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The Bulletin

OF THE SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN MUSIC
FOUNDED IN HONOR OF OSCAR G. T. SONNECK

Blind Willie Johnson's "Dark was the night, cold was the ground"

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With special thanks to Dr. Kay Norton for her guidance and help with this project.

Introduction

In his semi-autobiographical *Shadow and Act*, celebrated black novelist Ralph Ellison gives a potent description of what makes a "blues" song unique: within it, we hear "an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near-comic lyricism."¹ But Blind Willie Johnson was not a blues singer.

Greil Marcus published a book in 1997 that describes one of the first bootleg recordings to be widely circulated.² A chapter from this book appeared later that year in the re-issue of Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music*, a compilation of eighty-four folk, blues, and ballad recordings from the first half of the twentieth century. At the time of its original release in 1962, the *Anthology* was itself not quite legal: "like many reissues of old 78s in the post-war years by independent record companies, Smith's *Anthology* was a 'pirate'—the recordings were not licensed from the original manufacturers; the performers were not paid for their use."³ Though the artists on this album, including Johnson, had recorded less than thirty years prior, Marcus writes that after being "cut off by the cataclysms of the Great Depression and World War II...they appeared now like visitors from another world."⁴ But Blind Willie Johnson had never been on another world. Now, though, he might be...

In the late summer of 1977, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched two spacecraft, Voyagers 1 and 2. Neither was intended to return to Earth, and engineers equipped each with a gold-plated copper record containing songs, sounds, and images of the planet Earth. The penultimate song, Johnson's "[Dark was the night, cold was the ground](#)," comes just after an Indian raga and just before the Cavatina from Beethoven's String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130. To blues and rock guitarist Ry Cooder, Johnson's song is "the most soulful, transcendent piece in all American music."⁵

I want to know why. Why this song, based on a hymn but with almost no discernible text, an extremely

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slow rhythmic profile, and a repetitive harmonic pattern, beat out Brahms symphonies, Palestrina Masses, or Johnny Cash ballads. I believe the song's lasting impact derives from its simplicity and sincerity, which manifest themselves in several ways; not only is the music reduced to extremely fundamental elements, but these are further reinforced through simple repetition. Additionally, Johnson had been, from a young age, both devoutly Christian and completely blind. I will examine the impact his blindness had on his credibility as an evangelical singer. The original hymn text depicts the sufferings of Christ on the Cross, and in Johnson's hands, the song becomes an arena that pits the singer against an anguish so real (Ellison's "brutal experience") he cannot form words. After this examination, I hope it becomes clear that sometimes, the simplest song can be the most affecting.

Biography

First, the briefest of biographies: Willie Johnson, Jr. was born in 1897 in Washington County, on the eastern side of central Texas. Many details of his youth have been distorted or misreported, or have remained unverifiable. For a black American born in the Post-Reconstruction era in a former Confederate state, this is an unfortunate and unavoidable issue, and interest in his life's details did not begin to flourish until the 1950s.⁶ Of the few facts we do have, these are the most relevant:

- He started playing a homemade guitar around the age of five.
- From the same age, he wanted to be a "beecher" ("preacher") and grew up attending Baptist services and meetings.
- By age seven, he was completely blind. Though the cause is disputed, the most often-heard account comes from his second wife, Angeline: "[After Willie's mama died, his] father married another lady. She kept company with another man, [his father had beaten her,] and she throwed lye water in Willie's face and put his eyes out."⁷
- As a young man, he played in church services, on guitar and possibly piano, and also played and sang on street corners in rural Texas towns between Houston and Dallas. His guitar had a tin cup wired to it for tips and donations from passers-by. Wherever and however Willie Johnson learned his trade as an evangelical performer, Paul Oliver asserts "by the time he was recorded at the age of twenty-six, he was a well-known street singer with a remarkable technique and a wide range of songs."⁸

The lasting impression of a young Blind Willie Johnson is of a deeply religious musician, rather than a performer who had sacred songs in his repertoire. Early on and throughout his life, Johnson was a Christian first and a musician second.

First Recording Session

In 1926, another blind, Texas-born singer-guitarist recorded his songs in Chicago. Blind Lemon Jefferson, however, did not focus on gospel songs: consider his "Black Snake Moan" and the phallic and sexual images it suggests. As Neil Rosenberg writes, however, a concurrent trend began to emerge:

By 1920 [Ralph] Peer had discovered that recordings of African-American singers sold well to African-Americans, so his company, Okeh, initiated a separate series [selling what came to be called] "race records." ...But in 1926 things changed rather dramatically when [an African-American talent scout] brought street singer Blind Lemon Jefferson to Chicago to record. ...His best-selling records sent other companies out hunting for more "down-home" sounds, and created the popular image of blues performers as solo singer-guitarists. Around the same time, down home African-American religious sermons and music took over in popularity from the relatively more formal [race] quartets previously heard."⁹



It is in this climate that Willie Johnson recorded "Dark was the night, cold was the ground" for Columbia on 3 December 1927 in Dallas, TX. He recorded five other songs at this session, and Johnson biographer D.N. Blakey has concluded that this song was done in only one take. Evidently proud of "discovering" Johnson, Columbia Records ran newspaper ads like the following in the largely African-American

Chicago Defender: “This new and exclusive Columbia artist sings sacred songs in a way you have never heard before. Be sure to hear his first record and listen close to that guitar accompaniment. Nothing like it anywhere else.”¹⁰

“Dark was the night:” The Hymn Tune and Johnson’s Adaptation

“Dark was the night, cold was the ground” is the opening line to a hymn written by Thomas Haweis and published in 1792 in England. The tune, originally titled *Gethsemane*, was later adapted and re-harmonized by Lowell Mason. That may have been the version Blind Willie Johnson knew. In either case, the surviving text concerns Christ’s crucifixion:

Dark was the night, cold the ground on which the Lord was laid
His sweat like drops of blood ran down; in agony He prayed.
“Father remove this bitter cup, if such Thy sacred will.
If not, content to drink it up, Thy pleasure I fulfill.”
Go to the garden, sinner; see those precious drops that flow;
The heavy load He bore for thee, for thee He lies below.¹¹

The text is full of images that evoke loneliness and isolation: most nights are “dark,” but on this night, it is “cold.” Christ is there, normally a comforting image, but He “in agony” from bearing a “heavy load.” Given the humanity of Christ throughout the Gospels, this “heavy load” assumes multiple meanings. It could be a metaphorical reference to the crucifixion and imminent burden of the sins of the world. This bolsters another textual reference to the crucifixion—the agony of Christ the man is evocatively portrayed in the sweat that runs “like drops of blood.” The “heavy load” could also be a simpler, more literal reference to the weight of the cross He was forced to carry. All the while there is a narrator observing the scene and relaying it to us, the “sinners” for whom Christ is sacrificing His own life.

Simplicity

In Johnson’s recording, we hear none of this. Instead, he creates what Michael Hall considers less “a song than a scene” with an otherworldly combination of slide guitar, vocal melismas, moans, and fragmented moments of near-speech.¹² A slide guitar is usually played in “open D” tuning (D-A-D-F#-A-D) so that strumming without stopping any strings yields a D-major chord. Some sort of solid object—the neck of a glass bottle, a pocketknife, or an actual metal slide—is worn over (or held by) the guitarist’s fret hand. Pressing into the strings with the slide at varying speeds and pressures creates variable pitch and vibrato. As with the human voice, there is an infinite canvas of sounds available, and “a well-played slide can resemble a person crying, moaning, or even laughing.”¹³ Blind Willie Johnson had a fondness for “singing” parts of a verse, usually the final line, on his guitar. This is a technique shared with early blues guitarists, especially those in the Mississippi Delta.¹⁴

His vocal delivery is constructed similarly: there are identifiable pitches at the beginnings and ends of phrases, but the connecting material consists of moans, wails, and notes that, within the context of Western classical music, sound obviously flat. Sounds like these had been heard in America since before the Civil War,¹⁵ and to one white observer at the time, “[these soul-stirring Negro camp-meeting hymns are] the saddest of all earthly music, weird and depressing beyond my powers to describe.”¹⁶ Percival Kirby wrote in 1930 that these “in-between” melodic inflections, as well as the blue notes flat 3 and flat 7, are usually considered remnants of African vocal traditions.¹⁷

Just over three minutes long, “Dark was the night” has a very simple verse structure: two forms of the verse alternate, resulting in an A-B-A-B-A-B-A form. During the seventh and final “verse,” roughly 00:11 from the end, a tapping/knocking sound is audible. Johnson was nearing the 3:30 mark that was the maximum length available at the time, and, normally, a studio technician would flash a light in the booth to alert performers that their time was nearly up. Since Johnson was blind, however, this knocking sound could quite plausibly be a recording engineer rapping on the glass to give a similar warning.

Johnson demonstrates his slide technique in the brief introductory phrase, and this introduction winds up functioning as an interlude between the two forms of the song’s “verse.”¹⁸ This simple structure is similar to one church musicians use, by taking the final phrase of a congregational hymn and using it as

an introduction, an interlude, or both.

The verses themselves are spare, empty; more complex rhythms can be heard from the studio's background noise than from Johnson's rhythm section—his guitar. I had little luck in establishing the song's meter, but I discovered that this "discrepancy" was in fact probably intentional.

In 1841, a white minister named Benjamin Lloyd published *Primitive Hymns*, a compilation of 705 hymns suitable for singing. This massive collection has served as fodder for Primitive Baptist congregations, black and white, in the southeastern United States ever since, and two recent essays on its contents have greatly aided my examination of Johnson's rhythmic style.

Beverly Bush Patterson suggests that the modern Primitive Baptist singing style has remained largely unchanged for over two hundred years, in place well before Willie Johnson's birth. Though their congregational hymn-singing was primarily unaccompanied, "[it] almost as obviously...[had a] fairly slow and often irregular rhythm."¹⁹ Johnson's uneven "A" and "B" verses, the silences between phrases, and the lengths of his interludes are all irregular.²⁰

Patterson's observation should not be read as criticism, however. During a discussion of a song found in *Primitive Hymns*, William T. Dargan asserts that, "although the rhythm is freely measured, there is a sense of pulse connected more to the flow of the words as breath phrases than to any sense of metrical regularity."²¹ The words, then, govern the progress of the music, which has more "pulse" than "rhythm" or "regularity." This description, too, fits Johnson's recording hand-in-glove; though he sings few of the actual words, the listener is well aware that Johnson knows them all and is performing in direct response to them. By keeping the song's rhythmic profile somewhat in the background, Johnson's performance invites us to pay closer attention to other events, such as the song's melody.

To discuss the song's melodic characteristics, I introduce here what William Dargan calls "portraiture sound[s]"—"the slides between notes, hollers, growls, and other gestures which expand the range of sound colors and textures."²² The tune is simplicity itself: it spans just over an octave, and the vocal phrases all end on notes of the tonic chord. However, Johnson often glides between notes, especially when ascending. The discrete pitches, then, are connected by slides between two steps or half-steps: the opening verse, played only by the guitar, demonstrates this in instrumental form, and in the fifth verse, listeners hear many non-melodic tones in Johnson's expressive, musical, and spiritual singing.

These gestures, as well as some others, are also found in blues recordings from this period. Embellished, lowered, and decorated 3rd and 7th scale degrees reflect the same African tradition discussed by Percival Kirby; their use here, in a sacred song, reinforces Ralph Ellison's idea of a blues song as a metaphorical battleground. There is a struggle between consonance and dissonance (natural notes and "blue" notes), between people and their "painful details and episodes" in whatever form. This type of experience was certainly not exclusive to blues performers, and, though the stories differed between blues and black sacred music performers, Mark Humphery notes that their musical styles were at least somewhat connected.²³

Authenticity

The present discussion has yet to acknowledge perhaps the most significant observation of Blind Willie Johnson as a physical, breathing, human being: he could not see. This handicap has functioned as a signifier within two separate tropes that converged in Willie Johnson: as a blind singer, he became both more *authentic* and more *spiritual*. In the 1920s, appending "blind" to one's name grew into prominent usage by both blues and sacred singers, especially those who were African-American. Recordings earlier in the decade by Mamie Smith in New York City and Blind Lemon Jefferson in Chicago showcased different strains within the "blues" genre, but after Ralph Peer's recordings in Bristol, TN in 1927, record company executives realized that "the blues was not the only black music [they] could exploit successfully."²⁴ A "blind" singer imparted an air of authenticity seemingly related to this handicap, and if that singer had a religious bent, as Johnson did, he was well-positioned to sell records.

Terry Rowden delves into many of these issues in *The Songs of Blind Folk: African American Musicians and the Culture of Blindness*. He contends that for religious

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performers like Blind Willie Johnson, Reverend Gary Davis, Juanita “Arizona” Dranes, and others, success “may be largely attributed to the fact that for most people, spirituality and blindness have always seemed fundamentally related.”²⁵ For a white example of this phenomenon, consider Fanny Crosby, who authored over 9,000 hymn texts throughout the nineteenth century, despite being completely blind.²⁶ French composer Henri Duparc was completely blind for the last thirty years of his life, and in a 1916 journal entry he wrote: “God wants me to live in a more interior way; he has deprived me of vision, but, since then, what I hear is so beautiful!”²⁷ Clearly, Johnson’s blindness and spirituality merged into a powerful agent of religious sincerity.

Though other “authentic” musicians from this period could be variously labeled as white, black, blind, sacred, or blues-oriented (Fanny Crosby, G.B. Grayson, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Uncle Dave Macon, Reverend F.W. McGee), exceedingly few were simultaneously black and blind performers of sacred songs. For Rowden, it is Johnson’s blindness, more than his “blackness,” that grounds his “ability to function for many as a perfect signifier of folk authenticity and expressive primitivism.”²⁸ Primitivism is a hot button for many, and could perhaps use further contextualization.

In several instances during “Dark was the night,” Johnson nearly breaks free of the wordless moans he has sung thus far and into actual speech. In verses 3, 4 and 6, I hear the words “I,” “well/will,” “World/Word,” and “Lord/load” fairly clearly. These attempts are another facet of the struggle that occurs within the song; Johnson’s vocal delivery captures the mood of Haweis’s text, in which Christ is cold, alone, and in agonizing torment.

To compare this singer to Papageno in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* may seem odd, but the comparison remains valid if each is viewed as an authentic member of *das Volk* (the people). Richard Taruskin writes that “as Papageno’s music seems close to the imagined origins of music, so [his] utterances often seem close to the origins of speech and language, as if embodying

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[German philosopher Johann Gottfried] Herder's concept of the origin of human culture(s)."²⁹ Moreover, Papageno's small pipe motive becomes "a sort of 'Ur-musik'...a primeval music close to the state of nature."³⁰ It is a simple music, as is "Dark was the night," and the latter's simple repetition of verses feels limited only by the recording studio's time limits. Though describing another song, the following words by Greil Marcus apply equally well to Johnson's: "the performance made one thing clear: however old the singer was, he wasn't as old as the song....[it] was here before the singer started and it will be here when he's gone."³¹ Given the song's ultimate fate as an interstellar messenger, the description is especially powerful.

Conclusion

The singer is long gone: Willie Johnson stopped recording in 1930 but lived until a tragic death on 18 September 1945, when a fire razed his home to the ground. With no other home to sleep in, and soaked from the firemen's hoses, he and his wife simply slept on their damp bed. He caught pneumonia, and, according to his wife, was turned away from the hospital either for being black or for being blind.³²

Barely thirty years later, however, his legacy was ensured on a cosmic scale with the launch of Voyagers 1 and 2. The *Golden Record* editorial staff was tasked with curating what could be considered the most important playlist in history: eighty-seven minutes to represent the entire body of music on the planet Earth. One of the musical editors, Timothy Ferris, described the process:

We established two criteria. First, contributions from a wide range of cultures should be included, not just music familiar to the society that launched the spacecraft [I.e. American]. Second, nothing should be included out of merely dutiful concerns; every selection should touch the heart as well as the mind. As the musicologist Robert Brown wrote early in the project, "If we don't send things we passionately care for, why send them at all?"³³

Carl Sagan, editor both of the actual *Golden Record* and its accompanying written retrospective, *Murmurs of Earth*, reflected:

We imagined a cartoon of [Haydn, Vivaldi, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, Purcell, Copland, Rimsky-Korsakov, Debussy, Puccini, Handel, Schoenberg, and Shostakovich; Elvis Presley] all gathered at Cape Canaveral, gazing wistfully at Voyager being launched to the stars without them.³⁴

This is a staggering list of those who did not make the cut, and it is tempting to speculate how different the process and results would be were the project repeated in 2015.

In Blind Willie Johnson's "Dark was the night, cold was the ground," this committee must have heard something special. Though most members were scientists and few were musicians, Sagan speaks of it as "most haunting" and "expressive of a kind of cosmic loneliness."³⁵ By examining the song's simple and primitive use of harmony, form, rhythm, and melody, I hope to have partially clarified that elusive *something*. Voyager 1 officially entered interstellar space in September 2013, and, perhaps one day, some far-away creature will take off a pair of headphones, knowing what that something is.

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- ³ Neil V. Rosenberg, "Notes on Harry Smith's Anthology," in liner notes to *Anthology of American Folk Music*, ed. Peter Seitel (Brooklyn, NY: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1997), 37.
- ⁴ Greil Marcus, "The Old, Weird America," in liner notes to *Anthology of American Folk Music*, ed. Peter Seitel (Brooklyn, NY: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1997), 6.
- ⁵ Quoted in John Kruth, "Evangelizing the Blues: The Fierce and Enduring Legacy of Blind Willie Johnson," *Sing Out!* 54/1 (Winter 2011): 50.
- ⁶ One of the first men to search for living acquaintances of Johnson was blues historian Samuel Charters. His research, interviews with primary sources, and documentation were indeed pioneering, but later scholars who relied on his information found themselves in an uncertain situation. His liner notes to *The Complete Blind Willie Johnson*, released in 1993(!), includes the wrong father, the wrong birth year, and at times the wrong wife.
- ⁷ Related in Samuel Charters, in liner notes to *The Complete Blind Willie Johnson* (Columbia Legacy 52835, 2 CDs, 1993), 11. This is a tangled issue, because the "father" she refers to is named "George." Johnson's first wife, confusingly also named Willie, told Samuel Charters that "he'd been blinded by looking at an eclipse through a piece of glass."
- ⁸ Paul Oliver, *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 215. Since Oliver's book was published, Johnson's birth date has been revised from 1903, as Charters had it, to 1897, from his new-found death certificate. The point remains that he was enormously talented as a practically un-schooled guitarist and singer.
- ⁹ Neil V. Rosenberg, "Notes on Harry Smith's Anthology," in liner notes to *Anthology of American Folk Music*, ed. Peter Seitel (Brooklyn, NY: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1997), 35.
- ¹⁰ Jas Obrecht, "Can't Nobody Hide from God: The Steel-String Evangelism of Blind Willie Johnson," *Guitar Player* 32/6 (1998): 57. <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/docview1069762/13D9ABA42492A02B4CA/12?accountid=4485>. This refers to the recording released just prior to "Dark was the night," but as an example of race-record marketing, it is fitting.
- ¹¹ In D.N. Blakey, *Revelation: Blind Willie Johnson; The Biography, The Man, The Words, The Music* (Gardners Books, 2007), 55. The Mason hymn-tune can be found at the end of this article.
- ¹² Michael Hall, "The Soul of a Man," *Texas Monthly* (2010), <http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/815930425?accountid=4485>.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Mark A. Humphery, "Holy Blues: The Gospel Tradition," in *Nothing But the Blues: The Music and the Musicians*, ed. Lawrence Cohn (New York: Abbeville Publishing Group, 1993), 120. Robert Johnson, who would record in the 1930s, was another extremely capable slide player. Listen to his "Preachin' Blues (Up Jumped the Devil)," and to hear the squeaks and rasps of his slide as he plays.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 113.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 111. He is quoting Mary Boykin Chesnut, a white woman who worshipped at a South Carolina black church in the pre-war 1860s.
- ¹⁷ Percival Kirby, "A Study of Negro Harmony," *Musical Quarterly* 16 (1930): 406–13. He also warned against smoothing these out "to make them acceptable to the European [read 'white'] ear" (404).
- ¹⁸ D.N. Blakey counts nine notes here, and I hear ten. Regardless, this phrase alternates with a shorter variant in between verses.
- ¹⁹ Beverly Bush Patterson, "Forging Religious Identity: An Exploration of Hymn Singing in Anglo-American Primitive Baptist Churches," in Benjamin Lloyd's *Hymn Book: A Primitive Baptist Song Tradition*, ed. Joyce Cauthen (Montgomery: Alabama Folklife Association, 1999), 24.
- ²⁰ Humphery, in Cohn, 125. This song, for Humphery "his most atavistic...uses the silences between notes to create a tension both oppressive and austere."
- ²¹ William T. Dargan, "Texts from Lloyd's Hymn Book in the Quiltwork of African American Singing Styles," in Cauthen, 32.
- ²² Ibid., 38.
- ²³ Humphery, in Cohn, 108. Johnson's practice of finishing vocal lines on the guitar, mentioned earlier, is one such shared stylistic trait.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 113. Many of the recordings from Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* date from this time period, as well, and as its six discs testify, represent the styles prevalent across the Mississippi Delta, Appalachia, and the Deep South.
- ²⁵ Terry Rowden, *The Songs of Blind Folk: African American Musicians and the Culture of Blindness*, in *Corporealities: Discourses of Disability*, ed. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 65.
- ²⁶ Richard Crawford, 445 (caption).
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- ²⁸ Rowden, 76.

²⁹ Richard Taruskin, "Nations, States, and Peoples," in *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, bk. 3, *The Oxford History of Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 190.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Greil Marcus, 18–19.

³² John Kruth, 48.

³³ Timothy Ferris, "Voyager's Music," in *Murmurs of Earth: The Voyager Interstellar Record*, ed. Carl Sagan (New York: Random House, 1978), 162.

³⁴ Carl Sagan, in *Murmurs*, 19.

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Society for American Music 41st Annual Conference, Sacramento, California, 4–8 March 2015 #sonneck2015



SAM 41st Annual Conference

Awards and Reports

Davide Ceriani was awarded this year's **Adrienne Fried Block Fellowship**. Ceriani's research topic, titled "Defining Italian Cultural Identity in New York City through Opera: The Years of Mass Migration (1879–1924)," looks at the role of Italian opera in shaping and affirming the cultural identity of Italian immigrants in New York during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While there were several outstanding proposals this year, the Block committee

chose Prof. Ceriani's "because we felt his topic closely aligned with the award guidelines, which stipulate that topics 'illuminate musical life in large urban communities in the Americas.'" His proposal was clear, carefully delineated, and consistently interesting; moreover, his research differs from other similar studies, which have primarily drawn on English-language sources, by examining primary sources in the immigrants' own words in their native language. The Committee also feels that Prof. Ceriani's methodology is sound, and we believe that Prof. Ceriani's research will provide a fresh perspective on the musical life of *fin de siècle* New York, as well as on immigrant and Italian-American studies in general."

- Mark McKnight, chair; Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, and Elizabeth Wollman

The **Cambridge University Press Award** was established to recognize the work of international scholars within the Society for American Music; the first award was presented in 2010. The society appreciates the continued support of the press in this valuable endeavor.

The winner of the Cambridge University Press Award for 2015 is Emily Abrams Ansari for her paper "The Virtue of American Power and the Power of American Virtue: Exceptionalist Tropes in Early Cold War Musical Nationalism." In this paper, Emily carefully illuminates the careers, musical style, and influence of two Americanists, Howard Hanson and William Schuman, who were successful writing tonal, nationalist music before and during World War II, and also during the Cold War. She believes this to be in stark contrast to the usual historical thinking that the end of the Cold War brought the end of musical Americanism—the accessible national style created by Copland, Hanson and others.

Ansari argues that Hanson and Schuman benefited from their commitment to American exceptionalism and that they serve to demonstrate that musical Americanism was much more varied in its ideological underpinnings than previously has been acknowledged. She states, "While Hanson's exceptionalism invoked the power of American virtue, ...Schuman's invoked the virtue of American power. Both men celebrated a globally assertive nation by attempting a globally assertive music." She concludes that despite their fall from prominence and the waning of their influence, Hanson and Schuman both left an

indelible mark on American music history.

Committee readers remarked that Ansari's paper was extremely well written—a joy to read. Her argument is clearly developed, well documented, and sophisticated in its approach. Ansari's work provides us a bigger picture of and better context for understanding mid-century American composition.

I wish to thank my committee colleagues Renee Norris and Cecilia Sun, and to acknowledge the contributions of Leta Miller, the current program chair and the SAM board's liaison to award committees.

- Linda Pohly, chair

The **Wiley Housewright Dissertation Award** committee consisted of chairperson Theo Cateforis, Glenda Goodman, Eric Hung, Tracey Laird, and myself. 19 dissertations were submitted, and if their overall superb quality is any indication, American music scholarship is thriving and heading in exciting new directions. The excellence of the submissions testifies not only to the hard work and brilliance of these new Ph.D.s, but to the outstanding commitment of the many mentors and advisors with ties to the Society for American Music.

Our winner's dissertation is impressive in its scope. A study of collage, music, and American identity, its case studies cut across early and later 20th-century art music, Broadway, folk music, and digital media. The author displays an impressive command of literary studies, art theory, film criticism, semiotics, and American music scholarship. The dissertation seamlessly mixes interdisciplinary theory and musical analysis, navigating a teeming scholarly ecosystem with remarkable confidence and purposefulness. The author is unafraid to look critically at the composers and artists in question. He is comfortable with ambiguity and paradox, and able to persuasively and insightfully read complex music, text, and images that function on multiple levels at once. This dissertation *about* collage is simultaneously a collage in its own right—a “meta” move that one cannot help but applaud. It is intellectually playful, deeply serious, and thought-provoking work, and we on the committee not only admired it tremendously, but enjoyed reading it.

The winner received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, working with co-advisors Mark Clague and Charles Garrett. I am delighted to announce that the winner of the 2015 Wiley Housewright Award, for his dissertation entitled “Patchwork Nation: Collage, Music, and American Identity,” is R. Daniel Blim.

- Gwynne Kuhner Brown

Scott A. Carter received the **Lowens Article Award** for his “Forging a Sound Citizenry: Voice Culture and the Embodiment of the Nation, 1880–1920,” published in



SAM 41st Annual Conference

the *American Music Research Center Journal* 22 (January, 2013), pp. 11–34. The committee would also like to recognize with an honorable mention Robert C. Cook's article, “The Vocal Ecology of Crumb's Crickets,” published in the *Journal of the Society for American Music* 7:2 (May 2013), pp. 123–45.

- Robert Walser, chair; Danielle Fosler-Lussier, Monica Hairston, Kristina Magaldi, and Jennifer DeLapp

The **Lowens Book Award** was bestowed on Christopher Smith for his book, *The Creolization of American Culture*.

- Rob Haskins, chair; Leonora Saavedra, Tammy Kernodle, David Gramit, and Scott DeVeaux

The winner of the **Mark Tucker Award** is Michael Uy for “Staging Catfish Row in the Soviet Union: The Everyman Opera Company and *Porgy and Bess*, 1955–1956.” The tides are turned every which way in this cold war tale of international cultural propaganda between east and west. Michael Uy presents a fascinating and nuanced account of the 1950s Everyman Opera Company production of *Porgy and Bess* paradoxically through a Soviet-financed but American-approved tour of the Soviet Union, complicating the politics of government support. The author negotiates through an array of documents from personal interviews, archival documents, film coverage of the tour, Soviet press reports and recent scholarship to reveal how the Soviets were able to foreground the troubled race relations in the United States to their propagandistic advantage. Congratulations, Michael, on a terrific paper.

- Sally Bick, chair; Sarah Schmalenberger, and Steve Baur

The **Hampson Award** Committee bestowed the award to William Brooks, for his project “Singing for Sammy Land: World War I Sheet Music and American Culture,” designed to help understand music’s role in the culture of the time. Brooks is creating an online repository of contextual information about a digital archive of World War I sheet music, providing musical analysis of the songs, creating lesson plans, and linking that information with public, online, educational music sites including *Song of America* and *Voices Across Time*. With grant funding he has inventoried the war-related music in the J. Francis Driscoll collection at Newberry Library, Starr Sheet Music Collection at Indiana University, and holdings at the University of Illinois. Through the site, students, teachers, scholars, and the general public will be able to access digital images of the music, “compact summaries of persons (composers, publishers, recording artists, etc.), of cover-art iconography, musical style” and links to larger topics such as symbols of liberty and French-American relations. Through this site, visitors will gain “a kind of historical understanding that cannot be attained in any other way.” Brooks will also use the information in teaching undergraduate courses.

- Deane Root, chair; Katherine Preston, and Barbara Tischler

The two winners chosen for the **Virgil Thomson Fellowship** this year were Sally Bick for her book-in-progress, *The Musical Politics of Hollywood Modernism*, and James Steichen for his monograph *Balanchine and the Making of American Modernism, 1933–41*. The Committee found both proposals to be well-formed, mature, and focused so as to address in a significant manner their main subjects. Both topics, coincidentally dealing with 1930s modernism, explore familiar figures and cultural problems but they do so in very different and original ways. Both seek to probe their questions through untapped archival or published sources. The promise of excellent results in the form of publications in both cases is very likely and entirely justified based on the authors' respective track records. Bick’s and Steichen’s proposals stood out from the others for these reasons and we congratulate the winners for their excellent work.

- Tom Riis, chair; Vivian Perlis, and Trudi Wright

There were a number of extremely strong and well-conceived projects among the submissions for the **Judith Tick Fellowship** this year, and the committee engaged in considerable debate over each of them. The project we chose represents the field of ecomusicology, which, as one committee member noted, is producing a body of high quality scholarship. The Judith Tick Fellowship goes to Kate Galloway’s project “Soundscaping the Radio: Hildegard Westerkamp’s Community Engagement on Vancouver’s Co-op Radio.” Galloway’s project seeks to examine the ways that “the popular technological medium of radio served to communicate soundscape education and awareness to a local and national listenership, how local and national radio in Canada facilitated the development of avant-garde soundscape compositional techniques, and how the radio studio cultivated an authoritative female voice in the male dominated field of electroacoustic composition.” Drawing on archival sources and ethnographic work with the composer and in the environs of Vancouver, Galloway’s project seeks to explore the ways that Hildegard Westerkamp, building on the ideas of composer R. Murray Schafer, interjected her own perspective as a female composer onto the public airwaves in the 1970s and 1980s. She will show the ways that Westerkamp contributed to the World Soundscape Project, and through her broadcasts inspired residents of Vancouver to conceive of their city and its environs in new ways.

- Gillian Rodger, chair; Kendra Preston Leonard, and Drew Massey

Treasurer’s Report—Calendar Year 2014

Submitted by Sabine Feisst, treasurer

Income

The **Johnson Subvention** committee has this year chosen two recipients from an impressive slate of books on American music projects.

Total Revenue from Dues:	\$60,207.00
Conference Revenue:	\$54,787.50
Conference Surplus (previous year):	\$7,004.23
Sales and Other Income:	\$15,218.00
Budget Surplus, Endowment Income, and Donations:	\$64,261.00
TOTAL INCOME:	\$201,477.73

Expense

Management Expenses:	\$45,212.24
Publication Expenses (JSAM, RILM Membership Directory):	\$43,551.44
Conference Expenses:	\$51,127.42
Awards & Subventions:	\$16,450.00
TOTAL EXPENSE:	\$156,341.10

TOTAL (gain/loss): \$45,402.32

Endowments (as of 12/31/14)
Principal: \$748,146.84

Our first winner is a fascinating and far-reaching study of the United States' Cold War music diplomacy programs. Examining the government-funded travels of musicians representing an array of stylistic approaches to nations across the globe, this multifaceted book offers a sophisticated assessment of the many issues raised by these tours, while bringing American musicology into conversation with globalization scholarship. The first recipient of the Johnson Subvention is Danielle Fosler-Lussier and the University of California Press for *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy*.

Our second winner offers a detailed look at the under-examined practice of elocution in the 19th century. By recognizing this practice as a particularly gendered space, this book offers an

insightful look into how elocution formed a touchstone for the participation of women in a host of creative literary, dramatic, musical, and dance occupations. It uniquely reveals the 19th century woman to have used the art of the spoken word not just for artistic and musical expression but also as a space to exert moral and cultural authority. The second recipient of the Johnson Subvention is Marian Wilson Kimber and the University of Illinois Press for the book *Feminine Entertainments: Women, Music and the Spoken Word*.

- Beth Levy, chair; Julie Hubbert, and Emily Ansari

The **Sight and Sound Subvention** Committee is honored to award this year's subvention to Reba Wissner and Jessica Getman for their project titled "Cues and Contracts: Music and the American Television Industry." The project aims to make available to music scholars valuable research data on the inner workings of the American television industry in the 1950s and '60s and how it used and re-used music. Both Dr. Wissner and Dr. Getman are experienced scholars of music in media and have a straightforward plan to bring their project to completion.

- Brian Thompson, chair; Susan Key, and William Cheng

The **John and Roberta Graziano Fellowship** Committee unanimously selected Laura Moore Pruett as the recipient for the inaugural award in 2015. Pruett's project is a critical edition of Louis Moreau Gottschalk's two symphonies, *Symphonie Romantique: La nuit des tropiques* and *Á Montevideo*, for *Music of the United States of America (MUSA)*.

- Josephine Wright, chair; Allen Lott, and Carolyn Guzski

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42nd Annual Conference, Boston, Massachusetts, 9–13 March 2016

Please come to Boston in...the winter? That's right—March in Boston! What could be more enticing? It's not too soon to start psyching yourself up for an opportunity to visit Our Fair City. We have some wicked good concerts, excursions, food, and musicking lined up. To get you in the mood, check out the LAC's website of All Things Boston: samboston2016.com/website/. More to come in the next *Bulletin*!

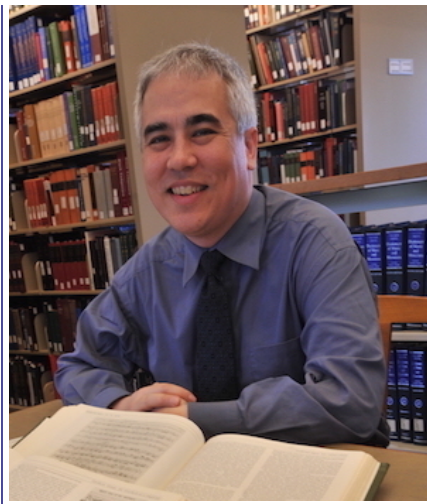
At your service, The LAC Committee

- Sandy Graham, chair; Paula Bishop, Carolyn Brunelle, Emmett Price, Laura Moore Pruett, David Pruett, Ann Sears, Sally Sommers Smith, and Paul Wells

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From the President

Dear Colleagues:



Charles Hiroshi Garrett, SAM President

The 41st annual conference of the Society in Sacramento, California, attracted record attendance, thanks in part to those SAM members traveling from the East Coast who forged through weather issues to join us. We all owe a big round of thanks to Beth E. Levy (Local Arrangements Chair), Leta Miller (Program Chair), the members of their respective committees, all of the volunteers who pitched in at the conference, Joice Gibson (Associate Conference Manager), and Mariana Whitmer (Executive Director). We are especially thankful to University of California, Davis—our host institution—and appreciate the generosity of UC Berkeley, Sacramento State, and the University of California Press. I also wish to thank the many members who donated to SAM (including those who purchased a raffle ticket), the students who handled the silent auction, and our remarkable development committee led by Bruce McClung, [whose column](#)

documents the continuing success of the SAM/2.0 campaign. Thanks also to the Star Spangled Banner Music Foundation, Bridge Records, Naxos Records, Indiana University Press, Oxford University Press, University of Illinois Press, Ashgate Press, Cambridge University Press, and the various individuals who donated raffle prizes.

At the annual Business Meeting, we were delighted to present awards, fellowships, and subventions to a litany of deserving recipients, including Olly Wilson (Honorary Member), Josephine Wright (Lifetime Achievement), and Carol J. Oja (Distinguished Service). We also presented the inaugural [John and Roberta Graziano Fellowship](#), a generous award that supports research in 19th-century American music, to Laura Moore Pruett for her critical edition of two symphonies (*Symphonie Romantique* and *Á Montevideo*) by Louis Moreau Gottschalk. A complete list of awardees can be found on the front page of the [SAM website](#).

There are far too many highlights to cover for such an animated and lively conference ([download final program](#)); however, I would like to call special attention to the plenary session, organized by the program committee, which featured talks by Mark Katz, Carol J. Oja, and George Lewis; the special panel presented by the Cultural Diversity Committee (“Great Migrations: Music in Black and Khmer Oakland”); and the Honorary Member award ceremony during which Anthony Kelley provided a touching tribute to his former professor Olly Wilson and the Delphi Trio gave a wonderful



Olly Wilson accepts his Honorary Membership

performance of his Piano Trio, one of Wilson’s most engaging works. Many conference-goers were also treated to a memorable concert featuring Anonymous 4 (performing with Bruce Molsky), whose travel plans to Sacramento represented an adventure of their own.

Plans are already in full swing for our [next annual meeting](#), which will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, 9–13 March 2016. In addition to making preparations for an appropriate celebration to honor Terri Lyne Carrington (we expect a turnout since she teaches at Berklee College of Music), the Local Arrangements Committee is hard at work at arranging various tours, events, and concerts, including the inaugural Vivian Perlis Concert, co-sponsored by the Aaron Copland Fund and the Virgil Thomson Foundation. We will be awarding two new fellowships for the first time in Boston. Long-time member Paul Charosh has generously funded a Fellowship for Independent Scholars, which will recognize the

lasting significance of independent scholars to our society. We also will be awarding the Judith McCulloh Fellowship, which honors Judy's memory and her contributions to the field of American music by supporting short-term research residencies at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Full information on both fellowships will be circulated in the coming weeks.

Finally, we have updated information on our website concerning newly elected and [appointed officers](#) and [current committee membership](#). If you are interested in serving on a SAM committee or in another capacity in the future (most appointments are made in January), please contact the chair of the Committee on Committee Governance ([Gayle Sherwood Magee](#)). It would be helpful if you would include a list of your interests and a copy of your CV.

As the incoming SAM president, I would be terribly remiss not to acknowledge the remarkable contributions of Judy Tsou, whose work as President has helped put SAM on solid ground for decades to come. She has tirelessly worked for our society—from intricate budget details to major development efforts, from endowing a fund that will assist all future SAM presidents to championing efforts (and funding) that will support the Committee on Cultural Diversity—and she has graciously mentored and supported me for more than one year. We are all grateful, Judy.

Thanks to all for your membership, support, and participation in SAM. I look forward to getting together again next spring.

Charles Hiroshi Garrett
SAM President

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SAM/2.0 Steams Past \$835,000!

At the Society's 41st Annual Conference in Sacramento, members donated \$14,132 in just four days! The conference concluded the third year of the SAM/2.0 Campaign, which began in 2012 and will conclude at our Boston meeting in 2016. In the month before the

conference, the Society received a \$100,000 bequest from the estate of Margery Morgan Lowens. A founding member of the Society, Margery finalized her bequest during the first year of the SAM/2.0 campaign, and we are grateful for her foresight in making an investment in the Society's future. We began the conference in Sacramento with a Campaign total of \$820,961 and left California's Central Valley with a new balance of \$835,083—another step on the way to our \$1 million goal!



The Development Committee is grateful to those members who made SAM/2.0 donations when registering for the conference or who purchased raffle tickets at the SAM/2.0 booth in the exhibits area. Congratulations to those members who won raffle prizes: Paula Bishop, Chelsea Burns, James Cassaro, Mark Clague, Sarah Gerk, Cameron Harrison, Carol Hess, Eric Hung, Neil Lerner, Beth Levy, Michael Ochs, Annett Richter, Sally Sommers Smith, Anna-Lise Santella, and Larry Starr. Thanks to the record labels (Bridge Records and Naxos), hotel (Hyatt Regency), foundation (Star Spangled Banner Music), individual (Mariana Whitmer), and publishers (A-R Editions, Ashgate, Cambridge University Press, Indiana University Press, Oxford University Press, University of Illinois Press) who donated this year's prizes.

The SAM/2.0 Campaign To Date:

Total bequests, donations, and pledges: \$835,083
Members who are donors: 275
Total membership: 942
Percentage of total represented: 29%

Richard Crawford 80th Birthday Wishes

Founding member Richard Crawford turns eighty in May, and the Development Committee invites members to mark this celebration with a birthday greeting—along with a donation of \$80 or

\$800 gift to the Richard Crawford Fund.

This fund will recognize Rich's seminal publications on American music, his shaping of the discipline for

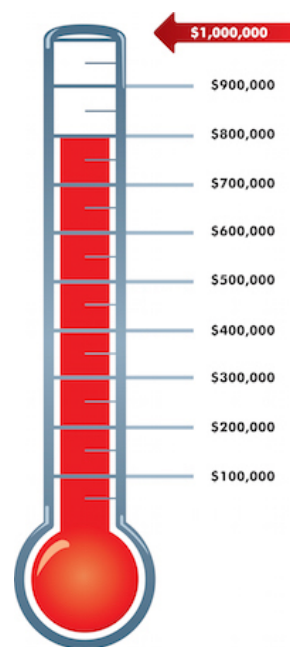
over forty years, and his service as founding Editor-in-Chief of Music of the United States (MUSA), a national series of scholarly editions. As of May 2015, twenty-five of the projected forty MUSA volumes have been published. When completed, the Richard Crawford Fund will fund an annual award for editors of MUSA. Wish Rich a very Happy 80th Birthday by helping to complete this fund in his honor.

Paul Charosh Fellowship for Independent Scholars Announced

In other exciting Campaign news, long-time member Paul Charosh has funded a Fellowship for Independent Scholars, which will recognize annually an independent scholar who is a member of the Society by providing funding to attend the annual conference of the Society. In addition to being recognized, the Independent Scholar will be available to meet with students, junior scholars, and other members of the Society who wish to gain insights scholarship conducted as an independent scholar. The Society is grateful to Paul for creating this opportunity. Watch for the forthcoming call for applications.

New Student Matching Fund

Former Board Member Mark Clague has organized a Student Matching Fund for the Campaign. A number of members have pledged to make an additional donation of \$1 for every student member who makes a donation or campaign to the pledge. If you would be interested in making an additional donation yourself, please e-mail Mark at claguem@umich.edu. Thus far, forty-four student members have participated in the Campaign, which bodes well for the future of our Society.



\$3,000 Match for Eileen Southern Fund Yet To Be Exhausted

At last year's AMS/SMT meeting in Milwaukee, an anonymous donor pledged a \$3,000 match for the Eileen Southern Fund. He will be matching new donations or pledges dollar-for-dollar until his gift is exhausted. So far, the donor has matched \$925 in donations but still has \$2,075 to give! When endowed the Eileen Southern Fund will support research on music of the African diaspora.

This fund recognizes Eileen's pioneering career and groundbreaking scholarship. She was the first black female professor to be awarded tenure at Harvard University, published several seminal publications on African American music, and cofounded *Black Perspectives in Music*, the first musicological journal devoted to African and African American music. In 2001 President George W. Bush presented Southern with a National Humanities Medal for having "helped transform the study and understanding of American music."

Status of \$175,000 NEH Challenge Grant and SAM/2.0 Campaign

Although we have raised \$835,083 towards our \$1-million goal, only \$511,028 of that amount can be counted towards the NEH Challenge Grant (donations received prior to December 1, 2012, unrealized bequests, and federal donations are ineligible under the conditions of the challenge program). But we are very close! We need to raise just \$13,972 more in order to receive the full Challenge Grant amount of \$175,000 (to date we have received the first \$50,000).

Each member stepping up to the plate with a donation or pledge confirms our Campaign goals: to fund endowments for new scholarship on music of the Americas and to create additional opportunities for the Society's many constituents. The urgency is now to complete the NEH Challenge Grant and our \$1-million goal during the final year of the Campaign. We need collectively to round third base and head for home. **Please take a moment to go to www.SAM2.0.net and make your donation or pledge today and then join us for the big celebration in Boston!**

bruce d. mcclung
Chair, Development Committee

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Forum for Early Career Professionals

The Forum for Early Career Professionals met during the Society for American Music's annual conference this past March. In addition to co-sponsoring a panel organized by the Student Forum on funding and preparing for research trips, we met as a group to discuss the various challenges we face at this career stage and to develop strategies for building networks of support to meet those challenges. Topics of discussion included the balance between meeting current obligations and working toward future success, as well as navigating controversial subject matter institutionally. We shared strategies for reaching out to other early career scholars across disciplines, maintaining and building connections after graduation, and finding allies.

This year promises to be an exciting and busy one, as we plan to create these networks. We will continue to update SAM's syllabi repository as a resource for all members, reach out to and collaborate with the new Pedagogy Interest Group, and update the interest tables in the SAM directory to facilitate collaborations with colleagues. We also look forward to an upcoming virtual conference in May, [Beyond the Professoriate](#), which builds professional skills for a wide range of careers.

Sarah Gerk, Dana Gorzelany-Mostak, and Dan Blim, co-chairs

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Student Forum

Dear SAM Members,

A quick note of thanks for those who contributed to the Student Forum's initiatives from this past conference in Sacramento: the panel on planning your research trip, the student lunch, the silent auction, and the student business meeting. Finally, we would like to thank Megan MacDonald for her dedicated work as student forum co-chair (2013–2015).

At our March business meeting, several ideas were discussed that may allow us to continue to expand the ways in which the student forum serves its members. We are looking into the development of a mentor system for students who are new to SAM and discussing ways for our veteran graduate students and recently graduated members to connect with students in the earlier stages of study. We are also working on ways to help students prepare for the job market; ideas discussed at the business meeting include mock-interviews, quick one-on-ones with senior scholars who attend SAM, and CV advice from senior scholars.

As we are now in the planning stages for the 2016 conference student forum activities, we encourage students to please contact us with your thoughts, suggestions, and ideas. We want to continue to build on the great work that the student forum has been doing so that it can be an even greater resource for student members.

We would like to encourage students to join our facebook group as well as the student listserv, which may be found at the following links: www.facebook.com/groups/161260137262989/ and list.pitt.edu/mailman/listinfo/sam_students.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Your Student Forum Co-Chairs,
Megan Murph (UK) and Jamie Blake (UNC-CH)

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Volume 9, Number 2 (May 2015)

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Articles	<i>Raoul F. Camus</i>

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Jake Johnson

From Cautionary Chart-Topper to Friendly Beverage Anthem: Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" and Pepsi's "Choice of a New Generation" Television Campaign
Joanna Love

Bill Dixon's Voice (Letter)
Eric Porter

Reviews

Books

Steve Swayne, *Orpheus in Manhattan: William Schuman and the Shaping of America's Musical Life*
Emily Abrams Ansari

Music in Television: Channels of Listening. Edited by James Deaville
Jessica Getman

Leta Miller, *Music and Politics in San Francisco: From the 1906 Quake to the Second World War*
Mark Clague

The Encyclopedia of Country Music. 2nd ed. Edited by Paul Kingsbury, Michael McCall, and John W. Rumble; David W. Johnson, *Lonesome Melodies: The Lives and Music of the Stanley Brothers*; Nadine Hubbs, *Rednecks, Queers, and Country Music*; *The Hank Williams Reader*. Edited by Patrick Huber, Steve Goodson, and David M. Anderson
Travis D. Stimeling

Recordings

Nico Muhly, *Two Boys*
Marianna Ritchey

Multimedia

Godfrey Reggio, *The Qatsi Trilogy*
Michael W. Harris

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JSAM and SAM Bulletin Reviewers Needed

The *Journal of the Society for American Music* and the *SAM Bulletin* are always seeking reviewers for books, recordings, and multimedia publications. If you are interested in serving as a reviewer for either publication, please send your name, email address, and areas of expertise to Judy Tsou, Chair of the SAM Publications Committee, at jtsou@uw.edu.

Calling All Multi-Media Reviewers!

The Hampson Award Committee bestowed the award to William Brooks, for his project "Singing for Sammy Land: World War I Sheet Music and American Culture," designed to help understand music's role in the culture of the time. Brooks is creating an online repository of contextual information about a digital archive of World War I sheet music, providing musical analysis of the songs, creating lesson plans, and linking that information with public, online, educational music sites including Song of America and Voices Across Time. With grant funding he has inventoried the war-related music in the J. Francis Driscoll collection at Newberry Library, Starr Sheet Music Collection at Indiana University, and holdings at the University of Illinois. Through the site, students, teachers, scholars, and the general public will be able to access digital images of the music, "compact summaries of persons (composers, publishers, recording artists, etc.), of cover-art iconography, musical style" and links to larger topics such as symbols of liberty and French-American relations. Through this site, visitors will gain "a kind of historical understanding that cannot be attained in any other way." Brooks will also use the information in teaching undergraduate courses. Do you use any scholarly databases, websites, DVDs or other multi-media items in your research or teaching that would be of interest to our SAM community? Please share your findings in a multi-media review for *JSAM*! Also, if you are interested in writing a review, but do not have a particular multi-media item in mind, we have opportunities for you too! Please contact *JSAM*'s multi-media editor, Trudi Wright, at twright@regis.edu for more information.

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New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome these new members:

Taylor Smith, El Cajon, CA
Charissa Noble, San Diego, CA
Marc Bolin, Los Angeles, CA

Leah Elliott, Carrboro, NC
Zhong Lin, Columbus, GA
Chantal Frankenbach, Sacramento, CA

William Ellis, Jericho, VT
Daniel M. Callahan, Jamaica Plain, MA
Sibyl Pettie, San Antonio, TX

Alyssa Mehnert, Cincinnati, OH
Sarah Kolat, Seattle, WA
Carol Jane Porter, Chadds Ford, PA
Lindsay Canting, Greenville, NC
Kathryn Kinney, St. Louis, MO
Michael Warner, Urbana, IL

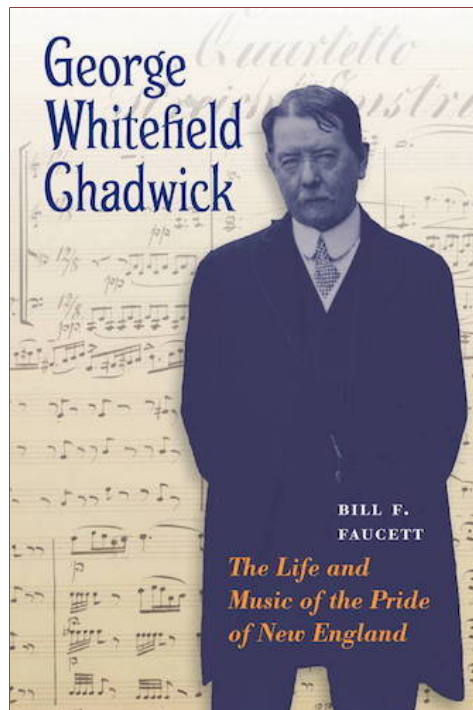
William J. Braaksma, Portage, MI
Cameron Harrison, Santa Cruz, CA
Camille Harrison, Santa Cruz, CA
Jacques Dupuis, Somerville, MA
Kreg Abshire, Denver, CO
David Gutkin, Astoria, NY

Rebecca O'Brien, Lexington, KY
Hannah Durham, Austin, TX
Stephen M. Kovaciny, Madison, WI
Devin Chaloux, Bloomington, IN
Catherine Hennessy, Champaign, IL
Hannah Leland, Tempe, AZ

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Reviews

Are you a graduate advisor with the perfect student to review a new book? Or, are you a graduate student who wants to review a book but could use some help through the process? As part of a new initiative from the SAM Publications Council, the *SAM Bulletin* actively seeks “mentored” book reviews for a large number of recent titles. Experienced authors will guide newer reviewers through the process of evaluating an American Music-related text and crafting their observations into a substantive, informative, and concise essay. The initiative also offers an opportunity for faculty to incorporate the book review experience into coursework for graduate students, transforming a typical book-review assignment into an authentic publishing opportunity. Interested advisor/advisee duos, as well as those with an interest but without a pairing (such as faculty at undergraduate-only institutions), are encouraged to contact the *Bulletin* Reviews Editor Ryan Bañagale (rrb@coloradocollege.edu) for a list of currently available books.



***George Whitefield Chadwick: The Life and Music of the Pride of New England*, Bill F. Faucett, Northeastern University Press, 2012. 416pp. ISBN: 978-1-55553-773-9. Paperback. Jacob A. Cohen**

The Graduate Center of the City University of New York

Over the course of the twentieth century, scholars, critics, and musicians effectively denied the Boston composers of the late nineteenth century any claims to an American style in music history. Deemed academicians, mere imitators of Schumann and Brahms, they became a footnote to the composers of the 1920s, when ultramodernism, jazz, and other populist tendencies became a new starting point for Americanism in cultivated music traditions. David C. Paul has described how Henry Cowell advanced the notion that Charles Ives was the first composer to espouse a genuinely American music through his use of borrowed “folk” melodies, and Paul has similarly shown that well known figures such as Paul Rosenfeld and Aaron Copland saw no “usable past” in the model

of the Boston classicists.¹

In the last decade, scholars such as Marianne Betz, Charles Freeman, Joseph Horowitz, and Hon-Lun Yang have brought the music and life of George Whitefield Chadwick, one of the most popular American composers of his day and a major figure in the Boston musical scene, into sharper focus.² Yet for many years the only biography of Chadwick had been the pioneering monograph *Chadwick, Yankee Composer*, by Victor Fell Yellin.³ Although it served as a necessary introduction to this important figure in both Bostonian and American musical life, it was in need of an upgrade. The “Life and Works” structure, in which personal biography and musical analysis are separated, feels antiquated and creates a fractured flow in the narrative. Yellin focuses on most of the major compositions of Chadwick’s career yet curiously omits many of the most often-performed pieces during his lifetime, such as the vocal and

orchestral works *Phoenix expirans* and *Lochinvar*. Additionally, while some of Yellin's book examines Chadwick's life against the cultural context of his time, such as the section on Boston in the 1880s, Yellin presents much of the personal biography as a series of connected yet somewhat autonomous events. The focus remains on the highly productive years prior to Chadwick taking the helm at New England Conservatory in 1897; less than ten pages are devoted to Chadwick's life after 1899.

Chadwick scholars, as well as anyone interested in nineteenth-century American music, now have a more comprehensive biography of this important composer in Bill F. Faucett's *George Whitefield Chadwick: The Life and Music of the Pride of New England*.⁴ Faucett's name is already well known to Chadwick scholars, as he authored two important reference works on the composer in the 1990s: a survey of his symphonic output that includes both compositional history, analysis, and reception history, and a bio-bibliography.⁵ This new biography builds on and expands on the work of those earlier volumes, as well as Yellin's initial foray into chronicling the life of this essential figure.

Faucett's most significant improvement over Yellin is the discovery and incorporation of Chadwick's own autobiographical writing in the form of extensive memoirs and diaries now housed in the archives of the New England Conservatory. As Faucett makes clear in the preface, this material helped shape the content of the book, and "enables the study of facets of Chadwick's life and work that were previously unknowable" (xi).

Certainly, Faucett maintains his authorial voice throughout the book; he is not Chadwick's ghostwriter nor do the memoirs dominate the text. Yet Chadwick's own words notably enhance the prose, offering not only a sense of immersion in his world, but also an intimate level of detail regarding his thoughts, opinions, and recollections. Perhaps most striking is the section towards the end in which Faucett describes Chadwick's attitude towards so-called modernisms and younger composers. Chadwick thought that Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* was "distinctly incompetent" and contained an "intrinsic general ugliness" (309), while of Sibelius's Fourth Symphony, he felt that "the harmony is brutally and apparently gratuitously discordant, even to actual cacophony at times" (311). He was especially offended by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Ornstein, going so far as to declare "I prefer to be put on the academic shelf and remain behind times" (314). With that stance, it is no wonder that the following generation forgot Chadwick, a point that Faucett brings into painful focus with Chadwick's remarks.

The book proceeds chronologically, although chapters are often organized around an event or specific types of works. For instance, chapters 6 through 8 all examine Chadwick's life and output in the 1890s, but chapter 6 is devoted to his vocal music and its sustaining institutions, chapter 8 examines his instrumental music, while chapter 7 neatly breaks up the musical focus by chronicling Chadwick's rise to director of the New England Conservatory. Faucett understands the genre of biography well and has written a book that not only provides an excellent historical account and musical analysis, but also does so in a highly readable manner, making for an engaging and natural narrative arc. He weaves together personal history, discussion of musical works, primary sources, and tangential discussions of people, places, institutions, and topics germane to Chadwick's life into an integrated story.

For example, as a precursor to a discussion of Chadwick's First Symphony (1882) and following the introduction to Chadwick's early career in Boston, Faucett offers a digression on "John Knowles Paine and the American Symphony" (83–86). Here, the author provides an essential context for understanding Chadwick's initial efforts in the symphonic genre by introducing Chadwick's immediate predecessor in the form of Paine's Symphony No. 2 ("Spring"), and also by placing both Paine and Chadwick at the end of a lineage that includes Anthony Phillip Heinrich, William Henry Fry, George Frederick Bristow, and Louis Moreau Gottschalk. In doing so, the reader understands the particular reasons for Paine's tremendous success, why Chadwick was so inspired by the senior Bostonian, and also some of the motivation for composing symphonies in a traditional style that privileged formal coherence. From Chadwick's recollections of Paine's Symphony No. 1 in his memoirs, the reader gleans something of Bostonian taste in the early 1880s: "The simple and benighted music lovers of those days had not been taught by...critics that the sonata form was a worn out fetish, that noble and simple melody was a relic of the dark ages, and that unresolved dissonance was the chief merit of a composition" (85). Faucett then cites reviews that note how the main theme was developed "with genuine symphonic respect," echoing the rhetoric of organic development that Boston critics lionized in Beethoven (90).

Cast in the immediate shadow of this discussion, Chadwick's First Symphony (which Yellin did not

include in his examination of the composer's symphonies) appears as an important litmus test for his abilities as a composer of this serious form. However, it is also a product of its time and place, shaped by public and critical taste of that era. Furthermore, by framing the First Symphony as part of a larger genre discourse, Faucett creates an even starker line between the earlier piece and Chadwick's later symphonies, which exhibit more traits of the composer's mature style using gapped or pentatonic scales, dance rhythms, colorful orchestration, and a progressive but adherent approach to traditional forms.

Almost every musical work is given its own subheading within each chapter, allowing the reader to quickly locate anywhere from two to eight pages of text devoted to the compositional history, performance history, and analysis of an individual piece. The same organizational scheme is given to watershed moments in Chadwick's life, such as Gilmore's Peace Jubilees, the construction of Jordan Hall, or the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. A notable improvement over the Yellin biography is that Faucett delivers the same level of historical acuity to the years after Chadwick assumed the directorship of the New England Conservatory. Although Yellin does focus on a number of Chadwick's twentieth-century pieces such as *The Padrone*, *Tam O'Shanter*, and *Aphrodite*, Faucett's ability to contextualize these works within the activities of Chadwick's life and the musical life of the U.S. and Europe adds a deeper dimension to understanding the forces behind their composition and reception.

Although the book is overwhelmingly a success, Faucett chose to omit musical examples "in an effort to make it more accessible for readers who are not musicians, music students, or musicologists" (xii). Perhaps because of this the book will find a greater readership, thereby introducing a general public to this neglected artist. However, Faucett uses specialized formal and harmonic terminology throughout, such as in his analysis of *Tam O'Shanter* when he argues that the piece follows a loose sonata form rather than an episodic, programmatic organization. He identifies the key areas of each theme, going so far as to spell out the pitches of the German augmented sixth chord that precedes the secondary theme (290). This level of detail demands a printed musical example, as it is difficult to imagine a reader who could follow his discussion yet who could not read music. Generally speaking, scholars will likely have to wait for future acute studies of specific works by Chadwick for any kind of detailed theoretical and stylistic analysis. Additionally, Faucett did not include any of Chadwick's many art songs, a point that he acknowledges is lamentable but necessary due to space considerations.

Still, Faucett's meticulous combing of primary source documents and articles, cross-referenced with Chadwick's own memories and descriptions, provides the bedrock for the next round of Chadwick scholars. In particular, this volume will be an excellent resource for critical examinations of specific works or specialized related topics. Noble as their nativist cause must have seemed at the time, the earlier twentieth century writers did a disservice to American music historiography when they dismissed the music of Chadwick and his milieu. Faucett's work is therefore a crucial step in reinstating Chadwick's place in American music history.

Notes

¹ David C. Paul, *Charles Ives in the Mirror: American Histories of an Iconic Composer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 48, 60.

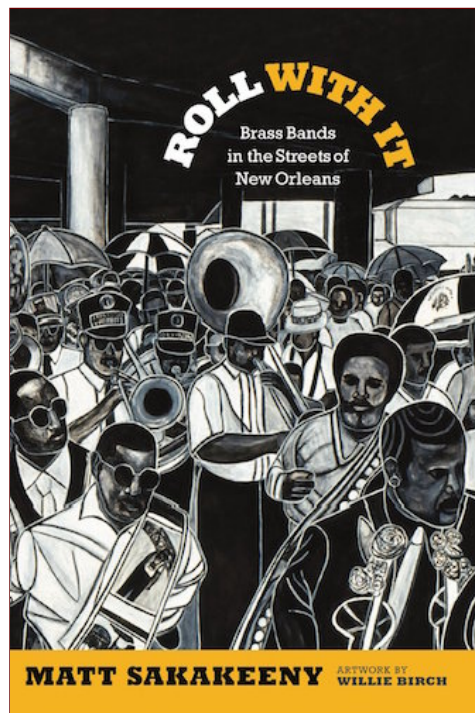
² Examples of these authors' works include Marianne Betz, ed., *String Quartets Nos. 4–5* by George Whitefield Chadwick, *Recent Researches in American Music*, Vol. 60 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2007); Charles Freeman, "Progressive Ideals for the Opera Stage? George W. Chadwick's *The Padrone* and Frederick S. Converse's *The Immigrants*," in Jeffrey H. Jackson and Stanley C. Pelkey, eds., *Music and History: Bridging the Disciplines* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 115–40; Joseph Horowitz, "Reclaiming the Past: Musical Boston Reconsidered," *American Music* 19/1 (Spring 2001): 18–38; Hon-Lun Yang, "Nationality Versus Universality: The Identity of George W. Chadwick's Symphonic Poems," *American Music* 21/1 (Spring 2003): 1–44.

³ Victor Fell Yellin, *Chadwick, Yankee Composer* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

⁴ There is, in fact, another new forthcoming biography on Chadwick by Marianne Betz which, unfortunately, was not available to the author at the time of this writing.

⁵ Bill F. Faucett, *George Whitefield Chadwick: His Symphonic Works* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996; Bill F. Faucett, *George Whitefield Chadwick: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998).

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***Roll With It: Brass Bands in the Streets of New Orleans*, Matt Sakakeeny, Duke University Press, 2013. 230pp. ISBN-978-0-8223-5567-0, Cloth.**
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“We know who we are. Do you know who we are?” (100). This question—asked by New Orleans bass drummer Keith Frazier of the 2006 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival organizers—speaks to the intimate nature of the powerful exchanges that inform *Roll With It: Brass Bands in the Streets of New Orleans*. While out-of-state headliners were given all the necessary amenities, Frazier explains, displaced, local, brass band musicians invited back to New Orleans for the first Jazz Fest post-Katrina were expected to find their own housing. Through extensive fieldwork and analysis, *Roll With It* traces the movements of a group of young, black, New Orleans brass band musicians involved in contemporary New Orleans jazz funerals, community

second line parades, and other, twenty-first century exhibitions of their craft as performers, community members, and “tradition-bearers.” Author and ethnomusicologist Matt Sakakeeny takes readers inside the personal and professional worlds of those associated with the Rebirth, Soul Rebels, and Hot 8 New Orleans brass bands, exploring the production of subjectivity, identity, and culture in and around the New Orleans brass band tradition.

One of the primary aims of Sakakeeny’s kaleidoscopic study is to better understand this group of brass band musicians as New Orleanians, black Americans, and cultural icons—offering a more nuanced, human conception of brass band music as a sonic signifier of the city. The protagonists of *Roll With It* are characterized as “dual-citizens” (5), most of whom belong to “the hip-hop generation” (4), juggling parade gigs, festival appearances, concert tours, recording projects, and more. The members of the Rebirth, Soul Rebels, and Hot 8 New Orleans brass bands follow in the footsteps of those associated with the New Orleans Brass Band Renaissance, broadening more conventional notions of repertoire, audience, and venue. As both “exceptional icons” and “unremarkable subjects whose lives and livelihoods are forever at risk,” these musicians are viewed as ideally positioned to diagnose relations of power (5). Sakakeeny claims, “Their stories speak not only to the power of local culture, but also to the uneven terrain that characterizes U.S. urban centers in the post-civil rights period, particularly for black men” (5). Music, in this regard, is mined as a record of hierarchical interactions. The book employs expanded theories of voice, subjectivity, and human agency in a “localized case study of the national and global transaction of black culture” with the New Orleans second line parade at the center (5). Contemporary New Orleans brass band repertoire is analyzed in terms of the production, articulation, and exercise of cultural identity.

Sakakeeny’s model of the brass band tradition is both fluid and broadly applicable, drawing parallels with other musical moments and contexts where possible. Seeking to account for the effects of continued urban restructuring and New Orleans cultural tourism, the author recontextualizes the continued activities of New Orleans brass band musicians, taking a more comparative stance on stylistic change and development. He writes: “Rather than a case of uniform musical style reinforcing a given generational identity, in the brass band tradition musicians have selectively and subjectively drawn upon a repertoire of musical, thematic, and aesthetic practices to align tradition with their experience” (117). Here, traditional notions of stasis and historical preservation are replaced with more volatile acts of cultural recalibration, “retuning tradition to be consonant with the experiences of younger generations” (20). Along these lines, Sakakeeny demonstrates a valuable means of understanding the city’s hybrid musical tendencies, opening up new directions in the continued study of New Orleans brass band music and New Orleans music more broadly. The book marks an important contribution to ongoing discussions of musical innovation and preservation in and around New Orleans.

The structure of *Roll With It* is both complex and compelling. Each chapter is broken down into a series of “episodes,” interrelated ethnographic vignettes that situate Sakakeeny’s theoretical work within rich, interconnected tableaux of twenty-first century musical life in New Orleans; past sounds, styles, and events still resonating in the city’s storied streets. The parade—a series of successive and overlapping events that might include “the performance of a particular song, the chant of a refrain, the display of a dance step, or the passing of a site endowed with local significance” (10)—both organizes and mobilizes the subjects of Sakakeeny’s research *and* the narrative progression of the book itself. The social anatomy of the New Orleans second line parade acts as the medium through which a bundle of specific, yet adaptable musical practices are interpreted in conjunction with synchronous, meaningful events occurring within parallel, shifting political infrastructures. Chapter 1, titled “Onward and Upward,” orbits around the 2002 jazz funeral for Harold “Duke” Dejan—historic New Orleans musician, well-known resident of the iconic Tremé neighborhood, and celebrated founder of the city’s famed Olympia Brass Band. The staged parade exhibitions of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and Harrah’s Casino are the subject of Chapter 2, titled “Constraints,” delving into the politics of cultural tourism. We return to the street parade by way of the club in Chapter 3, titled “Progressions,” exploring the ongoing dialogue with hip-hop that has “reconfigured the musical, thematic, aesthetic, and contextual parameters of the brass band” (114). Finally, the somber notes of the funeral rite invite the reader to contemplate the impact of structural violence, interpersonal violence, and death on the lives of young black musicians in present day New Orleans. In Chapter 4, titled “Voices,” the sonic, social, and societal threads of Sakakeeny’s argument come together in paired moments of musical speech and silence.

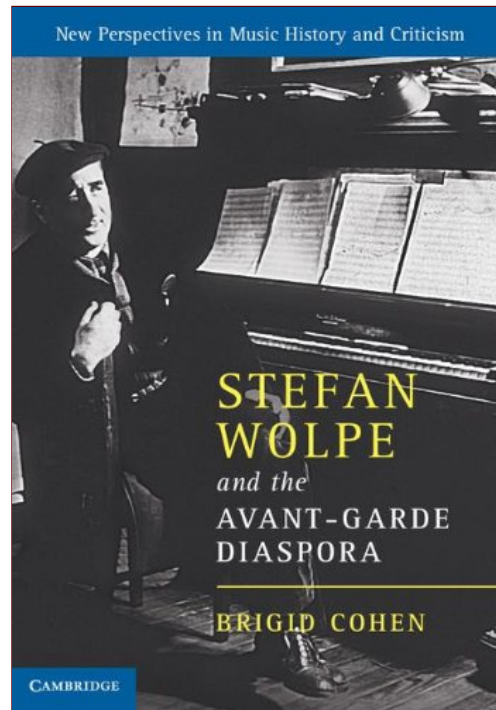
Roll With It is also unique in that it both exemplifies and advocates creative collaboration among artists and scholars. Illustrations by local artist Willie Birch are interspersed throughout the text, and discussed in detail in the afterword, “Image and Music in the Art of Willie Birch.” More importantly, Sakakeeny frames the incorporation of Birch’s images as integral to the book’s larger, performative aesthetic. The author compares his “writing tools” to those of the visual artist, articulating a desire to inject the rhythm and motion of the parade into his prose. The shared goal of artist and author is that the reader imagines they are actually *there*, “sensing the music’s effect in united bodies, interacting with others with diverse orientations, feeling pleasure or suffering, inclusion or isolation, empowerment or vulnerability. And moving, always moving” (11). A segmented structure—enlivened by the natural stops, starts, and multiple, shifting vantage points of a parade—presents a vivid, multi-faceted portrait of the New Orleans brass band musician, and the social and societal networks, spheres of capital, and cultural boundaries they navigate as they attempt to earn a living (107).

“Engagements,” the provocative conclusion of *Roll With It*, extolls the potential of such “interdisciplinary” collaboration for the practice of ethnography writ large, discussing Sakakeeny’s personal and professional collaborations with locals as a model for writing culture. The closing anecdotes compare and contrast the power dynamics of two of the academic discussions Sakakeeny has participated in as an expert-in-residence and New Orleans music scholar: 1) a 2007 Society for the Anthropology of North America Panel titled “Local Knowledge: New Orleans Artist and Activists Reflect on the State of the City after Katrina,” and 2) a 2010 American Anthropological Association Panel titled “Engaging New Orleans.” In the first, Sakakeeny and colleague Helen Regis were to act as impartial moderators—responding to the contributions of Hot 8 bandleader Bennie Pete, Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force members Tamara Jackson and Troy Materre, among others—even though they too had a vested interest in the city’s recovery as local residents. Turning once again to the brass band musician as “power diagnostician,” Sakakeeny recalls the way Hot 8 musician Pete was puzzled by this dynamic, interrogating the declared role of the present scholars. “Bennie’s question was not limited to the problem of representing culture in writing or repurposing ethnographic research for cultural critique,” reflects the author, “because he was asking anthropologists to be explicit about their everyday engagements as New Orleanians” (182). In comparison, the “Engaging New Orleans” panel unfolded as a meeting of the minds in which anthropologist, ethnomusicologist, musician, artist, and activist, spoke on equal footing as “locals” uniformly invested in the preservation and dissemination of local history and culture.

Situating each conference experience within ongoing discussions about the challenges and pitfalls of representing (and critiquing) culture in writing, Sakakeeny intertwines his voice with that of Hot 8 bandleader Bennie Pete, building organically to his arguments about the powers of socially engaged ethnography. “Without making a grand claim for the power of academic writing to transform society,” Sakakeeny asserts, “there is a potential for ethnographers who make uniquely intimate engagements

with people to open up more possibilities for social justice” (184–185). In the stories of the Rebirth, Soul Rebels, and Hot 8 brass bands, Sakakeeny finds models of overcoming vulnerability, navigating a multi-sited cultural economy, and a range of other pertinent social issues, which he believes points the way towards addressing society’s problems, as opposed to constructing scholarly representations of society (184). Not without its own perils, Sakakeeny’s creative approach to ethnography showcases the talents, insights, and skills of an equally multifaceted anthropologist, ethnomusicologist, musician, journalist, and curator of New Orleans music.

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***Stefan Wolpe and the Avant-Garde Diaspora*, Brigid Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 2012. 340pp. ISBN: 978-1107003002. Hardback.**

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No less eminent a figure than Elliott Carter praised the German-born composer Stefan Wolpe (1902–1972) for his “comet-like radiance, conviction, fervent intensity, penetrating thought on many levels of seriousness and humor,” along with his “breath-taking adventurousness and originality.”¹ With such an endorsement, one might be surprised to learn that the beginning of Wolpe’s career was a rocky one, as he was considered an outsider in the musical circles of his native Germany. And after leaving Germany for Palestine in the Second World War, the complexity of his musical style made it difficult for his music to find an audience in his new home. But after moving to New York, Wolpe’s artistic fortunes shifted as he developed contact

with artists and collectives associated with avant-garde movements. This included John Cage, who referred to Wolpe’s apartment as “the *true* center of New York” because of his connections with artists in all mediums, as Brigid Cohen points out in her much-needed new book, *Stefan Wolpe and the Avant-Garde Diaspora* (4). Indeed, Wolpe was in touch with figures ranging from Paul Klee, Anton Webern, George Russell, and Yoko Ono, and was in the orbit of movements such as the Berlin Dada, the Bauhaus, agitprop theatre, and the Second Viennese School. It is not surprising, then, that his music reflects a sweeping pluralism.

Given Wolpe’s fascinating international journey and impressive interpersonal network, what is surprising is that Cohen’s new book is the first full-length study of Wolpe’s music. But the reason for the lacuna in the literature on Wolpe is, as Cohen suggests, the difficulty scholars face in positioning him firmly within one particular movement in a field hungry for categories and classifications; as she puts it, “formidably dense cultural connections confound traditional narratives of modernism as a series of discrete styles and schools” (4). For Cohen, though, the challenge of talking about Wolpe presents an apt opportunity to reshape narratives of recent music history. As she shows, Wolpe’s significance is more in the way he invites us to approach the study of the twentieth-century avant-garde than it is in the specifics of his life and works. In the book’s extensive introduction, which serves as a useful primer on modernism, nationalism, exile, and cosmopolitanism, Cohen puts it best when she notes,

long-standing theories and commonplace understandings of musical modernism—conceived as an extension of ideologies of musical autonomy, or as a genealogy of schools, styles, techniques, and “isms”—can no longer account for the full range of thought, practice, and activism that has characterized experimental music movements over the last century. (2)

Cohen begins this reshaping process in chapter one, which considers Wolpe in New York in 1951—a moment Cohen identifies as a turning point in his career. At that time, Wolpe began to break with the

formalism of his previous music and took a self-revelatory turn. Before this period, Wolpe had self-identified as a formalist, albeit one who was prone to eclecticism in the content of his pieces. In speaking about the self-revelatory nature of Wolpe's writings, Cohen cites a 1951 letter he wrote to his second wife, which Cohen compares to the "Heiligenstadt Testament" of Beethoven (57). There Wolpe apologized for his role in the failure of his marriage but also worried that his life had counted little because he had not yet developed fully as a composer. Cohen posits that this letter reveals that "an impulse toward critique and defiant self-expression gradually overtook his feelings of despondency" (64). Wolpe also resolved in this writing to "say everything" in his music, and from this point his music would "engage in formalized acts of self-revelation, gathering together everything in his life" (74). In identifying the roots of this eclectic approach to form and aesthetic, Cohen brings Wolpe and his complex music down to earth, in an ironic but satisfying way, by placing him in the grand tradition of Western art music—in the tradition of composers whose lives have been seen to translate directly into their works.

Unraveling Wolpe's involvement in musical communities that sustained him along with the disparate ideas in his music—and the importance of these communities in helping Wolpe define his aesthetic—is a task Cohen tackles in chapter two. Here, Cohen considers Wolpe's "deep faith in the social and political value of his artistic activities" (77). A large focus of the chapter is on montage, which would continue to influence Wolpe in his work, juxtaposing disparate musical elements taken from his experiences in different musical circles and the events of his own life. Cohen takes this further by linking montage to Marxist thought and discourse. Given the disconnect usually observed between communism and avant-garde musical movements in the twentieth century, this is a link that serves well Cohen's goal of softening the boundaries between ideologies that are easily seen as conflicting ones.

In chapter three, Cohen turns to Wolpe's time in Palestine during the 1930s, where he sought to combine disparate cultural elements in his music to create the eclectic approach to formalism mentioned in chapter one. Because he had migrated from Europe, Wolpe had the chance in Palestine to encounter music of Arab-Jewish musicians, whose musical idioms began to appear in Wolpe's compositions. This appropriation of new sounds, Cohen proposes, could be seen as a coping mechanism: "After Wolpe's exile, the idea of montage that had motivated his artistic life now became all the more tangibly a resource for surviving as an artist caught in disjunctive life circumstances. Montage worked as a strategy through which to reassemble a sense of artistic identity in the midst of extreme life disruption" (142). Once again, Wolpe appears as a musical border-crosser, both in his life and in his music. In this case, that status invites us to consider other composers in a similar way; one can not help but also recall Elliott Carter's time transcribing music in Tunisia under the supervision of Rudolph d'Erlanger in the 1920s.²

Chapter four delves into Wolpe's belief in the avant-garde community as politically relevant once he immigrated to America. Believing that artistic communities could affect politics at the national level, Wolpe fostered many such groups himself and participated in bebop circles, the Eighth Street Artists' Club, and Black Mountain College. His music of this period "responded to, and helped to sustain, small-scale community relationship—lifelines for those deprived of a true political space or durable sense of national belonging" (301). An epilogue to the book draws some intriguing conclusions about Wolpe's self-revelatory and eclectic compositional style and raises crucial questions about how scholars can place Wolpe's work politically and socially. Often, the self-revelatory nature of Wolpe's works obscures their perceived relevance to a public audience, but in the end, as Cohen demonstrates in her case studies throughout the book, "Wolpe's projects have the potential for broader resonance beyond the musical subcultures in which his work has been remembered" (303).

Just as Wolpe's musical work was multivalent, Cohen's study of his life and music successfully draws on a wide range of materials and does so in a virtuosically non-linear way. In exploring Wolpe in terms of migration, cosmopolitanism, and interdisciplinary art, Cohen mostly uses as her primary sources the writings of Wolpe and of the figures around him, and she does so revealingly. But she does not hesitate to include detailed insight into several of his musical works, including the telling example of *Piece in Three Parts for Piano and Sixteen Instruments* in the epilogue. In its allusions to the works of others, to the commemoration of the suffering of the Jewish people, and the very personal dedication to his daughter, this composition serves as an apt summation of Wolpe's musical language and overall aesthetic. At its heart, though, Cohen's study is more about the ideas behind Wolpe's work than about the music itself; the book contains fifteen total musical examples from just seven of Wolpe's works.

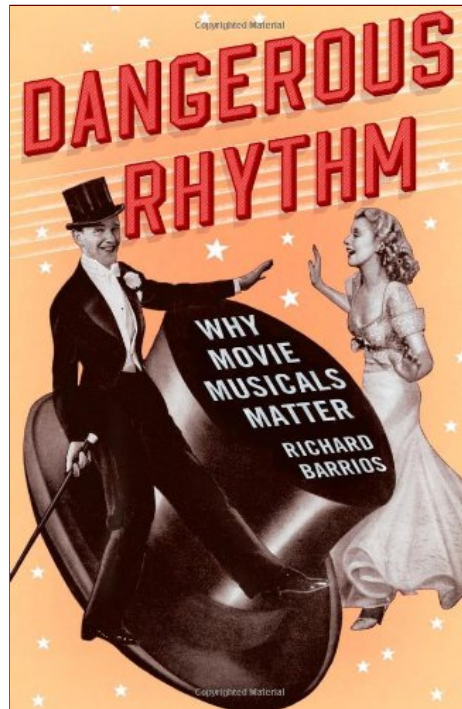
Students and scholars hoping to find in-depth analytical study of his entire musical oeuvre, or a cataloguing of Wolpe's musical scores, will ultimately need to look elsewhere. But they would do well to start here, where they will find a thoughtful framework for approaching that music and viewing it in the context of Wolpe's life—a clarifying model for the study of other twentieth-century composers who crossed boundaries and defy categorization.

Notes

¹ Elliott Carter, "Stefan Wolpe (1902-1972): In Memoriam," *Tempo* 102 (1972): 17–18.

² David Schiff, *The Music of Elliott Carter* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), 12.

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***Dangerous Rhythm: Why Movie Musicals Matter*, Richard Barrios, Oxford University Press, 2014. 276 pp. ISBN: 978-0-19-997384-2. Cloth.**

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Do movie musicals matter? According to Richard Barrios they do, and enough to dedicate an entire volume to the defense of their importance. In the introduction to *Dangerous Rhythm: Why Movie Musicals Matter*, Barrios states that the best movie musicals “commune with the hearts and minds and souls” of the audience and essentially bring the contents of dreams to life. The zeal Barrios boldly exhibits for the genre is tempered in the subsequent footnote by a self-effacing awareness of the movie musical’s tendency to polarize: “If expressing devotion [to movie musicals] draws a look down the nose from many, imagine the reaction when people learn of a book being written about them. Or, worse, a book about their beginnings” (10). This combination of unabashed passion and blunt realism (often bordering

on straight snark) makes Barrios’ book an entertaining read, a good thing considering the sheer amount of information covered in under 300 pages.

Rather than standard summative chapter headings, Barrios uses a quotation from a movie musical, a design that seems more effective as a trivia challenge than an organizational element. Some labels are spot-on, as in the case of Chapter 11, “Under My Skin,” dealing with issues of race and sexuality in movie musicals. Others, such as Chapter 8’s heading “I Get the Neck of the Chicken,” are so obscure for the average reader that they distract rather than enlighten (incidentally, Barrios’ initial notes of explanation reveal the source as a 1942 Lucille Ball feature, *Seven Days’ Leave*). On the other hand, in the context of a niche subject area such as this, “obscure” might actually be “normal.”

However appropriate Barrios’ chapter titles may or may not be, the contents are engaging and rich with detail. Chapter 1, “Everything’s Been Done Before,” deals with the complex nature of the movie musical as a medium that is all at once self-referential, repetitious, and attempting to be new. Barrios sets the stage—pun absolutely intended—for the discussions to come, providing a brief history of the musical’s journey to and on the big screen. He points out that movie musicals were at their most “daring and original” when they were introduced (22). The absence of a strong identity at the outset allowed them full reign in terms of subject, genre, and methodology. Unfortunately, the movie musical’s bright beginning birthed an awkward trajectory wrought with profound pits, creative deserts, and the occasional mountain high to offer hope. The Motion Picture Production Code, applied to most major pictures from 1934 to 1968, stripped movie musicals of scandal and sin and denounced the earlier vaudeville-style films. The disinfected results were generally hollow, bland, and repetitive, song-and-dance numbers strung together with a bit of a plot. Brief flashes of glory in the forms of such stars as Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers or cartoon films like Disney’s *Snow White* kept the movie musical alive

if not especially well during the worst of that time. Although Barrios notes that the pop and rock films of then 1960s forged an even greater “disconnect” for the movie musical, he concludes the opening chapter with the idea that the musical will continue to captivate audiences and connect “the past with the future” (36).

The subsequent chapters discuss various topics related to the movie musical. Chapter 2 explores the difficulties and related successes/failures of taking musicals from stage to screen and vice versa. The inherent troubles in transitioning from dialogue to song in film emerge in Chapter 3, titled “Seeing’s Believing.” Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the history of musical stars and casting as well as the most influential (for better or worse) directors. Songwriting and the development of the movie musical score receive attention in chapter 6. Chapter 7, aptly titled “With Plenty of Money,” addresses budgets, expenses, profits, numbers, and financial practices of the major studios. Ill-fated films and figures, including Barrios’ pet whipping child, *Paint Your Wagon*, emerge in chapter 8, while chapter 9 discusses films that were “magnificently uneven” (in Barrios’ words) yet tremendously important and often successful, such as *Gigi*, *Show Boat*, *The Sound of Music*, *Chicago*, and finally the golden goddess of the movie musical, *Singin’ in the Rain*.

It is not entirely clear why Barrios considered the titles of Chapters 10 and 11 in need of immediate explanation, but each bears a further descriptive heading. Perhaps these two chapters stray from what one might expect in a discussion of movie musicals (what DOES one expect, though?), but they are some of Barrios’ most compelling commentaries. Chapter 10 is titled, “Painting the Clouds: *Snow White*, *South Park*, and Other Ways to Animate a Musical.” Here, Barrios summarizes the trajectory of animated films and their deep musical connections. He pays particular attention to Disney films, appropriate as *Snow White* was the pioneer full-length animated musical film, noting, “Even without the fearsome marketing titan that is the Disney organization, *Snow White* was built to last—very much of the 1930s yet particularly timeless, an irreplaceable cornerstone of musical cinema” (139). Barrios’ journey through the history of animated musical films highlights glories like Disney’s “retro” 1989 musical *The Little Mermaid* along with less-revered offerings such as *Peter Pan* and *Alice in Wonderland*. Barrios’ insights on the more recent (and non-Disney) animated musical film *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* are particularly interesting, especially with comparisons to *Singin’ in the Rain*, *Gigi*, and *Cabaret* and the final estimation of the film as “an animated *That’s Entertainment!*” (203). As becomes apparent from his exploration of animated film, Barrios clearly leaves no stone unturned in his quest to illuminate the movie musical over the course of the book. He comes across as refreshingly unselfconscious and non-elitist, his views on *Paint Your Wagon* and *Singin’ in the Rain* excepted.

In Chapter 11, “Under My Skin: Musicals and Race, Musicals and Sexuality,” Barrios’ candor remains despite his more gingerly treatment of the subject at hand. His straightforward approach to both tales of injustice and scenes of triumph keeps the chapter from falling prey to the trap of agenda-driven diatribe, a frequent and unfortunate pitfall when dealing with race and sexuality. Barrios begins by noting the “depressing” nature of films in the 1930s and 1940s where African American actors were limited to comic or servile roles, casualties of the Production Code, and Depression-era cinema in general. Movie musicals provided some of the only “break through” opportunities for these actors, and Barrios uses Bill “Bojangles” Robinson and Louis Armstrong as examples, calling them “benign presences of staggering talent” (206). *Cabin in the Sky* is exalted as a bright spot in an unfortunate situation, and while Barrios primarily presents the plight of African American actors, he rounds out the discussion of racial issues in movie musicals by including Latin American and Chinese performers and their respective stereotypes, presenting the difficulties faced by all racial minorities.

Moving on to the gay presence in movie musicals, Barrios terms the gay population “a minority of a different sort,” as they have been typically been strongly supportive of movie musicals, often providing significant creative support though their screen existence may have been veiled or obscured (215). Barrios addresses early films as prominent as *The Broadway Melody*, noting that despite stereotyping, the film was at least displaying a lifestyle that was not being spoken of elsewhere (217). Movie musical icons such as Judy Garland and Bette Midler attracted the devotion and public support of gay audiences, the disco fever of the 1970s brought further manifestations of gay life to the screen, and then the AIDS crisis took a human and cultural toll that silenced the entertainment industry on gay culture for years. The twenty-first century brought a rise in gay-themed movie musicals, including *Were the World Mine* about a production of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at an all-male prep school. Barrios closes the chapter stating that *Were the World Mine* should spark “both gratitude for what it attempts

and a frustration different from that with which this chapter opened: the vexation that more bold and quirky musicals, gay or straight, of any or all colors, aren't being attempted" (222). If the power of movie musicals is in bringing dreams to life, as Barrios presents in the introduction, they ought to be free to express the dreams of all quirks and colors.

An epilogue titled *Dream Dancing*—which follows a discussion of movie musicals on television in chapter 12—laments the condition of current cinema with its overpowering digital effects and glorification of violence. He admits that audiences and the world have been through too much for the situation to be any other way. However, his hope for the movie musical is undaunted as he persists in believing that movie musicals do not die, “not even when neglected or lampooned or laminated or willfully misunderstood” (238). To those who say “They don’t make ‘em like that anymore,” Barrios agrees but advises that there is much to be learned from the historic body of movie musicals. With a bit of sentimentality and his ever-present wit, Barrios asserts, “Their absence is always temporary, their heritage is everlasting, and they do it without making it look hard, even in heels” (240). It is impossible to play cool and disinterested in the face of Barrios’ sincerity and dedication. If the wealth of information is daunting at times or the organization feels a bit distracting, Barrios’ passion overrides these aspects much in the same way that one’s personal adoration for a movie musical may render insignificant its lesser qualities. The answer to his question of “Why Movie Musicals Matter” is an overwhelming sentiment of joy, which is enough to convince this reader.

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Bulletin Board

The **Center for Popular Music**, a unit of **Middle Tennessee State University’s College of Mass Communication**, announces the launch of its **American Vernacular Music Manuscripts** (AVMM) website: popmusic.mtsu.edu/ManuscriptMusic. Built as part of a three-year project funded by the **National Endowment for the Humanities** and undertaken in partnership with the **American Antiquarian Society**, the AVMM site makes available for the first time hundreds of American music manuscripts from the 1730s to 1910.

The project treats American manuscripts of vernacular music, covering a period from the Colonial era to the early twentieth century. The complementary collections of the Center for Popular Music and the American Antiquarian Society are among the largest and most significant holdings of such material in the nation. Approximately 350 unique, handwritten manuscripts were included in the project, totaling more than 17,000 pages of music.

The manuscripts were all scanned in high resolution to archival standards for preservation, with the images stored at the Internet Archive. The AVMM website serves as a front page and search engine for the images, where users can search by year, song title, subject, origin, creator, and keyword. In addition, all of the project manuscripts were cataloged in MARC library format, making them accessible through WorldCat, and a set of guidelines was created to allow other institutions to catalog similar manuscripts in their collections.

Dr. Greg Reish, Director of the Center for Popular Music, notes that “the AVMM project makes available to everyone an overwhelmingly large collection of manuscripts that reveal what kinds of music Americans enjoyed at home before the advent of radio and recordings. Furthermore, the cataloging of these manuscripts was uncharted territory in the library and archival fields. What the project team accomplished will be of inestimable value not just to musicians and musical researchers, but also to other institutions who hold similar items and never knew how to deal with them.”

Dr. Thomas Knoles, Curator of Manuscripts at the American Antiquarian Society and AVMM project Co-Director, says, “Until now, repositories such as the American Antiquarian Society that had this material had no way to help researchers identify particular pieces of music in order to understand what tunes were in circulation and how widely they were copied.”

Dr. **Dale Cockrell**, former CPM Director and AVMM project Co-Director, adds that “handwritten music manuscripts by common Americans contain primary and direct evidence of their musical preferences during a particular time and in a particular place. To see, play from, or study one of these

old manuscripts brings us as close to that person's musical life as history allows."

Senior Program Officer at the National Endowment for the Humanities Joshua Sternfeld says, "NEH is pleased that such a rich collection of early American materials, collaboratively produced, will not only reveal new insight into music-making but also shed light on the social and cultural fabric of communities, including ethnic traditions, social networks, religious practices, family life, and class."

Flutist **Peter H. Bloom** continues to showcase 21st-century American music in performances across the United States. A concert of new works at Boston's Church of the Advent featured the premiere of Bloom's composition *Ablaze* for flute, viola and guitar (published by Noteworthy Sheet Music). Other recent premieres have included *Love Cries, Love Survives* by Stephen Stanziano; *At the Landing* by David Owens (performed by mezzo-soprano D'Anna Fortunato and Ensemble Aubade); *Mystic Trumpeter* by Karl Henning; and *FiLmprov Cha Cha Cha* by Mark Harvey. Bloom is a long-time member of Mark Harvey's Aardvark Jazz Orchestra, which released its 12th CD, *Impressions* (original compositions by Harvey), as the high note of the band's 42nd season (2014–2015). Contact Peter Bloom at phbloom@comcast.net.

Ralph P. Locke is taking retirement in June 2015 from the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. He has taught there for forty years, starting at age 26. At Commencement in May, Ralph will become the 2015 recipient of the University's Lifetime Achievement in Graduate Education Award. Though retiring from teaching and committee work, he will continue to edit Eastman Studies in Music, a book series published by the University of Rochester Press. The Eastman Studies series has produced over 120 monographs and essay-collections on topics ranging from medieval and Renaissance music manuscripts to recent North American composers (e.g., Claude Vivier and Steve Reich). Ralph invites potential SAM members to let him know of interesting book manuscripts (RLocke@esm.rochester.edu).

For more than thirty years, musicologist and composer **Roger Hall** has been researching the music of Stoughton, Massachusetts. This town is important for American music since it is the home of the oldest musical society in the USA, organized in 1786. This choral society, now known as The Old Stoughton Musical Society, has had many distinctions over its long history. Their constitution was written in 1787, only a few weeks after the U.S. Constitution, and they performed at the World's Fair: Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. In 1986, the Old Stoughton Musical Society celebrated its 200th anniversary with a gala concert at Stoughton High School, featuring a tune from 1770, "Stoughton," written by William Billings and a new song by Roger Hall based on the "Old Hundred" psalm tune. Hall's new book, *Dedication: Singing in Stoughton, 1762–1987*, traces the society's history from the earliest known singing meetings of 1762 to the bicentennial of its Constitution in 1987. The book is available on a multi-media CD-ROM with additional historical information, and an album of music by 18th century composers including Supply Belcher, William Billings, Jacob French, Oliver Holden, Jeremiah Ingalls and Daniel Read. For more about *Dedication*, and other DVDs and CDs, see this link: www.americanmusicpreservation.com/stoughtonmusicseries.htm.

Conference News

SAM members are encouraged to periodically check the Golden Pages website (goldenpages.jpehs.co.uk/conferences) for updated information about additional forthcoming conferences in musicology.

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The Bulletin of the Society for American Music

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Items for submission should be submitted to Laura Moore Pruett as an attachment to e-mail.

Photographs or other graphic materials should be accompanied by captions and desired location in the text. Deadlines for submission of materials are 15 December, 15 April, and 15 August.

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Awards, Fellowships, and Subventions of the Society

Further information is available at the website (american-music.org) or by contacting the SAM office [sam@american-music.org].

Student Travel Grants

Available for student members who wish to attend the annual conference of the Society for American Music and intended to help with the cost of travel. Students receiving funds must be members of the Society and enrolled at a college or university.

Mark Tucker Award

Awarded at the annual SAM conference recognizing a student who has written an outstanding paper for presentation at that conference.

Cambridge University Press Award

This award is presented to an international scholar (not a student) for an outstanding paper presented at the annual conference.

Adrienne Fried Block Fellowship

The Block Fellowship supports scholarly research leading to publication on topics that illuminate musical life in large urban communities, focusing on the interconnections and the wide range of genres present in these metropolitan settings.

Wiley Housewright Dissertation Award

The Wiley Housewright Dissertation Award annually recognizes a single dissertation on American music for its exceptional depth, clarity, significance, and overall contribution to the field.

H. Earle Johnson Bequest for Book Publication Subvention

The Johnson Subvention is given to support the costs of the publication of a significant monograph on an important topic in American Music. Two subventions of up to \$2,500 may be awarded annually.

Sight and Sound Subvention

The Sight and Sound Subvention provides financial assistance to facilitate the publication of non-print material concerning American music. Such material may include film, DVD, CD and other audio/visual formats, radio programs, website development, or other projects that further the Society's mission and goals. One subvention of up to \$900 is awarded annually.

Irving Lowens Memorial Book and Article Awards

The Lowens Award is presented annually for an exceptional book and article that make important contributions to the study of American music or music in America.

Judith Tick Fellowship

This fellowship, endowed in honor of Judith Tick, is awarded competitively to scholars at any phase of their careers to support scholarly research leading to publication on topics that have been the focus of Prof. Tick's distinguished career: women's music-making across time and musical genres, musical biography, and source studies in American music.

Graziano Fellowship

This fellowship, endowed by John and Roberta Graziano, shall be given to support scholarly research in all genres of music that originated in the United States in the nineteenth century, as well as other music performed in North America during that historical period.

Hampson Education Fellowship in American Song

The Hampson Fellowship supports projects developed by educators who wish to explore the repertory of American classic song as a means to understand the broader narrative of American history and culture.

Virgil Thomson Fellowship

The Virgil Thomson Fellowship is awarded competitively to scholars at any phase of their careers whose interest is focused on the history, creation, and analysis of American music on stage and screen, including opera.

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