasp the sheer output of energy (both physical and mental) needed to complete a music degree. These chapters, and really the whole book, get at that in some ways.

Colleen: Exactly, Trudi. If we stop to think about it, the fact that care and music often exist in tension with one another in postsecondary contexts is striking. The general public believes that what we do is healing, restorative, personalized, connected, etc. But the discipline itself—like many academic disciplines—can be an incredibly harsh place to exist—especially for non-binary folks, people of color, women, and other marginalized groups. The resistance to change in the discipline is harmful to *people*. So, in response to your crucial question, Andrew, about some concrete ways to move this work forward, I would say that, in small *and* big ways, put human needs before disciplinary priorities. Any small step towards this—whether in rethinking assessment, auditions, curricular planning, infrastructure, pedagogy, etc.—will feel significant, and its effects will ripple outwards.

Andrew: Putting the humans in our classes before the content we teach and recognizing that our pedagogy can have a profound impact on how our students understand themselves is the theme I see running through this conversation. It is a potent reminder of the solemn duty we take on every time we step into a classroom. However, we cannot neglect our own health and wellbeing in the pursuit of this kind of engaged pedagogy. Colleen, John, and Trudi, thank you for your honesty in this conversation and for bringing us *Sound Pedagogy* with concrete suggestions for how to work towards a holistic approach to our teaching, our academic service, and our lives.

Journal of the Society for American Music

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Articles

Bernice Johnson Reagon's Musical Coalition Politics,
1966–1981

Stephen Stacks

The Spiritualist Ear

Codee Spinner

Televising Talent: Musicality, Meritocracy, and the
Aesthetics of Exclusion

Lindsay Wright

"I Just Told Them Like It Was": Performance and
History at Colonial Williamsburg

Philip Gentry

Reviews

Books

Heather MacLachlan, *Singing Out: GALA Choruses and
Social Change*

Allison McCracken

Andrew Mall, *God Rock, Inc.: The Business of Niche
Music*

Adam A. Perez

Dottie Dodgion and Wayne Enstice, *The Lady Swings:
Memoirs of a Jazz Drummer*

Mandy Smith

Amy C. Beal, *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of
Lucia Dlugoszewski*

Denise Von Glahn

Media

*The Berkeley Folk Music Festival & the Folk Revival on
the US West Coast—An Introduction,*
<https://sites.northwestern.edu/bfmf/>

Nicholas Booker

Stephanie Economou, *Assassin's Creed Valhalla:
Dawn of Ragnarok*

Karen M. Cook

Book Review

[*Improvising the Score: Rethinking Modern Film Music Through Jazz*](#). By Gretchen L. Carlson.
Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2022. 224 pp. ISBN: 9781496840721. Hardcover.

Abby Rehard, Florida State University

In *Improvising the Score: Rethinking Modern Film Music Through Jazz*, musicologist Gretchen Carlson reveals how contemporary independent films model ways that jazz can effectively integrate with and transform film and media. Her four engaging case studies investigate the relationships between film directors like Alejandro González Iñárritu, Alan Rudolph, Spike Lee, and Woody Allen and professional jazz musicians who also work as film composers like Antonio Sánchez, Mark Isham, Terence Blanchard, and Dick Hyman. She highlights how these projects function as dynamic sites of creative experimentation that illustrate the possibilities of direct collaboration between filmmakers and jazz composers.

The book contains four chapters and a conclusion. Following her introductory chapter, Carlson explores the collaborations between film directors Alejandro González Iñárritu and Alan Rudolph and jazz musicians Antonio Sánchez and Mark Isham in chapter two, Spike Lee and Terence Blanchard in chapter three, and Woody Allen and Dick Hyman in chapter four. Carlson identifies these film directors as independent auteurs who have taken unconventional, "riskier" approaches, arguing that their success in the box office allows them largely uninhibited creative control. It is predominantly these types of directors who have hired jazz musicians to score their films. The reason for this, Carlson argues, is the directors' perceptions of jazz as a sonic indicator of "authenticity" (16). Through ethnographic interviews with composers and film production personnel,



film and score analyses, and archival work, Carlson underscores how certain filmmakers' perceptions of the relationship between authenticity and jazz shape their film's production, and she ultimately asks readers to rethink the roles and influence of film music and its composers.

Authenticity and creative agency are major themes woven throughout the book. Films are manufactured representations of reality, so filmmakers attempt to achieve perceived authenticity by using historically, situationally appropriate settings, props, and music as well as projecting realistic emotional scenes. In the world of jazz, authenticity is "evidenced through jazz culture's identification around the art of improvisation," (17) and it is also linked to the topic of race and Black American culture. Throughout the book's chapters, Carlson reveals how jazz evokes "authentic experiences" through various approaches and negotiations between directors and composers while also interrogating the problematic usage of jazz as racial signaling in film soundtracks.

Improvising the Score provides a refreshing perspective on the creation of film music and jazz soundtracks. In the film industry, music is typically subjugated to the visual narrative, and consequently most film music scholars have provided an analytic perspective that prioritizes the film over the music. Jazz historically has been used in film soundtracks to signify crime, sexuality, Blackness, or urban sophistication, and it is coded as a sonic "other," a conventional

formula to exemplify racial or ethno-stereotyping (20). The improvisational ideals of jazz might be seemingly incompatible with the highly structured, regulated expectations of the film music world. Carlson, however, follows Nicolas Pillai's work *Jazz as Visual Language: Film, Television, and the Dissonant Image* (2017), and makes the claim that jazz and visual media are mutually transformative sites of collaboration and experimentation through each of her case studies.

To set the scene of the book, Chapter 1: "When Strangers Meet" introduces the hierarchical structures and methods of film production where artistic decisions are largely in the hands of the director, the authorial editor. Carlson outlines the various roles and their responsibilities within jazz/film collaborations including director, producer, music supervisor, composer, musician(s), music engineer, music editor, and other support positions. She discusses the creative labor involved—the budgeting, networking, and negotiating—within the different stages of the filmmaking process and challenges the common assumption that the film music composer's creative agency is always subsumed by the visual narrative, therefore lowering their standards and the composer's value. "[C]ompromises that result in the process of commercial film scoring are not all relinquishments of artistic agency, but rather complex negotiations of interests and talents in service of the work" (47).

Chapter 2, "Not A Lot of People Would Go for That," considers two different approaches to improvised soundtracks through the films *Birdman* (2014) and *Afterglow* (1997). Directors Alejandro González Iñárritu and Alan Rudolph specifically chose improvising jazz drummer Antonio Sánchez and trumpeter Mark Isham to create organic soundtracks that evoke the unpredictable realities of everyday life in their films. In both of these cases, the film was developed around the music, not the other way around. Iñárritu required *Birdman*'s actors to time their movements to fit the tempo of Sanchez's recorded improvisations, and Rudolph rewrote portions of the script to accommodate Isham's compositions in *Afterglow*. Improvised scores are the biggest risk and the rarest in film scores due to the filmmaker's perceived lack of control over the score's production. Yet these successful, highly reciprocal collaborations challenge conventional film-scoring and editing practices and help create rare opportunities for film composers' creative agency that go beyond the film itself. Following *Birdman*'s release, Sánchez toured the world accompanying the film live. Each performance is unique and subtly shaped by Sánchez's interpretation, thereby showing the film is not stagnant, but a "negotiable creative site" and "organic media product" (65). Carlson's analysis of Iñárritu and Sanchez's work effectively supports her claim that jazz and film are mutually transformative sites of collaboration and experimentation.

In Chapter 3, “Honest, True Portrayals,” Carlson highlights the long-term collaboration between film director Spike Lee and jazz trumpeter Terence Blanchard, who share sociopolitical ideologies of jazz as a representation of authentic Black experience and creativity. Both Lee and Blanchard see their respective mediums as platforms for bringing awareness to racial injustice and advocating for Black creativity, social equity, and entrepreneurship. Carlson delves into these themes through the films *Mo’ Better Blues* (1990), *Malcolm X* (1992), and *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* (2006). In *Mo’ Better Blues*, Lee hired professional jazz musicians to record the music and tutor the actors in accurately emulating the performance of the recordings on film. While Blanchard has a more conventional style of film scoring (composing in post-production, using Romantic orchestral idioms that signify emotions), his use of jazz elements and techniques evoke human emotion that blend with a variety of other musical influences. Carlson argues that Blanchard “generates soundtrack models that expand the possibilities of how jazz can intersect with and influence film and its meanings” (117). She also provides a look into Blanchard’s extended creative projects based on his film scores like his *Malcolm X Jazz Suite* (1993) and extended concept album *A Tale of God’s Will: A Requiem for Katrina* (2007).

Another decades-long collaboration is explored in the following chapter. “A Film Director’s Dream,” Chapter 4, examines the compilation soundtracks of historic and recent recordings of early jazz and swing through the relationship between jazz pianist Dick Hyman and Woody Allen. Carlson details Hyman’s historically informed performance in *Zelig* (1983) and briefly mentions those in *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986), *Sweet and Lowdown* (1999), and *The Curse of the Jade Scorpion* (2001). In this chapter, she introduces the idea of dual authenticity (140–41) and argues that, for Allen, jazz is a sonic vehicle to express nostalgia, idealism, and escapism. Jazz represents authentic human experiences and emotions that transcend time, and the musical anachronisms in Allen’s films are meant to evoke authenticity, not undermine it. This argument would be more effective with the addition of more focused, in-depth scene and score analyses like there are in the other case studies discussed throughout the book. In her conclusion, Carlson looks at the recent increase in jazz-related films and puts them in dialogue with experimental film scoring. Ultimately, she demonstrates how the case studies discussed in this book offer more opportunities for jazz culture in the media-dominated, post-pandemic age.

Improvising the Score is a welcome contribution to film and jazz studies literature, filling a lacuna in the scholarship by exploring contemporary jazz-based soundtracks from the past thirty years. Most importantly, this book goes behind the scenes into the decision-making processes of film scoring as Carlson engages with musicians and film personnel through long-form personal interviews and observing live film-scoring and recording sessions. Scholars in film music, jazz studies, film production, and media studies will benefit from Carlson’s broad, comprehensible exploration of film music through jazz.

Bulletin Board & Member News

The Committee on Career Diversity and Advocacy (CCDA) encourages you to check out our Career Connections initiatives, which matches you with mentors from a variety of backgrounds and careers who can assist you with short-term information about a skill, possible career path, research area, or other query you may have. <https://www.american-music.org/page/RscCareerConnections>

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 pertaining to American music; and updates on our members’ scholarly, creative, and professional activities.
- **Announcing New Pedagogy Series continuing with our next issue (L No. 2; deadline April 15, 2023).**
 - Please reach out to *Bulletin* editor [Megan Steigerwald Ille](https://www.american-music.org/page/SAMBulletin) via email or by using the SAM website (<https://www.american-music.org/page/SAMBulletin>) if you have interest in contributing a short essay, case study, or opinion piece on teaching American music (broadly conceived). Topics might include

successful assignments, critical pedagogy, syllabi and curricular changes, or creative lecture design, among others. We hope to feature at least one pedagogical contribution each issue.

- We are currently soliciting media reviews pertaining to American music (including online resources, albums, and documentaries). Please reach out to Media Editor [Samuel Parler](#) if interested in contributing a review.

You can contact members of the editorial board via the SAM website (<https://www.american-music.org/page/SAMBulletin>) or via the email addresses listed at the bottom of the *Bulletin* issue.

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Editorial Board

Editor: [Megan Steigerwald Ille](#)

Reviews Editor: [Elizabeth Uchimura](#)

Design, Layout, and Media Editor: [Samuel Parler](#)

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