

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
• OF THE •
AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Fall Meeting

October 6, 2024
La Sierra University

Program

All events to be held in Hole Memorial Auditorium.

An asterisk () indicates authors who will be presenting at the national AMS conference in November*

9:00–9:30am Registration / Breakfast Reception

9:30–10:30am **Session I – Meta-Compositional Commentary in Classic Forms**
Chair: TBD

“Atomic Sonata: Destroying Form in Boulez’s Second Piano Sonata”
Benjamin Havey (University of Missouri-Kansas City)

“Musical Theologies of Time and Memory in Buxtehude’s *Jesu dulcis memoria* (BuxWV 57)”
Malachai Bandy (Pomona College)

10:30–10:45am Coffee Break

10:45–11:30am **Becoming the Real Deal, the Complete Package**
A visioning and job market workshop for students and junior scholars

Panelists: TBD

11:30–1:00pm Lunch Break

1:00pm–2:30pm **Session II – Popular Music and Popular History**
Chair: TBD

“Minding the Gender Gap: (Re)Writing Music History on Wikipedia”
*Kate Hamori (University of California, Los Angeles) **

Abstracts

Abstracts are listed in the order that they appear on the program.

“Atomic Sonata: Destroying Form in Boulez’s Second Piano Sonata”

Benjamin Havey (University of Missouri-Kansas City)

Pierre Boulez’s Second Piano Sonata (1946-1948) attempts to destroy classical forms, and the first movement targets sonata form. The result is musically powerful and historically influential, although previous accounts of this Sonata assert that the destruction of form is inaudible (e.g. Salem 2023 and Campbell 2010). I argue that Boulez destroys sonata form in the first movement by replacing resolution with fusion. My reading of Boulez’s Sonata prioritizes audibility of the form through musical narrative and intertextuality, which challenges assumptions about audibility in postwar modernism.

Boulez uses expected conventions of sonatas in the exposition and development. The first theme group is defined by thrashing arpeggios and a short-short-short-long rhythm. This rhythmic cell is an audible connection to Beethoven’s “Fate Motif.” The second theme is a chorale, distinguishable through texture and tempo changes. After a brief development that explores the first theme, Boulez eases into the recapitulation. Instead of preparing harmonic resolution, the recapitulation oscillates between the theme groups through breathtaking climaxes. The final bars replace an expected cadence with a climax that combines both themes. Boulez fuses the material of the chorale and arpeggios to end the movement explosively.

Like Ravel’s *La Valse*, Boulez’s Sonata both celebrates and undermines a genre through narrative. My reading also recontextualizes Boulez’s early work as a reflection of post-war France, including the stylistic explorations in Paris and the transition from WWII to the Cold War. This reading also provides clarity for non-specialists to perform or write about this Sonata for general audiences.

“Musical Theologies of Time and Memory in Buxtehude’s *Jesu dulcis memoria* (BuxWV 57)”

Malachai Bandy (Pomona College)

Like the cosmos itself, rules of perpetuity and circularity govern the most conspicuous forms of early modern musical clockwork: *basso ostinato* (ground bass) compositions. These works use a repeated, typically unchanging bass melody as structural platform for more varied material in other voices—a practice that touches virtually every early modern Western genre, both sacred and secular, vocal and instrumental, and in both joyful and *lamento* contexts, as McClary, Wilson, Silbiger, and Rosow have shown. Using a theoretical framework informed by these and related studies (Berger, Varwig, Butt), this paper situates and probes *ostinato* musical procedures relative to 17th-century German philosophies of memory and timekeeping—human markers of temporality that also point to theological eternities and mathematical infinities. In this light, Dieterich Buxtehude’s (ca.1637–1707) *ostinato* setting of *Jesu dulcis memoria* contains rich extra-musical commentary about time in its structural organization, which foregrounds music’s simultaneous possibility for measurement and endlessness; this merits a more explicitly theological investigation than currently exists in print.

Textually, *Jesu dulcis memoria* presents a formidable compositional challenge: portraying “time,” “memory,” and “eternity” beyond time itself in music, a medium that requires temporal unfolding for basic intelligibility. Buxtehude approaches this from the “ground” up, in an *ostinato* pattern of lines and leaps that, when quoted and re-woven into other voices, reach the listener as lived “memory” in true-to-life fragmentation. Meanwhile, he meets the work’s superlative-laden text with continually juxtaposed musical joy (even hilarity in musical-textual puns) and gravitas, which adds layers of dialectic to the work’s overarching paradox as a measure-bound meditation on divine infinitude. This treatment recalls contemporary philosophies of memory (Fludd, Bruno), mathematical infinity (Leibniz), and Lutheran concepts of eternity (Gerhard), as Buxtehude’s composition appears to proceed neither forward nor backward, but rather in geometrical triangles circulating from its center outward, resisting linear progression. Ultimately, these features of *Jesu dulcis memoria* reveal rhetorical power in *ostinato* technique that exceeds the bounds of this individual work: with theological agency, Buxtehude’s *ostinato* design points beyond the page toward profound contemplation of God and eternity—concepts with which humanity, in its own perpetual repetition, continues to grapple.

“Minding the Gender Gap: (Re)Writing Music History on Wikipedia”

Kate Hamori (University of California, Los Angeles)

Every day, hundreds of amateur historians gather in cyberspace to write (and rewrite) music history on the seventh most visited website worldwide: Wikipedia. Despite longstanding concerns about its reliability, Wikipedia finds its way onto our phone screens and into our daily lives, whether we are looking up a composer's dates mid-lecture, trying to remember how to spell Penderecki's first name for a research paper, or simply perusing a list of music considered the worst. But demographic information collected by the Wikimedia Foundation has revealed a significant gender gap in the Wikipedia editing community: As of 2022, only 13% of Wikipedia contributors (or Wikipedians) were women. While Wikipedia's insistence on citing reliable sources gives us some sense of how the sausage gets made, the majority of Wikipedia readers are unaware of the platform's rigorous editing policies, which quietly but profoundly shape article content by controlling how information is presented, what details are considered encyclopedic, and what constitutes a “reliable source.” Wikipedia's content policies construct a reality that reflects both the values and the blindspots of the (overwhelmingly male) Wikipedian population, presenting a reference source rife with systemic bias to its vast audience (which averages over 200 million readers daily.)

In this paper, I consider how the procedures and values adopted by Wikipedia and its editors influence how popular music history has been (and continues to be) written on the crowd-sourced reference site. In doing so, I identify the unique challenges that Wikipedia's core content policies (“Neutral Point of View,” “Verifiability,” and “No Original Research”) pose to music historiography. Following Darren Mueller's (2019) assertion that we as musicologists have much to learn from reading Wikipedia, I suggest that we have just as much to learn from writing it, arguing that a thorough understanding of Wikipedia's content policies, especially in relation to music, presents new opportunities for music scholars to actively and ethically participate in the (re)writing of music history on the world's largest free encyclopedia.

“Synthesizers as Markers of Identity in the ‘Ost-Berlin School’ of East German Electronic Rock”

Heather Moore (University of Southern California)

Throughout the 1980s, a small, yet thriving group of East German musicians sought to create their own Krautrock-inspired electronic sounds. Unfazed by the logistics of accomplishing this in the GDR – merely obtaining a synthesizer entailed breaking laws and spending thousands – artists like POND, Servi, Key, and Rainer Oleak produced several albums ranging in style from sweeping electronic soundscapes to bouncy proto-synthpop. While recent research on Krautrock overlooks these innovations in the GDR (Adelt 2013; Schütte 2016; Schütte 2022), the musicians who cultivated this style identified as a branch of Krautrock, inspired by, though distinct from, their Western counterparts. Equipment played a key role in forming this identity: hearing – and *seeing* – the impressive synthesizer displays of Western artists like Tangerine Dream and Klaus Schultze not only inspired these musicians to explore new sounds, but also informed their self-perception and legitimization as electronic artists.

Drawing on archival material, interviews, and private holdings, this paper explores the multifaceted role that synthesizers played in the cultivation of the electronic scene in the GDR. Seeing domestic instruments as inadequate, these musicians took significant risks to illegally acquire Western synthesizers like the Jupiter 6 and the Minimoog. In doing so, they could utilize the sounds they associated with the progenitors of this style. Instruments also played a role in the way these artists differentiated themselves from their Western counterparts, creating a musical identity that was unique in both the GDR and the global electronic scene. Many claimed to have a deeper, more technical understanding of their equipment than the Western artists with whom they interacted, treating this technical knowledge as a basis for legitimacy, and a way to establish themselves as a separate musical scene.

Building on studies assessing the significance of gear to identity-building in popular music scenes (Herbst/Menze 2023; Broess 2023) and the complex art world of East German popular music (Hayton 2022; Zaddach 2022), this paper argues that synthesizers played a crucial role in the ways these artists self-identified, developed their sounds, and situated themselves both within the East German musical community and in the international electronic music scene.

“Night of the Social Dead: Hip-hop, Zombies, and the Aesthetics of Vulgarly in Lupe Fiasco's *The Cool*”

Alexander Joshua Moore (University of California, Los Angeles)

Originating from Haitian voodoo, the concept of the “zombie” is inherently rooted in Afrodiasporic cultural memory by religion and folklore. Traditionally, the zombie serves as a folkloric cautionary character: a deceased individual that is ritualistically resurrected and is forced into slavery. Contemporary depictions of the zombie in media today dissociate from and overshadow the rich cultural and religious history in favor of highlighting the degradation and violence as a means of exemplifying horror. This paper examines how this negative representation leads to stereotyping Black individuals as violent and nonhuman. In *On the Postcolony*, Achille Mbembe posits that the African-descended encounter “negative interpretation” in a world post-slavery. Orlando Patterson calls this “social death,” where he considers all Black people as figuratively dead at birth—frequently battling for essential human rights. I frame this paper upon racist contemporary depictions of the Black zombie and how these interpretations reflect upon the socially dead Black individual.

In 2007, Chicago-born rapper, Lupe Fiasco, released a concept album, *The Cool*, weaving together a narrative that follows a Black man who is murdered from gang violence and is miraculously resurrected. *The Cool* tells a story of cultural memory, inner-city struggle, and social death as the protagonist attempts to navigate through a second life as a Black zombie. Often interpreted as violent, hip-hop music and culture has allowed Black musicians to communicate political and social commentary. Musicologist William Cheng writes about how hip-hop music reinforced racist stereotyping during the #BlackLivesMatter movement, where Black bodies have unjustly been perceived as both inhuman and superhuman, much like a zombie. Using Afropessimism and Afrofuturism, this paper investigates the Afrodystopic horror imposed onto Black bodies by connecting the violent characterizations and interpretations of hip-hop music and culture to the popular depictions of the Black zombie. The zombie, originating from cultural fable, is reimagined in Fiasco’s concept album as a tragic hero involved in a twisted web of social misfortune. This metaphorical storytelling successfully allows the audience to retroactively and introspectively reconsider the stock character, and hip-hop, as empathetic--representative and reflective of sociopolitical injustice rather than intrinsic truth.

“Stravinsky and Ingolf Dahl: Portrait of Collaboration”

Craig Parker (Kansas State University)

During his American years (1939-81), Igor Stravinsky maintained close associations with many younger musicians, notably composers Alexei Haieff and Ingolf Dahl, composer/impresario Lawrence Morton, and conductor/author Robert Craft. Of these, the Stravinsky/Craft association is the best known, due to their numerous collaborations on recordings, books, and conducting engagements.

Before meeting Craft in 1948, Stravinsky’s closest musical associate in America was Ingolf Dahl (1912-70). Born in Hamburg of Swedish parents, Dahl settled in Los Angeles in 1938. From 1945 until his death, he taught at the University of Southern California, where he conducted the orchestra, taught composition, and gave courses on Stravinsky’s music. A virtuoso pianist, Dahl often performed Stravinsky’s works, culminating in the premiere of Stravinsky’s final composition, *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat* (Monday Evening Concerts, 31 October 1966). Dahl collaborated with Stravinsky in interviews, and wrote reviews, program notes, and essays about Stravinsky’s music. Stravinsky’s Norton Lectures (given in French at Harvard in 1939-40 and published as *Poétique Musicale*) were translated by Dahl and published as *Poetics of Music* (1947). Dahl also made piano reductions of Stravinsky’s *Scenes de Ballet* and *Danses Concertantes*. These two composers often socialized, and even exchanged greetings in the form of musical canons.

This paper details the mutually beneficial Stravinsky/Dahl association and elaborates upon the birthday canon Stravinsky wrote for Dahl in 1952 (a work uncovered by the author in the UCLA’s Lawrence Morton collection and which is not discussed in any Stravinsky literature). Excerpts from the unpublished Stravinsky/Dahl correspondence will also be quoted.

“Socially Unifying or Dividing? Opera’s Significance for Italian Immigrant Audiences in Early Twentieth-Century America”

Daniela Smolov Levy (Occidental College)

The establishment of New York’s Metropolitan Opera House in 1883 cemented opera’s growing association with social prestige in the popular imagination. Yet the public’s use of opera as a mode of social distinction was far from the genre’s primary function in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Recent scholarship has examined Italian immigrants’ use of opera as a means of social cohesion and uplift in Philadelphia during this period (Agugliaro 2021), as well the importance of early opera recordings and popular songs on operatic topics to the formation of Italian identity in America more broadly (Agugliaro 2023, Hamberlin 2011). However, despite New York’s status as the economic and cultural – including operatic – epicenter of America during this period, the Italian immigrant public’s involvement with opera there has not yet received comparable scholarly treatment.

My research begins to fill this gap in scholarship by examining Italian immigrants’ engagement with opera in early twentieth-century New York, and especially the little-known rich and dynamic immigrant-oriented scene of opera at “cheap” or “popular” prices. My scholarship thus also builds on current interest in examining “operatic peripheries” (Kotnik 2019) and extends recent work on Jewish immigrants’ involvement with mainstream operatic institutions like the Met (Cooper, forthcoming).

In this paper, I argue that for New York’s Italian immigrant community, opera functioned in a way entirely contrary to how it functioned for Anglo-American audiences: for the Italians, opera was an activity that erased, not highlighted, social divisions. I also compare opera’s significance for Italians to its significance for other contemporary immigrant groups, including Jews and Germans. Through an examination of opera coverage in Italian, English, and Yiddish newspapers and other publications, I show how opera in Lower East Side theaters unified the Italian immigrant public, even as in other theaters, especially farther uptown, opera finely sliced the public into social groupings. This paper therefore contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the turn-of-the-century American opera scene by shedding light on both the diversity of operatic experiences and on the genre’s ability to simultaneously hold a tremendously wide range of cultural and social meanings.

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