

The US chapter of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music announces our annual conference, April 11-14, 2024, hosted by Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA.

Call for papers

### **“You know how we do”: Popular Music and Communality**

Discussions of popular music frequently center individual actors: the star, the producer, or the listener. Such narratives allow for exploration of personal expression and insight. But they can overlook the communal elements and mass appeal of popular music. As the late Howard S. Becker illustrated in his foundational work on “art worlds,” popular music is the product of a group of creators: songwriters and lyricists, studio musicians, sound engineers, promoters, dancers, and more.

What can we learn by exploring the collaborative aspects of popular music? Many great musical moments result from surprisingly harmonious musical synergies. Conventional genre distinctions have resulted in new forms of cross-musical hybridity. Yet the social implications that follow from such genre distinctions persist, and continue to be reinforced by deep social, political, class, regional, and ethnic divisions. For many Americans, “freedom” has come to mean the right to express individual interests and pursue personalized goals, no matter the effects on others. Reminders during the early period of the COVID-19 pandemic that “we’re all in this together” may not have shifted self-focused Americans’ priorities to the communal. “Social” media, ostensibly a means of connecting people, often centers the individual while managing its promised “connections” for the company or advertisers’ own aims, such as harvesting users’ data. Even group activism around identity, oppression, and justice can risk being individualist in excluding some participants. However, when the nation’s attention turned toward police brutality and racism in the summer of 2020, the resulting protests tapped into collaborative and coalitional organizations that were already embedded in communities and ready to carry a movement forward to important social change. Individualism has also made possible previously new expressions of self beyond existing categories and norms, inspiring new collective identifications as well as calling for new coalitions with existing groups. Communal thinking seems needed when understanding humans as animals, who are at least partly dependent on one another for survival. How does this necessity of interaction feature in popular music? How does collaboration shift over time with the adaptation of new technologies? How might the joy of the communal in popular music inspire people to think more collectively in general? What can be learned from musical collaborations gone wrong, whether musically, socially, commercially, or otherwise, and due to mismatch, miscommunication, abuse of power, or exclusion, for example? What can we learn about communal engagement in musicking environments from examples of different popular music?

This year, IASPM-US will meet in Philadelphia, a name that translates as “The City of Brotherly Love.” We invite conversation around all forms of popular music’s interactive,

collaborative, and communal properties. Possible topics for papers or panel submissions include but are not limited to:

Band dynamics

Artistic collaborations or mentoring, short or long term

Workshops, song circles, and festivals

Camps and group educational settings

Interactions in the studio and rehearsal spaces

Venues that serve as third spaces

Collectives and coalitions

Social dance, line dancing, dancing choruses, choreography

The audience (live and in person or virtual)

Listener engagement in virtual or live spaces

Fan clubs and communities

Communal elements of popular music journalism

Hearing/analyzing the communal in the sounds of popular music

Analysis as a communal activity

Music scenes

The exploitation and gatekeeping realities of collective activity

Popular music marketplaces

Interconnections and inspirations between popular music and other creative fields

Cross-genre creativity

Sampling/Interpolation (versus copyright)

Digital music making collaborations

The role of the communal in music made by artificial intelligence

The business and legal sides of/interventions in popular music collaboration

Please submit proposals via Google Form at <https://forms.gle/8Qu4ZD8cjSXJ9Jrc9> no later than **midnight (Eastern Standard Time) November 20, 2023**. The form will collect information such as the presenter's name, institutional affiliation (if any), current email address (required for program decisions and conference communications), current membership status in IASPM, the intention to present in person (encouraged) or virtually, and a 100-word bio.

- Individual submissions should include a paper title, the presenter's name, contact information, a 250-word abstract, and a list of 3-5 keywords. Abstracts should identify the methodology used, state the paper's goals, summarize the context and argument of the paper, and include a brief conclusion.
- Organized panels, consisting of 3-4 papers, should include a 250-word description of the panel's rationale and goals, a 250-word abstract for each individual participating in the panel, and a list of 3-5 keywords.
- Roundtables, consisting of a moderated conversation with 4-6 participants, require a single 250-word abstract, a list of 3-5 keywords, a list of roundtable members, and should designate one person as the panel chair.
- Alternative presentations should include a 250-word description of the presentation, a list of 3-5 keywords, the delivery format, and special requirements beyond standard AV-equipment.

Individual presentations of 20 minutes will be followed immediately by a 10-minute question and answer period. Roundtables and organized panels can be allotted up to a two-hour time slot. Abstracts not adhering to the word count will not be considered.

Please note: All conference presenters must be IASPM members by the time they register for the conference. For membership and conference information visit: <https://iaspm-us.net/>

Program committee: Shana Goldin-Perschbacher (chair), Justin Burton, Ya-Hui Cheng, Jasmine Henry, and Rebekah Moore. You may direct general questions to the president of IASPM-US, Anthony Kwame Harrison at anharri5 at vt dot edu. Questions about the program can be sent to Shana Goldin-Perschbacher at profgp at temple dot edu.