
Busking, street performances for donations, has been associated with cultural activities and urban life for centuries. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the situation for buskers drastically: measures imposed by many governments to prevent the spread of the virus have (had) an immediate effect on artists, whose occupation is heavily dependent on public performances. The extensive shutdown of public life and the associated restrictions for buskers were particularly noticeable in metropolitan areas such as New York City. Performing in New York’s subway system, one of the most popular and most frequented locations for buskers was temporarily banned. Buskers are gradually returning since mid-2021. Following the hypothesis that the COVID-19 pandemic comes with crisis experiences and (new) challenges for busking, and therefore has an impact on the buskers’ (mental) health, the study aims to analyze the (post-)pandemic situation of buskers in the New York underground. By using first-person accounts based on narrative-biographic interviews accompanied by participant observation and expert interviews, the study investigates the buskers’ current living environments, focusing on their well-being. This approach allows for deep insights into the subjective realities of buskers and forms the basis for an effective debate on the deficits and challenges musical life is currently facing.

Maria Teresa Lacerda, “This Song Is Called ‘Dignity’: Crises Seen Through the Paths of Street Musicians in Lisbon”

How can we understand the crisis from the streets? What bodies claim it, and what voices make themselves heard? Are we talking about a crisis or multiple crises (Leone 2016)? This presentation intends to answer these questions based on ethnographic work, with street musicians who perform in Lisbon, Portugal. In addition to the locals, there we find street musicians from Brazil, Germany, Nigeria, and Ukraine. In a single time and place, multiple perceptions of crisis intersect. The Lisbon metropolitan area was one of the regions most affected by the covid-19 pandemic in Portugal, accentuating vulnerabilities that already exist in an unequal society (Alves et al. 2021; Gouveia and Almeida 2022). Street musicians who then performed in the city do not forget the hardships they experienced. Contrastingly, two years later, the tourism-dependent city seems to have returned to normality (Sánchez-Fuarros and Lacerda 2022), attracting new musicians to Lisbon. For some it is a gateway to Europe, envisioned as a place with more job opportunities. Others seek the political stability, security, and peace that they associate with Portugal. The paths of street musicians reveal the real impact of political, military, and humanitarian crises, but also their resilience, joy, and dignity.
Russell Skelchy, “A Culture of Sharing: Mutual Aid, COVID-19 and a Punk Infoshop in Manila, Philippines”

Located on the Pasig River in the eastern metro Manila area of the Philippines, Etniko Bandido is a community resource center and infoshop that provides an autonomous space for the dissemination of alternative resources and information, including punk and political zines, journals, and books. The space is frequented by locals and visitors who gather to discuss ideas and issues, and organize events such as music workshops, film screenings, and book club meetings.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, with Manila under strict lockdown, Etniko became an integral hub for the safe distribution of food, medical supplies, and accurate information about the pandemic. The paper examines the response of Etniko’s network of local musicians, artists, and activists to reconfigure the infoshop’s physical space and its political mission of mutual aid to address the needs of the community. For instance, after COVID regulations were implemented, Etniko members organized the “really free market” where basic food and medical items and services (such as haircuts) were given free of charge to those in need. In this sense, the paper examines how Filipinos’ response to the pandemic can be more widely contextualized in the Philippines’ “culture of disaster” and its responses to other catastrophic natural events.

B. Korean Pop and Politics (Political Crises stream)


South and North Korean music exchange, begun in 1985 peace event confirming ethnic homogeneity, has continued intermittently according to the tensions on the peninsula after its division. The 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games became one such symbolic event. To mark the Olympics, performing troupes visited both Seoul and P’yongyang. In their performances, popular music from each side was featured—not the traditional music which had been the predominant genre in previous inter-Korea events. It was surprising that popular music was featured in such an inter-Korea peace event while fully excluding indigenous music. In this regard, I seek to answer the following questions: How should one interpret the “national” status of popular music? How could the Korean identity—previously represented by “traditional (indigenous) music”—be now described via popular music? How was that “ethnicity” represented and declared in the peace event’s music? In what dimensions are the desires and achievements that both Koreas expressed or expected through popular music alike or different? This paper discusses an aspect of Cold War politics on the Korean Peninsula in the twenty-first century, the positioning of popular music, and the implications for popular music as nation and peace.

Keewoong Lee, “Popular Music and Disaster: The Place of Music in Seoul Halloween Crowd Crush”

On 29 October 2022, more than 150 Halloween crowd were killed in crowd crush in Itaewon, one of Seoul’s most vibrant entertainment districts. The South Korean government immediately
declared a seven-day national mourning period. During the period, numerous public events, many of them popular music related, were either cancelled or postponed as a gesture of condolence often at the behest of local governments or event organizers. It effectively silenced and deprived popular music of its place in the time of national tragedy. Indeed, the stories about loud dance music blasted from nearby clubs and party songs chanted by the street crowd in close proximity to the scene of disaster were mobilized to paint a negative picture of the festival. However, some artists challenged this exclusion and silencing by arguing that it is an essential function of popular music to provide consolation and healing the pain in times of collective suffering. By looking into the disaster and unfolding of the events in its wake, this presentation explores the complex and multifarious ways in which popular music gets involved and takes position in social disaster.

Paroma Ghose, “‘Look What You Made Us Do’: K-pop and the Crisis in Global Governance”

In January 2022, American talk show host Jimmy Kimmel likened South Korean group BTS’ burgeoning popularity to the spread of an “Asian virus.” His comments stirred fleeting controversy, and were quickly forgotten once Kimmel apologised for his misplaced humour. Despite BTS’s immense global cultural capital, their musical prowess has outpaced cultural cognizance. BTS’ rise, and the growing acclaim of Korean popular music at large, is experienced as an anomaly by the crudely defined if still relevant category of ‘the West’. Although South Korean popular culture (post-1987), characterised as a ‘postcolonial interruption’ (Yoon 2017), poses the first real challenge to Western dominion over the global cultural sphere, Korean and Western cultural actors do not meet as equals on the international stage. Contemporary geopolitical norms defined by past, unequal power relations (colonialism, conflict, trade, globalisation, etc.) and their resultant cumulative prejudice, still govern the terms of these encounters. Thus, the rising popularity of an increasingly commercial, predominantly apolitical popular music, has inadvertently evinced fractures in historical systems of global governance through its geographic provenance. Using examples from South Korean popular music, this paper will historicize the unfolding geopolitical crisis, which global encounters between national ‘representations’ of popular culture have exposed.

C. Elvis (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)

Ajitpaul Mangat, “Love You to Death: Elvis, Fandom, and the Ethics of Consumption”

This paper considers how the 2022 film, Elvis, represents the music industry as resolving crises in capital accumulation through the commodification of the musician. While a number of critics have complained that the film foregrounds the perspective of Elvis’ manager, Colonel Tom Parker, this paper argues that such a narrative choice allows for a vital political reinvention of the music biopic: it alters the focus of this genre from interiority to exteriority, identity to process, artistic genius to the commodification of artistic labor. This paper begins by showing how The Colonel is able to commodify Elvis’ creativity through a disciplinary apparatus that ranges from the psychological (exploitation of grief) to the legal (deceitful contracts) to the biological (enforced pharmaceutical drugging). It then focuses on how Elvis shifts towards its ending from the production and exchange of labor to the moment of consumption, with the Colonel
suggesting that what killed Elvis was not “me” or “the pills” or “his heart” but rather his “love for you.” The film thereby, this paper concludes, forces viewers (“you”) to position their fandom, or “love,” in relation to the process of commodification and to interrogate the ethics of their own consumption.

Robert Fry, “Elvis Is the Building: The King and the Placement and Personification of Musical Sound”

Nashville invites fans to go beyond mediated sound and interact with geographical, social, and sonic spaces, which reconnects listeners to the places and people that inspired, shaped, and documented musical sound. The desire for such experience is increasing with new technologies and the corresponding displacement and de-personification of musical sound and production. In response, Nashville has transformed its downtown, specifically Lower Broadway, into a consolidated and theme park-like performative space, which permits and encourages fans to perform within the shadows of the celebrated tradition. Within this performance, Nashville’s story of Elvis Presley is presented in unique ways, yet each is complimentary to the overall Music City experience. In this paper, I will discuss two Nashville representations of Elvis: Broadway Elvis, which I suggest serves as a signifier of an imagined American identity, the past, and the spectacle nature of tourism, and Music Row Elvis, which I suggest serves as a personification of Nashville as a historic and ongoing place of performance and production. These two representations and resulting experiences complement each other, highlight the experiential focus of Nashville’s tourism industry, and, in the process, reconnect mediated sounds to place and persona.

Mark Duffett, “A Family Affair?: Disability and Elvis Fandom in Touched by Love (Trikonis, 1980)”

There are relatively few studies of popular music audiences, and even fewer on the topic of music fandom and disability in fiction. Directed by Gus Trikonis, Touched by Love (1980) is a Columbia Pictures melodrama about a girl with cerebral palsy who is emotionally isolated after being abandoned by her parents. When a new female care assistant arrives at her home and tries to form a bond, initially the going is tough. Things get easier when the carer realizes that her charge is an Elvis fan. Since much of the care takes place outside of professional parameters, the film arguably portrays an instance of music fandom as part of a surrogate family environment. I will discuss Touched by Love as a filmic representation situated in the context of the early 1980s, a time where music, politics, and the family were in a state of historical transformation. With its capacity to tug on the heart strings, Touched by Love works as entertainment, and its gendered representation of fandom and disability is ambivalent in relation to the politics of its era.

D. Social Media and Musical Sociality (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)

Adam Behr, “Changing the Tune: The Shifting Dynamics of Musical Content in Election Campaigns”

From verses on cheaply printed ‘broadside ballads’ in eighteenth-century England, and election songs at the birth of American democracy, music has long been a component of political
campaigning. Its deployment has altered substantially, initially in the face of shifts associated with growth of mass media (broadcast, recording) and, latterly, the rise of social media and accompanying digital technology. This paper discusses the shifting dynamics of musical interventions in the election process as digital distribution – exemplified by streaming – becomes predominant. With primary examples from the UK, though drawing on discussions elsewhere, it examines the introduction into electoral politics of material by activists and party machines alike that draws on the aesthetic of ‘produsers’ (Bruns) – where the boundary between production and consumption is blurred. As party dominated formats (like election broadcasts) have given way in recent campaigns to a more fluid, digital mode of musical electioneering (Behr and Street, Behr), the opportunities for deploying data-driven techniques – like the manipulation of the music charts – have entered the equation. This paper outlines these developments and looks towards the challenges such uses (and potential misuses) of music, as both content and data, pose for broadcasters, regulators and the conduct of elections.

Select bibliography:


Manlin Wang, “The 'Music Socialising' of Chinese Online Music Platform — A Case Study of WeSing”
The digital music industry, represented by online music platforms, has become the fastest-growing field in China's music industry. By June 2022, the number of online music users in China has continued to increase to 727 million. Meanwhile, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in recent years has gradually highlighted 'socialising' as the core attribute of the Internet in China. "Music Socialising" has become popular and has helped develop online music platforms in China with the mode of 'music + social' communication. More specifically, the network users joining the online music platform gradually formed an active virtual social network music community due to their personalised music interests and preferences. And the user has generated content constantly spawned a subdivided Internet culture circle.

This paper will emphasise a case study of the Chinese online Karaoke music platform WeSing, which has a large number of users with an average monthly active user of 130 million in 2021. The paper will take online ethnography and social network analysis as research methods to pursue:

1. Defining the concept of 'music socialising' of the online music platform.
2. Categorising the social interaction behaviours of users in the online music platform.
3. Finding actual communication content in online music platforms.

**Eirik Jacobsen, “Independent and Dependent: Distributing Independent Music Projects on Social Media”**

With internet and the so-called “democratization of music,” independent musicians are still dependent on internet industry giants such as Meta, Spotify, and Google. Due to the possible massive reach of these platforms in context of the mass participation of cultural production and tremendous competition for audiences today, the choice not to work with these giants is not feasible for many independent artists. Previous studies points towards a world of discrimination rather than democratization for independents, where they still are systematically disadvantaged by the major record companies when it comes to negotiate deals with the giants in digital promotion and distribution (Hesmondhalgh & Meier, 2015).

For independent artists with limited resources for outreach in comparison to established major label artists, social media has an increasingly presence in their musical work, which has created new types of laboring practices including a heavy emphasis on self-promotion (Baym, 2018; Suhr, 2012). Based on an in-depth study of independent music projects in Oslo, Norway, this paper will investigate how the socio-economic position, as well as negotiations with the structural and commercial infrastructure of social media platforms, affects these independent musician’s approach to present and promote their music projects in the broader context of digital distribution.

**E. Black Male Stars, Songs, and Subjects (Crisis of Identity and Subjectivity stream)**

**Jeff Kuykendall, “Sly Stone’s ‘Somebody’s Watching You’”**

In 1970, Little Sister, a Black and female American vocal trio, released “Somebody’s Watching You.” Written and produced by Sly Stone, a Black artist himself, the hit single was a landmark
departure from the soul music dominating that era’s US airwaves. Incorporating sparse but innovative instrumentation and technology, namely the Maestro Rhythm King, Stone crafts a rhythmically subdued track featuring whispered vocals and lyrics highlighting downfall and disappointment. More pertinently, Stone’s creative use of wordplay and musical sounds appears to transform “Somebody’s Watching You” into a Black social statement on racism, drug addiction, and US government surveillance.

This paper is a critical reflection on Stone’s motivations for writing and producing Little Sister’s “Somebody’s Watching You.” Following Thomas Turino’s perspectives on rhemes, it provides an imagined but probable interpretation of the said song. Centrally, this paper argues that Little Sister’s “Somebody’s Watching You” is a dark and alarming listening experience highlighting the non-consensual loss of privacy through unwanted surveillance, specifically wiretapping. While the said song may be a bleak commentary from America’s past, it still has important considerations for the present. As such, this paper also touches upon contemporary issues of race and American exceptionalism, technological democracy, and surveillance technology.

Griffin Woodworth, “Piano & a Microphone and Prince’s Crisis of Representation”

Near the end of his life, Minnesota artist Prince began several unexpectedly revealing projects, suggesting a crisis of self-representation. These included his first-ever solo tour sans backing band (titled Piano and a Microphone), opening his Paisley Park recording complex for public tours, and co-writing his autobiography. Prince structured his solo shows biographically, playing songs in chronological order from his earliest albums and sharing personal anecdotes. Similarly, he began his autobiography talking about his childhood and how his parents influenced his creativity and personality. And on rare nights, he began inviting audience members to tour the inner sanctum of his private recording studio. To many, these seemed like surprising decisions given Prince’s privacy and reluctance to discuss his past. However, I argue that his late-career retrospection and self-revelation were the logical next steps for an artist who had long fought to control every aspect of his work and image, and in this paper, I explore what these three interconnected projects say about the construction of identity in Prince’s work and how, ultimately, Prince may have wanted to represent his own legacy.

Anthony Kwame Harrison, “From European (Queen) to Caribbean (Queen): Putting Billy Ocean Back in His Place”

Since its founding, the NAACP’s official magazine, The Crisis: A Record of The Darker Races, has chronicled triumphs and challenges facing Black America by focusing on historical documentation, political advocacy, and creative expression. Yet in the decades following what is, arguably, the NAACP’s most outstanding historical achievement—the passing of key civil rights legislations during the 1950s/60s—Black creative expression in fields of popular music experienced its own crisis surrounding irreconcilable notions of “Black” and “mainstream” (Brackett 2016). In the midst of these convulsions, Black British singer Billy Ocean’s “Caribbean Queen (No More Love On the Run)” ascended to Number One on Billboard’s Hot 100 chart. The surprise success of “Caribbean Queen” is amplified by the fact that an earlier British release of the same song, titled “European Queen,” failed miserably in the UK. This presentation examines the signal difference between Ocean’s European and Caribbean Queens
through a critical race framework that foregrounds issues of transnational racial intolerance, ongoing containment of Black music, and the terms through which Black British musicians access the US market. Like The Crisis, “European Queen” challenged White Supremacy and upheld interracial ideals. Nevertheless, the workings of the market put Billy Ocean back in his place.

F. Staging the Voice (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Live Haugejorden Schau, “Vocal Staging and Identity in Electronic Music”

Technological advances have throughout history had huge impacts on vocal expression in music and this has affected aesthetics in different forms of popular music. It has given music creators endless options in ways to express a human voice, for example by staging it in different soundscapes and by using different tools for voice alteration and creation of artistic effects. An artist’s performative expression may be important for the identity construction of a respondent of the music, and artists and genres can be seen as strong symbols for social groups. This paper looks at musical aesthetics and connects it to issues concerning technology, vocal expression, and identity. I reflect on how creating music in digital audio workstations (DAWs) may play a part in creation of new musical ideals, and I raise questions concerning how such ideals may be contribute to ways of expressing identity, both for artists and respondents. My aim is to shed light on how music production technology and the development of new musical aesthetics may be important for social groups and individuals in terms of issues concerning identity and sense of empowerment.

Joseph Grunkemeyer, “Analyzing Patrick Stump's ‘Soul Voice’: Vocal Timbre as a Signifier of Style and Genre”

Although vocal timbre has received significant analytical attention in recent years, including the development of systematic approaches to analysis by Heidemann (2016) and Malawey (2020) and hermeneutic interpretations of vocal timbre by Wallmark (2014) and Blake (2012), the interaction between vocal timbre and style has not been explored in the current literature. In this paper, I will demonstrate how vocal timbre can be used to understand an artist’s style, as well as track and anticipate future developments in style and changes in genre using an analytical methodology based primarily on Heidemann’s system of embodied analysis, supplemented by Malawey’s descriptive methodology. Two songs from Fall Out Boy’s first four studio albums and three songs from Patrick Stump’s solo album will be selected and separated into two categories, representative and characteristic, the former being songs that represent the overall sound of an album, the latter being songs with unique stylistic and timbral elements. Through the analysis of these selected songs, I will show Stump’s vocal transition from a stereotypical pop-punk singer to a soul-style vocalist. Finally, I will discuss the racial dynamic of Stump, a white man, adopting the musical and vocal styles of soul and funk, which are primarily black genres.

Eric Smialek, “‘All Shall Scream!’: Transposable Lessons from Pierre-Luc Senécal's Hate.Machine for Growler's Choir”
Pierre-Luc Senécal composed Hate.Machine (2020), a nine-minute work for metal band and growler’s choir, in response to a Fox news report on the violence of internet culture. Like many metal songs, its lyrics represent a social commentary on crisis, “portray[ing] a horrible machine, dedicated to the corruption of everything that exists” (Senécal 2020). Its unusual format for growling choir introduces an experimental context that draws on Senécal’s university training in composition. The Bandcamp website for Hate.Machine acknowledges contributions from Emploi-Québec and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. This common lyrical inspiration and unusual sponsorship thus scrambles the traditionally countercultural and the radically institutional in ways that metal scholars have recently argued represent a white-collar aesthetic within the genre (Smialek and St-Laurent 2019).

My presentation uses Hate.Machine’s experimental approach to learn about vocal expression in extreme metal. I show how Senécal’s written score functions both as instructions for vocalists and as his artistic interpretation. His wordless text demonstrates the importance of vowel acoustics and his techniques of varied repetition in the chorus show how combinations of voices in different registers interact with song form to create a sense of musical rhetoric. These lessons transpose to metal more generally.

11:15 am-1:15 pm – Session 2

A. Pandemic Production and Performance (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

Luis Perez-Valero, “Reinvent Yourself or Die: The Production of Independent Popular Music During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Guayaquil City”

Guayaquil (Ecuador) was one of the most affected cities in Latin America during the 2020 pandemic. All face-to-face activities were suspended under strict confinement measures, which generated a crisis in the local music industry. The present paper studies the production of popular music in the city during the years 2020-21, its reconfiguration, diffusion and scope. The artists, recording industry and circulation of popular music that was made by independent producers are exposed. There is previous research that dealt with the issue of health crisis and musical practices, such as those carried out by Taylor, Raine and Hamilton (2021) and Herbst and Ahlers (2021). Likewise, an approach has been made to works that include virtuality as means of disseminating music (Bennett and Peterson 2004, Auslander 2008 and Holt 2020). The data was obtained through research on social networks and streaming platforms that functioned as the main channel of dissemination to the producers. It has been determined that during the pandemic the number of independent musical productions in various genres, such as pop, rock and reggaeton, increased significantly as alternatives for mental and economic survival.

Elsa Fortant and Sylvain Martet, “Jamming During and After the Pandemic: A Case Study in a Montreal-based Electronic Music Community”

In 2020 in Quebec, the Covid-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of many musical events, including jam nights. This paper is focusing on a community of electronic music producers and enthusiasts that gravitates around the Montreal-based collectives Silicon Beats and Unlog. In 2020, the collectives’ founding members chose to transpose the jam event they had previously
organized in physical locations into the digital environment, creating a series of events entitled Passe le beat. A first part of our research was conducted in 2020 after the sixth Passe le beat. By watching the events' recordings and conducting a group interview with the four main organizers, we discovered that the purpose of the jam is evolving from music played together to music produced and composed collectively. In 2022, in-person jams have resumed. What remains of the practices and uses developed in Passe le beat? We conducted a follow-up group interview to identify the structural dimensions of the temporary collective project in the continuation of the collective's activities. Our research aims to explore what the digital transposition of the jam does to the collective creation, through which technical devices it is materialized, and what practices have remained after the resumption of in-person jams.

Giacomo Bottà, “Learning from the Underground: Crisis, Sustainability and Techno in the Summer of 2020”

In the pandemic summer of 2020 in Helsinki, techno outdoor parties were able to disengage electronic live music practices from profit making and the logics of cultural extractivism, offering a sustainable practice by and for the local techno music scene. Thanks to qualitative content analysis of interviews with organisers, participants, and DJs, I identify the pedagogical and practical means able to build sustainable and safe nocturnal spaces, where marginal cultural practices could rise. Free techno parties are understood as a learning experience, in which sustainability gave access to a different way to produce and consume culture, in particular thanks to: (1) safe space and pedagogy, (2) ecological awareness, (3) non-profit and community building, (4) music curating, and (5) randomness and exploration.


Not only has the Covid-19 pandemic produced new online DJing practices during lockdowns, it has also had consequences on these practices in nightclubs. Since their reopening, many actors of the Parisian scene notice on the part of the public a "crazy will to dance", and to "not take themselves seriously". As a result, certain DJing practices have become widespread in the Parisian techno and bass scene. In particular, it has become common 1/ to play remixes of pop music during peak time (in DJ sets that yet distinguish themselves against the mainstream), 2/ to reach high bpm's very quickly while mixing faster. These changes have two main effects. First, they shape new musical dynamics whose tensions and resolutions are based on renewed factors, such as the quickness of the transitions and the musical ruptures they induce. Secondly, they allow the emergence of new authenticities : the various criteria of acquisition of subcultural capital shift, for example from the digging of unknown tracks to the digging of remixes playing with the codes of irony. The evolution of these DJing practices will be questioned with complementary analysis tools taking from sociology and music theory altogether, borrowing from musical analysis to ethnographic investigation.

B. The Written Archives of Popular Music: Music Magazines and Fanzines as a Repository of Musical Practices (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)
Popular music scholars value a universe of related artifacts as research materials. Digital resources such as Spotify playlists, blogs, and YouTube videos, as well as material objects like vinyl records, photographs, homemade tape recordings, posters, magazines, fanzines, and comics, are all of interest to fans, collectors, and popular music researchers alike. This panel focuses on printed press materials as part of this network of digital and physical objects of popular music and the ways in which scholars relate to and work with them.

In addition to the audiences to which popular music magazines and fanzines were originally addressed, these periodical publications constitute archival material for music scholars. As Dave Laing and Catherine Strong explain (2018), these magazines are used in at least two ways: as a primary source for historiography, and as a source to construct popular music histories. As part of the former, music magazines contribute to determining the history and development of genres, and on writing histories of musical publications; they also play a key role in generic canon formation. As part of the latter, music magazines work as the “first draft of history” (90) because of first-hand reports on concerts, festivals, scenes, and newly issued recordings, plus the views of musicians and fans. Such fieldwork materials construct multiple scholarly perspectives on popular music and on the cultural and political context, gender representations, and collective identity that surround it; they also work as key material for classroom teaching.

Despite the historical time when contemporary popular music genres emerged, and the availability of digital humanities frameworks, the access to popular music magazines and other related artifacts is not always easy. While core publications such as Creem, Rolling Stone, or Mad can be accessed in academic electronic databases or digital repositories created by the magazines, many other publications are not easy to find. Some magazines are short-lived or had limited distribution. Also, scholars may have to locate magazine issues via private collections, by contacting the editors, using incomplete and poor quality online scans, or even buying them on online auction houses such as eBay.

These periodicals include a wide variety of publications with different periodicity, formats, life length, forms of circulation, and author profile. This panel gathers case studies and discussions from various types of magazines and geographies. In particular, the presenters discuss popular music magazines devoted to a group of musical genres or a particular theme, such as hi-fi or recording technology; fanzines, as non-commercial, small circulation magazines created by musicians and fans under the DIY culture, and frequently associated with underground music styles such as punk (Duncombe 1997); and comics where popular music plays a central role.

This panel explores both the conundrums of accessing the printed sources, the strategies scholars use, and their relevance by presenting case studies illustrating the use of magazines in scholarly and pedagogical work. Two of the presentations address a frequently overlooked aspect of music publications, the visual. Advertisements, photo essays, and comics provide valuable information about the musical scene and its cultural history. The first paper examines 1950s hi-fi magazine advertising as a strategy to construct desirable forms of sound technology and masculinity. The analysis is based on the leading marketing theory of the time, the motivational research, promoted by psychologist Ernest Dichter. Based on cultural studies, comic scholarship, and music analysis, the second paper examines the visual representations of musical practices, and in particular of rock, in the Chilean comic strip “Condorito.” The main musical idea conveyed in
the comic strip about a large vulture bird from the Andes, is that rock is easy music. The third paper makes use of newly accessible magazines available via the Museum Musik Indonesia to create a historiography of the 1950s music magazine Musika. Musika stands as a testimony of democracy and a commercial lifestyle before the 1965 political turmoil. The last paper proposes a digital humanities pedagogical project based on open access zine resources. Given the relevance of fanzines in popular music as a testimony of the musical scenes and their related ideologies and aesthetics, and by applying punk pedagogy, the paper explains how to use zines in undergraduate popular music courses, including creating DIY zine projects as class assignments.


Laing, Dave; Catherine Strong. 2018. Music magazines and the first draft of history. The Routledge companion to popular music history and heritage. Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge. 88-96

**Kelli Smith-Biwer, “‘I Will Tell You Who You Are’: Marketing and Masculinity in Midcentury Hi-Fi Magazines”**

Advertisements in historical magazines are useful resources for gleaning the values of a readership, but we can often only speculate as to how the idealized images and rhetoric of advertisements were perceived by readers. One way to address this challenge is to consider contemporaneous sources for contextualizing evidence. In this paper, I examine midcentury hi-fi magazine advertisements in the light of marketing methods pioneered by psychologist Ernest Dichter to illuminate historical conceptions of masculinity. Drawing on archival materials from the Ernest Dichter Motivational Research Institute (established in 1946), I show how the study of historic marketing strategies can help us better understand the ways publishers and manufacturers constructed midcentury masculinities. I focus my attention on motivational research, a marketing method pioneered by Dichter and the dominant approach to print advertising throughout the United States midcentury. Motivational research is the study of the attitudes that predispose consumers to attraction to certain products and how those attitudes might be manipulated. I examine Dichter’s critiques of hi-fi advertisements to reveal the tactics publishers used to reinforce the co-constructions of sound technology and masculinity and, more broadly, demonstrate the generative possibilities that emerge at the nexus of music studies and the histories of marketing.

**Cristian Guerra, “Rocker ‘Condorito’: Representations of rock music scenes in ‘Condorito’ comics (1960-2010)”**

The Chilean comic strip "Condorito," whose beginnings date back to 1949, has been one of the most successful and recognized beyond national borders. Its main character is known in several countries via publications in magazines and newspapers. Over the years, humor has represented the process of socio-cultural changes that have occurred both in Chile and Latin America, as recognized by authors such as Juan Poblete or Carlos Guillermo Páramo. In Condorito's world, musical practices, repertoires, and scenes play a central role. This paper emphasizes the representation of musical scenes linked to rock music in Condorito comics, based on three stories
from different periods united by the trope "making rock music is easy." One corresponds to the 1960s, another to the 1980s, and the last one to the first decade of the 21st century. For this purpose, a broad theoretical framework is used, including contributions from musical, cultural, and comic studies.


Over the past decade, several grassroots sound archives have emerged and reformed access to Indonesian popular musical media including vinyl, shellac, and music magazines from the 1950s-1980s. Newly accessible materials detail the evidence of activities of various styles including indie, dangdut, rock, kroncong, and jazz. Before these archives, materials had been scattered among private collections or not preserved at all. Based upon ethnographic and archival research at Museum Musik Indonesia in Malang, East Java, I trace stories within and around the 1950s music magazine Musika as documenting and contributing to a lively democratic public sphere and promoting a commercial lifestyle. The archivists at Museum Musik Indonesia position Musika in dialogue with later Indonesia popular music publications like Aktuil, Hai, Top, Diskorina, Gong, and others published after the politically charged year of 1965.

Lindsey Eckenroth, “Zine-Based Assignments as Punk Pedagogy”

Zines have played a prominent role in popular music discourse since at least the 1960s; they provide historical information about diverse musical scenes, subcultures, and genres, acting as a site for the dissemination of related aesthetics and ideologies. This paper explores how zines—especially independently published zines—can function in the popular music classroom. Specifically, guided by previous perspectives on zine-related pedagogy and my own twelve years of college teaching experience, I outline requirements, learning goals, and rubrics for two zine-based assignments that could be incorporated into online or in-person undergraduate popular music courses. These assignments—using only open access zine resources—allow students to explore DIY production and distribution models, to engage the potential of zines to represent marginalized identities and/or resist various forms of oppression, and to practice writing in a variety of formats (e.g. interviews, reviews, opinion pieces) while developing their own critical literacy, writerly voice, and visual aesthetic. Ultimately, I position zine study and creation as a form of punk pedagogy that can empower students to draw on their pleasures and angers alike in collaboratively bringing their own musical experiences, passions, and values into the classroom.

C. Agency and Collectivity (Political Crisis stream)


The ideological discourse of “positive energy” is predominant in China since it was introduced by the Communist Party of China (CCP). It also permeates into various popular cultural productions including pop music which features high accessibility. This paper will apply both discourse and text analysis, to examine two types of pop songs respectively: 1) Top-down songs: the government-commissioned songs that are generated for the propaganda demand of the CCP
as a strategy of ‘entertaining patriotism’; 2) Bottom-up songs: the industry-produced songs with ‘feel-good’ narratives to reflect whether audience taste or self-disciplined subjects.

The paper will further explore the reception of the mandarin netizens through some topical cases: a rejection of #PositiveEnergy songs albeit they can highly access through state-owned media and digital platforms. The paper will discover and discuss how a group of subcultural netizens tactically debate such “mirage” through their amateur music (e.g., cover songs, derivative work), developing around government policies, social norms, inequality, and injustice they disagreed. Cultural production has a function of criticizing societies, however, they are “underground” and “unstable” voices, as the rebellion of 'nobody/unofficial' to 'somebody/official', to express a cynical attitude to such mobilisation while controllable ideological discipline.

Gay Breyley, “‘Woman, Life, Freedom’: The New Solidarities of Popular Music in Iran”

In recent years, artists in Iran have survived not only some of the world's deadliest COVID waves, but also intersecting crises of international sanctions, food, water and energy shortages, inflation, climate extremes and government restrictions. Since September 2022, in the face of extreme violence directed by Iranian government authorities towards mostly young people, artists from around the country have articulated old and new solidarities in diverse musical forms. Some have responded by intensifying their translocal practices – simultaneously supporting their local communities and working intensively with likeminded music communities around the world. Others have drawn on connections created by social media or resonances from earlier social movements. This paper explores the music and motivations of acts in different sections of Iran's electronic and pop communities, with examples from the capital Tehran, as well as the provinces of Kurdistan and Baluchistan. These diverse forms of music play many roles, from supporting acts of mourning and articulating collective anger to communicating political injustices and outlining some of the emerging movement’s goals. As this social movement evolves, its dominant slogan of ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ takes on new layers of meaning, which are especially evident in its music.

Laura Etemah, “The Agency of Popular Music Performance and Bodily Praxes among Disenfranchised Youths within the Political Climate of Nigeria.”

In the last two decades, popular music in Nigeria has tremendously evolved and consequently received a wider acceptance in the global music scene, as studies have shown. With the rising awareness of the agentic power of popular music among youths and politicians in effecting social change, the current political climate is being navigated with utmost consciousness of the notion that personal and social aims can be actualized through the strategic use of the music of the moment. Hit songs with captivating lyrical and choreographic elements crafted by popular Nigerian musicians are being appropriated as tools of political propaganda and the music-loving youths are lured to propagate the indirect campaign tactics applied by established and aspiring political office seekers, through social media. Data for this qualitative study was obtained through secondary sources – the Internet, news publications, academic journals and books. Results revealed that popular music which is the mainstay of the Nigerian music scene, has a strong influence on the youths and this singular reality is being deliberately harnessed by leaders to win youth followership. On the other hand, the youths engage their creative ingenuities in
response to socio-economic issues that undermine their efforts and threaten their livelihoods, through music performance.

**Kim Kattari, “The ‘Tomorrowland’ Utopia: The Response of Electronic Dance Music Communities to a World in Crisis”**

The rise of clubbing and raves that featured Electronic Dance Music (EDM) in the 1990s precipitated a significant shift in the field of subcultural studies. Some suggested that youth who participated in EDM did so primarily to be entertained and to participate in escapist leisure, rather than to “disrupt the system” and raise their voices in protest against hegemonic culture and ideologies, as punks and skinheads had. By examining contemporary EDM festivals from an ethnographic perspective, I argue that the EDM community has much in common with “classic subcultures,” including a committed political ideology and countercultural identity. This paper explores how many EDM fans understand their participation as a response to, and even a protest against, the crises of our world today. Those who embody and enact EDM values of “PLUR” – peace, love, unity, and respect – seek to foster a utopian vision, one that champions environmental sustainability, promotes inclusivity and equity, embraces diverse identities, and supports and heals one another through community. Drawing on ethnographic experience, particularly at the international festival “Tomorrowland,” I document how EDM participants attempt to manifest a better tomorrow and create change that responds to global crises and social issues.

**D. Diasporic and Transnational Relationships (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)**

**Warrick Moses, “‘Coming Back Home’: Diasporic Belonging in Time of Crisis”**

Slated for release in South Africa in December 2021, the distribution of Cape Town-born, London-based MC, Dope Saint Jude’s single "Home" was postponed due to travel restrictions imposed in the wake of Omicron variant identification. Although the variant by this time had spread to many parts of the world, its specific “discovery” by the South African scientific community prompted the cancellation of flights and closure of national borders, preemptive healthcare measures that nevertheless resuscitated racist imaginations of (Southern) Africa unequivocally as a locus of risk and contagion.

In this presentation I examine the notion of nostalgia exacerbated and deferred by such xenophobic and colonial implications. DSJ’s track "Home" is both a yearning for return to her place of birth and a love letter to her wife; the accompanying music video provides an intimate view of the longstanding couple’s romantic and sexual relationship featuring scenes of playful flirtation and physical bondage. Drawing on Nadia Ellis’ writing on queered and diasporic belonging, I propose that the timing and message of "Home" offers a theoretical framework within which to critically explore ideas of contested assimilation and imposed confinement, hostilities encountered in gestures towards “home-building” and “home-coming.”

**Paul David Flood, “‘A Melting Pot of Sound’: ENISA, New York City, and the Making of a Euro-Diasporic Musical Imaginary”**
When Albanian-American singer ENISA represented New York at the inaugural American Song Contest, a US American spinoff of the Eurovision Song Contest, she described her song “Green Light” as a “melting pot of sound.” ENISA’s metaphor references her fusion of disparate musical influences: Latin American rhythms, Turkish folk instruments, and a contemporary hip-hop sound that draws on Europop’s transnational aesthetics. Drawing on scholarship centering Albanian and Albanian-diasporic musics and musicians (Tochka, 2016; Sugarman, 2007; Buchanan, 2007), I argue that ENISA makes use of these musical aesthetics relative to her status as a first-generation Albanian-American Muslim woman living in New York City. Albanian musicians have sought a popular sound that listeners could recognize as both “modern and Albanian,” though their uses of folk instruments are rendered geographically ambiguous. ENISA takes advantage of this ambiguity to sonically express an immigrant and first-generation US American experience that is recognizable to immigrants of various nationalities. Through a transnational musical aesthetic, visual markers of her Muslim identity in her live performances and music videos, and lyrics addressing upward socioeconomic mobility, ENISA’s music evokes senses of lived and aspirational belonging and prosperity, welcoming immigrants, first-generation US Americans, and her international fanbase into her sound.

Adam Kielman, “Popular Music, Minor Transnationalism, and Blackness in Southern China”

In recent years, musical styles linked to African American, Afro-Caribbean, and Black Atlantic histories and experiences have become increasingly prominent in China’s popular music realms. At the same time, political and economic cooperation between China and Africa has accelerated, and a sizable diasporic African population resides in southern Chinese cities. This paper ethnographically examines articulations and disjunctures between these two shifts. In the evolving cosmopolitan context of southern China, transnationally circulating musics, cultural knowledge, and social identities are rearticulated through emplaced and historically constituted practices of listening and creation. I focus on ethnic minority musicians who draw on reggae, Afrobeat, and other Black musics, and explore how musicians self-reflexively reformulate and reinterpret musics from diverse sources within locally grounded contexts and experiences, reflecting their own subjective experiences of culture, power, and globality. I am inspired by what Shih and Lionnet describe as “minor transnationalism,” attending to “creative interventions that networks of minoritized cultures produce within and across national boundaries” (2005, 7). More broadly, this paper addresses how configurations of human difference understood through historically and culturally constituted concepts and ideologies—such as race, ethnicity, minzu (nationality/ethnicity), and shaoshuminzu (minority)—intersect and are reformulated through the transnational circulation of popular music.

Ceren Mert-Travlos, “Contemporary Sounds of Iceland in the Secular-Spaces of Istanbul: Connection of Disconnected Geographies through Music”

In this paper, I will highlight the creation and importance of secular spaces in Istanbul, Turkey, by focusing on the role of live performances by contemporary Icelandic musicians in the music venues of that city. In the context of the increasing authoritarianism of the AKP led government of Turkey, I argue that the continued interest towards Nordic culture and music is an act of secularist resistance. This is centered in a cosmopolitan “youth” culture established in Istanbul in
the last two decades, mainly expressed by musical venues like Babylon. This culture expresses a yearning for Nordic culture, exemplified above all by the creative networks between artists and venues in Istanbul with “far off” Icelandic musicians. I argue that this yearning is part of a resistance towards the increasing erosion of secularism within Turkish society due to government action. These trends were exacerbated with the Covid-19 pandemic, as the government used the pandemic as an excuse to change the cultural landscape in Istanbul. Using qualitative methods and focusing in interviews with Icelandic performers and the Istanbul venues that hosted them, I intend to trace the past, present and future of this relationship, and its relationship with the yearning for secular spaces.

E. Making Music Digitally (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)

Emil Kraugerud, “Impact of Software Design on Creative Diversity”

Through their online advertisements, developers of digital audio workstation software (DAWs) like Ableton, Avid, Apple and Steinberg promise customers, in more or less explicit ways, that their products will somehow enhance creativity. At the same time their DAWs seem to provide users with differing ways of navigating music production, via the layout of graphic user interfaces, the availability of presets and default settings at the start of a new project. The design of DAWs may thus have significant impacts on how users create music. With this paper I look specifically into what software developers themselves make of the impact of their work on how music is made. In doing so I consider how the design of different DAWs (and different layers of software design) aims to facilitate creativity through making choices for the user while simultaneously inspiring new modes of creation. The paper thus touches on questions about how DAWs become parts of creative systems, as well as how different DAWs may contribute to increased or decreased diversity in musical expression.

Paxton Haven, “An Industry in the Cloud(s): Splice and the Infrastructural Relations of Cloud-Based Music Creation Platforms”

Over the past decade, processes of popular music have undergone dramatic transformations due to the advent of streaming and the proliferation of complementary platforms. In terms of music production, Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) challenge recording studio logics to represent “a new type of compositional practice based on controlling processual macro-synthesis of metadata rather than working with individual recorded sources,” (Reuter 2022, 114). Without rehashing discussions of the musical ontological crisis and digital production, I focus on the recent emergence of cloud-based creation/collaboration platforms that integrate with DAWs to offer subscription-based access to specialty production software, expert-led tutorials, and royalty-free samples. Using the platform Splice as a representative example, I examine how these platforms construct the infrastructural boundaries of contemporary digital music production and further regulate sociotechnical musical practices. My approach to this topic, however, is far from technologically determinist. Rather, I build upon new media theory, popular music industry scholarship, and platform studies to illustrate how transectorial practices are gradually redefining (“re-tuning”) value and musical community through these platform infrastructures. I argue this third-party platform market represents broader industrial shifts where music is creatively branded
and collaboratively circulated, yet materially leveraged for data collection, social networking, and market differentiation.

Bibliography


Cody Black, “Archives of Analog Optimism: Digital Attention, Anticipatory Vocal Labor, and Listening for Residuals of Potential in South Korea”

Amidst a stagnating neoliberal market economy and the lingering echoes of post-COVID social distancing, the labor precarity of South Korean creative entrepreneurs in has led them to increasingly rely on the YouTube platform to ensure their economic viability. Within this broader digital attention economy (Beller 2006), the voice—whether singing, speaking, or storytelling—is subsumed into a broader flexible labor politics, requiring creatives to cultivate it to anticipate and maximize audience attention (Berardi 2018). In this paper, I draw from fieldwork at a Seoul-based media startup, and my work on a YouTube documentary highlighting the anticipatory labor of K-Pop idol trainee hopefuls, to examine the competing anticipatory politics and value that rendered certain idol vocalizations uncirculatable despite promises of exposure otherwise. Inspired by Sadiya Hartman’s (2008) notions of critical fabulations, I narrativize these digitally archived recordings to write outside the teleological orientation that articulates their “failure” to circulate, and the unfulfilled political and economic expectations that result from unlistenable compression. Countering teleologies of (im)possibility, I listen for how these Koreans maintain what I call an “analog optimism,” where they keep open the boundless multiplicity of potential—political, economic, or otherwise—through the process of spoken/sung/narrative utterance despite their precarious circumstances.

Yngvar Kjus, “Working on the (Value) Chain: A Study of How Technology Companies Intervene in Music Production in the Online Era”

It is well-known that musicians have faced pervasive challenges due to the encounter with the internet and novel modes of distribution, such as commercial streaming services. However, established modes of music production are also contested as tools and technologies migrate online and new kinds of resources and services emerge, as revealed by the recent work of Sterne and Razlogova (2019) and Théberge (2020). This paper sets out to assess the development of production technologies in the online environment and to evaluate the associated implications for music producers. It uses a value chain perspective to examine how different technological enterprises are intervening in music production and challenging established modes of songwriting and performance, which the copyright system of the music industry is based on. In
its analysis, the paper first considers digital audio workstations, which are moving online alongside the emergence of entirely web-based variants. Second, it studies the launch of different kinds of plugins and supplementary production services (including Splice and TrackLib). Third, it examines the rise of online commissioning services for music (from Fiverr to Epidemic Sound), and then evaluates the extent to which these kinds of tools and services upset traditional values, roles and modes of music making.

F. Exploring Race and Nordic Whiteness: Hip-Hop Case Studies from Finland and Sweden (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity Stream)

The Nordic region is often characterized by social stability, consensus and equality, which has shaped its global reputation and its common regional self-understanding. Despite this, discrimination and xenophobia are part of the Nordic societies, nowadays mirrored also in the region’s political development. The rise of the far-right and racism have been normalized throughout the region during the past decades, as evidenced by results in general elections, the rising number of hate crimes, and public discourse regarding groups perceived as ‘Other’.

Introduced in the Nordic countries in the early 1980s, hip-hop culture and music have been embedded in contemporary popular culture in various forms, while simultaneously providing a creative and critical way of contributing to public debate. This panel is united by a general interest in how local(ized) interpretations of global hip-hop are expressed. More specifically, the panel focuses on Finland and Sweden and the relationship between popular music and political struggle on both an individual and societal level. Key questions addressed are: How are questions of gender, race, belonging and marginalization present in Nordic hip-hop? What kinds of understandings of contemporary Nordic identity do the panel’s case studies suggest?

Andrea Dankić, “‘This is Sweden’: Stereotypes and Representations in Swedish ‘gangster rap’”

Hip-hop culture and music are at times associated with a stereotypical identification often described as a racialized hyper-aggressive and hyper-masculine persona. Initially American, this stereotype is established in contemporary glocalized hip-hop practices as well as in international public discourse on popular music. By the end of the 2010s, the most commercially successful Swedish hip-hop music drew inspiration from drill music with its ominous beats alongside portrayals of a criminal lifestyle. This Swedish scene, in the public debate referred to as “gangster rap”, is characterized by (Black and Brown male) rappers personifying the stereotypical identification whilst winning some of the most prestigious awards in the music industry such as the Swedish Grammys.

Drawing on music, music videos and artists’ social media content, this paper examines representations of 1) a stereotypical persona based on race, gender, sexuality, age and place, and 2) Swedish society. What function does the stereotypical persona play in the construction of the artist persona? How do these representations shape the artists’ identity as Swedish glocalized rappers and members of a global hip-hop community? This paper draws on intersectionality, critical race theory, global hip-hop studies, and ethnomusicology.
Susan Lindholm, “Re-imagining ‘Swedishness’: Intersectional Feminist Resistance and Reflection on the Work of Silvana Imam”

This presentation introduces a chapter included in the upcoming anthology “Nordic Noise. Hip Hop, Culture, and Community in Northern Europe” written by Susan Lindholm and Alexandra D’Urso (Routledge, forthcoming 2023). Focusing on the work of Swedish feminist rapper Silvana Imam the presentation discusses how Imam uses hip hop culture as a platform to position herself in relation to shifting notions of Swedishness, in terms of a “good Sweden” (that is, imagining Sweden as an antiracist and feminist country) and an imagined “old Sweden” (framing Sweden as a homogenous nation) — constructions that Tobias Hübinette and Catrin Lundström have called the “double-binding power of Swedish whiteness”. Imam’s work is considered in light of the growing global body of work addressing intersectional understandings of feminism within hip hop culture and in relation to broader movements of resistance to discrimination or racism as articulated by Nordic hip hop artists. The presentation suggests that Imam’s work contests the notion of Sweden being a post-feminist and post-racial society.

Inka Rantakallio, “Women, Feminism, and Whiteness in Finnish Rap”

Hip-hop has historically been considered the voice of the societally marginalized, but the culture has also often marginalized its women practitioners. The rap genre is still today globally dominated by (Black and Brown) men, although more and more women have emerged as chart-topping rappers in recent years. Whereas White women are marginally represented in global hip hop culture, in Finland, the majority of women engaged with hip-hop and rap music are White. Further, openly feminist content has become more common in rap recently, although rap is still often considered a hypermasculine and misogynistic genre. Looking at feminist women rappers and whiteness in Finnish rap thus offers an interesting case for an intersectional examination of racial and gender norms in contemporary rap music.

In my presentation, I look at these issues in relation to the construction of artist identities and expression and ask how do Finnish feminist women rappers understand, challenge and/or uphold hip-hop’s norms? The presentation is based on artist interviews, participant observation, and music and music videos. I rely on previous literature on intersectional hip-hop feminist perspectives, critical whiteness studies, gender studies, audiovisual popular music studies, and discourse analysis.


The Nordic countries remain relatively un(der)explored as regards ethnicity, belonging and racialization. Given the myth of ‘monocultural Finland’ and the fairly recent diversification of Finnishness, questions of race, ethnicity and (non)belonging are societally crucial and topical. Thus far, hip hop culture in Finland has been mostly dominated by white (male) rappers.

This paper explores the construction of (non)belonging from the perspective of POC rappers, in between and beyond cultures and places. (Non)belonging is understood as i) connected to hip hop culture, a voice of the margins with multicultural roots and global appeal, and ii) resonating
with the challenges related to sociocultural changes in Finnish society. The paper explores how multiple identifications, voices and experiences can exist in (super)diversifying Finland and how one’s (non)belonging should not be assumed a priori.

Theoretically and methodologically, I draw on sociolinguistics, discourse studies, critical race studies and global hip hop studies. As data, I use interviews conducted with Finnish rap artists. By exploring how these rappers engage with belonging and identity (and Finland and Finnishness), the aim is to examine how they themselves navigate and negotiate (non)belonging but also deny and challenge identity categories assigned to them.

2:45-4:15 pm – Session 3

A. British Rock Identities (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Xiaodan Zhang, “Quadruple Crises in the Who’s Quadrophenia”

Quadrophenia was released by the British rock band the Who in 1973, which focused on the experiences of a young Mod, Jimmy, who was disturbed, agitated and disillusioned. As a concept album, it not only used the multiple texts to complete the storytelling, but also expressed quadruple conceptual ideas.

This paper argues that these ideas actually represented the quadruple crises in reality: a review of the Who – crisis of band, the relationship between the band and fans -crisis of class, a reflection on the Mod subculture – crisis of cultural identity and a tribute to the Indian spiritual master Meher Baba – crisis of faith. They were not independent of each other – we cannot understand the entire album and its tracks in terms of any single perspective; they worked together in an intertwined way to complete the interpretations of the album.

In addition, many of the negative emotions and cryptic expressions conveyed in this album were different from the band’s earlier style. The author believes that its deeper reason lied in the fact that Quadrophenia was a reflection on the identity crisis of British musicians in the broader context of British society and culture after World War II.


A common understanding of the history of Pink Floyd is of changing leadership: from Syd Barrett in the group’s earliest years (1965-67), to Roger Waters through a period of rebuilding and the group’s phenomenal success after Barrett’s departure, to David Gilmour from the mid-1980s. My research suggests that it makes sense to think of the group as more of a collective, at least in its foundation, consolidation and output up to and including Wish You Were Here (1975). I will argue that the group’s early exposure to and interest in free improvisation is connected to the importance of group composition in their output and approach – pieces that were mainstays of their performances such as “Interstellar Overdrive”, “A Saucerful of Secrets”, “Careful With That Axe, Eugene” “Echoes” and “Time” from Dark Side of the Moon are all
credited to the whole group. Indeed, Roger Waters is quoted as saying that “We were working shoulder-to-shoulder up to and including Dark Side” (Simmons 1999).

The paper will include a quick survey of approaches to improvisation in Pink Floyd’s early work, another of the comparatively rare instances of free improvisation in rock music history, and Georgina Born’s conceptual framework of four planes of the social mediation of music (2017). As well as offering an alternative perspective on the workings and legacy of Pink Floyd, this presentation will offer “a thick account of history [that] defocalizes the actions of individuals . . . and shifts our attention toward social structures and collective action” (Lena 2012: 2-3).

Romain Garbaye, “The Angst of the Marginalized? A Contribution to Debates on Social Class, Neoliberalism and Heavy Metal: A Look Back to 1970s Britain

The question of the relations between social class and music has cropped up regularly since the very early days of metal studies, in particular going back to Deena Weinstein’s seminal book “Heavy metal, the music and its culture” of 1991. While early works such as Weinstein’s emphasized what one could call the “working-classness” of metal, together with others (for instance, Berger, 1999), many other studies have sought to re-evaluate this perspective, from those highlighting the frequent presence among metal audiences of people better characterized as middle-class or “lower middle-class” (Brown, 2016), to those more recently arguing in favour of renewed understandings of metal as “middle-class” and “post-modern” (as opposed to the romanticism purportedly associated with the working-class ethos of metal) – see for instance Smialek and St-Laurent (2019). Others have also argued for a complete disassociation of metal with any class affiliation or class-based identity.

While recognizing the relevance and complementarity of all these approaches, this paper seeks to contribute to ongoing debates by arguing that core metal esthetics and ethics often remain relatable to what can adequately be characterized as a mode of “working-class” agentivity in the context of changing economic and social orders, or, to follow Weinstein, often continue to more or less directly reflect reactions to the rapid unravelling of the traditional manual work ethos brought about economic and cultural globalization across a range of societies. To do this, I propose to return to what can be construed as one key episode in the historical development in metal music, ie. 1970s British metal, from Black Sabbath’s first productions in 1970 to the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, from 1979 to the early 1980s. Focusing on interviews of band members, their musical styles, their lyrics and their visual art, I will argue that highlighting the homologies between a declining working-class culture in the context of early neoliberalism, and these instances of what was then coming to be known as “heavy metal”, helps us to assess the continuing relevance of Weinstein and Berger’s interpretations of the genre, and, beyond, of what we can call the “metalness” of metal in the 2020s.

References


B. Archives and Memorials (Political Crisis stream)


In 2017-2018, I did a fieldwork on how US audiovisual archives (public, corporate, local) dealt with the object “musical heritage”. One of my hypotheses was that this construction of the object “heritage” had to do with the representation of collective identities and its inscription in a historical construction of the State. As a French scholar familiar with the concepts of “universality” (vs. diversity) and “republican integration” (vs. communities), I thought that contrasted philosophical frames of the collective might put their imprint on archival practices. I will first offer a perspective on how the importance of communities and cultural diversity is visible in the practices and material set ups produced by those institutions, as compared to similar French institutions. Beyond this comparison, I will tackle the issue of archive as a place for struggle and power: after one year of Trump presidency, archives appeared as clearly connected with their etymology — “archê”, or power (Derrida). I will highlight what kind of power is at stake in the practice of audiovisual archiving, why these institutions that could be considered “out of the time” are a place for struggle, and how this struggle is expressed.

Benjamin DuPriest, “Archival Aurality: Listening for Disappearance in the Musics of the American South”

The folklorists and musicologists who constructed the archives of American music were long motivated by the imperative to collect and document sound at the precipice of existence. For those odyssean songhunters of midcentury revivalism, braving dirt roads past cotton fields to sharecropper shacks, the archive was a repository for sonic cultures in crisis—the nearly extinct resonances of a romanticized black rural South. Overlooked and under-scrutinized in the celebration of their canonic findings are the aural techniques and practices of these researchers, and the extent to which their own auralities came to dictate their archival methodologies. Researchers like Alan Lomax and his contemporaries were ever listening for the past, for retentions, and for any sign of archival meaning and value in the face of imminent disappearance. In this paper, I map the emergence of a set of listening practices across the late-20th century, an aural ethos inherited from and formed in the image of these researchers. I call this concept ‘archival aurality,’ and I use it as a critical lens through which to think about the role
of race, memory, and listening in the construction of musical Americana across the deep South, focusing particularly on blues research in North Mississippi.

**Thomas Sebastian Köhn, “Sounding the Holocaust: The Role of Music and Sound for Remembering World War II at Memorial Sites”**

Institutions remembering World War II and the Holocaust are currently facing two crises: The rise of neo-fascism and the passing of Holocaust witnesses. In this presentation, I will analyze how memorial sites apply popular music to transmit testimonies of the Holocaust and to raise awareness about current discrimination and marginalization. Firstly, I will focus on the hip-hop song Edek (2018), created in a collaboration between a Holocaust witness and the UK National Holocaust Center. Here, testimonies are sampled and adapted to the flow (Kautny 2009) to give voice to Holocaust victims while digitalization taking action against neo-fascism. Secondly, I explore the exhibition at the memorial site “Zeitzentrum Zivilcourage” in Hanover, Germany, where music and sounds are employed to construct narratives of historicity, mourning, and fascist terror. Drawing on ethnomusicological interviews (Pink 2018) and Artistic Research (Zaddach 2022), I explore how auditive parameters are connected to testimonies from music producers’, exhibition managers’, and visitors’ perspectives. The presentation aims at extending the emerging interest in music and memory culture (Köhn 2021 & forthcoming, König & Ringsmut eds. 2021) to the research gap of music and memorial sites, thus intersecting methodological and theoretical approaches from cultural memory studies, musicology and artistic research.


Köhn, Thomas Sebastian. „Rapping the Shoah: (Counter-) Narratives and Judaism in German Hip-Hop.“ In *Music and Politics* (15\(2\)). 1–24, 2021.


C. Grime, Drill, and Underground hip-hop (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Alex de Lacey, “Live and Direct? Censorship and Racialised Public Morality in Grime and Drill Music”

This paper addresses the linguistic policing of grime and UK drill music. Existing studies often focus on the immediacy of the penal system. This paper will instead explore the extent to which institutional bodies uphold and maintain a programme of 25igitaliza censorship across radio broadcasts, seeking to understand how these value judgements impact creative practice and artists’ articulation of identity. It presents an ethnographic study of three shows that aired on BBC Radio 1Xtra, in the United Kingdom, demonstrating through interviews and analysis how the broadcaster’s censorship practice unfairly renders Black artists as dangerous with criminal associations. Lyrical assertions of musical skill are misread as direct threats, while evocations of the quotidian are seen to cause violence rather than reflect artists’ surroundings. Importantly, it will show how artists’ words are adversely discriminated against owing to a legacy of 25igitaliza public morality that imposes greater sanctions and restrictions on artistic output: radio personalities must strike a balance between presenting voyeuristic excitement about a genre, and the need to meet (25igitaliza) editorial standards; producers assiduously monitor new slang to make sure that it is censored; artists are encouraged to self-censor and alter their musical output, to protect themselves from unwanted ramifications.

Matthew Carter, “A Bloody Crisis of Authenticity: Branding and Violence in Bronx Drill Music”

Beginning in the mid-1980s, corporate brand logos in the United States became distinguishing features of otherwise homogeneous products. Tommy Hilfiger, for example, does not make any products; it purchases mass-produced garments from a manufacturer, then brands them with the Hilfiger logo. Advertisers market brands as reflecting consumers’ identity, lifestyle, and sense of belonging—thus a brand’s perceived authenticity is foundational to its longevity.

The stakes of authenticity are no less existential in the Bronx drill scene. As generic features like beat construction, rapping style, and imagery are relatively uniform, drill rappers distinguish themselves through targeted threats, mocking deceased enemies, and violent braggadocio. Moreover, while an often prolific and confrontational social media presence functions as valuable brand marketing for drill rappers, it is likewise a lens through which the authenticity of their rapping personae are constantly assessed and jeopardized. The crisis of navigating that paradox has implicated Bronx drill in a coinciding increase in violence and murder among Bronx youth. My talk explores this “crisis of authenticity” that pervades Bronx drill by examining the strategies through which rappers harness their brands to authenticity and violence, and the role of those generic features as constraining and affording forces within that process.

Jacob P. Cupps, “‘If You’re Seeking Understanding…’: Glissant’s Opacity, ELUCID’s I Told Bessie, and the Politics of Legibility in Contemporary Underground Hip-Hop”

Spotify’s Carl Chery claims that, in the streaming era, the designation ‘underground rap’ has lost its meaning because all rappers share the same space on the internet (Gee 2021). This paper, by
contrast, reframes undergroundness as a set of social behaviors that operate in opposition to Chery’s notion of boundaryless listening. I argue that mainstream hip-hop culture enacts a “liberal mandate of legibility” (Lee 2019; Momii 2021) that underground hip-hop disrupts by communally centering what Édouard Glissant refers to as opacity—or “that which cannot be reduced” through Western interpretations of the racialized Other (1997).

In this paper, I use two fan responses to the Brooklyn-based underground rapper ELUCID’s album *I Told Bessie* (2022) to demonstrate the difference between modes of interpretation in mainstream and underground communities. First, I show how Professor Skye’s YouTube review attempts to render ELUCID legible as an emcee who “makes emotional sense [but not] sense sense,” reducing the album to a commentary on Blackness in America. This interpretive mode clashes with Joseph Rathgeber’s zine about *I Told Bessie*, which reinforces the album’s opacity through associative, multilayered commentary on it. Where Skye’s review mandates a single, legible interpretation, Rathgeber’s zine responds to ELUCID’s call to step into the opaque.

D. Mediating Locality (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)

**Sean L Peters,** ““Playing in the Mud”: Cassette Tapes and the Do It Yourself Histories of East Bay Punk”

Punk histories often omit the material conditions and labor of music scenes to tell the stories of “legendary” bands. This approach to writing history has been an awkward fit for a subculture that views itself as egalitarian and shuns ‘rock stars.’ In this paper, I shift my focus from genealogies of bands to the material conditions of the scene, specifically its use of cassettes, to take a bottom-up approach in telling the story of the 1980s/1990s East Bay Punk scene of Northern California. Through archival research and interviews, I theorize an East Bay Punk ontology built on the tenets of collectivism, leftist activism, and a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethic enabled by the material affordances of the compilation tapes produced by scene participants. I focus on two compilations, exploring how each cassette exemplifies the broader scene’s ethos. The first, *Get Off My Guts*, defined the scene’s identity through a shared lo-fi aesthetic that prized a DIY approach to music-making. The second, *Absolutely Zippo!: Time Capsule*, illustrates the memory work and approach to history (re-)making that has allowed East Bay Punk participants to shape how we remember the scene through tape. Ultimately, my paper asks how objects can record and tell histories?

**Ryan Blakeley,** “From Stacks to Tracks: Public Library Streaming Services and Local Music Scenes”

Public libraries have long been important repositories of local popular music, but in recent years they have struggled to compete with the content and convenience of on-demand streaming services such as Spotify. In response, several public libraries across North America have partnered with the library vendor Rabble, using its MUSICat service to create their own streaming platforms that showcase and financially support community-curated collections of local artists. While scholars have extensively studied the effects of commercial streaming services on musicians and the music industries, non-profit applications of music streaming such as these have been largely neglected.
In this paper, I explore how public library streaming services are used to support local popular music artists and scenes, arguing that these platforms demonstrate streaming’s potential for tangible community impact outside of strictly commercial contexts. To do so, I primarily focus on Rabble and its MUSICat library partners. Through platform analysis and interviews with librarians and Rabble’s executives, I investigate how library streaming services materially benefit local artists, drive participation in music scenes, and create archives of music history. Streaming may grant instant access to music from across the globe, but it is also imperative to explore its ability to highlight local culture.

S. Alexander Reed, “Urban Print Subculture and the Pressure to Professionalize”

This talk unveils the Aegis Archive, a 501(c)3 nonprofit collection of 1500 ephemeral zines from the 1980-1999 international goth and industrial scenes. These zines’ dates and publishing geographies literally map out new histories of subculture and diverging modes of participatory fandom.

Specifically, although cities are affirmed as centers (especially San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles), dozens of rural zines reflect the often isolated and makeshift experience of subculture in Arkansas, Vermont, Hawaii, Alaska, Kansas, Iowa, and places yet farther flung in Canada and rural Scotland. However, their print artifacts differ in broad but consistent ways. The archive reveals how urban participatory fandom was visibly subject to capitalist and professionalizing pressures, especially amid the booms of “alternative” culture and desktop publishing in the 1990s. Rural zinemaking meanwhile was permitted greater idiosyncrasy in comparison. These observations expand upon writings on goth scene geography by Carr (2011) and Tosoni & Zuccala (2020), and also on zines by Duncombe (1997). Through analysis of content, authorship, postal networks, and material paleography, this talk shows the buzzing mutuality and jockeying competition that drove urban zines uniquely toward monetization and into the slickest, most one-way channels of the networks connecting subcultural stakeholders.

E. Gender, Courtship, and Reproductive Rights (Political Crises stream)

Heather MacLachlan, “Pop Songs in Contemporary Burmese Courtship”

Burmese pop songs play a heretofore unrecognized role in Burmese courtship practices. My ethnographic interviews with heterosexual men and women in Myanmar in 2022 reveal that popular music is an important element of contemporary Burmese courtship, as a man will often elect to sing currently popular songs to the woman he courts, usually accompanying himself on guitar. During the past decade, men have expanded this practice by singing to women using Facetime Messenger, by sending recordings (via email) of themselves singing, and by sending professional recordings in lieu of their own performances. I argue that this phenomenon, evolving rapidly with the aid of internet-era technology, is best understood as the continuation of an older norm, which involved small groups of unmarried young men serenading young women. In this sense, musicking is just like the other elements of Burmese courtship: the tradition is seemingly radically changed by twenty-first century technology, but in fact has strong similarities to earlier practices. This presentation is tied to conference theme C, because
Myanmar is in the throes of a humanitarian crisis due to the military coup of February 2021. Ethnographic interviews about courtship were only possible because this topic is broadly perceived as apolitical.

Katha Alexi, “Negotiations of Abortion in Popular Music In Times of Right-Wing Populism (and Before)”

In his sociology of abortion, Boltanski assumes that abortion is a universal but invisible practice (Boltanski 2013, Krolzik-Matthei 2019). This observation needs to be updated, given several visualizations and narrations (not only) in popular music in the 2010s. Therefore, this paper examines how musicians negotiate abortion in times of right-wing populism when abortion rights are threatened or even abolished. The examples from rock and alternative music that I will comparatively analyze are Lindemann’s music video “Praise Abort“ (2015) and Amanda Palmer’s “Voicemail for Jill“ (2019). While the first music video stages abortion in a horror scenario, the second video tells the story of an everyday lonely woman who is unwanted pregnant and isolated in society. The latter example is combined with the artist’s commitment against global right-wing populism, which will be illuminated, but it also narrates abortion as a rather sad practice, which will be discussed.

To contextualize these recent artifacts, I will provide a historical overview of abortion as a topos in (popular) music. Drawing upon examples from several countries, I will pay special attention to the 1970s, but also to the 1990s and 2000s as periods that indicated the current political fights and crisis.


In Fight Sterilization! (moral and physical) by the lackeys of Imperialism, a 1971 composition by British composer Cornelius Cardew, a chorus of women in unison articulate a problematic desire: “I want a child” they sing, “but who will look after it?” A chorus of men echo the women's plea. As the piece rises to a climax, a mixed choir suggests a questionable quartet of nursemaids: Karl Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung...

Over the decades, musicians on both sides of the struggle for reproductive rights have put their ideologies to music. From songs sung by unborn babies, to the ghostly voices of women killed by illegal abortions, in hip-hop, industrial metal, and country, an explicit sub-genre of music about abortion and birth control mirror an increasingly polemic political discourse.

Cornelius Cardew wrote Fight Sterilization! in reaction to accounts of population control programs in developing countries. Like his hero, the Austrian composer Hanns Eisler, Cardew saw music as a form of cultural activism and a catalyst for social change. And yet, while the current stakes for both sides of the reproductive rights debate are higher than ever, the music that embodies these politics seems caught in a sentimental loop that merely reinforces, rather than challenges, entrenched ideologies. This paper will trace the history of this unusual subgenre from Weimar Berlin to the present day, using it as a lens to analyze the efficacy of popular music as an agent for political action.
4:30-6:30 pm – Session 4

A. Punk Identities (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Sangheon Lee, “American Values And American Hardcore Punk In The Crisis Of The 1970s”

After the unprecedented political, social, and cultural turmoil of the sixties and the economic (and political) crisis of the early seventies, American society witnessed the prevailing disillusionment and the weakened sense of historical continuity and collective memory. The resulting new form of radical individualism—further at odds with the tenets and values of traditional puritanism—sought to focus on needs and desires that could be met “right now”, both physically and psychically.

This paper explores the musical and cultural expressions of the early American hardcore punk—which emerged then as a rebellion against this new form of hedonism and conformism, and at the same time due to disillusionment with the “idealistic” counterculture of the sixties—focusing on a dialectic that can be deduced from two different observations: first, the very propensities of mainstream culture described above were in fact embodied by hardcore punk, paradoxically, but in a more specific fashion (we call it “urgency” and “nihilism”). On the other hand, it tended to rely on some of the tenets of puritanism, i.e. work ethic, “self-made man”, self-discipline, sobriety, and deferred gratification, as is the case for some seminal bands: Black Flag from Southern California and Minor Threat from Washington DC.

paige klimentou, “‘Bold Will Hold’: Hardcore, Tattoos, Military”

In the global hardcore scene, the preferred tattoo style worn by scene participants is American traditional tattooing—a style of tattooing made popular by the military in the early to mid-20th century (Friedman 2015). In this paper, I establish key links between hardcore and American traditional tattooing, which contributes a new 29igitalizati of how tattoos contribute to the masculine nature of hardcore. I do this in four ways. Firstly, I use Willis’ (1978, 2014) concept of ‘homology’ to establish how certain tattoo styles can be part of a genre/subculture/scenes’ make up—part of the ongoing ‘style guide’. Secondly, I provide a brief history and overview of American traditional tattooing and consider the connections between punk/hardcore band art and traditional tattoo flash. I also connect the ethos behind American traditional tattooing, where designs are intended to be repeated over and over, to the ways hardcore and punk art is created. Thirdly, I draw on an interview with a key informant, hardcore expert and tattooer, Ractorpsy, where we discuss how the basis of traditional tattooing matches the way hardcore music is constructed. Fourthly, to further link punk/hardcore and the military, I consider how they are both highly masculine and male dominated environments and how ‘masculinity’ and ‘commitment’ are central to this connection. Furthermore, the prevalence of military tattoos is an element of how hardcore is constructed as a masculine space. Together, these connections will help us to understand how traditional tattooing has become so integral to hardcore.
Patrick S Mitchell, “No More Mr. Nice Guy: Misogyny and Masculinity in 2000’s Pop-Punk”

From underground, do-it-yourself scenes to Hot Topic’s commercially produced punk fashion, pop-punk gained astounding popularity during the 1990’s and 2000’s. This male-dominated genre defined what it meant to be a White, suburban American teenager in the 2000’s—and for many, defined heterosexual masculinity. Although previous scholarship has explored sonic and aesthetic elements of pop-punk masculinity (Williams 2007, Ryalls 2013, Ryan 2021), my study seeks to explore the gendered narratives and construction of masculinity in the genre via lyrical analysis. In this vein, I have identified a performative trope common to many pop-punk songs: the cultural trope of the nice guy. The nice guy is defined as a young man with an unhealthy fixation on a young woman who rejects his romantic advances; and this rejection can be met with violence (Nesbø 2021). My case studies analyze lyrical content from the bands Fall Out Boy, Saves the Day, and Say Anything to show a three-part analytical progression: (1) the nice guy in love (2) violence as passion (3) the shattered fantasy. I argue that alternative masculine performances in pop-punk were manifestations of complicit masculinity (Connell 2005), and this anxious reaction to hegemony expressed itself through the cultural trope of “the nice guy.”

B. Atmospheres–Ambiences–Environments (Environmental and Ecological Crises stream)

This panel explores how popular music and sound make audible and perceptible anthropogenic conditions, ranging from ecological decline to ruptures in the more-than-human relationalities wrought by extractive capitalism, settler colonialism, and neoliberal expansion. Specifically, the panel proposes “atmospheres” – and related terminologies like waves, surroundings, and impasses – as an emergent analytic for understanding vernacular musics and sounds as sites for apprehending environmental crisis. Across all four papers, this panel mobilizes atmospheric musicalities as a theoretical vista for developing a more politically and ecologically felicitous popular music studies.

Panelists draw from intersectional methods and theory (music studies, anthropology, critical race studies, Indigenous studies) to interrogate the role of popular practices of sounding/listening in bringing the realities of the climate crisis into focus. We ask: How do the precarities of the Anthropocene come to be sensed through music/sound? Across several genres and musical practices from Senegal, Mexico, and the United States, panelists critically examine how politics of audibility create spaces for making anthropogenic conditions perceptible. Taken together, these papers chart new paths for a popular music studies that can be better equipped to wrestle with the emerging realities of global environmental crisis.

Chris Batterman Cháirez, “Beyond Impasse: Musical Experience and Ambiental Sensibilities on a Mexican Lake”

This paper takes pirekua—a popular music performed by Indigenous P’urhépecha communities—as a point of departure to explore the ways in which ecological precarity becomes felt and known by Indigenous residents of Lake Pátzcuaro, Mexico. Government and commercial extractivism have resulted in pollution, declining water levels, and the disappearance of endemic species. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork in Pátzcuaro, this paper asks what is at stake for
Indigenous residents in this form of musical experience. Tracing the multiple dimensions of water in the Pátzcuaro region, I attend to the way in which water—and relationships to water—comes to be known through song. I argue that musical experience is a means by which “digitaliz sensibilities” (Peterson 2021) emerge and through which residents enact and make audible the various entanglements of their lacustrine environments; through these sonic practices, Indigenous residents negotiate histories of dispossession and rebuild more-than-human socialities ruptured by degradation. I end with an invitation to think through “impasse”—as opposed to “crisis” (Abreu 2018)—both as a heuristic to understand the current ecological/political condition of our times and as an analytic through which to grasp how ethically felicitous forms of locality and sociality are (re)made through musical experience.

Jade Conlee, “Re-Placing the Non-Place: Vaporwave’s Ethical Atmospheres and Ecologies”

Soothing, watery sounds are most frequently found today in music made for meditation and massage, but they play an unexpected role in another genre: Vaporwave. This internet-based music and meme aesthetic ironically reanimates 1990s American and Japanese consumer cultures through the lens of now-obsolete technologies. Sonically, vaporwave is a music obsessed with sensory experiences of place, drawing on field recordings of mall interiors and production techniques like reverb, stereo panning, and filtering to heighten the experience of acoustic immersion. This presentation traces an affective topology of climate change through vaporwave tracks that juxtapose malls and office parks with tropical sunsets, beaches, and palm trees. Vaporwave albums like Palm Mall (2014) highlight the centrality of fountain-based water sounds and tropical plants to corporate atmospheres designed to shield consumers from reckoning with the disastrous effects of climate colonialism and global capitalism (Liboiron 2021). By recreating the atmospheres of commercial “non-places” (Augé 1992)—transitory capitalist spaces that strip consumers of their particularity and social relations—I argue that vaporwave producers demonstrate a mode of “atmospheric attunement” (Stewart 2011) that replaces the non-place. Theirs is a subtle ethics that critically observes, without fully acquiescing to, the sensory logics and ecological imaginaries of end-stage capitalism.

Cana F. McGhee, “Botanical Blackness: Musico-Sonic Intimacies as Environmental Justice”

As philosophers, geologists, and environmental historians have recently articulated, racial justice cannot be achieved without remedying the harms wrought by anthropogenic conditions (Taiwo 2022, Yussoff 2018). In this paper, I grapple with how musicality figures in entanglements of racial and environmental justice. Specifically, I venture through a greenhouse of online plantcare cultures to account for musical and sonic engagements amongst houseplants and human caregivers. With a focus on Black cybercultures (Brock 2020) of plantcare content, I demonstrate how genres like R&B, soul, and hip-hop work alongside ASMR-like sensory plays with foliage to animate soundscapes where Blackness and planthood coincide. These plant-human assemblages reveal how lives that, at times, have been deemed nonhuman enact agency through musico-sonic expression. Plantifying Rachel Mundy’s formulation of “animal musicalities” (2018), I assert that Black “plant moms” reveal how musical and sonic practice often envelop processes of identity-formation, effectively serving as connective tissue between the many
Margaret Rowley, “‘When It Comes Here’: Listening to Climate Change from the Periphery in Omar Pene’s Climat” (mlrowley@bu.edu, in person)

Senegalese popular music has a long history of 32igitalization – awareness-raising songs oriented toward changing outcomes in health, politics, and other public conversations. Singers in the 1990s and 2000s counseled people to pick up trash and use insecticide-coated mosquito nets for malaria prevention; songs about the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 likewise urged precautions like washing hands and masking. Veteran musician Omar Pene’s 2021 album Climat follows this tradition, focusing on climate change. But the title track in particular raises questions of accountability and direction. Identifying Western nations as those responsible for creating and reversing climate change, Pene warns his compatriots in Wolof that “when it comes here among us, it will hurt more,” a reality evident in Senegal’s ongoing coastal erosion, floods and droughts, and resulting outward migration. Dialogue is his only recommendation. In the genre of 32igitalization, Climat asks the listener to confront a problem that “has no borders anymore,” but for which the responsibility and agency lies far outside of Senegal’s frontiers. This presentation listens to Climat as a voice from the periphery, hearing it as a synchronous, polylingual experience of a nation with negligible contribution to climate change, but for whom the consequences are already disastrous.

C. Gen Z Reflections on Gender Inequity, Misogyny, and the Future of Femmes in the U.S. Music Industry (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

When does a crisis become the status quo? In this panel, three college music industry students and a music industry professor donning a discussant’s cap cover a tune as old as mass manufactured sheet music, the phonograph, and radio broadcasting: sexism in the music business. The first presenter examines research on the women missing from festival line-ups and irrational excuses for their exclusion. This old problem has gained new urgency with the demise of recording revenues and artists’ dependency on the festival circuit as a primary revenue stream. The second presenter examines gender dynamics in the alternative rock scene of the 2000s, when sexist lyrics were the norm, predators roamed stages freely, and female fans carried their favorite acts to superstardom, receiving abuse and disrespect in return for their free market labor. The final presenter brings the maligned fangirl squarely into the limelight in a timely corrective to the media’s mockery of femme fans. Our panel concludes with a discussion of this music industry crisis, not entirely one of identity or resource scarcity, but of confidence among Gen Z’s future music professionals that change is possible, when it’s more profitable to uphold systems of power that exclude, denigrate, and abuse.


While music festivals are a space to create joy, spectacle, belonging, and self-expression, they are also big business with a bad habit of excluding women from the stage. Whether a micro event
or mega festival, women are often lower down the line-up, receive shorter time slots on smaller stages, are paid less, and a shocking few are given the opportunity to headline. This paper examines the research and movement-making of #BookMoreWomen, female:pressure, and Keychange, which highlight the lack of women and nonbinary performers on festival stages and demand industry change from the inside. The good news is that the gender gap has narrowed slightly since these organizations began their reporting, and small-scale, independently run festivals are more likely to make bold statements about inclusivity and prioritize women’s representation on their lineups. But most of the largest and most profitable music festivals don’t share this sentiment, and top festival promoters continue to argue that women fail to bring in the big sponsor bucks or comparable fan following of male-fronted acts. Through communications studies lenses on gender theory and identity performance, this paper brings into sharp focus the logical fallacies in these excuses and suggests long-term solutions for this pervasive problem.


For decades, fangirls have been the entertainment industry’s punchline. As early as the 1960s, with the rise of rock journalism and Beatlemania, a generation of fangirls were mocked and reviled with terms like teenybopper and groupie and attacked for their so-called lack of intelligence or taste. In yesterday’s journalism and today’s digital media, teenage girls are typecast for liking something “too much.” Fueled by a combination of misogyny and ageism, the belittling and shaming of fangirls has gone relatively unchecked and fueled negative public perceptions of femme fandom. Unfortunately, the damage goes deep: fangirls often internalize these unkind representations, leading many to disavow the term altogether. This paper examines the media’s historic and modern-day representation of fangirls and contrasts public perceptions with how fangirls view their fandom and culture. Through interviews with fangirls, this paper gives them voice to tell their own stories about their favorite musical artists, the communities they have built and nurtured, and the many ways they contribute to artistic success. By passing the mic to the fangirls, we can gain a better understanding of and respect for who they are, what they love, and what collective power they wield in shaping popular music, yesterday and today.

D. Solitude and Connection Under Covid (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)


The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, especially during the large-scale shutdown of the vast majority of in-person interaction in 2020, has largely relegated the most common musical experience to the realm of the isolated individual. Popular music recordings and productions disseminated through online platforms suddenly became the only means by which fans could engage with artists. As a result, the layers of technological mediation between musical artists and their listeners have become more pronounced than perhaps ever before. While some might characterize the dearth of live entertainment as a cultural and experiential crisis, I suggest a silver lining in the form of an opportunity to engage deeply with aspects of our acousmatic listening experiences. While mediated experience has long been a central facet of our interaction with recorded popular music, the significant changes to our daily routines throughout the pandemic...
have brought certain aspects of that experience into relief. Modern popular music records provide us with impressions of virtual performance spaces that are often fascinatingly complex and dynamic, bearing little resemblance to physical reality. To contemplate the implications of our perception and cognition of virtual performance spaces of popular music records is to contemplate a core component of current musical engagement.

Xinze (Rafa) Lu, “Looping during Lockdown as a New Participatory Musicking Style: How Distancing Made More Long-Distance Collaborations Possible during the Pandemic?”

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, the world was forced into a lockdown. As live music events were canceled, experts within the music industry anticipated a substantial negative impact on musicians. However, it was the lockdown that led to some unprecedented collaborations between musicians from diverse economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds; some even collaborated with animals. At the beginning of 2021, Kiffness’s collaboration with the Alugalug Cat exploded on the Internet. Afterward, Alugalug became the most popular artist with whom to collaborate. A worldwide participatory musicking event then started on multiple platforms. Instrumentalists, independent artists, and renowned celebrities all joined its loop globally. Therefore, what does it say about the music in this time of crisis?

Through an in-depth study of those looping lockdown music events and the unprecedented cooperation, this article argues that the COVID-19 crisis pushed musicians to develop new ways to bond—music was indeed revolutionized. With looping as the new key participatory element, music was uplifted technologically, making it possible for boundless/distanced musicking. However, the bigger question is what comes next with distanced musicking—could it feed back to live culture? How should musicians benefit financially from all-inclusive looping events such as this?

Jan Torge Claussen, “Teaching Sound Studies Online During the Covid-19 Pandemic”

In many university courses held during the pandemic, lecturers experienced that contact with students via videoconferencing systems was heavily reduced in contrast to face-to-face courses, despite many pragmatic advantages. However, during a seminar on Sound Studies, advantages also emerged. Thus, core positions of Sound Studies could be conveyed by making use of the fact that each student was in his or her own room on the one hand and the media-technical conditions of their interconnection on the other. During one session participants were asked to spontaneously select sounding objects that were meaningful to them and that they could access in their environment. Through the subsequent audio-visual perception and discussion of the objects, the following fundamental positions of Sound Studies could be conveyed, among others: Our knowledge of sounds is shaped by cultural clichés and associated dichotomies between hearing and seeing (Sterne 2003). They are closely linked to our individual perceptions and our "sonic persona" (Schulze 2018). The media-technical transmission channels unfold effects on the contents and beyond (McLuhan 1964), which have an impact on aesthetics as well as on constellations of power (Ismaiel-Wendt 2018). Finally, these approaches seemed to have a positive impact on the well-being of the students during the crisis.
Increased access to cheap and powerful music production technology has been celebrated as democratizing by both scholars, journalists and music producers. Harkins and Prior however suggest that music-making practices intersect with socio-economic structures in specific ways that demand attention (2022). While increasing access to technology should be celebrated, celebrations should not keep us from examining the socio-economic conditions of music production and how these affect different music makers’ opportunities to do musical work. Interviews we have conducted with Norwegian producers suggest that there are significant discrepancies between democratic ideals and actual distributions of opportunities to pursue musical projects. One obvious example of such discrepancy is the lack of women in record production, assumed by the Norwegian Recordist Union (PAF) to account for less than 1% of Norwegian producer credits.

Drawing on democratic theory, this paper explores democratization in music production with Norwegian producers’ experiences as a starting point. It sheds light on some ways in which technology and socio-economic structures offer distinct ways of working that invite some producers to engage in meaningful musical work and not others, and argues that if we hope to live up to democratic ideals, we should ask for more than cheap technology.


Songs continue to be the foundation of popular music cultures. Since the industrial assembly line production of songs in Tin Pan Alley, Brill Building, or the hit song factories of the 1960s to 2000s (Seabrook 2015), the working conditions of songwriters have not improved. Today, in physical or virtual songwriting camps, hundreds of productions are completed week after week, most of which never reach the market or are only available via playlists, with little income prospects for their creators.

In a joint cross-national research project between the UK and Germany, empirical data on the specific forms and formats of songwriting camps and the professionals involved were collected and compared to address the relative lack of knowledge about the economic situation of popular music songwriters (Barber 2017; Bennett 2014; Hiltunen 2021).

During the analysis of interviews conducted with songwriters and camp organizers, it became evident how dependent songwriters are on the camps’ infrastructure, how patronized they are by it, and how poorly they can plan their lives around it. This ties into theories of collaborative creativity, precarious craft labor in music, and questions about rights, shares, and music economies in the 21st century (De Laat 2015; Jones 2003, 2005; Thompson 2019).
Ičo Vidmar, “Turn, but in Which Direction? New Syndicalism Among Cultural Workers in Post-Covid Times and After Authoritarian Statism in Slovenia.”

In October 2022 a new union for »creativity and culture« was formed in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia. ZASUK (»turn«) is the last syndicalist attempt of forming broader organization of art workers from every artistic field, regardless of their employment status and income, their dependence on public subsidies or independent action in the market that would cope with precarious conditions of cultural and creative workers. This broad category also includes musicians, supporting personnel and people who work within local music industry in small country, EU member-state at its periphery.

ZASUK, an example of »horizontalist« bottom-up approach to labor organization, should be understood as an answer to the material conditions of cultural workers (and workers in other occupations and trades) gradually worsening during last decade, and also as the last cry to the devastating effects of revanchist politics of the right-wing government during pandemic that could be defined as authoritarian statism (old term by Nicos Poulantzas). After the elections in 2022 and the formation of centrist liberal government with some left leanings the broader field of cultural production (including music production) and status of the artists (musicians) as laborers in Slovenia will be examined.

Sarah Lahasky, “Equity in Crisis: Lessons Learned from Argentina’s Live Music Female Quota Law”

The live music industry largely ignored women’s equity in popular music before movements like #metoo gained traction worldwide. Since then, female musicians in Argentina rallied to help pass national legislation requiring a 30% quota of female musicians in live music events. The timing of the law’s passing on the cusp of the Covid-19 lockdown in early 2020 made it difficult for researchers, musicians, and policymakers alike to recognize whether this groundbreaking legislation positively affected women’s musical work. Since many musicians have returned to pre-pandemic work opportunities, now is an ideal time to reevaluate the law’s effectiveness and contemplate broader applications of the policy elsewhere. Despite this return to near-normal, Argentina continues to experience severe economic crisis that began years before Covid-19, which often exacerbates issues of gender equity in live music. Drawing on feminist theory, I use fieldwork in Argentina from 2019-2020 and a follow-up visit confirmed for January 2023 to consider the effectiveness, benefits, and shortcomings of the Live Music Female Quota Law in post-pandemic Argentina. Ultimately, by outlining the effects of the new legislation in combination with Argentina’s specific economic moment, this paper sheds new light on women’s musical work at the juncture of policy and crisis.

References


F. *Facing the Music: The Crises of Identity in Post-WWII Japanese Popular Music Culture* (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

This panel focuses on the relationship between the sociocultural crises of postwar Japan and popular music. What do jazz in post-occupation Japanese society, the influx of mambo amidst the Cold War, the rise of “new music” after the US-Security Treaty protests, and the history and heritage of Japanese musicians playing Hawaiian music represent in terms of the crisis of identity in post-1945 Japan? Quickly adopting foreign cultures and incorporating into its own musical activities, should we acknowledge postwar Japanese popular music as a form of cultural collaboration or an instance of cultural appropriation? Moving beyond traditional national histories, how do Japanese, Hawaiian and Cuban music cultures intermingle and how are those insular cultures comprehended in terms of archipelagic geopolitics? How do sociocultural crises coincide with musical (rhythmic/harmonic/generic) transformations? This panel examines postwar Japanese popular music in order to think through these issues, which require renewed scrutiny given the contemporary global spread of social movements and the pandemic.

Yuri Sakuma, “The Dawn of Feminism in Post-occupation Japanese Jazz-influenced Songs”
Following the defeat in the Pacific War, Japan, occupied by the U.S., faced an identity crisis due to the Americanization of politics and culture. In post-occupation Japan, two music trends emerged. One leaned toward nationalism, seeking to highlight the roots, authenticity, and purity of Japanese music, and the second sought to fuse Japanese and American music. My presentation will shed light on the second trend characterized by Japanese popular songs of the 1950s to the 60s with American style big-band jazz accompaniment. Japan adopted the male-dominated jazz tradition from the U.S. big bands, and as a result, jazz players were all-male with women only playing singers’ roles. Shizuko Kasagi, Chiemi Eri, and Hibari Misora are often considered the most important female singers of this trend. Being the only female performer on stage, these female singers represented the new voice of Japanese women who sought liberation from patriarchal norms and pre-war militarism. Focusing on the performance and lyrics, I will explore how their jazz-influenced songs enabled a fusion of new gender values along with Japanese and American sounds, promoting early feminism in Japan through popular music.

Sota Chu Takahashi, “Mambo Sun Over the Pacific: Perez Prado’s Late Modernism and Dancing Bodies in Cold War Japan”

Mambo was the most popular music of the early Cold War. Its popularity, which originated in Havana, spread from Miami to the Atlantic Ocean via New York, or from Mexico City to the Pacific Ocean via California, caused a panic around the world prior to the Cuban Revolution and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Dámaso Pérez Prado, who was hailed as the “inventor” of the mambo and achieved huge commercial success dominated the latter route. While keeping one foot in the Cuban vernacular scene, Prado professed his devotion to Stravinsky and Sartre, his “modernity” more evident in his compositional approach, which emphasizes dissonance and the persistence of mechanical repetition. Prado's popularity reached Japan and its dancing teens initiating a huge “youth-quake” that predated the rock and roll craze. This paper reconsiders the discourse of the mambo and Prado in the Pacific during the Cold War to discuss how the modernist aesthetic of mambo, which has been called the music of the atomic age, blossomed through the dancing bodies of Cold War Japan, the first country in the world to have suffered nuclear bombing.

Toshiyuki Ohwada, “‘Feeling of Buoyancy and Equilibrium’: ‘New Music’ and Identity Crisis in Postwar Japan”

The Mountain Base Incident and the Asama-Sansō Incident, both caused by the United Red Army in the early 1970s, are considered to have been turning points in postwar Japanese society. Social movements such as Anpo Tōsō (Japan-US Security Treaty protests) had gained public sympathy and developed into a national movement, but they rapidly lost support after lynching and murders among students and deaths of civilians and riot police were reported. Student movements with the sound of an emerging folk music became stagnant, and Japan ostensibly became depoliticized and pushed forward with economic growth into the bubble economy. How, then, did popular music change in the early 1970s, a critical point in postwar Japan? In this presentation, I will examine the structural reforms in the music industry, including the rise of studio musicians and collaborations with the rising commercial industry, analyzing how those transformations coincided with the musical/harmonic change in Japanese popular music—a shift which would subsequently lead to the advent of City Pop.

In this talk, I examine the ways in which Japanese musicians who perform Hawaiian music professionally throughout Asia and the Pacific, including Hawai‘i, deal with the politics of identity. The three Japanese guitarists I discuss – Yamauchi Yuki “Alani,” Agnes Kimura, and Slack Key Marty – provide distinct ways in which Hawaiian culture is accessed and performed. The fraught history of Native Hawaiian cultural suppression and dispossession require us to think about the kuleana, or responsibility, any artist bears in using Hawaiian musical expression as their own. Japanese musicians have been performing Hawaiian music for at least eighty years, arguably longer. Is it possible, then, after such a long period of crosscultural activity to have true collaboration rather than mere appropriation? Because of Hawaiian music’s link to the Hawaiian cultural revival and social justice movements, do Japanese guitarists produce the kinds of crosscultural identifications that advance or diminish emancipatory social relations? I think through the possibilities of the formation of a Japanese slack key guitar style to consider what a “Japanese Hawaiian slack key guitar” idiom might articulate.
Tuesday, June 27

9:00-11:00 am – Session 5

A. Global Hip-Hop (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Hexing Xiao, “Neoliberalism and Dialect Rap: GAI’s Accent, Resilience, and the Chinese Dream”

The overnight rise of Chinese dialect rapper GAI was unprecedented. The artist had little public exposure until the summer of 2017 when he placed first in the initial edition of the reality competition, The Rap of China. Yet in June 2021, GAI became the first hip-hop artist to be applauded by a full article in People’s Daily, the Chinese Communist Party’s official newspaper. Due to the government’s strict censorship of the genre, most Chinese hip-hop artists work in the underground, making GAI’s achievements particularly notable and curious. Where academic and journalistic accounts of GAI’s career have focused mainly on how the controversial rapper adapted to the government’s political agendas by changing his musical materials and styles, this paper takes a different track. Rather than attributing his success simply to selling out or self-censorship, I argue that GAI’s work articulates a neoliberal, grassroots culture of resilience. GAI’s music is especially marked by his accent which features a mixture of southwest Chinese dialects, evoking the rapper’s own experience as a migrant laborer in larger, more industrialized cities. The subject materials of his tracks, his unconventional sampling of folk tunes, and his visual styling gesture further to an urban-rural disparity caused by the country’s capitalizing process. And it is the blend of such elements makes GAI’s artistic rhetoric unusually powerful.

Noriko Manabe, “‘Say What You Think’: The Discourse of Japanese Women Rappers”

Although Japanese female rappers have been performing since the 1990s, the largely male rap community has often marginalized them as inauthentic. Since the late 2010s, however, a cadre of skilled women rappers has achieved commercial success, telling stories that encourage fellow women. This paper examines the ways in which Japanese women rappers challenge beliefs regarding gender and sexuality. After summarizing the history of Japanese female rappers and the industry structures that have impeded their success, I analyze the work and interviews by recent rap stars and the discourse surrounding them.

Okinawan rapper Awich revived her rap career after having been widowed and reached stardom in her thirties. She comments on female empowerment and geopolitical dominance in “Queendom” (2022), gender roles and sexual choice in “Doreni shiyō kana” (2022), and female assertiveness and desire in the double entendre “Kuchi ni dashite” (2021). Japanese-Korean Chanmina questions the damaging impact of beauty standards in “Bijin” (2021) as she impersonates multiple characters through vocal pitch and timbre. These women have prompted critics to reconsider misogyny in Japanese hip-hop and its relation to US culture. Through language, music, and visuals reflecting multiple stances on femininity, these women reframe hip-hop, Japanese womanhood, and cultural globalization.
Sandy Larose, “Hip-hop: A Space for Resistance and Identity Building in Haiti”

Since 1982, Haitian hip-hop has been a medium for expressing popular desires. It has thus reinforced this approach in its own way by constituting a new form of expression of popular revolt but also of identity building for young people. Young people from working-class neighborhoods find in this culture a space to fight against scorn and all forms of marginalization (Larose, 2015). Thus, there is a constant demand for recognition through claims. Haiti is in a situation of extreme poverty (Perchelet, 2010; Louis, 2010), where more than half of the population is stuck below the poverty line. This is why a certain fringe of the youth is discontented and revolted; they take refuge in hip-hop to exist and resist in another way. Our paper try to analyze how can contempt push some young people to throw themselves into resistance through a discourse of revolt. Hip-hop is the means that these young people use to build new collective identities. Hence the use of this culture as a space for political expression and criticism of power in the interest of a better society (Honneth, 2007).

Ludia Exantus, “Rap, Power and Womanhood”

Women rappers are fighting a double battle. First, to gain recognition for rap in the Haitian cultural space and, second, to promote themselves as female artists on the music scene (Larose; Exantus, 2021). The rap industry is dominated, for the most part, by men. Despite the undisputed talent of many women, they are still relegated to the background. This is what Bourdieu (1998) calls a kind of minoritized identity that is socially assigned to certain women in specific social contexts. Haitian female rappers are sometimes forced by some producers to change the contents of their songs to be sexier (Vallet, 2019). Despite of those challenges, these female artists have taken ownership of hip-hop scene. Sometimes, they use, in their songs, the same misogynistic discourses used by their male colleagues. This paper proposes to analyze of the “notion of power” through the music of Haitian female rappers. To do so, I focus on the content of two songs in order to understand how the notion of domination and power is treated in these works. At the same time, it would be interesting to understand the extent to which these songs capture the notions of gender and sexuality.

B. Live Music Responds to the Pandemic (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

Jeff Apruzzese, Paul Barretta, Terrance R. Tompkins, “Impact and Hope for the Live Music Industry”

Live music, whether at a festival (Carneiro et al. 2011) or an indoor venue (Edwards et al. 2014), contributes to the economic development of its location. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted the live music industry and therefore the financial contributions of its participants. The present article investigates how the pandemic has affected — and will continue to affect — live music in the U.S. context. The pertinent elements of the industry and its players will be discussed, followed by the impact of the pandemic. This is followed by a discussion of how the live music industry has adapted, then how those adaptations have affected the current and future state of the industry, including the results of a survey of contemporary music consumers. This paper ends with research limitations and opportunities for future research.
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the music industry – in particular the live music sector – was described by the media as a “catastrophe” (Woods, 2020), “worst nightmare” (Terzon, 2021), and “existential crisis” (UK Music, 2021). Despite dramatic consequences for artists and music businesses, the health crisis also created innovation opportunities that would not occur in normal conditions (Johnson & Murray, 2022). One prominent example of an innovative approach to the crisis was the 2021 and 2022 digital-only editions of the Eurosonic Noorderslag showcase festival. They included all the elements of a regular showcase festival (Ahlers, 2021; Galuszka, 2022): a digital music industry conference, networking sessions for artists and business professionals, and a music festival—yet all of them were held entirely online. The paper’s objective is to analyze how the festival was reconfigured as a virtual event and discuss the future of the format proposed by the organizers in the post-pandemic world. In particular, the paper concentrates on two aspects of this reconfiguration: the innovativeness of the festival platform design and how participants made use of unique affordances (Gibson, 1977) offered thanks to the event taking place online. The analysis is based on participant observation of both festival editions and in-depth interviews.

References


Global pandemic put an unprecedented pressure on touring music acts worldwide; with the growing popularity of streaming services distribution model, most musicians gradually lost the ability of making livable income by selling music and became reliant on income from tours and live shows instead. But as the pandemic interrupted touring activities, many found themselves in precarious conditions. Fast forward to 2022, we are seeing an unprecedented number of tours and live shows happening simultaneously. Even acts like Soft Cell and Tears for Fears have re-united post-pandemic, aiming to benefit from the touring boom. This, however, created a live music attendance crisis; music prometers report disappointing ticket sales and attendance numbers. At the same time, the ticket monopoly Ticketmaster introduced “dynamic pricing” model to gauge ticket prices for more demanded acts. Through a series of interviews and surveys with Canadian promoters, music fans, and touring music artists this paper aims to investigate the nature of the “attendance crisis” and provide a multi-layered perspective on what is causing touring vs. attendance disbalance, as well as theorize possible resolutions of this crisis. Promoter and musician responses will be taking an interview format, while fan responses will be collected and analyzed with survey tools.

Chris Anderton, “Web3 and the Music Festival Sector”

Music festivals have been experimenting with digital technologies for several years – including livestreaming, digital ticketing, holographic performances, augmented reality and virtual reality. Yet, the imposed lockdowns and disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic have accelerated interest in both virtual and hybrid events as festival promoters have sought to adapt to changing circumstances, and to protect against the effects of future public health-related closures. At the same time, there has been burgeoning interest in Web3 technologies including Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) and the metaverse. These technologies afford new developments within the music festival sector, including transformations in how festivals may be owned, managed, marketed and experienced. The longstanding transformative and carnivalesque experience of the music festival might be regarded as under threat by moves that shift attention and interaction to digital platforms and technologies, yet the music festival sector must also keep up to date with changing audience demographics and interests in order to remain relevant. The infrastructure underpinning such developments remains challenging and the hype surrounding Web3 needs to be tempered by the realities of working with virtual assets. This presentation outlines the debates and explores the issues that are affecting the present and future of the music festival sector.
C. Game Sound and Animated Soundtracks (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Sean Davis, “Here to Play: Music and/as Identity in Chrono Trigger”

This paper considers how the music from Square’s 1995 video game Chrono Trigger simultaneously conveys a narrative of crisis and urgency while constructing corresponding identities for in-game characters as well as players. The game’s primary composers, Yasunori Mitsuda, Nobuo Uematsu, and Noriko Matsueda, use what Tim Summers calls “epic texturing” in order to “…accentuate a sense of narrative vertigo through connecting the player’s…interaction to an explicit or implied broader narrative construct” (2016, pp. 66). In other words, the composers’ use of epic texturing links players to a broader narrative—whether that be an in-game story or an implied connection to the real world—through the interaction of the player with the music and the narrative associations between the music, player, and game world. With careful application of critical theories of identity (Bamberg, Butler, Vila), I argue that the epic texturing in Chrono Trigger often accentuates and produces identities in various crises: legal crises, military crises, political crises, economic crises, and ultimately an apocalyptic crisis. These plot elements from the game’s story, coupled with recurrent musical devices (leitmotif, musical topics, texture) reveal a layered narrative that speaks to the game’s popularity, longevity, and continued cultural relevance.

References


Mike D’Errico, “Spatial Audio and the Imaginary Soundscapes of Grand Theft Auto 5”

In the 2020s, 3D audio became a standard experience across media. Meta’s “Quest” headsets brought VR and 3D audio to a mainstream audience looking to escape the lockdown of a global
pandemic, the 2021 rollout of the Dolby Atmos spatial audio technology on Apple Music reshaped casual music listening for millions of users around the world, and the introduction of next-gen video game consoles like the Playstation 5 introduced new 3D audio engines to immerse players in both fantastical and realistic open worlds. In this paper, I consider how spatial audio and the radio mechanic in Grand Theft Auto 5 function as metaphors for the social, cultural, and economic construction of the Los Angeles beat scene. Just as the marketing and development rhetoric surrounding 3D audio claims to allow enhanced presence, locality, and control over one’s sonic environment, artists in Los Angeles’ hip-hop underground foreground the importance of asserting spatial dominance over both the sprawling geography of the city, as well as sonic dominance over the width and depth of their musical mixes. By analyzing the shared trajectories of the 3D audio format and the music and marketing materials of artists such as Flying Lotus and Anderson.Paak, I outline a spatial shift that occurred in the late 2010s and 2020s in which the private music listening experience became not simply a way to escape or control one’s sonic environment, but also a mechanism for engaging further with it.

Gustavo Souza Marques and Jason Ng, “Anime, Hip-Hop and Afro-Asian Connectivities: Reworking Race, Gender and Nationality in Yasuke’s Netflix Series”

Yasuke (2021) is a Netflix series produced by avant-garde hip-hop producer Flying Lotus (executive production and soundtrack), created by renowned writer LeSean Thomas and animated by Japan's MAPPA studios. The plot is loosely based on the real story of the homonymous African samurai who lived in the late 16th century Japan and served Oda Nobunaga; one of the most powerful feudal warlords in the country’s history. The series refracts complex readings of race through expressions of Afro-futurism, Retro-futurism, post colonialism and globalization to develop this complex reimagining.

The protagonist, Yasuke, is portrayed as a middle-aged ronin (masterless samurai) 20 years after the Honno-ji Temple incident which ended with Nobunaga committing seppuku (ritual suicide) after being overwhelmed by an enemy force. His portrayal in the series as an educated, gentle and worldly man, who now lives a modest life of solitude as a boatman in a calm country village escapes stereotyped representation of black masculinity which typically presents toughness alongside hedonistic values. The soundtrack plays off the juxtaposition of the old and the new, and the real and the metaphysical, through its ethereal polygeneric hip-hop compositions produced by Flying Lotus, which are paralleled by the incorporation of futuristic technology and supernaturality in this retro-futuristic retelling. In this paper, we explore the aesthetics of Yasuke to unveil an intricate intertextuality between Afro-Orientalism, anime and music production in order to comprehend the ways that the series reworks race, gender and intercultural relations by colliding the past with our present.

Hanisha Kulothparan, “The Importance of Body Language: Musical Topics Through a Queer Lens in Disney’s The Little Mermaid”

In the 2018 documentary “Howard,” we learn that Ursula from Disney’s The Little Mermaid was inspired by the drag queen Divine, increasing the villain’s prominence as a queer icon over the last several decades. While Disney film narratives are typically categorized within the romantic archetype, her queerness invites a flipping of the script to fit the tragic archetype (Almén 2008).
Ariel and Ursula’s opposing viewpoints as hero and villain, which I call normative and queer lenses, respectively, are seemingly clear at the surface; however, complexity arises through cross connections between the archetypes when we examine the film’s songs through each lens. In this paper I explore how musical characteristics both invite and complicate these opposing perspectives. First, I analyze how Ursula’s “Poor Unfortunate Souls” signifies villainy in its opposition to Ariel’s “Part of Your World.” Then, I discuss the complication of this opposition within the film through the same musical characteristics present in “Under the Sea” and “Kiss the Girl.” Drawing upon Lee’s definition of queer theory (2020), Decker’s discussion of topical oppositions (forthcoming), and Cusick’s Song/Speech binary (1999), I argue that complexities of physicality in the film parallel its complexities within the music.


D. Negotiating Gender (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Alexandra Apolloni, “The Sunshine Girl at Home: Mary Ford and White Domesticity in Crisis”
From her early appearances on 1940s barn dance radio, to her chart-topping duets with her husband Les Paul in the 1950s, Mary Ford’s vocal and guitar performances responded to perceived cultural crises by engaging with notions of white feminine domesticity.

Ford, born Colleen Summers, began her career in the Southern California country music scene of the 1940s, where she was a regular on Hollywood Barn Dance radio. This was a time of rampant discrimination against migrants who left the Great Plains for California, when the whiteness of migrants and so-called hillbilly music was contested. For so-called “native” white Californians, who experienced the dust bowl migration as a threat, Ford’s sentimental vocality imbued country music with white feminine respectability.

A decade later, following a run of pop hits that featured virtuosic multi-tracking, Ford and Paul co-hosted the TV show Les Paul and Mary Ford at Home. It cast Ford as a singing housewife, domesticating Paul’s techno-wizardry at a moment of technological anxiety. Reception of Ford’s voice at these two moments of her career reveals how pop music engages with feminine respectability at moments of white anxiety—not only shaping ideas about musical genre, but broader cultural notions of gender and respectability.


The critical focus of music journalists and scholars on the country music industry’s promotion of white heterosexual male artists over women and Black, Indigenous, and other artists of color has shed new light on the commercial success of marginalized artists. By extending the insights of Marissa R. Moss (2022) and Francesca T. Royster (2022), I suggest that for women in country music, humor has proven to be a prevalent performative strategy in mediating the racial and gendered inequality of country music. Comedic tactics appear in the music of well-established white soloists, notably Miranda Lambert and Kacey Musgraves, as well as the music of newly-formed artists, such as the Black female country trio Chapel Hart. By pointing to the ways that Lambert’s collaborations with other female artists have employed humor as a means of critique and inclusion in a variety of performative contexts, I extend my analysis to Chapel Hart’s emerging commercial visibility (despite being ignored by country radio) and to their artistic collaboration with ZZ Top guitarist Billy Gibbons in the campy music video “Jesus and Alcohol” (2020). I, thus, argue that female country artists employment of humor serves as savvy demonstrations of southern and working-class jokes meant to signal inclusion and negotiate difference in country music.


In 2015, musician Joni Mitchell suffered a brain aneurysm. She had to learn how to walk, talk, sing, and play music again. This was not the first time that Mitchell had to relearn basic human functions, having contracted polio as a child during a Canadian epidemic in 1951. This time, she was over 70. Given Mitchell’s long romance with cigarettes, her age, and various maladies over the years, that she survived at all was miraculous. Then she took to the stage of the 2022 Newport Folk Festival and played a full set, with an array of musicians supporting her but not holding her up. She more than held her own, especially when she grabbed an electric guitar to
play an excerpt from “Just Like This Train,” from her 1974 album Court and Spark. The entire set “broke the internet” for several days.

This paper starts from Mitchell’s performance at the 2022 Newport Folk Festival to explore the ways in which Mitchell refuses, like she always has, boxes that she is “supposed” to fit into. Drawing from media studies, disability studies, and popular music studies, I explore how Mitchell’s self-presentation over a range of recent public and media events defies pre-ordained narratives about female aging as well as the intersection if not conflation of aging and disability. In addition, by freely acknowledging her age and disability in her choice of clothing, hairstyle, and even the cane she now uses, she defies the tight linkage between popular music and youth, especially for female performers. Mitchell certainly benefits from her various privileges, including economic and racial, yet her performance of aging and disability enact new possibilities, within and outside of popular music culture.

Shelina Brown, “Two Nights at the Hollywood Bowl: Yoko Ono Revivalism and Asian American Women’s Visibility in the Post-Pandemic Era”

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, intensifying hate crimes targeting Asian American communities sparked wide-spread outrage and concern. The US commercial music industry responded with a push towards greater representation of Asian American artists. In particular, Asian American women, long silenced by the invisibilizing, white hegemonic gaze of the US music industry, are now emerging at the forefront of popular music culture. The current trend towards Yoko Ono revivalism can be interpreted as part of this wider cultural shift towards the acceptance of Asian American women artists’ diverse creative voices. This paper will present an ethnographic case study of two nights at the Hollywood Bowl that can serve as a lens through which to assess changing attitudes towards Asian American women in US popular music. In 2011, Yoko Ono took the stage as part of the encore for the Hollywood Bowl’s “Big in Japan” event. While Ono’s iconic performance was met with racist vitriol, just over a decade later, in 2022, the Hollywood Bowl hosted a widely celebrated concert program featuring predominantly Asian American women rock musicians, marking a pivotal moment in US popular music history and a victory for Asian American women’s visibility.

E. Popular Music and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe (Political Crisis stream)

Maciej Smółka, “Disco Polo as a Cultural Crisis: Analyzing the Contemporary Narratives About the Genre in Poland”

Disco polo is one of the most significant music phenomena in contemporary history of Poland. It was developed in the mid-1980s and rose to prominence in the 1990s in a country still striving to cut itself off from its communist past as the semi-libertarian, ribald, but safe cultural alternative to western music. However, since its inception, disco polo was criticized as overly simplistic and shallow – an embodiment of cultural crisis Poland experienced in post-soviet world, while reestablishing its identity. After the decline of its popularity in the 2000s, disco polo encountered a cultural renaissance since 2017 due to political and state-held television’s support, which advertised disco polo as ‘people’s music’. Therefore, listeners opposing the genre currently not only see it as a crisis of culture, but as an element of political crisis.
This paper’s goal is to study the complex narrative about disco polo as Poland’s cultural crisis. Through discourse analysis of the Polish media and interviews with Polish students of popular music studies courses, the data will show why disco polo is currently considered an embodiment of the worst aspects of popular music in Poland, a distinguisher of both tastes and values in Polish culture.

**John David Vandevert, “The ‘Popular’ Musician As ‘Political’ Chameleon: Popular Music Under Putin and Some Post-Invasion Inquiries”**

The Soviet Union’s last decade, while politically chaotic, was a time of significant musical evolution. 1980s rock and bard culture were being phased out for new “Western”-styled genres like hip-hop, discotheque, and punk. The 90s ushered in the supremic rise of “estradnaya” (or popular variety) music, and by the end of the decade, Russia had successfully created a thriving, post-Soviet “popular” music environment. However, as Yeltsin’s anti-Soviet pro-Westernism soured and Putin’s brand of supraethnic nationalism found favor, it was clear that Russian society was irrevocably changing. Once Russian culture turned “political” in the late 2000s, musical artists were now finding themselves at the mercy of political ideology any way they chose. While some decided to use their music for protest, others quietly toed the pro-Putin line or stayed silent altogether. In this paper, I will explore how popular music under Putin became a strategic tool in defining what it means to be/not be Russian and how it participated and continues to participate in augmenting discourse on Russian identity construction. I will also propose several inquiries about the future of popular music, given the rise of censorship and emigration within the Russian hip-hop community in response to the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war.

**Aleš Opekar, “The Development of Popular Music Investigation in the Czech Lands in the Context of Central European Culture and Political Crises since 1945”**

The paper will focus on the examination of academic and, to a relevant extent, also non-academic writings of popular music in the Czech Lands in the international context and in the historical periods defined by the milestones of 1948, 1968 and 1989. The character of the popular music scene as well as the possibilities of its research were influenced by political crises. On the other hand, popular music itself, its resistance and oppositional activities and its theory and journalism contributed to the breakdown of totalitarian regime. How popular music helped society survive bad times and move towards greater freedom.

The paper will examine the establishing and development of popular music research in Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The development of musical culture itself will be examined in the context of left-wing folkloristics, Marxist musicology, communist and post-communist cultural policy, and in the context of underground and alternative writings and media.
Both the GDR and the PR China belonged to the world communist movement and could be regarded as brother countries of a socialist family. Especially in the 1950s, the artistic concepts of both countries were characterized by “the construction of socialism” due to Soviet influences. Within the framework of this cultural policy, numerous mass songs were composed in the two countries and served as tools for the dissemination and propagation of socialist ideology. Despite similar compositional principles, such as emphasis on socialist optimism, the musical languages of the political songs have different characteristics, which are mainly due to different musical cultures of the GDR and the PRC.

The aim of this transnational study is to investigate the relationship between music and politics through comparing the mass songs influenced by socialist ideology in both countries. It studies the impacts of party-loyal cultural politics on national musical life from a historical perspective and particularly explores the role of music in the society. Moreover, my paper uses musicological research methods, including text and music analysis, to examine the ideological factors in musical language.

F. Tik Tok, Twitch, and Covid (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

Kelly Hoppenjans, “‘You Want It, Say So’: Doja Cat, Self-Memefication, and Fan Community in the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Pop star and social media maven Doja Cat released her inescapable disco-pop hit “Say So” on January 17, 2020, just two months before the pandemic rendered in-person live performance impossible. The song quickly went viral on TikTok, spawning countless memes and fan-created versions, and soon Doja followed her fans online and embraced the memes she’d inspired. In the two years following the song’s release, she performed multiple reinvented versions of “Say So” live to virtual audiences, often embracing intertextuality and “self-memefying” (or replicating and adding to fan-created memes of herself) as a means of conversing with her fan community. A parody version spoofed the popular video game Minecraft; a Chicago version blended Fosse’s iconic choreography with TikTok moves; and a genre-crossed metal version shocked fans with Doja’s versatility and powerhouse vocals. Using memetic theories from Richard Dawkins, Henry Jenkins, and Limor Shifman, I trace the evolution of Doja Cat’s live performances of “Say So” and the various memes she engaged and engendered. Through Doja’s efforts to memefy her own song as her fans do, I explore contemporary artists’ use of digital networks and participatory cultures to build community and foster virtual fan engagement through the isolating pandemic in creative ways.

Kaitlyn Canneto, “Pump Up the Pitch: The Effects of COVID-19 on Popular Music through TikTok”

The onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic limited the activity of individuals globally, causing an uptick in social media usage, particularly TikTok. Users on the app create short videos often accompanied by music, and viral content has generated trends in which users replicate a popular video with the same song. For many viral trends to date, the songs used are bytes of popular
music—sped up. Consequently, popular artists are now rereleasing their music with increased tempi and raised keys, editing recent hits to songs predating the app in order to monetize the popularity of their edited songs. I argue that the phenomenon of artists speeding up their own songs is a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and has surfaced a new online appeal for faster songs as a creative outlet for isolated individuals and a simulation of socialization via participation. Previous studies in metric analysis in electronic dance music by Mark J. Butler analyzes popular music in EDM, notably, accelerated samples used by disc jockeys. Building on the scholarship of Butler, I explore the appeal for sped-up editions of songs using “Bad Habit” (2022) by Steve Lacy and “Lights” (2010) by Ellie Goulding to contextualize dance music trends online.

Arthur Ehlinger, “The Musicians on Twitch: Opportunities, Labour and Insecurity”

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, many musicians have turned to Twitch as the only way to showcase their work and connect with their fans. Twitch has considerable disruptive potential, allowing direct-to-fan access and bypassing the conventional music industries’ intermediaries which have traditionally been the most effective way to access potential fans and generate revenues.

However, the reality is that most musician-streamers get a minor financial return compared to the hours they spend undertaking strenuous labour both online and offline. This, combined with the uncertainty of making it to the top one day, put them in a situation of mental precariousness.

On the bright side, Twitch enables musicians to develop their performing and interpersonal skills, making them more confident in offline live music settings. Additionally, they have the ability to create strong ties with their audiences in an unprecedented way. The dynamic and flexible nature of these relationships encourages them to spend a significant amount of time interacting outside of what is considered to be their ‘normative purpose’. This consequently benefits viewers who unite around what musician-streamers represent and can create social ties with like-minded people in a relatively safe environment.

G. Place, Space, and Musical Environmentalism (Ecological and Environmental Crises stream)

Matt Brennan, “Imagining a Just and Green Future for Music Cities: The Case of Glasgow as a UNESCO City of Music”

A city’s music industry and culture may initially seem ephemeral and immaterial, but they rely on a significant and unglamorous infrastructure (buildings from pub to stadium, artist and audience transport, plastic and e-waste, not to mention the digital infrastructure supporting the city’s musical life online – see, for example, Pedelty 2011; Devine 2019; Brennan 2020; Brennan and Devine 2020; Brennan 2021). This paper discusses a new project which aims to (1) map and qualitatively understand the infrastructure and complex systems underpinning music industry activity at the level of a city, using Glasgow as a case study; and (2) envision what role music sectors might play in the urban challenge of accelerating a just and green transition. Ultimately this paper considers a question: what does a ‘just and green transition’ mean in the context of a
city’s music industry and culture, and how can music activity be integrated into the city’s wider transition strategy?

References


Sara McGuinness and Sonia Perez Cassola, “THE CUBAN MUSIC ROOM: A Low-tech Music Display Format, Democratizing Access to Culture”

The Music Room is a method of display which immerses the viewer in a musical activity situated in its home environment. This system has the potential to contribute to the democratization of culture, providing audiences with the opportunity to be educated and enjoy national and international cultural heritage. The idea grew out of discussions between a team of practitioners and educators on how to present musical performance with all of the interactions and communications therein, for educational purposes. A key factor was access, costs needed to be kept low in order to reach a wide audience. To achieve this, the focus was on re-configuring existing technology.

While technological advances have greatly expanded the possibilities of communication and cultural exchange, there is a divide in terms of economic power and access to resources, with cultural manifestations being documented for consumption typically by a western, relatively privileged, audience. This project could facilitate a two-way exchange: not only can international audiences experience a performance in a Cuban tenement yard without increasing their carbon footprint, Cuban audiences can enjoy performances from other cultures. Perhaps more importantly, this system could increase local access to national cultural heritage.

Jan Koplow Villavicencio, “More than Screams and Distortion: Chilean Metal Against the Ecological Crisis and the Extractivist Economic Model”

In the context of the current ecological crisis, Latin America has been affected both by the vulnerability of its ecosystems and by the environmental destruction generated by the extractivist economic model. Chile has not been the exception to this and has suffered the consequences of its opening to neoliberalism during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, which gave way to an economic and institutional system that encourages the development of extractivist projects.
Nowadays, various musicians have sought to use their art to denounce this situation, and Chilean metal music has not been the exception. However, the work carried out to date on the relationship between metal and the ecological crisis has been circumscribed to the study of artists and contexts within the Global North. Thus, this paper aims to fill part of that void by analyzing how Chilean metal bands have joined the discussion about the ecological crisis and the effects generated by the extractivist economic model in the country. In this vein, the methodology consists of a sound and discursive analysis of different musical productions, while the theoretical approaches that guide this research are decolonial and socio-environmental studies.


This paper deals with the types of sonic agency (LaBelle 2018) expressed via popular music about environmental politics in Greenland. It uncovers types of sonic agency that Greenlandic
popular musicians exercise when encountering climate change, and closely related oil, mineral and natural gas extraction processes. This paper provides an ecomusicological case study from an understudied area of the Arctic, and Greenland, which is a location of rapid climate change, with local to global implications, environmentally and socio-culturally. With global warming happening four times as fast in the Arctic as on the rest of Earth, the case offers a preview of what we may expect of climate change music and related sonic agencies elsewhere in the future.

11:15 am-12:45 pm – Session 6

A. Translating Identity: Cruzando Latine/Ibero-American sound, music, and aesthetics (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity panel)

Latinx, Latina/o, Latine, Latin American, Hispanic, Caribbean, Ibero-American are terms of identification that produce representative politics based on an assumed sense of cultural or racial togetherness. In reality, the subject of Latin American and Ibero-diasporic experience is always “cruzando” (crossing), “traveling” to other’s worlds (to borrow from María Lugones), in ways that can produce radical projects of disidentification, solidarity, and utopia. This panel explores how sound, music, and the aesthetic—all translated into that thing we call “popular music”—negotiate the boundaries of and between identity by those of the Spanish/Spanglish/English speaking world. Translation, then, is used as a method to explore the cultural and political workings of popular music; as all performances of language serve as an act of translation between subjects and their respective logics. Thus, what we call “popular music” must cruzar into other fields (such as Latine feminism, and cuir decolonial) to produce and question its aesthetic relations with the future. Here, we use popular music as a way of investigating how identity formations such as Latinidad, and the geographic area described as Latin America, are translated across diaspora, time, language, and political movidas (movements). Popular music, or sea música popular, serves to translate such identities through its ability to cruzar in a multitude of contexts.


There is no direct translation for the word loudness in Spanish; many of the attempts to translate the term lead to indexing noise (54entaion), excess (exceso), strength (fuerza), or distance (alto). Loudness, then, has specific ideological markers of aggression, and therefore people whose presence is in excess of the dominant paradigm are sonically mistranslated as such. I take this difficulty in translating loudness, the unfruitful search for a signifier in the “other” language, as the method for investigating how trans Latinas perform their identities through popular music. How do artists such as Arca, Sailor Fag, Linn da Quebrada, and Villano Antillano use the body in performance to articulate their trans, Latinx loudness? How do genre, sound, and the voice index such loudness in popular music? Is the “trans” in translation the trans in transgender? I argue that these performances—and the ways that these artists articulate abjection, exceso, the body, and travestismo through such performances—point to one way we might think past a discursive need to translate loudness and instead bypass the identitarian regime of representation. (Mis)Translating loudness, then, demonstrates how transgender Latinx popular music artists reclaim their bodies from the terms of transphobic and racist identity formations.
Camila Torres Castro, “Tracking the Mestizo Ear: The Politics of Cielito Lindo and Whitexican Sensibilities”

At the beginning of the pandemic, videos of people clapping and singing from their balconies in places with the strictest lockdowns went viral across the internet. Soon after, and as a direct response to this gesture, a similar video emerged that showed people singing Cielito Lindo from their balconies in Santa Fé, one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Mexico City. This is not the first time this has happened. For years, Mexicans have sung this song when they are abroad, in World Cups and Olympic Games, as a non-official national hymn. Here, I examine the construction of what I call the mestizo ear and how it emerges in relation to Cielito Lindo, a traditional Mexican song written in 1882 by Quirino Mendoza y Cortés. I draw from Dylan Robinson’s conceptualization of “hungry listening”, where he discusses settler-colonial listening relations, to formulate a more culturally and regionally specific term that speaks to the racial formations of Latin America and, more particularly, of what we now know as Mexico. I argue that this song provides a particular type of belonging to the nation-state that, while unofficial, runs parallel to institutionalized discourses around Mexican identity and mestizaje.


Carlo Aguilar González, “Sounding the Territory in Drag: Drag Canario as a Queer/Cuir Borderland.”

Often discussions about borders and translation center experiences within the boundaries of the U.S. territory. In this paper, I want to address how queer life is crossed by other borders, specifically those that, equidistant from the global south and north, define the tricontinental space of the Canary Islands. In March of 2022, the Gala de la Reina Drag of the Carnaval in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria returned to celebrate its 23d edition after the interruption of public events during the global pandemic. Following Maria Lugones’s ‘decolonization of gender,’ and Diego Falconi’s ‘inflexión marica,’ I interrogate Drag Canario uses of music mixes, vocality, and embodiment as an archive that shows the tensions that consumption, legibility, and translation create in the colonial space between local economies of sexual dissidence and global displays of gay modernity. Untangling the paradisiacal touristic image of the islands, I argue how drag can
be a form of indigenismo that not only claims a self-autonomous corporal expression but also enacts a connection with identity and territory that demonstrates how epistemic categories as Latin America, Caribbean, African, and European fail when an outermost archipelagic land is centered.


B. Media Materialities (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)

**Shaun Cullen, “Analog vs. Digital and the Crisis of Musical Preservation”**

Steve Albini is a rock musician and engineer famous (or infamous) for his commitment to analog (as opposed to digital) recording techniques that many musical listeners and producers regard as frivolous or outdated. Albini, for his part, adopts a nearly Platonistic view that digital recordings are, in a sense, unreal. The sound of pop recordings, even the most naturalistic, betray choices made by musicians in terms of mic placement, amplification, compression, and mixing, to name only some of the most important factors. Even though digital technology can be used to produce a theoretically infinite array of sonic effects, in most cases, it ends up functioning as a cost-saving measure. Curiously, Albini also makes the argument that analog recordings are a more durable archive of musical performances, a somewhat questionable assertion given recent catastrophes like the 2008 Universal Studios fire. At root, Albini’s recording practices stage a kind of performed dialogue between musicians about the meaning of their performances, both as popular commodities and as historical documents (to mention just two heuristics). Given the revival in vinyl record sales and their concomitant environmental impact, Albini’s idiosyncratic theories and techniques resonate more loudly in an increasingly digitized world.

**Tim Jay Anderson, “In My Room: Private Paratexts, their Publics, and the Envisioned Identities of the Album Cover”**

This speculative essay is the result of two unexpected events. In 2019 my family decided to ship over 2000 albums to me that I had acquired in my teens and they had stored as I moved from city to city beginning in late 1980s. The second came in the form of the pandemic. The time during shutdown meant more time interacting with records than my teens, resulting in new patterns of reflection and leisure. This paper reflects upon this moment of reconsideration to discuss what it means to engage and reengage albums and their paratexts. After years listening of CDs and streaming, these albums and their accompanying covers, sleeves, and other elements have reinvigorated memories that pose questions about their intent. This paper draws from discussions
of paratexts and the public sphere through an autoethnographic lens to speculate about the mediated identities of artists and their consumption through the album as a specific material object. Finally, this paper asks what kind of judgements and activities does the album cover afford the listener, particularly in periods before networked ubiquity when records were the only time-based media a person could own.

Claudia Ripoll Martínez, “Music Editorial Photography in Rolling Stone Magazine (USA) in the 1990s: Aesthetics, Authorship and Discourses of the Images and the Relation to the Creation of the Charisma of the Artists.”

This proposal aims to explore the relationship between photography and popular music by carrying out a study of the different origins, media and genres to highlight and determine the relationship between the two disciplines, focusing on the editorial photographs of Rolling Stone Magazine (American edition) in the 1990s. To do so, we will analyze the formal and aesthetic characteristics of photography when it is placed at the service of popular music, differentiating and comparing the connotations in relation to the creation of the charisma of the artists and taking into account the gender of the artist, whether they are male rock stars or female pop stars (taking into account the low number of female rock stars). Through this analysis, this paper aims to draw conclusions on how photography has created the aesthetics of popular music in the photographs that gave life to the Rolling Stone magazines of the 1990s, thus giving rise to results that shed light on the evolution of this union between disciplines, their motives and consequently, their aesthetic and emotional canons in relation to the artists, their charisma and the meaning of the photographs created in the service of popular music.

C. The Politics of History and Memory (Political Crises stream)

Monika E. Schoop, “Popular Music, Historical Revisionism, and the Crisis of Democracy in the Philippines”

In May 2022, Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr, son of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, was elected president of the Philippines. The election was preceded by social media campaigns, portraying the dictatorship period as the “golden age” of Philippine history. This historical revisionism glosses over the fact that the rule of the dictator was marked by severe human rights violations such as imprisonment, torture, and killing of suspected political opponents. While “Bongbong” Marcos enjoys widespread support across social classes and political groups, many consider the election a crisis of democracy. In popular music, the return of the Marcoses to national politics and historical revisionist narratives are perhaps most vigorously opposed, as new compositions and the revival of historical protest songs from the martial law era show. Drawing on online and offline ethnographic fieldwork, interviews with musicians, and an analysis of selected musical examples, this paper explores popular music as a form of protest in the context of the current political crisis. In dialogue with popular music studies, memory studies, and political science, the paper illuminates the role of music in negotiating contested memories of a violent past, in providing counter-memories to historical revisionism, and in fighting threats of a new dictatorship.
Onur Sönmez, “90s Turkish Pop, Anglophone Rock, and Nostalgias of ‘Good Old Turkey’ in İzmir’s Popular Music Scene”

Covers bring the past, sometimes a lost past, to the now. Many people in İzmir’s popular music scene go out to see live cover bands to satisfy their nostalgic feelings. There are two prominent nostalgias experienced in the scene: 1) for 90s Turkish pop; and 2) for Anglophone rock (especially from before the 2000s). Based on ethnographic fieldwork, I argue that these two nostalgias are closely related to the political and economic transformations that have happened in the country and in İzmir within the last twenty years. Firstly, the conservative policies that the Islamist government has been imposing on the citizens since the early 2000s have made many seculars reimagine the 1990s as the last era of “good old Turkey.” Thus, Turkish pop from the 1990s represents that “golden age.” Secondly, frustrated rockers believe that the government’s economic policies have led to a change in the audience demographics in nightlife and relatedly to a decline in Anglophone rock’s popularity in İzmir. Hence, their desire to hear this genre at shows is reinforced by their mourning for this transformation. In this paper, I shed light on the relationship between these two nostalgias and the societal transformations of the past twenty years.

Jeongin Lee, “The ‘Forgotten War,’ Remembered and Reimagined: Musicking and Sounding Memories of the Post-War Generation”

The soundscape of the DMZ not only provides a unique context to examine the multivalent nature of the inter-Korea conflict, but also implies how sound manifests, witnesses, represents, and/or masks wartime violence. Based on my ethnographic fieldwork, this paper investigates the role of popular music performances in the memory-making process among the post-war generation in the Korean DMZ. By exploring the complex layers of the DMZ soundscape between the two Koreas, this research attempts to address how sound could affect individuals to establish a sense of a place and memories. More specifically, this paper explores how wartime experiences are shared and represented through the musicking process and how memories are re-enacted, re-owned, and re-interpreted by the participants. In this process, I put an emphasis on the performativity of “listening” to highlight further the individual agency and the affective nature of sound to explore how the DMZ soundscape affects a group’s cultural memory of events layered with violence and trauma. Drawing on the concepts of “sounding memories” and “mnemonic imagination” (Keightley and Pickering 2012), this paper further pays close attention to the entanglement between the formation of socially shared memories and sonic representations of cultural trauma.

D. Girlhood and femininity (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Nora Leidinger, “Sweet, Sad Subjects – Negotiations of Girlhood in Bedroom Pop”

Girlhood, girlness, and girl culture have been frequently analyzed by pop music scholars in the past, often with a focus on the apolitical and non-autonomous space girls inhabit (Warwick, 2013; Griffín, 2004; Björck, 2013). However, while earlier studies emphasized girlhood as something negative, powerless, and rejected, we now see a new confidence in girls’ overcoming their identity crisis and political representation (or lack thereof) through a generation of (young)
artists and fans who embody girlhood as a form of political activism. So far, little attention has been paid to girls of the current generation growing up in a mediatized world with access to social media, new software, and other ways of accessing, (self-)producing, and listening to music. In this paper, I will revisit the concepts of girlhood, girlness, and girl culture that have conceptualized the position of girls in the music industry in the past to highlight the growing agency, relevance, and influence of girls as (bedroom) pop artists and listeners over the past decade through the use of social media and to underscore the importance of girls in the popular music industry of the future. Special attention will be given to the concepts of voice and space in relation to girls to highlight how the bedroom has become a safe space to amplify girls’ voices as a form of activism.


When Madonna released “Material Girl” (1984) she defined, in the soundscape of American popular music at the turn of the 21st century, what it meant to be a girl. This project interprets “Material Girl” (2020) by Saucy Santana and “Immaterial” (2018) by SOPHIE as reinventions and radicalizations of feminine materiality in pop music. SOPHIE, electronic hyperpop dance music creator, and Saucy Santana, viral southern trap musician, redefine Madonna’s object materiality by displaying their digital materiality as severed from their bodily origin, an accessible creative product for all, and displaced from time and space. SOPHIE and Santana demonstrate how artists can display gender fluidity through their lyrical messaging and transcend their corporeal body with their voice. Beyond Madonna, and in conjunction with her, SOPHIE’s and Santana’s cultural materials matter.

However relevant Madonna’s “Material Girl” remains today—and its resonance with artists such as Santana and SOPHIE demonstrates her ongoing importance—the song is now 40+ years old. By investigating various theories of materiality (Bennett, Leonardi, Salamon), TikTok virality (Vizcaino, Avdeeff), and racialized genre constructions (Grem, Jennings), this project illuminates how the phenomena of Madonna’s “Material Girl” begs to be deconstructed, leading to new considerations of what it means to be a material girl.

So Yoon Lee, “Pretty Savage and Queen’s Sneakers: Dialectical Construction and Presentation of Female Subjectivity in Postfeminist K-pop—Focusing on Blackpink and ITZY”

Following the rise of feminist movements in Korea and abroad, many K-pop girl groups have begun to showcase a more agentic female subjectivity, often characterized as the “girl crush” concept. Drawing from sociological literature on gender and identity performance (West & Zimmerman 1987, Goffman 1959) and literature on postfeminism (Gill 2007; 2016), I define “girl crush” and argue that this brand of female subjectivity appeals to an increasingly global K-pop audience with postfeminist sensibilities. In this paper, I focus on two globally successful K-pop girl groups—Blackpink and ITZY. Through a close analysis of the two groups’ discography, music videos, paratexts and participant observation data of the Chicago leg of Blackpink’s “Born Pink World Tour” and ITZY’s “The 1st World Tour Checkmate,” I identify several patterns by which the two groups construct and present a highly valorized brand of female subjectivity—
most notably the use of audio-visual dialectics such as the synthesis of pink and black or the juxtaposition of crowns with athletic footwear. The paper offers insights into how the currency of “girl crush” both affirms and contests existing norms of gender construction in K-pop and K-pop’s troubled embeddedness in Korean ideals of beauty, heteronormativity, neoliberalism, and patriarchy.

E. Healing, Testifying, and Sounding Social Transformation (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Yongsi Wang, “An Electronic Spatial Underground Solution for Identity and Mental Health Crisis”

This paper is based on the argument of agreement and disagreement with Mark Fisher’s Hauntology regarding the identity and mental health crisis in the contemporary music scene, to discuss the possible future and solution in electronic spatial underground music. Comparing distinguished new musical forms such as the virelai, ballad, and rondeau that were explored by the musicians who survived during the Black Death; in Fisher’s words, contemporary music has been trapped in a cycle of repetition where the capitalist culture has been restricting both creators’ and listeners’ imagination and reality towards novel and new ideas, especially in the context of Covid. However, there has always been another music scene that is not necessarily new but can be considered as so in a broader sense—— Electronic Spatial Music & Underground Music. Driven by the need for belongingness and the desire to be back in a physical social group, and healing the mental damage from the long isolation of the pandemic, immersive electronic spatial underground music points out the future.

Myrtle D. Millares, “Crisis on the B-side”

Hip-hop culture’s development continues and thrives, growing from artistic expressions in local spaces, often in response to global forces that can provide resources even while imposing constraining imperatives on individuals who assert alternative power positions. This paper is an inquiry into the narrative of Ariel, a mixed heritage, Indigenous DJ whose story of artistic enculturation and identity creation within hip-hop reveals the intricately woven, often contradictory frameworks she moves amidst, with(in), and through. In speaking of community battles for Indigenous rights, the personal impact of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), the quest for identification, and learning from Vancouver, Canada’s early hip-hop artists, DJ Ariel allows an intimate view of hip-hop’s possibilities and invites deep reflection on the extent to which music makes us. Her story prompts us to interrogate the ways we connect crisis and music even as we invest sound creation(s) with the power of social change.

Carey West, “Sharing Stories of Abuse: Performing Testimony in the Form of Lament Songs”

Popular music vocalists have a history of performing testimony in the form of lament songs where they bear witness sharing stories of abuse and wrongdoings. Throughout the history of pop music, the stage has served as a “safer space” for individuals to experiment with presentations of victimisation and survival, using old tropes to critique societal attitudes and
suggest new outlooks. Performances by Billy Holiday, Aretha Franklin, Tina Turner, Lady Gaga and Taylor Swift, among others, serve as a site of public discourse regarding gender-based violence. This research analyses how such performances have informed social attitudes towards women who experience violence and serve as frameworks of which individuals improvise their own performance of memory while testifying about abuse. Likewise, popular music shapes the reception of such testimony. Applying Suzanne Cusick’s invitation to investigate how “much of the pleasure in music is afforded by the opportunity it gives us to play ourselves free of gender’s rigidities” (1994) this inquiry will combine feminist ethnomusicology and critical studies in improvisation to examine how the popular song has interacted with social attitudes toward the crisis of interpersonal violence to imagine new ways of being in the world (Fischlin, Heble & Lipsitz, 2013).

F. Musical Style and Political Crisis (Political Crises stream)

Stephanie Doktor, “Jazz as Crisis”

Jazz was the first Black music to become so popular it defined an age and gave rise to a new industry. Its success in the 1920s happened in a moment of national crisis. World War I disrupted racial hierarchies when Black families fled to urban centers for safer jobs and Black soldiers returned home to the same unjust treatment. From the Red Summer of 1919 to the 1926 Ku Klux Klan march on Washington, racial uprisings threatened to topple the racial order. Jazz was the soundtrack of these national traumas.

In this paper, I explore how early jazz was a sonic materialization of a post-war racial crisis. By the mid-1920s, white men did not exclusively control Black cultural representations. Black musicians created more opportunities to record and perform, and New Negro artists gained notoriety. As a result, the extremely successful music of white jazz musicians such as the California Ramblers, Red Nichols, and Roger Wolfe Kahn became a conduit for reestablishing cultural dominance. In my analysis of their recordings and reception, I argue that jazz was not just the logical development of Black dance music following ragtime, but rather a unique sonic arrangement confronting the fragility of whiteness.

Mauricio Andrés Pitich, “Between Local and Global: The Ideas (and Problems) of Regional Labels Around Tango”

Tango is an artistic manifestation (i.e., music, poetry, dance, ritual, jargon, and clothing, among others), built during the last two decades of the nineteenth century in the vicinity of Río de la Plata geographical region. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, tango has been subjected to different local, (inter-, trans-) national, regional, and global processes of mobility and mediation which have generated the proliferation of new and more varied cultural hybrids. This work aims to explore some labels –e.g., “Rioplatense tango”, “South American tango”, and “Latin American tango”— created from regionalist discourses systems –ethnic, racial, or national– to solve different economic and national representation crises between the 1980s and 2020s. The proposed methodology is subject to a genealogical-discursive and historiographical analysis of a hegemonic historical accounts and musical productions corpus around
tango. The main hypothesis of this research states that these labels are not only idealized representations but practical resources and concrete realities, materialized in projects, budgets, audiences, and commercial circuits. All of this produced, financed, and distributed by international organizations or companies with the co-participation of different national states, both for profit and to revalue national symbols that reinforce the mechanisms of domination, oppression, and control of different cultures from a specific region.

José Gálvez, “(De-)Standardizing Sound in Times of Political Crises: The Case of Rock ’n’ Roll, USA 1954-57”

The 1950s were characterized in the USA by political crises regarding rights, race and representation. The civil rights movement raised demands for the African American population, whereupon segregationists organized to reinforce politics of discrimination. The role of popular music in this crisis has been characterized as R&B and rock ’n’ roll became catalysts for a youth culture that defied a binary division between music for white people and people of color.

My paper aims to complement and partly challenge this narrative through the analysis of the standards for postproduction of rock ’n’ roll. From this perspective we can identify a desire “transparency” and “balance” in the sound of music addressed to white, middle class and male audiences. However, in the realm of rock ’n’ roll between 1954-1957 it’s possible to identify a desire for loudness and distortion. This doesn’t only represent an infringement of standards of high-fidelity but also technical realization of a sound designed to address otherwise racially separated audiences. Drawing on the discourse analysis of historical documents and media-archeological analysis of original records this paper shows how sound was imbricated in a crisis that shaped our concept of popular music.

2:15-3:45 pm

Keynote session featuring Katie Eichele, Director, Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education, University of Minnesota
“Power of Respect: Sexual Misconduct Response, Prevention, and Culture Change”

Katie Eichele is responsible for strategic planning and day-to-day operations of The Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education, development of policy and protocols relating to sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking and sexual harassment, partnering with faculty, staff and students in the development of outreach and educational initiatives, development of innovative programs to enhance the safety and well-being of students, and the overall coordination of services with other campus and community organizations.

Additionally, she provides direct services to clients, addresses parent concerns, provides consultations for the greater university campus and surrounding community, supervises the TAC staff, and oversees Aurora's fiscal accountability.
Katie has worked at the University of Minnesota, TC since 2004. Her background/experience stems from communications, teaching, student conduct, safety and security, policy development, student development, social justice, and crisis management.

4:15-6:15 pm – Session 7

A. Instruments and technologies (Economic Crises stream)


Drummers have ostensibly been threatened with extinction since drum machines and click tracks made their way into mainstream popular music in the 1970s. Innovations in AI as well as the pandemic have exacerbated the economic and identity crises facing them. The prevalence of drum sequencing in today’s studio recordings has put drummers at risk of becoming cosmetic accessories in live performance, miming playing while contributing little to the audible result.

In order to precisely trace the rise of the technologically based metronomic regularity that has profoundly challenged the profession, we undertook a corpus study of popular music from the 1960s to today. Our research uses post-production software to examine tempo variability and microtiming in 120 songs in the Billboard year-end pop charts. We complement this survey with systematic examination of drummer credits in chart-topping songs over time and in statistics reflecting the decreasing numbers of drummers and drum kits sold. Interviews we have conducted with professional drummers provide further perspective on the changes to the profession and on the economic, social, and creative crises facing these artists. Our paper ultimately reveals the ways that drummers have adapted to technological change and found ways to thrive despite the challenges.

**Erik Broess, “The Slow Death of the Electric Guitar: Existential Threats to the Infrastructure of Analog Guitar Gear”**

In the Summer of 2021, as global supply chains came grinding to a halt, Mike Matthews of electronics manufacturer Sovtek warned, “there is a worldwide panic on the availability of vacuum tubes,” a vital component for building guitar amplifiers. As of today, Matthews’ Russian factory is one of three remaining sources for new tubes worldwide. With the subsequent outbreak of the war in Ukraine and efforts from Russian oligarchs to acquire the factory, the global infrastructure for electric guitar gear appears to facing an unprecedented existential threat.

This paper explores a simple, but consequential question: What happens when the infrastructure supporting the manufacture and maintenance of analog guitar gear dries up? Employing a combination of oral history and archival research, I discuss the remaining tube factories in Russia and China, as well as the supply lines for highly valuable “new old stock” electrical components. Ultimately I speculate about the long-term effects of guitarists’ investments in older and “slower” technologies, like vacuum tubes and analog circuits. Although these technologies have seemingly resisted the tides of obsolescence, I show that their long-term viability rests on highly precarious or otherwise finite supply chains.

The common narrative that correlates technological development with the democratization of music assumes that music technologies will become gradually cheaper and more accessible in time. Indeed, many music technologies are now digitally available to the masses at relatively lower prices. Yet, there are still many stand-alone devices produced in large amounts. Considering that not only governments but also NGOs and the private sector actors are working towards more ecologically-conscious policies, the production of these pricy “one-trick-pony” devices made out of metal and plastic seems curious. I believe that the ongoing Eurorack synthesizer craze especially offers an apposite case study for an inquiry into this seemingly anomalous situation.

Interestingly, there has been only a small amount of discussion in the literature regarding the Eurorack synthesizers so far, especially from the point of view of social sciences. Yet, I believe this subject is worth studying as it seems promising to offer insights into music technologies’ relationship with the democratization of music, as well as ecology, gender, and class. With this conference paper, I aim to review what work has been done on Eurorack synthesizers in social sciences so far and report on the preliminary findings of my own ongoing research.

Ravi Krishnaswami, “Amplifying Value: How a Jingle Trade Association Navigated the Technology-Driven Transition from Stability to Precarity”

David Hesmondhalgh wonders why “highly educated” and “middle-class” workers have chosen a life of “precarity,” “exploitation,” and “misery” in the cultural industries. As a practicing jingle composer in the television advertising industry from 1998 to 2020, I became increasingly interested in researching and documenting the dramatic changes I experienced in how I worked, how my clients valued my work, and the role that my work played in popular culture. These decades were shaped by three major factors: the digitalization of music recording and music distribution technology, the advertising industry’s appropriation of popular music for television, and the decreasing power of labor unions in the creative industries. In addressing Hesmondhalgh’s question, this paper leverages my insider status to explore the role that composing, recording, and postproduction technologies, and their move from elaborate recording studios to laptops running digital audio workstations, has played in deskilling the American advertising music industry. Through an ethnography of its trade organization, The Association of Music Producers (AMP), I show how the shift to remote work reduced composers’ ability to build social capital and maintain value for their work, and how an organization such as a trade association can give dispossessed creative communities some leverage.

B. Self, sound, and structure in hip-hop (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)


While live performance, recorded music, and music videos are temporally based in composition, the composition of persona is a much more subtle everyday performance for most artists.
Rappers, emcees, DJs, producers, and other hip-hop performers often spend their entire careers developing their persona: a performance identity that is disseminated through interviews, stage performances, music videos, branding, fashion, and just about every aspect of an emcee’s career. While the persona is significant to almost all professional performers, it has special significance to hip-hop’s performers. As Common says about the art of emceeing: “Being an MC is about aura and persona. It’s a character you inhabit; it’s a style; it’s a mentality; it’s the way you put yourself out there, the way you think and the way you act. It’s about lyrics and voice, creativity and showmanship” (Anthology of Rap, 799).

This paper will consider the relationship of persona development in hip-hop to crisis: both crisis of identity and the (re)definition of identity as the mitigation of crisis. This paper will briefly examine the racialized history of persona development in hip-hop through the development of personas on a spectrum of thin (i.e. rooted in verisimilitude to self, such as Tupac/2pac) to thick (i.e. distinct from self, such as MF DOOM). The paper will conclude with the examination of an oral history: primarily how one emcee—Newark’s Purple Haze—uses the process of renaming as a way to represent and interrogate her personal identity transformation.


This paper attempts to sketch a critical theory of musical self-transformation. Drawing on the scholarship of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, as well as the musicological work of John Shepherd and Monica Miller, it offers an important corrective to the approach to music-making as a ‘technology of the self,’ associated with the work of Tia DeNora, by pointing to the partial nature of her use of that concept. Based on my collaborative, exploratory case study research with the Grammy nominated, mixed-race hip-hopper, Rob “Fresh I.E.” Wilson, the biography of whose musical self spans a variety of experiences from the dysfunctional sex and drugs trade to wide cultural industry recognition to suicidal ideation, I highlight four major findings having to do with music as self-transformation, musical self-transformation as a modern phenomenon, as made up of specific techniques, and making up a specific ethos. From this, I operationalize musical self-transformation as a practice whose strategic engagement marks key moments of change and non-change throughout the life course and offers a framework for future research. It allows us to expand beyond a singular focus on popular musical achievement, musical self-construction, or social inequalities, as though detached both from the conditions of their experience and potential for transformation, to synthesize a collaborative critical reflexive approach to musical socio-analysis.

Sarah Lindmark, “The Sound of Self-Loathing: Reshaping Genre Through the Manipulation of Timbre in Kendrick Lamar’s ‘Swimming Pools (Drank)’”

In this paper, I investigate Kendrick Lamar’s use of the underwater sound: a conglomeration of audio effects that make a song’s beat sound as if it is being played underwater. With Kendrick’s 2010 single “Swimming Pools (Drank)” from his album good kid, m.A.A.d city serving as a case study, I theorize that the underwater sound signifies an introspective darkness within black urban life in America that often goes unheard. Famed gangsta rappers such as The Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac Shakur had certainly established precedent for emotionally vulnerable verses, but Kendrick’s disdain for peer pressure, insidious self-doubt, and alcohol-soaked guilt in his lyrics
boldly defy gangsta rap’s idiomatic braggadocio. “Hip hop’s tragic trinity, the black gangsta, pimp, and ho” (Rose 2008), was not glorified in Kendrick’s track as it had been in many gangsta rap hits prior, but sharply criticized. Placing David Brackett’s theories on how musical genres are shaped over time in conversation with the work of Schloss and Ewoodzie that centers hip hop beats as productive sites for critical inquiry, I explore the ways that certain beatmakers have reshaped gangsta rap through the manipulation of timbre.


Listening to music is attending to a multitude of layered streams interacting and unfolding in time, like an auditory tapestry woven in real-time as sound meets the listener’s cognitive apparatus. In certain musical expressions the constant negotiation between which structuring clues the various musical layers and the compound whole affords the listener is fundamental to the communication of both the musical structure and cultural and social values. This paper’s object of analysis is “the rapping chimera”, a singular creature with multiple heads – simultaneously “one” and “many”. Rappers and hip-hop-producers manipulate the flow, layering and ruptures of various auditory streams using musical, linguistic and literary structure, sonic design and music production tools to weave a chimeric tapestry. The resulting musical structure and overall aesthetic is tightly linked to the music’s roots as a Black cultural expression. Dope rapping requires a mastery of Signifyin(g) and the manipulation of the between-space of what is” and what might be – and these skills are the same that enables one to see through systemic oppression and injustices in society at large.

C. Cities, Space, and Music (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)


Troy Café was a unique space where a diverse range of artists from the largely Mexican-American eastside neighborhoods of Los Angeles mixed with the underground scenes in the city’s decaying downtown, which had been hit hard by a series of economic crises. Owned and operated by Bibbe Hansen and Sean Carrillo—Beck’s mother and stepfather—this small, short-lived venue served as a vital musical and cultural hub during the first half of the 1990s. Two of the key artists featured in this talk are ¡Cholita!, “the Female Menudo,” and Robert Lopez, who is best known as El Vez, a.k.a. “the Mexican Elvis.” ¡Cholita! was a mixed-race group of gender-fluid performers who dressed as thirteen-year-old Latina girls, and the core band consisted of intersex-born “terrorist drag” performer Vaginal Davis, a young Salvadorian man named Greg Hernandez who performed as Fer
tile LaToya Jackson, and punk pioneer Alice Bag. The latter was a Mexican-American woman from East L.A. who fronted the Bags, a first-wave L.A. punk band that circulated in the same SoCal scene as the Zeros, which included a teenaged Lopez, well before he transformed into El Vez. The group’s frontperson was Vaginal, a black performance artist from South Central L.A. who had Choctaw Indian, Black Creole, and German-Jewish-Mexican-American roots. ¡Cholita!’s lineup expanded and contracted with each performance—Beck’s younger brother Channing was briefly a member—and its core players
represented a microcosm of L.A.’s kaleidoscopic arts scenes. From 1990 to 1995, Troy provided a home base for ¡Cholita!, Lopez, and other likeminded iconoclasts to hang out and perform with That Dog, Beck, and others who gained wider exposure during the 1990s alternative rock explosion.

**Wuyi Zhang, “From Maxim to Southern Station: The Spatial Flow of Rock Culture in China”**

Whether did rock music flow from the metropolitan to the smaller size cities, cultivate more audiences and then a rock culture emerged in a broader area in China? Maxim Beijing is a restaurant opened in 1983 by designer Pierre Cardin, in which the mini stage was one of the few places for rock performances at that time. Maxim attracted many diplomats, international journalists, and international students and then became a culturally connected space more than cuisine in the 1980s. The Southern Station is a Live House launched in 2020 at Yichang city, the site of the Three Gorges Dam, and considered the third-tier city in China.

Rock music was more popular among the well-educated, international-exposure middle class and college students in big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, etc. However, with the launch of more live houses in smaller-size cities, the rock music scene with a broad audience emerged in China. From Maxim to Southern Station, this research will examine the following issues: 1) The development of live house culture in China; 2) The rock band’s tour culture in small-size cities in China, taking Miserable Faith and Buyi band as samples; and 3) The rock culture’s flow in China.

**Maxim Bonin, “The Last Living Rock Club in New York City?”**

Nick Bodor owns the bar The Library on Avenue A in New York since the early 2000s. His former club, Cake Shop, which closed in 2016, was considered Manhattan’s last great rock club by Spin Magazine. In 2020 and 2021, The Library manages to withstand the financial impact of the sanitary restrictions surrounding the pandemic. It was during a research séjour in New York City in the spring of 2022 that Nick will inform me on a new project in the works for fall 2022. He will affirm that following the pandemic, the East Village was slowly reuniting with this fauna of freaks and artists characterizing the neighbourhood before the gentrification of the area in the early 2000s. A few months after my journey in NYC, Curbed and New York Magazine announced the takeover of the mythical Pyramid Club on Avenue A by Nick and his partners. The media presents the project as the first rock club opening in New York since decades: Baker Falls will soon be in operation.

This paper aims to explore how nostalgia operates in the construction of New York's music scenes and more specifically in the life cycle of bars and clubs. It is an extract from a doctoral thesis on the making of NYC’s music scenes temporalities and their articulation with the urban and the digital.
D. Musicking and Mental Health (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

Ross Brillhart, “Musicking Sobriety amidst the Addiction Epidemic: Grassroots Recovery-support Groups in a (semi)-Popular Music Scene”

For over 30 years, fans of the band Phish have constructed a dedicated and mobile community, often initially in the image of the Grateful Dead’s Deadheads, ripe with various physical, social, and economic structures and organizations, as well as specific forms of communication, to better meet the needs of the fan base as they travel from concert to concert. One such organization is the Phellowship—a group of sober phans and pholks in recovery. Through the creation and performance of symbols, embodied practices, and mutual support, members of the Phellowship have created a space for health, sobriety, and recovery within a live concert event that is otherwise known for the use and celebration of drugs amidst one of the most challenging crises of the present era: the addiction epidemic. In this paper, through an examination of the ways in which members of the Phellowship, or Phells, are musicking their sobriety and participating in nonprogrammatic, vernacular networks for recovery in this scene, I turn my attention to the ways in which their practices subvert an otherwise subversive scene. My entry into this discussion will be the colloquialism and age-old, neo-hippy question: “are you here for the drugs or the music?”

Christopher Zysik, “Cuteness and Suicide – Affective Deconstruction of Stigmas about Mental Health”

In recent years, more and more music videos from Japan about fatalistic suicide, e.g., Racing into the Night (2019) by YOASOBI or Ruru’s Suicide Livestream (2019) by Shinsei Kamattechan, are released and saw great success on video platforms domestically and internationally. Even though, according to the WHO, the suicide rate in Japan is declining in recent years, the stigmatization of suicide as a result of mental disorders is still prevalent. In Japan, a successful form to address this issue are music videos, which draw visually and/or acoustically from the aesthetics of cuteness (jap.: kawaii). With its soft, bubbly and charm evoking style, the question must be raised of why and how cuteness is being used to address this difficult and stigmatized topic in music videos.

Drawing on Simon May (2019), who defines the essence of cuteness as an inherent “unpindownability”, I will show that it is the complexity of contradictions ranging from Sweet to Uncanny, powerful to powerless, expressible to inexpressible that is conveyed by cuteness. It is cuteness, I argue, that affectively disrupts and deconstructs a stigmatized perception of the phenomenon of fatalistic suicide and makes space for an understanding of the socio-psychological complexity of this mental health crisis.

Victor Szabo, “‘Should I Be Joking at a Time Like This?’ Bo Burnham’s ‘Inside’ and Anxiety Performance”

My current research investigates how 21st-century audio cultures render and respond to anxiety, a pervasive mood and mental health disorder. Here, I theorize “anxiety performance” as one modality through which musicians stage and express anxiety. To illustrate, I turn to Bo Burnham’s 2021 Netflix special Inside, which popularly translated anxieties about covid, climate
change, social media, white privilege, and performance anxiety itself into a series of comedic songs and monologues. The film depicts Burnham’s drift into anxious depression as he worked on it largely in isolation during the height of the covid pandemic. With reference to studies and narratives of anxiety disorders, I analyze how Burnham’s parodic songcraft, vocal delivery, and visual techniques both simulate and humorously undercut states of disabling anxiety. I briefly compare Burnham’s “anxiety performance” with those of other singers; I also address some criticisms of Inside. Primarily, however, I meditate on the social value of anxiety performance at a time when musicians’ labor is devalued, as Burnham sings, for not “healing the world” in times of crisis. Anxiety, I argue, is an understandable response to such unreasonable standards, and ironically a condition that music and comedy have long made—and still make—more inhabitable.

REFERENCES


Sonia Gaind-Krishnan, “Poetry, Genre, (In)Visibility; Or, How Difference Fades to A Pop-Shimmer”
When Arooj Aftab, the US-based Pakistani singer of jazz-inflected subcontinental Sufi songs, was nominated for not one but two Grammy Awards at the 2022 ceremony, there was a mixed response. From the view of American popular music culture, this was a triumph: Aftab was nominated not only for the marked category of Best Global Music Performance, but also for the unmarked Best New Artist category, which recognizes an artist who achieves “a breakthrough into the public consciousness.” For a Pakistani artist performing music from the traditional Sufi ghazal form, achieving this level of impact on the mainstream American soundscape was notable. From the South Asian perspective, however, listeners have found Aftab’s sonic aesthetic to cast a shadow on the ghazal form; one listener referred to Aftab’s style as “comatose.” Shifting aesthetic markers, discourse around mental health and wellness strategies, and a resulting rewiring of musical affect are at the root of a diasporic aesthetic I have elsewhere referred to as the ‘Sufi sublime.’ Supported by digital and ethnographic research, this paper examines listeners’ responses and sonic markers of musical affect in both contexts, in order to articulate a set of musical strategies emerging from the contemporary crisis in mental health.

E. Country music (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Paula Propst, “‘Long Way to Go and a Short Time to Get There’: The Romanticization of the Trucking Industry through Country Music”

What makes a specific profession “essential?” In the past two years, many nations have designated certain professions in this way due to the global health crisis. While many professions were already considered essential to society in the United States, such as health care workers, the public became very aware of the importance of different jobs involved in the supply chain of consumer goods, foods, and other necessities. The trucking industry is a primary example of a working-class job that is now viewed as essential by the general public in the United States. There is a long history of music and media that romanticizes the trucking profession and creates an idealized persona and lifestyle of this career, primarily through the lens of country music. By looking at selected songs that tells the stories of these truckers and their experiences, representation of truckers in media, as well as the technology involved in listening to these songs over the course of almost an entire century, this paper examines how this working-class career has been an essential part of country music culture.


“I’d like to express that I no longer have any interest in participating with the Opry in any capacity unless there is some clear form of accountability and structural change,” wrote Holly G, founder of Black Opry, in an open letter to Grand Ole Opry executives on January 9, 2022. (Holly G, 2022) The night before, the Grand Ole Opry had welcomed country singer Morgan Wallen to its stage in Nashville for its weekly live radio broadcast despite Wallen’s documented anti-Blackness. Through Holly G’s advocacy and a vibrant community of Black country fans and artists, Black Opry (a media hub, musicians’ collective, and touring revue) has built an alternative to the mainstream country establishment and its white-dominated radio spaces. Through extended ethnographic research in Nashville, I argue in this paper that Holly G and Black Opry members respond to the systemic exclusion of Black country artists from the industry by building an alternative radio space off the airwaves. This paper seeks to add an
ethnographic perspective to the emerging scholarly conversation on Black country music, and explore themes of race, place, and radio in Nashville and beyond.

Holly G, "Grand Ole Opry Letter," Google Documents, January 9, 2022, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FOSRfHuOox5MYXZEI71m0B-hT1pW3zY9jIxSxTfTfU/edit.

Mark D. Hulsether, “‘I Got So High That I Saw Jesus’ and the Complexities of Religious Irony in Country Music”

Noah Cyrus’s song referenced in my title—in which she gets high, talks to Jesus, and learns from him that “everything’s going to be okay”—seems clearly intended to be slightly provocative and not to be sung by most church choirs. However, I suggest that its blend of sincerity and ironic provocation is around par for the course in country music; in fact it may even skew somewhat more “sincerely religious” than average, if properly understood. To clarify and evaluate this hypothesis, however, we must think about how to operationalize what counts as “religious” in country (for example in songs such as “Mama Tried,” “Bible Belt,” or “Amazing Grace”) and how ironies (both conscious and unconscious) related to religion function in complex layered ways that might easily pass unnoticed. This matters both for the general problem of assessing the preferred meanings of country music performance and reception, and for a range of specific questions about how country performances resonate with varieties of US religiosity.

Alan Stanbridge, “From Singing Cowboys to Kitchen Appliances: The Long Strange Trip of ‘You Are My Sunshine’”

‘You Are My Sunshine’ was published in January 1940, credited to Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell. Following Davis’s 1940 recording, ‘You Are My Sunshine’ was widely popularized by Gene Autry, the archetype of the singing cowboy, and became a huge hit. Over the years, the song has been subjected to a remarkable number of different readings and cover versions, reworked and reshaped to the demands of an apparently endless catalogue of styles and genres, from rock and roll, soul, surf rock and ska to jazz, bossa nova, bluegrass, and punk. In more recent decades, ‘You Are My Sunshine’ has become firmly ensconced in the public imagination as a children’s song—a somewhat curious phenomenon, given the dark nature of the lyrics. And in the early years of the twenty-first century, ‘You Are My Sunshine’ appeared in television commercials, supporting children’s charity fundraising for UNICEF, and enlisted in selling Whirlpool domestic appliances, accompanied by the somewhat dark version of the song by Johnny Cash. In this paper, I chart the historical, musical, and semantic trajectory of ‘You Are My Sunshine,’ noting both its unprecedented ubiquity and remarkable resilience, suggesting that few other songs have achieved such levels of circulation and recognition.

F. Streaming Subjects (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)

Benjamin Oyler, “The World’s Greatest Ear: Virtuosity, Biopolitics, and the Crisis of Care”
Music-based cognitive development apps, games, and toys are central to the repertoire of household devices available to parents and caregivers. Alongside ubiquitous baby monitoring systems, such technologies draw on audiovisual and biometric data to maximize the health and aptitude of children. Increasingly, these tools and techniques of cognitive transformation mediate between private carework and public performance, actively shaping the conditions and contexts of popular virtuosities. The exemplary Nuryl app—introduced in 2016 by guitarist and social media influencer Rick Beato—employs “high information music” to expand children’s capabilities in mathematical reasoning, language acquisition, and, especially, musical cognition. The app boasts a singular example of its efficacy: Beato’s son Dylan, whose dazzling performances as the “World’s Greatest Ear” have garnered millions of YouTube views. An avowed product of Nuryl’s proprietary techniques, Dylan demonstrates a virtuosic ability and celebrity ostensibly available to all consumers—for a price. This paper analyzes technologies like Nuryl as an expansive, and often expensive, investment in children as emergent political, economic, and musical subjects (Thompson 2020). I argue further that this investment constitutes a homegrown biopolitical practice—what I call ‘the monitorium’—reflective of a larger “crisis of care” (Fraser 2016) endemic to neoliberal capitalism.

Jay Jolles, “Edges of Sound, Edges of Self: Music as a Tool of Surveillance”

The music streaming service Spotify, which was once thought of as the panacea for many of the music industry’s problems, has instead doubled down on the structures it initially sought to subvert. While the deft use of this technology has resulted in the ability to connect people to particular spaces, sounds, and other individuals, it has also resulted in the proliferation of the music listener as a distinct type of commodity. Recently, the advanced algorithmic assemblages powering Spotify have worked to finely tune interactive media to both localize and disperse information about user activity for profit. As our increasingly networked society erodes the boundaries between person and platform, public and private, music and data, the algorithms that undergird Spotify have become more than mere infrastructure. In this paper, I draw on the work of scholars in media theory, popular music studies, and surveillance studies in order to argue that through the proliferation of Spotify’s technologies, music has become a tool of surveillance, leveraged to reveal how the nature of networked platforms and the types of listening they produce have begun to intersect, commodifying not just music but the individual to an unprecedented degree.

Amy Coddington, “Monetizing Users on Streaming Services: A New Crisis?”

Streaming services such as YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Music constitute a break with previous music distribution mediums, offering users a membership model that allows for on-demand listening without the potential of owning the music. And yet like all commercial innovations, streaming platforms build upon prior business practices.

In this paper, I analyze on-demand streaming services in the United States alongside one of their predecessors, commercial terrestrial radio, to examine continuities between their business models. While some have raised the concern that on-demand streaming services offer a novel way to reduce listeners to sellable data points, I argue that music distributors have long used music as a way to segment the listening public into consumer groups. Music helps both
commercial radio stations and streaming services define different types of people whose information they sell to third parties, whether they are local radio audiences whose listening time is sold to advertisers or individual users of streaming services whose listening habits offer the streaming service information to sell to other companies. I end by considering the consequences of using music to define difference, contrasting music’s oft-celebrated ability to foster community with the divisive nature of the contemporary climate of music consumption.

**Eric Harvey, “Stream: Reprogramming Digital Music”**

In response to the revenue crisis occasioned by mp3s and filesharing, the record industry’s embrace of streaming at the turn of the 2010s has stabilized its revenues by reasserting a new form of soft control over listeners—and deepening revenue crises for musicians. Focusing on the epochal shift from mp3s to streaming platforms in the early 2010s, this paper centers on two keywords: stream and program. The stream is the dominant music media protocol of the 21st century. A ceaseless current of information with technological, industrial, and poetic connections to broadcasting flow, the stream creates new regimes of surveillance, cura
tion, and compensation that ripple outward to occasion new musical practices, beliefs, policies, and power struggles. The defining quality of the stream is that it is programmed—culturally, industrially, and technologically. Programming is a very familiar word to scholars of popular music, and the perspective taken here is that popular music is defined by programming: from concerts to album tracklists, mixtapes, broadcast playlists and software design, outward to what Clifford Geertz called the “cultural programs” that order human behavior. socio-technical control mechanisms. This paper historicizes and theorizes how the shift to the stream has fundamentally reprogrammed popular music culture.

**G. Listening to U.S. Militarism: Music, Sound, and Silence (Political Crises stream)**

This panel presents three papers inspired by the sounds and silences of U.S. militarism and their musical afterlives. It grows out of the premise that military actions have multiple temporalities, affecting people in the moment and resonating long after the fact. Whether in the form of nuclear testing, military exercises, or actual combat, the aural assault of war leaves enduring psychic scars. Musicking, however, has the potential to confront those sonic legacies in powerful ways, preserving and passing on historical knowledge, challenging prevailing political narratives, and interpreting the emotional, psychological, and physical consequences of wartime violence. First, Jessica Schwartz explores intergenerational musicking among emigrants from the Marshall Islands who were displaced by postwar American nuclear testing in the Pacific. Second, Alejandra Bronfman’s paper analyzes musical responses to the 2003 withdrawal of the U.S. military from the Caribbean island of Vieques after more than sixty years of extensive military exercises there. Finally, David Suisman’s paper compares four unusual pieces of music responding to the U.S. war in Iraq, from both American and Iraqi perspectives. In different but complementary ways, these papers all probe the crisis of social and mental fragmentation caused by state violence and the possibilities of music to effect meaningful forms repair.

**Jessica Schwartz, “Singing Continuity and Fragmentation: Marshallese Musical Challenges to US Militarism in the Transpacific Diaspora”**
This talk explores the importance of Marshallese musical archives of U.S. militarism in outmigrants’ transpacific diasporic context. Specifically, I draw on the work of the Marshallese Educational Initiative (MEI), a non-profit in Springdale, Arkansas where the largest continental community of Marshallese live, over the last decade with a particular focus on how creative productions—music, poems, and visual art—have been central to their anti-nuclear activism and means of engaging the youth. From 1946 through 1958, the United States detonated sixty-seven nuclear weapons in what is now the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The U.S. maintains an active military base on Kwajalein Atoll with missile tests that plummet into the lagoon from California. In addition to the legacy of U.S. militarism, which includes Americanization on the governmental and cultural scales, lack of educational, employment, and health care opportunities in the RMI compromise the quality of life for Marshallese people and prompt outmigration. One project in particular, “Songs of Our Atolls,” challenges this fracturing legacy through intergenerational musical sharing where Marshallese youth learn and perform songs from the elders in the cultural style of jitdam kapeel (“seeking knowledge guarantees wisdom”). The songs, stories, and generational modes of sharing amplify the difficult history of fragmentation—of U.S. militarization and embodied consequences of nuclear testing that have resonated as connective silences (e.g. home-land, matri-lineage)—as well as continuity through the power of Indigenous pedagogical processes and values.

Alejandra Bronfman, “Music and Silence in (Dis)occupied Puerto Rico”

Narratives about the popular mobilization that contributed to the departure of the US military from the island of Vieques in 2003 feature the use of music as protest and as a source of information in Puerto Rico and the United States. The contributions of celebrities such as Ricky Martin and the wide circulation of CDs and radio and television broadcasts render the music as savior, unifier and catalyst. Music is central to these triumphal narratives in which solidarities on the island and between the big island and the mainland came together to oust the military from its six-decade-long occupation, dislocation and environmental degradation of the island. This paper seeks out the silences and occlusions created by these narratives. While I do not diminish the role of music and of political mobilization, I argue that attention to these has dampened our attention to musicking in other forms and to a broader critique of music as embedded in ecologically destructive practices. Moreover the narrative of unified mobilization silences tensions between the main island of Puerto Rico, and Vieques and Culebra, which see themselves as colonies of a colony.

First, the paper draws from the work of Carlos Cubero to explore transinsular music practices on the island of Culebra, which was also occupied but which has a much smaller presence in the literature. Cutting across imperial boundaries, this is an opportunity to explore forms of musical exchange not tied to the US/Puerto Rican colonial relationship. Next, it turns to underexamined afterlives of the islands as they negotiate contaminated spaces and largely inadequate efforts at remediation. Music such as the 2004 album Vibroacústica (electronic and composed of interlocking loops of microsound) and the bleeps and sputters of a trumpet attached to a muffler in Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla’s film “Returning a Sound” create a fragmented, non-melodic soundtrack that haunts post-occupation spaces and contributes to geographically and ecologically grounded narratives of imperial power and its afterlife.

The U.S. war in Iraq was, among other things, a musical phenomenon. Thanks to scholars like Suzanne Cusick, Martin Daughtry, Jonathan Pieslak, Lisa Gilman, and Matthew Sumera, we now know a lot about various musicking practices related to the war, from military recruitment videos and weaponized iPods to music in torture. Less scrutinized, however, have been the war’s sonic legacies and musical afterlives, its resonances in the notes and silences that the American invasion inspired. This paper analyzes four unusual musical perspectives on the war, drawing out its emotional ambiguities and making audible its deep psychic wounds: 1) Baghdad Music Journal, a series of remixed field recordings by a soldier and erstwhile composer, William A. Thompson IV; 2) Stress Position, a composition by the pianist Drew Baker about the physicality of torture; 3) Holding It Down: The Veterans’ Dreams Project, Vijay Iyer and Mike Ladd’s collaboration with veterans of color about their nocturnal fantasies and nightmares; and 4) Letters from Iraq, oud master and political exile Rahim Alhaj’s musical compositions based on letters written by Iraqis living through the war. The paper argues that, together, these recordings represent four discrete, contrapuntal registers through which we might listen to (and for) the consequences of twenty-first-century American militarism.

7:00-9:30 pm

Film screening and panel discussion/Q&A: Jay's Longhorn
Best Buy Theater, Northrup Hall
Sponsored by Carleton College

The documentary film, Jay's Longhorn, explores the former Minneapolis nightclub called Jay’s Longhorn, which was opened June 1, 1977 by owner Jay Berine and his friend and booker, Al Wodtke. The opening show featured local rockers, Flamingo. At the time, the former Nino’s Steakhouse was the only venue that regularly featured original punk rock, new wave, and indie rock music in Minnesota. In fact, Jay’s Longhorn opened nearly three years before the 7th St. Entry and at a time when the venue that would become First Avenue — Uncle Sam’s — featured disco and progressive hard rock bands.

Almost overnight, Jay’s Longhorn became the epicenter for punk rock and indie rock in Minneapolis and began attracting international touring acts, such as Elvis Costello, Blondie, Talking Heads, The B-52’s, and the Police. Early local bands included Flamingo, seminal punk rockers the Suicide Commandos, Curt Almstead and Thumbs Up, Fingerprints, the Suburbs, NNB, the Hypstrz, and later Husker Du, the Wallests, and the Replacements.

Panel discussion following the film will include director Mark Engebretson, along with Bill Batson (The Hypstrz/The Mighty Mofos), Karen Haglof (Crackers/Band of Susans), Martin Keller (author, Music Legends: A Rewind on the Minnesota Music Scene), Andy Schwartz (journalist, New York Rocker), and Robert Wilkinson (Flamingo/Flaming Ohs).
**Wednesday, June 28**

9:00-11:00 am – Session 8

**A. Hyperpop (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)**

**Rob Drew, “Hyperpop and Trans Survival”**

Amid the detritus of the past decade’s unfolding cultural traumas, hyperpop has been credited with sustaining listeners through a pandemic by forging an online scene out of an eclectic hybrid of alternative and pop aesthetics; it has also been dismissed as the flavor-of-the-month product of a Spotify playlist and pronounced dead in some quarters from the moment it was named. Less often noted is hyperpop’s preponderance of trans artists, from PC Music innovator Sophie, to Laura Les of the archetypal duo 100 gecs, to household names of the genre such as Dorian Electra, Kim Petra, fraxiom, osquinn, and ElyOtto. Finding inspiration in Sasha Geffen’s argument that “music shelters gender rebellion from those who seek to abolish it,” I’ll consider how hyperpop’s glitchy beats, maximalist hooks, denaturalized voices, and arcane public personae allow trans artists to both strategically conceal and create their own reality. At a time when moral pundits and politicians have mounted campaigns to wish young trans people away by policing their schools or arresting their parents, hyperpop has furnished them a cultural resource, not just to withstand constant threats of real and symbolic violence, but simply to flourish in a world where they might feel at home in their own skins.

**Peter Trigg, “Edgelords, Incels, and Enbies: Constructing Masculine Subjectivities in Hyperpop”**

Contemporary popular music and musicians have performed and reimagined modern masculinities in various capacities against the background of an ostensible “crisis of masculinity” in the United States. Exemplary in this trend, trans and nonbinary artists in the growing genre of Hyperpop set bubblegum pop vocals against harsh electronic sounds to explore gender indeterminacy, liminality, and constantly shifting conceptions of masculinity and femininity. In this paper, I utilize Sara Ahmed’s models of affect and queer phenomenology (2004, 2006) to examine nonbinary artist Dorian Electra and their 2020 album *My Agenda*. I suggest that the work uniquely lampoons the crisis of masculinity in North American men by performing various modern online tropes of masculinity jointly with queer musical affects. Electra presents the extremes of feminine and masculine vocality in combination with purposefully challenging, uncomfortable, and artificial sounds that name the so-called crisis as a moral panic about the insidious effects of queerness in the anglosphere and beyond. Meant to satirically play on the idea of a homonormative “gay agenda,” the album models for its listeners how masculine subjectivities can sound, feel, and shift through a full spectrum of gender possibilities that embraces a queer affect.

**Westley Montgomery, “Bedsheet Phantasm(agonia): Hyperpop’s Trans Specters”**

The bedsheet ghost, made famous by trick-or-treaters and Hanna-Barbera cartoons, is simultaneously occluded and revealed by its linen shroud, the flowing white fabric at once hiding
the live/living body in disguise, and offering a glimpse at the self’s immaterial form, the body stripped away. This essay explores the work of three artists, each of which features bed sheet-covered ghosts—laura les’ Haunted, Blackwinterwells’ (Wells) Omen, and quinn’s 53021. Comparatively reading these artists’ visual references to the spectral, their ghostly vocabulary of sounds, and their haunting voices, this essay will situate these works in particular, and hyperpop as a genre more generally, as techniques employed in resisting hegemonic constructions of gender, while also conjuring new worlds of sense through sonic, somatic, and social performance strategies. Drawing on Foucault's notion of desubjectivization and Deleuze’s explorations of Becoming, I position the bedsheets ghost as an inherently trans figure that rejects discourses of authenticity and knowability, allowing trans hyperpop artists to meet the “reality enforcement” of the affective malaise, frenetic anxiety, and imposed dysphoria of late capitalism’s delimiting hyper-perception—not with entrenchment, but through a Becoming Spectral—not an acquiescence to death, but a refusal of fixed Being.


The aim of my presentation shall be to establish initial academic reflection on hyperpop and examine how its experimental, posthuman, and queer character pushes the boundaries of popular music. Hyperpop is a microgenre of popular music that emerged in the late 2010s, and as a new phenomenon, it has almost no academic coverage to date. What characterizes hyperpop is a radical stylistic eclecticism—an ironic and hyperbolic combination of sonic and visual aesthetics of mainstream pop of the last 20 years, heavily immersed in the Internet culture of memes and remixes. Moreover, the trend is considered a safe space for the LGBT community—many hyperpop artists identify as queer; queerness is expressed lyrically and sonically (by technological experiments with performers’ voices). Sharing with Jakobsen (1998) the performative notion of “queer” as a practice, I shall examine how hyperpop musical personae queer both musical genre and gender, according to Derrida’s (1980) analysis of relationship between these two, through the aesthetics of glitch. I shall focus on how hyperpop’s complex relationship between the past, present and future of popular music and sexual minorities may work as a musical factor for establishing future queer utopia (Muñoz 2009).

B. Live Music Economies (Economic Crises stream)

Steve Waksman, “No Fun: Music Festivals, Failure, and Disaster Capitalism”

When ten people were trampled to death at the 2021 Astroworld Festival in Houston, Texas, it was only the latest in an ongoing series of festival-related tragedies dating back to Altamont and even before that, the riots that brought the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival to a halt. These incidents are routinely treated as cautionary tales and exceptions to the rule, but they are just as often beheld as instances of cultural fascination—witness the two recent documentaries on the ill-fated Woodstock 99, or the two dedicated to the fiasco that was 2017’s Fyre Festival. This presentation will argue that the possibility or even likelihood of failure is in fact integral to the modern economy of music festival production. Spectacles of festival failure and tragedy are marketable unto themselves, and more than that, the prospect of failure helps to justify the extravagant expense of major festivals such as Coachella – described as the “anti-Woodstock” upon its 1999 debut to distinguish it from the recent events at Woodstock 99. As such, music
festivals can be connected to the broader phenomenon of “disaster capitalism” as defined by Naomi Klein and others who have argued that neoliberal capitalism exploits disaster as a stimulus to profit and renewal.

Select Bibliography


Ben Green, “Crisis and Reinvention for Live Music in Australia”

Live music in Australia is at a critical point and its future is being rewritten. There is burgeoning recognition of this sector’s central place in contemporary life, with more than half the population attending live music performances in greater annual numbers than professional sport and with increasing frequency, generating extensive economic, social and cultural benefits. Growth over the last decade has been rapid but sensitive to policy, which has only recently and faltering addressed live music in its own right. Meanwhile the sector grapples with change on multiple fronts: a kinetic and complex regulatory landscape including urban planning and noise restrictions, night-time leisure regulation (e.g. ‘lockouts’) and festival policing; technological change including the fast-evolving digital reconfiguration of the industry; mitigation of climate impact and adaptation to climate crisis, including extreme weather, in an industry dependent on energy-intensive tours and date-specific events; major cultural change with respect to diversity, inequality, safety and well-being; and economic inequality within a ‘cost of living crisis’. It is in this dynamic context that the acute crisis point of COVID-19 erupted, generating new urgency and opportunity for reinvention. Live music was one of the first sectors to shut down completely in the COVID-19 pandemic, and was among the hardest hit on measures including income, jobs and business closures. It is re-emerging slowly in the context of dynamic public health policy and socio-economic conditions. As the future of live music takes shape, there is a need for detailed and critical understanding of the factors involved, and a singular opportunity to study the real time reinvention of this major cultural, economic and social sector. This Griffith University postdoctoral research project aims to analyse the factors shaping Australia’s live popular music scene, as a whole and with critical attention to internal difference and conflict. This paper will present preliminary findings after the first year of the two year project.

Tom Wagner and Laryssa Whittaker, “Musicking in the Metaverse: Emerging Patterns of Participation in Virtual Live Concerts”
In the past 20 years, live musical performance has expanded into virtual spaces within Massive Multiplayer Games such as Fortnite, in Virtual Reality platforms like VRChat, and in web 3.0 worlds such as Decentraland. These spaces are often promoted as democratic spaces that respond both the economic challenges facing many independent musicians in a streaming world and the exacerbation of those challenges brought about by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on live events. However, the extent to which these platforms will permanently impact the preferences and consumption patterns of audiences, and thus artist renumeration, is an open question.

This paper theorises ‘virtual’ live music concerts through Christopher Small’s (1998) concept of Musicking. It discusses the results of our recent survey of 1000 UK residents, which sought to understand the extent to which the consumption of music in virtual spaces is distributed throughout the population, explores shifts in preferences for participation in physical and virtual venues, and suggests reasons for those shifts. We will conclude by suggesting ways in which these digital interactions may reflect, reinforce, and disrupt the wider musical-industrial complexes in which they occur (i.e., the connection between ‘online’ and ‘offline’ practices), and outline directions for future research.


Since its rapid outbreak, COVID-19 has affected many aspects including economic loss, human life and consumption patterns. Seeking opportunities out of the enforced social-distancing policy, music performers have turned to digitally stream-based platforms, which have perhaps discarded consumers’ usual habit of accessing live music. This phenomenological study aims to explore the impact of accessing popular music in the pandemic era with a focus on numerous events by TME Live, a subsidiary developed by Tencent Music Entertainment, a leader in China’s live streaming music industry. The lived experience of the phenomenologist in designated events is accounted in order to investigate China’s popular music scene in the pandemic era with a special interest to problematize emerging streaming media trends in accessing popular music via Chinese media post-COVID-19. This study is to hopefully provide a substantial reference in research on COVID-19-influenced live stream concert culture through experiencing popular music in a ‘new normal’ cosmopolitan mediascape.

C. Memory and nostalgia (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity Stream)

Katerine Zamora Caro, “Nostalgic Performance as a Resource for the Study of Social Change and Migration”

The concepts: “memory” (Waldman 2006), “counterpresent” [kontrapräentisch] (Assmann 2011), “nostalgia” (Boym 2015), “performance” (Schechner 2013) and repertory (Taylor 2017) all of them explore the contravention of time and space and some kind of remembrance or transmission. However, the subjugation to language and the impossibility of all these terms to express the vivacity of the actions that are generated by migration incline me towards a new conceptualization. A new concept that addresses the ability of feelings of uprooting to dispute time or establish a new place, or disengage equally from space and present time. In this paper, I
propose “nostalgic performance” as an exploration of the deep dimensions of feelings and actions that imply processes of cultural memory. This reflection is supported in the case of the Colombian gaita group Son de la Provincia in Bogotá. The question that guides the analysis is positioned from performance studies: What do actions, events or cultural manifestations and what do they allow people to do? (Taylor 2015). I conclude that the nostalgic performance that is projected in musical practices and discourses becomes resilience factors in the face of the processes of social change that people and communities experience.


Members of North American drum corps scene maintain a vexed notion of tradition that is historically rooted in a desire to hear (often US American) popular music. For invested audiences, recognizing a familiar melody in a Drum Corps International (DCI) program is part of the traditional listening experience and adds aesthetic and affective value to the performance. A lack of recognizable popular music, by contrast, indexes the more recent tendency for these marching brass and percussion ensembles to prioritize an aesthetic of art music collage. The extent to which contemporary performance threatens the use of identifiable popular music is thus a foundational anxiety of this musical subculture. This tension became particularly apparent during the 2021 DCI “bridge tour” of exhibition performances, as ensembles returned to the field after a pandemic-shortened 2020 season. In this presentation, I analyze the use of popular music arrangements in two 2021 productions: "Beyond the Canvas" by the Sacramento Mandarins and "LIVE! From the Rose" by The Cavaliers. Drawing from participant observations, ethnographic interviews, and online audience responses, I argue that these programs underscored the scene’s ongoing artistic identity crisis by simultaneously delivering recognizable popular tunes while maintaining a collage aesthetic.

Michael Broussard, “Negotiating Space in ‘Les Bons Temps’: Nostalgia and Belonging in Louisiana Dance Halls”

Throughout the twentieth century, French Louisiana dance halls provided popular communal sites animated by performances of localized musics and dance, ultimately to diminish in social, cultural, and economic significance in recent decades. The conceptualization of a French Louisiana, one that commonly positions Cajun and Creole communities in binary dynamics of ethnicity and race, invites an imagination rooted in nostalgic spaces of belonging to “the good times”. While Kathleen Stewart (1988) famously described nostalgia as a tool for communities to regain experiences they have lost, I posit that nostalgia may also construct a space of contestation, one that challenges hegemonic narratives that limit who is allowed in the “good times”. Through oral history via archival recordings and ethnographic fieldwork, as well as engagement with scholarship on nostalgia and on ethno-racial belonging in Louisiana, I argue that the act of nostalgic remembering/reminiscence of musical experiences provides a lens through which locals construct diverse senses of belonging that extend beyond reductionist binarisms. The nostalgic past may thus be unfastened to include stories that challenge a singular, romanticized memory, revealing that how we imagine the past becomes contested when more voices speak, allowing us to imagine a future where those voices are heard.
Bibliography:


D. Cover Versions and Corona Songs (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

Lou Aimes-Hill, “Cover Versions as Coronamusic”

Hansen et al (2021) define Coronamusic as ‘cultural products resulting from engaging with music during COVID-19 lockdown[…]' and journalist Ann Powers defines 2020 as ‘a year defined by covers’ (Powers, 2020). COVID-19 and its associated lockdowns disrupted the world of music production and consumption, social experience became a solely online endeavour, and pre-pandemic music behaviours followed suit, finding new virtual lockdown residences. The frictional co-existence of a locked down physical and material world, versus the frantic online realm affected a shift in our understanding of time and space; our chronotopal comprehension,
with some commentators (Yeung 2020), noting a move towards nostalgic listening habits, suggestive of Reynolds (2011) assertion, that the pull of nostalgia has always been driven by ‘a collective longing for a happier, simpler, […] world that was familiar.’ This paper explores how the familiarity and nostalgia of covers ‘enable(s) a sense of collectivity’ (Jennex 2018), acting as a musical ally of the lockdown message and a ‘pandemic-perfect […] bonding tool for musicians […]’ (Powers 2020).

What is the value of the cover version as Coronamusic? And how can the collective nature of covers act as an agent of socio-emotional communication in the twenty-first century?


This paper explores how members of cover bands, primarily in Austria, construct, debate, represent, and engage concepts of creativity and professionalism in their practices as cover-band performers, who have experienced particularly drastic challenges in times of pandemic. The live performances are, after all, integral to how a band delivers its “musical service” that is (usually) taking place every day on a local level. Furthermore, the paper situates Austria’s cover bands within the region’s broader musical economy. They inhabit a cultural and economic ‘middle-ground’, emerging from the mixture of “professionals” (graduates from the regions’ music universities), “semi-professionals” (people with mixed financial income), and “amateurs” with more vernacular musical backgrounds. Resulting of these circumstances, a repertoire and musical practices emerge that can be adapted to both cosmopolitan and provincial spaces and diverse audience expectations.

Drawing on my participant observations and qualitative interviews, this paper focuses on how cover bands have responded to the Covid-19 restrictions and its effect on the field actors. Additionally, I am highlighting central ethnographic strategies that I have used during my fieldwork in a hardly existing live music sector between 2020 and 2022; thereby offering insights into a ubiquitous but conspicuously under-researched popular phenomenon in times of pandemic.

Ly Quyet Tien, “Vietnamese Corona Songs as Effective Means to Fight The Pandemic”

The outbreak of Covid-19 had a negative impact on all aspects of socio-economic life in Vietnam. Since January 2020, 43,000 Vietnamese died with Covid-19. Amid the deadly environment where every activity was disrupted and people were required to stay at home, hundreds of uplifting songs about Covid-19 were born to encourage the healthcare workers who are fighting the pandemic and call for the people to stay cool and overcome resultant hardships in quarantine. Coronavirus songs are diverse: folk artists used traditional melodies to create music, teenagers invented hip hops to sing and dance, professional singers composed artistic lyrics to reduce fear and anxiety of crisis. Some of these songs went viral and were covered by international community. This paper aims to give the readers a full portrait of Vietnamese popular music during the most challenging time in the country. It examines the background into which the coronavirus songs were born and how they responded to the pandemic. It also studies their styles, their particularity as well as their important role in the fight against Covid-19 and providing the feeling of peace, security and comfort with people.
Ya-Hui Cheng, “C-pop in Post-Covid Times: The Sounds of Reflective Nostalgia and Resilience”

Although the political tension between Taiwan and China continues to evoke global attention on geopolitical conflicts, no one can deny that Chinese popular music (C-pop) across the strait has subtly permeated mass cultures of both sides. C-pop superstars from Taiwan/China have constructed a giant cross-strait fandom that contradicts the political controversies (Cheng 2017). The frequent cross-strait music activities were interrupted by Covid when travel bans froze the music industry. C-pop superstars outside of China were absent from China, where the C-pop center is. Their absences were replaced by pop stars in China, who often produced the covers of superstars’ hit songs to portray a sentiment of recollective memory. Audiences call these covers “Hui-yi-sha” (Nostalgia–Liquidation), meaning using sweet memories to remedy and smooth their grief. Music programs in 2022 were full of the sounds of nostalgia–liquidation. This paper discusses this post-covid nostalgia and the strategies used to produce recollective sounds. Using reflective nostalgia from Boym (2001), I discuss how these sonic portraits subtly romanticize the past time to bring the power of resilience. By invigorating the traumatic present with a flashback to pre-covid music, C-pop stars in China reconstruct the latest cross-strait fandom, elevating their careers to new legacies.

E. Music, Media, and Platforms (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)


Amid the worldwide rise in music streaming services since the 2010s such as Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon Music, popular music studies on the digital subscription have become active from various perspectives: for example, studies on listeners’ consumptions and behaviors (Arditi 2018, Prior 2018, Tominaga and Hirota 2021) and on the musicians and productions (Johansson 2018, Hesmondhalgh 2021). In Japan, certain devices in chord progressions and song form in hit songs to appeal to music-saturated listeners in the subscription era have been sporadically indicated in web essays, such as shortening of the piece length and starting from the Sabi section (rough synonym for chorus). However, whether and how songs have undergone change before and after the dominance of subscription media has rarely been analyzed and verified quantitatively. I have conducted the undergraduate program “analysis and design of music experience in the subscription era” with colleagues and analyzed Japanese hit songs in my laboratory (Nishida 2019). In this study, the characteristics of hit songs in Japan from 1990s to the 2010s (approximately 200 songs) will be analyzed and compared in the flow of media, from the chord progressions and modulation using PLR transformations of Neo-Riemannian theory, form, and other features.

Ragnhild Brovig, “Crisis in the Flow of Remixes and in the Maintenance of Copyright Exceptions”

A widespread expression of contemporary culture is mashup music. Despite the enormous and abiding popularity of mashups, they continue to occupy a contested area of copyright law, thanks to their substantial use of samples from prior musical recordings. While the Internet once offered
a free space for mashups, it does no longer. That is, online platforms have increasingly implemented substantial content-moderation measures designed to mitigate copyright infringement. These measures rely on algorithms and automatic decision-making, and mashups have represented a ready target for blocking and takedown. In this paper, I report from interviews and a survey with mashup producers that reveal that, as a result of platforms’ blocking and takedown procedures, many mashup artists find themselves less motivated to do their work, and some have even stopped producing or distributing mashups altogether because of the hurdles they face. I further argue that the content moderation systems of the major hosting platforms are ill-equipped to handle copyright exceptions, which has important consequences for content residing in the contested area of copyright law. More broadly, it jeopardizes the maintenance of copyright exceptions, and as such, also freedom of expression.

Dave Fossum, “Digital Streaming and the Frictions of Musical Copyright Reform in Turkey”

In Turkey, musicians and other music industry actors often describe their dysfunctional copyright system as one in crisis. As has been the case in other emerging economies, the country’s copyright law was little enforced until a period of dramatic intellectual property (IP) reform beginning in the 1980s era of market liberalization and economic integration with Europe. In recent years, the rise of the digital streaming has accelerated the process of international IP integration. Turkey’s IP reform has had mixed results. While the state and a variety of music industry actors have worked together to assemble a bureaucratic apparatus for administering copyright, overall licensing income remains disappointingly low; copyright collecting societies’ internal politics inhibit their effectiveness; databases for registering music rights holders and distributing royalties are disorganized; and the system affords a variety of kinds of fraudulent or questionable rights claims. This paper ethnographically documents how musicians, record producers, music publishers, and copyright administrators narrate such challenges. I draw on Anna Tsing’s influential concept of friction (2005) to show how accommodating digital streaming platforms has complicated copyright reform and IP internationalization in new ways even as some long-standing domestic issues complicate the administration of digital streaming in turn.


By analyzing regional Central and Eastern European (CEE) streaming chart data, the talk aims to map out the web of international digital music flows in the region. Based on a big data analysis of weekly charts on YouTube and Spotify, between 2017 and 2022, we were interested in how are songs and performers of a given country listened to in other countries, and vice versa? According to our findings, CEE digital music flows on global platforms deeply reflect the region’s peripheral position in the global music industry. Very few local performers can make it to the global mainstream, and CEE performers are very seldom listened to in other CEE countries. The theoretical contribution of our talk is to provide new insights for rethinking the relationship between global platforms and regional music industries. In the debate centered around the mediating role of global streaming platforms in local and regional markets, whether they facilitate a more evenly distributed network of music consumption, or on the contrary, they
reproduce or even strengthen existing core-periphery patterns, our talk takes a position that streaming platforms do not change existing international power relations and core-periphery dynamics, rather they serve as new mediators for maintaining existing inequalities.

Chair: Dave Fossum

F. Listening to the Far Right (Political Crises stream)

Nadav Appel, “Power to the People: Popular Music and Global Populism”

This paper deals with the relations between populist discourse and modern pop. The idea of popular music supplying its listeners with a useful vocabulary is one of the earliest social functions of pop suggested in academic scholarship (Riesman 1950). Subsequent studies had mostly understood it in the context of anti-authoritarian resistance, from protests against the ruling military junta in Argentina (Vila 1987) to Black American resilience in the face of police brutality (Rose 1994). This paper suggests that next to their emancipatory functions, some of the most globally successful musical genres that have appeared since the 1950s have also demonstrated certain forms of expression and modes of thought that characterize the discourse of contemporary right-wing nationalist and populist forces.

While the last years have seen a rise in the publications of studies concerned with music and populism (Dunkel and Schiller 2022), these have mostly dealt with recent, localized phenomena. Utilizing Regev’s (2013) concept of expressive isomorphism, this paper will offer a more global and historical perspective, investigating how some of the central tropes, rhetorical conventions and performative techniques associated with contemporary populism can be identified at key points in popular music history ever since the emergence of rock and roll.

References


Michele Yamamoto, “What Does a Republican Sound Like?”
This paper will examine the use of music and sound as part of conservative gatherings to help answer the question, “What does a Republican sound like?” At a rally supporting Republican U.S. Senate candidate J.D. Vance in Fall 2022, former President Donald Trump delivered a speech filled with falsehoods, climaxing over a notably ominous piece of instrumental music. Videos of the melodrama posted by the New York Times and USA Today showed audience members, as the music swelled, raising their right arms to the sky, index fingers pointed out. This quasi-fascist salute drew a shocked response from the media. Then another twist was uncovered: the cinematic track, titled “WWG1WGA” had been pirated and “repackaged”—unaltered—as part of a clickbait album on Spotify from an obscure artist named Richard Feelgood with titles referencing popular Q-Anon phrases. As political rallies continue to lean toward the performative, music becomes a central player in the formation and projection of political identity. What musical fictions about conservatism are at play? What are the signifiers of these conservative topoi? Drawing on topic theory, research done by Dana Gorzelany-Mostak’s Trax on the Trail, and musicological analysis, this paper will construct the sonic space of conservative misinformation.

André Doehring, “‘We’re in this Together’: Group Analyses of Popular Music as a Cooperative Method for Researching Far-right Populism in Austria”

Although the analysis of popular music has lately undergone large developments, most approaches have one thing in common: Analyses are still performed by an individual. Only few of popular music’s many affordances will be addressed in this way. In my paper, the method of group analysis developed in recent years (Appen/Helms/Doehring/Moore 2015; Doehring/Ginkel 2022) will be presented. This involves the collaborative musical analysis of a piece of music in a group characterized by flat hierarchies, which may also include people from other disciplines. In the process borne by shared and conflicting argumentations in the sense of interpretive groups (Reichertz/Bettmann 2018), broader understandings of the affordances of the sound under investigation and discourses stimulated by it thus become visible. By means of examples from the Austrian part of the international research project "Popular Music and the Rise of Populism in Europe" (2019-2022, VW Foundation 94 754) I argue that this method is an adequate tool to understand how popular music fosters the construction of the ‘people’ (Laclau) by populist parties whose rise to power has been one of the many crises we’re in, together.

G. Jazz Identities (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)


The player piano was central for the dissemination of jazz in the 1910s and 1920s, but its history tends to be overlooked. By shedding a light on this lacuna, I aim at problematizing 1. Linear histories of musical media (the digital era doesn’t begin in the 1980s) and 2. Hegemonic definitions of jazz (which emerged as a genre of deliberate technological production). I will present and discuss two theses:

1. The player piano was the forbearer of today’s digital culture: the first technology that celebrated machine (proto-computerized) aesthetics and heralded the automatization of music.
The player piano’s processing unit was the piano roll, a paper with perforated holes which activated a pneumatic mechanism that pressed the piano keys. The piano roll was a digital device because it didn’t record sounds “as such”, but processed control signals via binary code = hole vs. no hole.

2. Piano rolls allowed for mechanical manipulation: their creation and playback didn’t rely on a human performer, and holes that were deemed to sit in the “wrong” place were regularly “re-arranged” or “edited” (resembling post-production). Mediated through piano rolls, jazz didn’t emerge as a music of human performance and improvisation. It rather began as a genre of artificial machine aesthetics, a “post-human” music.

Catalina Constantinovici, “Jazz as Popular Music in Communist Romania”

45 years of communism in Romania led to the establishment and perpetuation of a cultural crisis, which also had repercussions on music. Ignoring the fundamental rights of the people by the communists (freedom of movement, access to information, etc.) contributed to the isolation of Romanians, from all points of view, thus strongly affecting the musical area. Jazz was censored, the genre being considered decadent, subversive. The study aims to highlight the role of jazz as popular music in communist Romania, addressing both the informational sector (including the subterfuge of presenting jazz as popular music) and the musical sector (with reference only to jazz considered to be popular music). A few demonstrative examples will highlight the jazz atmosphere derived from the academic creations of Romanian composers from that period. The identified jazz elements represent a real “valve”, a response to the needs of society, in the midst of an identity crisis.

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This paper discusses three trends that typify jazz activity and representations in contemporary China: first, jazz that follows global music traditions and developments; second, jazz that incorporates ethnic, folkloristic, regional and political Chinese elements; and, third, jazz that expresses the individual styles and identity of those who play and create it. The interplay between musicians and audiences that follow the above trends raises multifaceted queries on the authenticity, artistic integrity, political expressions and directions of contemporary jazz in China. As this paper reveals, those who practice universal jazz trends, for example, are often tagged as imitators of Western jazz – this criticism is often raised by people coming from outside China – while those who attempt meshing local elements and instruments in their jazz are often criticized as making overly Chinese and deliberate fusion – this kind of criticism, however, is usually heard by people who belong to China’s jazz scene. In this respect, the third trend of individual jazz seems to stay safe; but what is essentially Chinese or authentic in this kind of jazz? By negotiating the above dilemmas, this paper clarifies the complex affiliation of jazz in China and its current trends and transformations.

11:15 am -1:15 pm – Session 9

A. Situating hip-hop (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Samuel Lamontagne, “Public Enemy, Public Scholarship: The Co-Production of Hip-Hop Knowledge with Chuck D at UCLA”

In 2022 Chuck D of the rap group Public Enemy taught the class “Rap, Race, and Reality” at UCLA. The principles of hiphopography shaped the class from the initial steps to the teaching itself. The class ruptured the separations between scholarship and hip-hop, and was a space for the co-production of hip-hop knowledge, involving students, guests, professors, and Chuck D in a process of constant co-theorizing. James Spady coined the term “hiphopography” with the will to center hip-hop participants’ perspectives as grounded in experience and expertise. Placing the engagement with hip-hop participants at the heart of its methodology, hiphopography acknowledges and includes participants’ agencies, reflexive capacities, and active theorizations on their own hip-hop practices and involvements in hip-hop cultural worlds as central to the production of knowledge on hip-hop. Hiphopography offers ethical, and socially justice-oriented ways to engage in the knowledge and power relationship. Taking the Chuck D class at UCLA as a case in point, this paper considers the possibility for the co-production of hip-hop knowledges within institutions of higher learning. Further, it explores how the extension of hiphopography to
the university teaching environment can impact the field of hip-hop studies and assert a commitment to epistemic decolonization.

Lou Furnelle Taillard, “Aesthetic Roots and Ideological Commitments in Contemporary Jazz-Rap”

The meeting point between Jazz and Rap seems to play a particularly important role in the #BlackLivesMatter movement. I would first show that Jazz Rap has already a long history, its emergence in the early 90s is almost concomitant with the beginning of hip-hop. Within this scope, I would picture this story in a few words, and highlight the statements of the musicians in terms of aesthetics and ideology. Thereafter, I would question musical techniques used in certain pieces resulting from collaborations between jazzmen and rappers and appearing as “anthem of the #BlackLivesMatter movement” e.g. the tracks “Pig Feet”, produced by Terrace Martin and “For Free” by Kendrick Lamar. The analysis of these pieces shows how Jazz Rap musicians are steeped in the history of Jazz and its techniques. The musicians seem to choose explicitly a certain musical language attached to the modal and free Jazz tradition of the 50-60-70s that used to campaign for the civil rights movement. Today, Jazz Rap musicians choose to be part of a music tradition sided against systemic racism. This paper would be based on my master’s thesis obtained with great honours (University of Liège – Septembre 2022) and supported by an extensive bibliography.

James G. McNally, “Riding the N-41: Black Long Island as Hip-Hop’s Other New York”

From 1986 to 1993, hip-hop’s margins became its center, as acts from Black communities in suburban Long Island reinvented the genre’s aesthetic and commercial possibilities. But what is this ‘suburban’ in the context of New York’s post-Civil Rights landscape? And, how did Long Islanders like Public Enemy, Rakim, EPMD, De La Soul, and others, respond to the crisis of representation that followed the overwhelmingly inner-city prism on Blackness in the United States? In asking these questions, we’ll look to the historic contexts and complex cultural politics of early Long Island rap. We’ll ask how this most ‘ghettocentric’ of genres responded to Black acts from a landscape associated with white success in the American Dream. Our focus will be Adelphi’s WBAU – the college radio station where in 1983 Nassau County’s budding rap stars began to record experimental sounds that offered vital avenues for counter-representation. Doing so, we’ll accompany Chuck D and the Townhouse 3 on the N-41 bus, via their unreleased track of the same name. We’ll ask how this convivial vehicle of funk reimagined the Black communities the bus served, and attended to the discrepancies of race and class in being Black in America’s archetypical white suburban land.

Matt Yuknas, “Signifyin’ the Golden Age: Intra-Generic Quotation in Hip-Hop”

Unique to hip-hop, sampling provides a noticeable relationship with the past that pays homage to popular Black musicians, mainly from classic funk/soul records; However, little is known about the masked self-referential and intra-generic borrowing from hip-hop’s late-1980s and early-1990s “golden era.” Rappers incorporate signifyin’, an intertextual Black literary device that recontextualizes prior works, to bind themselves with their idolized predecessors. In hip-hop,
signifyin’ amalgamates literary (textual) and musical (rhythmic, timbral) quotation to attract the educated listener.

In this paper I build upon this theoretical framework to argue that signifyin’ highlights a deep knowledge of hip-hop practices that signal an in-group “community of interpretation” (Fish, 1980) among hip-hop aficionados. I present a case study of Minnesota underground hip-hop duo Atmosphere to classify different signifyin’ practices that allow artists to align themselves with past hip-hop greats. I argue that signifyin’ can be an effective tool for negotiating membership into a hip-hop community through connection to its history, especially when membership in the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983) is contested. Through analysis of these allegorical approaches, I expand the theoretical framework of musical quotation and signifyin’ in music; bring musicological awareness to an undertheorized group; and illuminate hip-hop’s symbolic relationship with its golden era.

B. Music, Place, and Community Under Covid (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

Marija Dumnić Vilotijević, “Popular Folk Music Performances in Taverns During COVID-19 Crisis in Belgrade”

This paper deals with particular place for popular folk music live performance in Serbia — a tavern. Since the beginning of XX century until the pandemic of COVID-19, Belgrade’s „bohemian quarter” Skadarlija has been the sonic environment characterized by the genre starogradska muzika („old urban music“). Tavern stage is a place of popular folk music performance, specific because of its dual nature of presentation and participation, as well as because of in-betweeness of public and private spheres of performance. During the pandemic, music in tavern performances went through significant changes, based on crisis which especially affected event industry. In this paper will be problematized changes in ensemble construction, traditional interactivity of performance and music economy on one side, and on the other – radical change of repertoire as a result of esapism during the crisis. The work is based on interviews with tavern musicians from Belgrade.

Áine Mangaoang, “(Be)Longing: Music, Integration, and Place-Making in Oslo”

In Oslo, the number of Irish-born immigrants registers at less than 0.05% of the population. Yet while this community may be small in numbers, Irish music plays an unlikely, yet essential role in the city’s soundscape. This paper highlights issues of belonging, migration, and place-making posed by individuals in Oslo’s popular, trad and folk scenes, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic that significantly curtailed formalized musical activity from 2020-‘21. I discuss the multi-faceted Nordic staging of Irishness in Oslo’s music scenes and seek to give voice to a range of more ‘hidden’ (Finnegan 1989) experiences of Irishness in Oslo that show it to be multiple and nuanced, if not deeply problematic. Drawing from stories shared through semi-structured interviews and conversations with seven musician-interlocutors, each of whom plays Irish music of various forms, styles and genres in Norway, this paper provides useful points of departure for investigating specific sonic entanglements and social encounters between the different people who call Oslo home. If ‘migration is a sonic process’ (Western 2020: 294),
according to these migrant musicians in Oslo, integration is, too, a continuous sonic process – if only we care to listen.

References:


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Nicola McAteer, “Community Music & Women Amidst a Post-pandemic World in Crisis”

Community music embraces strong connections with popular music through its political activist roots that gained momentum during the counter-culture period of the 1960s in western countries. As a facilitated practice community music has become a global phenomenon, with emphasis on people, places, participation, inclusivity, and diversity. As a community musician working through the pandemic, I was plagued by contested values due to escalating inequality crises, most predominantly, economic deprivation, racial disparity and gender discrimination making me reconsider the role of community music in today’s socio-political landscape. My intersectional feminist research entitled ‘Disentangling powers at play; community music and women amidst a post-pandemic world in crisis’ seeks to explore how the shifts in community music practices since the pandemic may empower women in different cultural contexts in the current socio-political landscape.

This presentation strongly connects to the conference themes of various sites of crisis. By sharing my mixed methodology of participatory action research and autoethnography I will illustrate how my research can centre lived experiences by women engaging in community music activity in different contexts. I strongly believe the pandemic is an opportunity for reflection, action, and realignment of community music’s roots in social justice.
C. Music, Activism, and Ecological Crisis (Environmental and Ecological Crises stream)


The planet faces an environmental crisis that is an existential threat to humanity. Research has shown that music fans have a particular interest in environmental issues. The Electric Sufi project has sought to leverage this interest to encourage environmental consciousness and activism. A group of three musicians has created an album themed on the Environment. This paper explores the creation of that album, discussing it as a piece of practiced-based eco-musicology.

The work draws upon three religious / spiritual traditions, reflecting the interests and cultures of the three musicians involved: Islam, Coptic Christianity, and a mixed perspective somewhere between humanism, post-Christian, somethingism, agnosticism, and new religious movement paganisms. These spiritual traditions agree that addressing climate change is a cosmological issue relating to the relationships between people and the materiality of existence, and in this project, those three traditions meet in an inter-textual intersection. This paper explores the methodological issues, affordances and issues raised by such a project. It proposes music as an effective tool for drawing attention to climate issues, offering deep cultural value to impact upon individuals’ practices and lifestyles.

Tore Størvold, “Björk’s “Oceania” and the Prospects of a Blue Musicology”

When commissioned to perform at the opening ceremonies of the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Björk composed an original song that gives musical shape to ecological knowledge of the sea. “Oceania” exemplifies the significant role of sound and song in Western maritime cultural history as well as in contemporary ocean imaginaries. In this paper, an analysis of Björk’s performance of “Oceania” in 2004 forms a starting point for discussing musical ways of promoting ocean knowledge in a time of anthropogenic climate change and rising sea-levels. The paper asks what music and musicology can offer to the emerging interdisciplinary conversations dubbed the “blue humanities” (or critical ocean studies). These conversations involve a new engagement with ontologies of the sea, no longer seen as being outside of human history but rather central to our Anthropocene futures. My argument is that music is a productive partner to these intellectual endeavors: music can enliven our understanding of concepts at the core of “oceanic thinking”, such as volume, movement, verticality, and temporality.

Thorsten Philipp, “Soundscapes of Fear and Comfort: Processing Prophecies of Environmental Disaster Through Pop Music”

Narrations of disaster, panic, and doomsday mood have determined the perception of environmental crisis since the rise of the modern ecological movements. To what extent are environment related fear and comfort a topic of pop music? And in which way does fear induced pop music process today’s environment conflicts? Is there any potential for political education?
Whereas Gotye (Eyes Wide Open, 2011) explores fear as the standard characteristic of today’s society, whose members “walk the plank”, and ANOHNI articulates a hymn of environmental hopelessness (4 degrees, 2015), The Poppy Projects unconcernedly narrates the story of a global future without humankind (Time Is Up, 2018). No need to fear, as it all will be over soon? In contrast, feelings of consolation resound in country rock: John Denver’s world successes about the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains show beneath the surface of societal fear a promise of a stable future for all. The analysis of textual and sound regimes not only offers a hybrid mirror of environmental communication through “politainment”; it also permits to discover “latent structures” of social systems (Luhmann 2005) by unveiling the subconscious memories of Western societies.

REFERENCES


D. Metal, Genre, and Crisis (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Gary Sampsell, “Into Everlasting Fire’: The Critical Fundamentalism of Immolation”

In 1991, sociologist Deena Weinstein (2000) introduced the term “fundamentalism” to classify an emergent subgenre of heavy metal known as death metal. Harris M. Berger (1999) and Keith Kahn-Harris (2003) are among the few scholars to follow her precedent; still, no one has fully appreciated how the term locates the genre historically and ideologically. I read Weinstein’s contemporary description as an allusion to the peculiar relationship between American death metal and the premillennial discourse underlying the moralism of its time. In this paper, I consider various aspects of the album Dawn of Possession (Immolation, 1991) to demonstrate how death metal participates in the discourse of Christian fundamentalism. The discussion centers on the content and form of “Into Everlasting Fire,” whose apocalyptic narrative affirms the fundamentalist worldview (i.e., perpetual decline) while denying the Christian promise of utopia. I also address the content of other songs, namely “Dawn of Possession” and “Those Left Behind,” to establish the core themes of the album and Immolation’s work generally. What emerges is the intersection of criticism and mimesis: in their condemnation of hypocrisy and self-righteousness, Immolation replicate the rhetoric of hell-fire evangelism.

Elise Girard-Desprault, “Cultural Representation in Neo-folk and Metal Bands”

The growing enthusiasm for bands including their culture as part of their artistic identity can be seen in the diversification of visual and musical representation in the folk and metal scene. For Indigenous bands, their representation is linked with their struggle and effort to defend and preserve their culture. But for European bands, also concerned by the rising popularity, this cultural representation may come with a different legacy.

The infamous National Socialist black metal, or NSBM, has tainted the metal genre with ideologies that were sometimes clearly expressed in the music, and sometimes expressed behind the scenes. While more recent neo-folk and metal bands sometimes clarify and assume their political ideologies, whatever they may be, other bands decide to keep their political beliefs to
themselves. While recognizing that artists are not obligated to position themselves publicly, what role can the reception play in interpreting these representations? And can bands claim an artistic and cultural heritage without falling into ambiguous political positions?

**Manuel Reyes, “Apocalyptic Encounters: Hearing Survival in Bring Me The Horizon’s Sounding of Doom”**

As the end of the world approaches, noise amplifies. Noise, whether theorized to herald the future (Attali) or to act profitably in late-stage capitalism as recyclable damage (James), is frequently understood as a blank semiotic space with great potential. However, in the approaching end of times, such potential is foreclosed by the lack of imaginable, viable futures (Fisher, Jameson), we must look for survival amidst capitalist ruins in the present (Tsing). This paper analyzes Bring Me The Horizon’s soundings of doom in their album *POST HUMAN: SURVIVAL HORROR* (2020). The British metal band articulates through a wide range of sampling practices, artistic collaborations with, e.g., the Japanese “kawaii metal” band BABYMETAL, and mixing of musical conventions an all-encompassing sonic representation of societal and environmental collapse. In this articulation, I argue, survival can be heard not through a specific analysis of the various aforementioned elements, but rather through the gaps in-between. Mobilizing postcolonial philosophy, this paper explores the limitations of analytical methods in popular music studies to demonstrate how our scholarship is simultaneously imbricated in the perpetuation of damage and yet capable of excavating survival among the ruins of our own making.

**Stephen S. Hudson, “Breaking the Vector of Brutality: Progressionism and Imagined Genre Crises in Metal”**

Metal culture has a progressionist imperative to “leave the blues behind” and pursue greater heaviness or brutality, often with problematic racialized / gendered undertones. In two case studies, established styles are paradoxically framed as breaches of genre. I argue these imagined crises can be dispelled without abandoning the aesthetic experience of heaviness, by adopting less-partisan listening stances. Some critics framed Metallica’s “Fade to Black” (1983) as betraying thrash metal, attracting homophobic disparagement plus accusations of “selling out.” But I show that, far from a breach of genre, this song followed an established archetype of soft metal songs.

Wallmark (2018) argues that in death metal newer, heavier sounds render older ones obsolete, and frames listening as a ritualistic performance of dominance over novel horrifying timbres (with problematic macho implications). Drawing on fans’ positive assessments of classic death metal and newer “old school” bands, I argue that horror and transgression can still be heard into older metal styles long after they have lost their novelty. I conclude by calling for metal scholars and fans to step off the “teleological treadmill of increasing brutality” (Wallmark 2018), to adopt less-macho listening practices and embrace metal’s entire history instead of valorizing its partisan, progressionist vanguard.
E. Power and Place in Dance music (Crises in Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Rosa Reitsamer, “Electronic Dance Music Scenes in Vienna, Austria: Feminism, Activism and Crisis”

Electronic dance music scenes are often associated with an openness to difference, including gender, class, sexual and ethnic differences. Feminist research has shown that this openness does not necessarily include the level of cultural production where white cis heterosexual masculinity persists and the contributions of Black, queer and trans artists are often left out of dance music historiographies. This paper explores how feminisms have shaped Vienna's EDM culture over the last decade. Drawing on interviews and archival research, I will first examine the political agenda of the networks and collectives female:pressure, Femdex (recently disbanded) and Ärger, which draw on feminist and queer theories to protest against gender inequalities and to create safer spaces for LGBTIQ+ audiences. The following part shows that feminist, queer and anti-racist knowledge is circulating within Vienna’s EDM culture to an extent that it is also appropriated by certain club hosts, DJs and other producers to justify and legitimize gender inequalities. I argue that these justification strategies are not only “undoing” feminism, but also contribute to the post-Covid-19 crisis of EDM culture in Vienna.

Tami Gadir, “Dance Music: An Ordinary Culture of a World in Crisis”

A prevalent consensus paradigm in scholarship holds that electronic dance music is a politically potent, even radical culture, where certain dance floors facilitate utopian ideals: openness to gender and sexual difference; temporary dissolution of class and ethnic divisions; alternative states of consciousness; and illegal occupation of space.

But dance music is ordinary, subject to the same forces—including economic, political, and ecological crises, and the myriad social oppressions that arise from them—as the rest of the world. DJ culture emerged in the 1970s, when states redirected money from citizens to corporations with military and police support, and western governments normalized such processes through neoliberal indoctrination. It is no great surprise, then, that group consciousness in dance music is fragmented, centers around shared musical tastes, is theorized in terms of “consumption,” and is focused on individual experiences of escape, pleasure, and self-actualization. Where radical practices emerge, they are generally confined to the act of participation in the event itself.

Dance music’s imbrication in society’s crises are total, since capitalism subsumes everything, including oppositional, radical political philosophies themselves. Alternative ways-of-being on dance floors, therefore, can act only as temporary reprieves, unless they lead to mass organization of transformative political action.

Charlet Brethomé, “Raving in Montreal: How Relations of Power Materialized Themselves in These Scenes?”

Rave culture is ontologically linked to marginalized people especially BIPOC and the 2SLGBTQIA2+ community (Osganian, 2005). Raving was a way for marginalized communities
to create temporary spaces where one could dance, move, and be, away from the oppressions of the “regular world” (Maari, 2009; Arnold Jacob, 2012). Studies tend to understand rave culture as hermetic from the social relations of power. However, through my courses in political sciences I looked at these scenes with a more critical lens. Therefore, my hypothesis was that these social relations of domination (race, gender, sexuality, class, age) are not excluded from techno dancefloors.

Drawing on ethnographic work done with 15 insiders (participants or organizers) while dancing was prohibited in Montreal (fall 2020), I will explore the multifaceted reality of these subcultures, from lived experiences to internal tensions stemming from privilege, exclusion, and other forms of violence. To open this discussion, I’ll conclude by analyzing the practices and policies of certain rave organizers who seek to challenge these relations of domination by building more inclusive and benevolent spaces.

**Alexis Grussi, “Teknopoltics Under Masks: (Self)governement of Soundsystems and Freeparties between France and Quebec (2020-?)”**

The tekno movement – complex cultural and artistic form composed of people with plural relationships to music listening – is opposed in its very essence to the industrialisation and commercialisation of electronic musics (techno) and autonomous artistic practices. Judicialisation and moral judgements are the hallmark of this movement, which originated on both sides of the Atlantic but took its shape in Western Europe. From there, the pandemic and its restrictions revealed tensions – notably through media discourse – but also and above all adaptations of the actors (organisers, health organisations, partygoers, etc.). A transdisciplinary research conducted between Quebec and France invites us to question the fact of talking about a "crisis" in relation to the tekno movement. Is it not one of those autonomous groups that are too often perceived (morally, legally and culturally) through the prism of crisis? Wouldn't this term of crisis, articulated to cleaving musical and protest forms, provide us with keys to understanding what the crisis does to (tekno) music and what this music does to the crisis? This paper will also be an opportunity to look back at a series of conferences given on the subject between 2020 and 2021 in Montréal, Paris and Neuchâtel.

**F. Geographies of Crisis (Economic Crises stream)**

**Richard Cruz Dávila, “The Tejano Midwest in Crisis: Economic Crises and the Decline of a Regional Identity”**

Unbeknownst to many outside the community, from the 1960s to the 1990s Texas-Mexican music and dance flourished across the Midwestern United States, serving a vital role in processes of placemaking for Tejana/o migrants to the region. In the present, though, what I call the Tejano Midwest is in crisis. Since the 1990s, audiences at dances have both markedly dwindled and aged. The numbers of local groups, venues, and radio shows have declined precipitously. Few, if any, record stores that served Tejana/o communities survived past the 1990s. New technologies have allowed local groups to expand their audience beyond the Midwest, but those invested in the longevity of Texas-Mexican music in the region are concerned that a Tejano Midwest may be fading away. This paper situates the initial growth of the Tejano Midwest in the Post-War
economic boom and its eventual decline in processes of deindustrialization and disinvestment beginning in the 1970s. Its current moment of crisis is thus closely tied to the economic shifts of the past half-century (Stream D) but is also telling of a crisis of identity (Stream F), as the disappearance of sites of Texas-Mexican music making foreshadow the possible disappearance of a Midwestern Tejana/o regional identity.

Pil Ho Kim, “The Skies of Seoul, the Moon of Seoul: Critique of Urbanity in South Korea’s American Roots Music”

Americana or American roots music – blues, folk, country, and others – has rural origins as the name suggests. When it came to South Korea, however, the locals adapted it to an urban style of music. Still, some Korean musicians who took up this genre did not abandon rural suspicions about urbanity deeply embedded in American roots. Instead, they sometimes wielded their music as a political weapon against rapacious urbanization that devastated the countryside and boxed in the working class who migrated from there. Kim Min’gi and Yang Pyŏngjip, the Korean modern folk pioneers in the 1970s, represent an early adaption of American roots music as critique of predatory urbanity. Four decades later, South Korea’s independent music scene has produced another wave of American roots adaptation highly critical of predatory urbanity in the twenty-first century. In particular, the folk singer-songwriter Saenggagūi Yŏrŭm, the bluesman Kim Taejung, and the country singer Kim T’aech’un are at the forefront of this renewed tradition. Tracing the lineage of Korean adaptation of American roots music, I will explore how the processes of musical adaptation and localization have inflected/modulated the critical messages and vice versa.

Sydney Schelvis, “Drum ’n Bass: Rolling and Flowing Through Amsterdam and Beyond”

In this doctoral research project, I study the migratory mechanisms at play in Dutch drum ‘n bass music scenes. Sonically characterized by a high-paced drumbeat and an abrasive bass, the music does more than to invite movement on the dance floor alone. It also induces movement among its diversified scenes in and around the city. I research how the post-COVID financial crisis impacted the spatial dissemination of these scenes. To find out, I track, trace, map, attend, and analyze a variety of drum ‘n bass events in and around Amsterdam. I do so with special attention to the sonic variations of the various scenes and their connection to the demographic parameters that impact their spreading. By mapping how drum ‘n bass moves through the city and beyond, I aim to reveal previously concealed patterns of distribution of cultural and financial capital in Amsterdam.

Harrison Montgomery, “Atmospheric Industries: Listening to Speculation and Precarity at South By Southwest”

From the recent high-profile collapse of the cryptocurrency exchange FTX to the ongoing market-wide tank in value, it is clear that cryptocurrency speculation has reached a public inflection point, pivoting swiftly from unbridled optimism to the brink of solvency. One unusual contact point between the crypto bubble and the popular music industry was the 2022 South By Southwest conference, which returned to Austin's streets with partners specializing in art and blockchain technology, including "BlockChain Creative Labs" and "Fluf World". Throughout the
festival Austin performed two versions of itself: one an obstacle course of geodesic domes and exclusive events devoted to the Metaverse, NFTs, and other speculative jargon, and the other a familiar churn of bands playing for exposure and drinks on 6th street, enormous stage performances along the Colorado, and networks of house shows. This paper investigates the crisis of musical viability at this meeting of the failing futurism of blockchain art markets and the strictures of SXSW’s return to normal. In so doing, I propose the notion of an “atmospheric industry” which describes the aesthetic suture which Austin and South By perform, both advertising the musical city which is yet to come and playing one which struggles to exist.


Like the “Cousin Oliver Syndrome” in which a younger child is added to the aging cast of a television sitcom, the growing prominence of child performers in rock genres may indicate a crisis in music. Child musicians and fans are increasingly hailed as the future of old-fashioned styles like rock, punk, and jazz, but what does their participation really mean?

The presentations in this panel address how children in popular music contribute to refashioning identities and reframing genre boundaries as well as making children and their issues visible. Two of our speakers discuss children who perform in “adult” genres of pop, jazz, and rock, and two focus on constructions and representations of childhood in various music media settings. We consider the ways in which children’s music resists but also reifies canons and hierarchies of taste in popular music.

Ryan Bunch, “Who is This For? Critical Childhood Studies and Music”

That realignments of genre and identity in popular music would center on children is in keeping with a historical and ideological relationship between childhood and music. This paper surveys the fields of music studies and critical childhood studies to pose questions about what they can do for each other and who stands to benefit. Common discourses embedded in Western music, modern childhood, and the academy have infantilized and marginalized children and popular music, often in terms of each other. Both childhood and music are perceived as “authentic,” natural, uncorrupted, innocent of politics, universal, angelic, devilish, interior, subjective, emotional, and creative. They are used to uphold hierarchies of colonization, age, race, gender, and class. Recent questions about what constitutes knowledge in music studies are akin to those raised by critical childhood studies, which regards childhood as socially constructed and children as social agents. Music studies face methodological challenges in locating children in the archive or mitigating power imbalances in ethnography with children. Fortunately, interdisciplinary popular music scholars are well-positioned to navigate these challenges and to address the questions of agency, voice, performance, and “authenticity,” that adhere to both childhood and music.

Liam Maloy, “Rock Music for Children: Rebellion Refashioned”

Children’s musical culture has assimilated rock as a musical style and as a series of performative visual tropes. Hippe Gasten (Netherlands), Heavisaurus (Finland), The Not It’s (USA) and
Johnny & the Raindrops (UK – author’s own band) perform rock, heavy metal and punk for children. Meanwhile, baby clothes that feature the logos of Ramones and Motorhead are now mainstream. This paper argues that musical, attitudinal and aesthetic factors have facilitated this homology between rock and childhood. High tempos, musical aggression, theatricality, the commodification of visuals (band logos, horny hand signs, etc.) and the projection of parents’ musical tastes are just some of the factors that have smoothed Rock’s adoption by children’s culture.

The racialized Dionysian dangers points to both the diminution of the genre as a (counter) cultural force and the refashioning of the social and cultural identities of the child. However, the distillation of rock to a selection of child-friendly tropes is problematic. Drawing on Bernstein’s concept of the performativity of racialized childhood, I argue that rock-as-children’s-culture constructs a white consumerist childhood that chimes with rock’s culturally appropriative roots in rhythm and blues and the blues.

Friederike Merkelbach, “Child, Girl, and Artist With a Voice”

Angelina Jordan has built much of her early success with cover songs—and particularly cover songs in a jazz tradition—creating her characteristic style of (interpreting) music. Leaning on Regev’s (2013) notion of rock-popization, I conceptualize Jordan’s acts as jazz-popization, identifying her as an aesthetic cosmopolitan attracting international listeners from diverse music traditions.

In this paper, I explore some of the tensions arising in the confrontations between society’s hunger for child pop stars like Angelina Jordan and the young artist’s musical persona blending elements of child, artist, genre, and girlhood. I address how these different components relate to each other, and how Jordan’s voice can be considered the hotspot in this assemblage. Also, I consider how the jazz-nostalgia, that the child artist Jordan is able to evoke, appears to function as a guarantee of her musical—and personal—authenticity and talent. Finally, I address YouTube’s role as a distributor and manager of what I call “talentification” and what it means in the real and virtual lives of Jordan and her fans.

Jacqueline Warwick, “Play, Play-Acting, and Players: Musings on the Meaning of Child Musicians”

Child musicians seem to occupy the past and the future simultaneously: when adults hear them performing familiar repertoire or new music shaped by old-school aesthetics, we can feel our own “inner child” brought to life before our eyes and ears. In valuing the spontaneity and charm of children’s made-up songs and dances, adults reinscribe Romantic ideologies of genius as well as rockist notions of authenticity. This view of children’s music reinforces an idea of “child” as pure, natural, and evanescent, not yet corrupted by adult cynicism and knowingness.

Yet the work of performing childish wonder in music is often undertaken by children who are highly skilled at enacting the apparent artlessness so cherished by audiences. When their performances are recorded and enjoyed repeatedly, these children construct particular versions of “child” that can solidify into controlling stereotypes shaping the ways we hear and look at all
children. The stylized repetitions made by child musicians thus become foundational to children’s culture; might they offer opportunities for reinvention and resistance as well as reproduction? In this paper I consider child musicians and their meanings for adult and child audiences.

1:15-2:15 pm

Lunchtime panel – Extreme Noise Records Anarcho-Punk Collective

Founded in 1994, Extreme Noise Records is the oldest continually operating punk collaborative in the Twin Cities. Currently located on West Lake Street in the heart of South Minneapolis, Extreme Noise was recently celebrated as part of the Walker Art Center's Design Lecture Series in an evening devoted to collaborative design approaches across a range of media: record covers, apparel, posters, and print publishing. This lunchtime roundtable discussion with members of the volunteer-run collective will discuss the past, present, and future of this staunchly DIY store and the broader community of which it is an essential part.
Thursday, June 29

9:00-11:00 am – Session 10

A. The Identities of Leonard Cohen (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

This panel will look at different aspects of Leonard Cohen's persona expressing different social and cultural identities. While Cohen's persona was in some respects remarkably consistent over the course of his career, it was also never without internal contradictions. These cleavages reflect larger social and cultural ones even if Cohen rather rigorously avoided taking sides. Some of the contradictions involve Cohen's ambivalence about stardom and the whole business of persona making. Some involve friction between the role of the rock star and Cohen’s identification with writing, especially poetry, which bring light questions about the cultural capital accruing to each role. Other contradictions are imbedded in the writing and performance itself. Cohen was white male heterosexual whose preoccupation with sex was expressed differently than it was by most of his peers. He became rock star at a later age than most, and his career peaked when he was in his seventies when he owned the identity of an old man. He was a practicing Jew who was also a practicing Buddhist and who make frequent reference to Christian scripture in his writing. Cohen’s personas reveal the complexities of contemporary identity.

Loren Glass, “Writer to Rock Star”

Authors such as Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway were among the most important celebrities of the earlier part of the twentieth century. Authors were later overshadowed by movie stars and then rock stars, who by the time Cohen began recording were at the top of the celebrity heap. And yet, even celebrity authors retained the cultural capital that had long accrued to writers but was historically denied to actors or pop singers. This chapter will examine the transformation of Cohen from a literary figure who was already a celebrity in Canada into an international rock star. This transformation raises some questions about the traditional valuation of these roles since Cohen seems to have achieved higher status as a rock star than he did as a novelist and poet. This unusual career path meant that Cohen would have a different sort of persona than those who were merely authors or popular musicians. His claim to the status of poet, for example, was different than that of Dylan or other songwriters who did not publish books of verse. His fame as a singer-songwriter gave the books he published later new meaning and a larger audience.

Lucy J. Boucher, “Self and Persona”

Leonard Cohen has been accused of wearing his heart on his sleeve, or, according to Gary Shaprio, “some less clothed part of his body.” A figurehead of the 1960s singer-songwriter scene, Cohen’s lyrics were often autobiographical, but never confessional. While he has not been associated with the outright theatricality of artists such as David Bowie and Bob Dylan who radically overhauled both their appearance, style and sound with each new album, the figure of ‘Leonard Cohen’ can be considered a cipher in his own work. The songwriter and poet that appears in his lyrics and verse is not speaking in the voice of mild-mannered Canadian himself, but a literary alter-ego. Cohen fans cite biographical references as key to understanding his
music and it is hard to deny that many of the details in his work draw upon his personal life, but this does not mean that the narrative voice in his novels, lyrics and poems is interchangeable with Cohen’s own voice. The biographical events that feature in the works may have provided inspiration for Cohen’s art, but that does not mean the emotions, reactions and conclusions drawn by Cohen’s narrators are the same as those of the man who created them.

Ann Powers, “The World Expressed through Sex”

Rock & roll was overwhelmingly devoted to the expression of the male heterosexual experience of sex. Given that, one might wonder what about a discussion of Leonard Cohen and sex wouldn’t be entirely predictable. But Cohen’s representation of sex is different, partly because it is not taken for granted. One might argue that Cohen expressed the world through sex—or vice versa. Some of his most memorable songs (“Marianne,” for example) use individual paramours as prisms that refract larger experience. His lyrics, while not explicit in the sense that some rock or rap songs are, often evoke the power and pleasure of sex. Cohen has asserted that he finds no tension between sex and spirituality, and songs like “Hallelujah” insist upon their deep imbrication with each other. He has been called and called himself a “ladies man,” but he also dismisses the assertion that he has been especially successful with women. This paper will try to assess how Cohen’s representation of sex challenges cultural norms and how in other ways upholds them. Does Cohen point toward a more progressive mode of male heterosexuality?

David R. Shumway, “How to be an Aged Rock Star”

Age is an important but fraught and often overlooked category identity. Rock & roll was long understood as youth music, and rockers in the 1960s often proclaimed that they couldn’t imagine themselves continuing into their 50s or 60s. But many have continued well beyond that, including The Rolling Stones, the youngest of the remaining members of which is 74. But the Stones and most other older performers do not present themselves as old. Leonard Cohen, on the contrary, performed on his late tours honestly and gracefully as a septuagenarian. Some of this is consistent with the persona he has displayed since the 1960s, for example, dressing in the style of the previous generation. But the new Cohen was not just conservatively dressed. He directly confronted the limitations of age in his stage patter, and his songs, which had always taken account of death, now took on a new resonance, as it was apparent that the singer’s days were numbered. Where other old rockers seem to assume that they deserve the audience’s adoration, Cohen was humble and grateful for the renewed interest in his work. By openly identifying as a senior citizen, Cohen struck a blow against ageism and called in question the cultural presumption of the transcendent value of youth.

B. CV and Cover Letter Workshop for Graduate Students and Recent Graduates

Justin Patch
Anthony Kwame Harrison
Justin Burton
Bekah Farrugia
Ryan MacCormack
This workshop will provide practical advice to graduate students and early career professionals looking for positions in the US and Canada. These processes. Everything from the timing of staffing plans to ways on interpreting the language of job calls are often opaque to new graduates and graduate students. The workshop will offer critical tools to help them better prepare for the job market and early career. Members of this panel represent a diverse array of institutions, from large research universities to pre-professional and small liberal arts colleges, and have also served on search committees. They are also drawn from fields that are open to popular culture scholarship – music, media arts, communication, sociology and academic staff. The workshop will begin with each of the panelists taking a few minutes to introduce themselves and discuss a few things they wish they had known while they were on the job market or early in their career. After this, the panel will review several examples of CVs and cover letters that will be solicited from the participants at the conference beforehand. The aim of the workshop is to provide guidance and insight to young scholars that will help them prepare for their professional futures.

C. Genre and affect (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Bruno Alcalde, “The Covert Centrality of Genre in Post-Millennial Popular Music”

In a 2021 article titled “Genre is Disappearing. What Comes Next?,” Amanda Petrusich raises an old but pertinent concern—that musical genres, or the ways we understand them, are not useful anymore. This essentialist trope about musical categories implies that once you mix types, they no longer exist. My answer to Petrusich’s “what comes next?” is an in-depth embracing of hybridity, which affords a more dynamic and productive perspective on musical categories. What is “disappearing” is the agreement (from artists, audience, and critics alike) that popular music genres are rigid and stable. As such, it is the combination of identity markers that should be addressed. The instability and permeability of categories may be problematic for marketing, but not for musical creativity, criticism, or enjoyment. In this presentation, I will discuss four case studies of artist’s and communities’ engagements with 21st-century popular music and highlight the centrality of genre categories for listening, interpretation, and production of this repertory despite the common discourse that contradicts it. Engaging with literature on musical genre, analyses of interviews, and YouTube comments, I problematize the idea genre’s demise in post-millennial popular music and offer a way to deal with “what’s next” through the lenses of hybridity.

Dan DiPiero, “I Wanna Be That Cool’: Soccer Mommy, Big Feelings, and Permanent Crisis”

This paper elaborates recent work tracking a strain of contemporary indie rock that I refer to as “Big Feelings” by focusing on a case study of one of its chief practitioners, Soccer Mommy. This particular approach produces a (queer) feminist affect that is irreducible to any one parameter, but emerges through a cohesive synthesis of several characteristics. That is, listeners feel this music’s feminist orientations even in the absence of overt references. Primarily performed by Gen-Z musicians, the Big Feelings that these artists articulate must also be read in the context of the successive socio-political crises that are not literally referenced in the music, but which, I suggest, nevertheless inform it.
Lyrical analysis of the 2018 single “Cool” provides an example of how Soccer Mommy resonates with but also departs from riot grrrl models, where queer/feminist politics are implied by never stated outright. Harmonic analysis of the same song exemplifies the ways in which Big Feelings expands the sonic palette beyond the two and three note chords typical of masculine rock music, instead incorporating chord extensions that track with Susan McClary’s arguments regarding the feminized semiotics of chromaticism. Finally, I introduce excerpted interviews I have conducted with fans of the music, using their words to help corroborate and elaborate my reading of Big Feelings as an orientation that is made meaningful in part because of the traumatic context in which Gen-Z musicians and fans, permanently in crisis, create spaces of community, catharsis, and care.

**Theresa Nink, “Ballads as a Soundtrack in Times of Crisis: An Examination of Sentimentality and Affect in Charity Singles”**

Popular musicians frequently respond to major global crises by releasing charity singles. For this purpose, usually several popular musicians form a supergroup to record a song, the sales proceeds of which are donated to the victims of the respective crisis. It is striking that it is often sentimental ballads that function as charity singles (USA For Africa’s “We are the world”, 1985) or that the songs are devoted to sentimental topics (Band Aid’s “Do They Know It’s Christmas Time”, 1984). This paper investigates the connections between affect, sentimentality and the coverage of the crisis in relation to charity singles. To this end, I focus on a close reading of “Everybody Hurts” (2010), a cover version of the R.E.M. original by the project Helping Haiti, thereby taking sonic, lyrical, performative, and visual elements into consideration. In addition, I consider the song’s reception in music criticism to examine its (d)evaluation in relation to coverage of the current crisis, also taking into account the postcolonial implications of musicians, mostly from the Global North, initiating charity songs for crisis mostly in the Global South. I use analytical models of cultural studies, situational analysis and music sociological approaches to examine emotional-somatic forms of experiencing music.

List of references


Marcelo Bergamin Conter, “Nobody’s Playlists: Ambient Music and Liminal Spaces in Late Capitalism”

In 2022, YouTube channel @nobodyplaylists became relatively popular. It features playlists of dark ambient music that are always instrumental, slow, melancholic and with lo-fi textures. The music is accompanied by images of liminal spaces such as empty hotel corridors, lobbies, neighborhoods, fast food restaurants and parking lots, imagining a dystopian future in which humanity disappears while signs of capitalism remain. In the videos’ comments, users report that they listen to Nobody’s playlists because it improved their focus while working or studying after hours during COVID isolation. Our hypothesis is that the relations between liminal spaces, ambient music and working late expresses the harmful effects of late capitalism on workers, such as sleep disorders and anxiety. Sound plays a major role, since most of the users leave the video streaming on a tab in the browser and resume work on another. It seems to us that the case study reconfigures the notion of escapism: it is as if users were trying to reverse the dark atmosphere of constant crisis that surrounds them through the playlists sonorities, but without really leaving the zone that oppresses them, since Nobody’s tracks express exactly what can happen in the future if we continue this way.

D. Streaming, Selling, and Sorting Music Online (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)


Music streaming under the condition of late capitalism follows the neoliberal tendency of enabling ubiquitous and fluid access to commodities. However, as Martin Scherzinger has recently argued (Scherzinger, 2019), algorithmic models of music streaming superimpose preferences by grouping artists and genres into an all-encompassing framework. Algorithmic suggestions, alongside curated streaming playlists, titillate listeners and operate as chief arbiter of interpretation. A situation which recalls the Adornian critique of the culture industry (Adorno, 2002), these technological measures mystify the music’s underlying stylistic and social histories by overemphasizing its affective function.

One example of this mystification occurs when YouTube’s algorithmic recommendations present drum and bass mixes as inoffensive “study music.” This paper takes as its case studies the YouTube videos “Peshay studio set 1996” (2018) and “Bailey – Intelligent Drum & Bass” (2018) and their attendant user commentary. Noting that “the algorithm” brought them to these videos, commenters often remark that the music in the videos can improve listeners’ mental awareness. In these instances, an algorithmic, non-human tastemaker complicates traditional
human-to-human or critic-to-reader approaches to learning music’s histories. Contrasting algorithmically orchestrated discussions with traditional locales of drum and bass historical discussion—specifically in magazines such as Wire and DJMag and forums such as DogsOnAcid and RollDaBeats—this paper shows how listeners within these virtual communities recognize the underlying tensions exacerbated by the algorithmic tastemaking’s neoliberal mode of operation.

Veronika Muchitsch, ““Repeat Rewind”: Mediations of Time and Listening Subjects in Music Streaming”

A 2022 report by Spotify states that songs from artists’ back catalogues comprised a third of the company’s 2021 weekly global chart, illustrating how listeners increasingly revisit music many months after its initial release. The study seems to contradict the notion that digital media creates a temporality of pre-emergence (Coleman, 2018), which has also been identified in the anticipatory logic of algorithmic recommendation (Drott, 2018) and the encouragement of exploration over archiving (Lüders, 2021) in music streaming. Scholars have linked these temporal mediations to functional uses of music that foster normative temporal and affective structures of everyday life resonating with idealized neoliberal subjectivity (Eriksson & Johansson, 2017). In this paper, I analyze how algorithmic, editorial and user curated Spotify playlists variously construct time, particularly temporalities oriented toward the past. I propose that the temporal patterns of music, algoritorial curation (Bonini & Gandini, 2019) and everyday life mutually structure each other, and that tensions between these mediations focalize negotiations of power in contemporary digital popular music culture. I ask how the various constructions of the past in (popular) music streaming may rearticulate normative temporal-affective patterns of idealized neoliberal subjectivity, or create other, possibly liberatory mutual mediations of music and listeners.

Ellis Jones, “Midnight at the Sun Diner: The Cultural Impact of Song Management Firms”

The popular music industries have been in part defined by what Bernard Miege calls the “dialectic of the hit and the catalogue”. In short, back catalogue has held a 106igitalizat function which offsets (and indeed permits) some of the insecurity inherent in producing new music. The rise of new “song management” firms (such as Hipgnosis, Primary Wave, Round Hill, and others) threatens to tip the balance towards established repertoire, due to their focus on purchasing and exploiting proven high-value song catalogues.

Drawing on the work of critics such as Simon Reynolds, Mark Fisher and Sianne Ngai, this paper explores the cultural politics of “re-vitalising” back catalogue, via a single example of such work. Midnight at the Sun Diner is a podcast series produced to “celebrate” 70 years of Sun Records, co-developed by Primary Wave (who own rights to many iconic Sun songs). The fantastical premise of this series – centred on a time-travelling music journalist – seems designed to highlight the relevance of back catalogue works to a contemporary protagonist; this capacity to “re-tell” musical history also invites parallels with the time-travelling multiverse as developed in other media (such as the Marvel Cinematic Universe).

Håvard Kiberg, “Music Production in the Age of Streaming”
This paper investigates what effects the paradigm of platformization imposes on the development of music production. In recent years, it has been frequently claimed that online platforms are re-formatting musical goods, whereas shorter songs, adapted to various platforms’ contextual and mood-based playlists, are increasingly gaining ground – ultimately generating large quantities of streams by optimizing on the economic and infrastructural potential of the platforms. While examining how 15 Norwegian artists create music in the platform-centric era, this paper explores how streaming, as a technological and distributional shift, alter the logics of music production. On the one hand, it analyzes these developments through a critical lens, where insights taken from platform studies and attention economy forms a basis for discussing how attention, as the most important and scarce currency of the information-age, pulls popular music production and consumption towards standardization and homogenization. On the other hand, it focuses on the historical and continuous interplay between music, media, and technology, and explore how technological and formative constraints also might function as dogmas catalyzing creativity. Hence, the paper addresses the following RQ: In what ways do platform-based distribution change the processes of music production, and how do music-creators creatively respond to these changes?

E. Musical Crossroads: Stories about the Objects of African American Music (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

The crisis of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the forced enslavement of African-descended people in the United States is the precipitating event of African American culture. The music that originated out of this experience was created in response to that forcible rupture from their communities, cultural traditions, and homeland. The material culture of African American music history embodies the stories of individual and community perspectives and experiences. Some objects speak to the obstacles, challenges, and injustices African Americans encounter due to systemic racism and personal bias. Others speak to accomplishments and achievements against the odds and capture people’s emotional, spiritual, and bodily experiences with music alone and with others.

The values and experiences that shaped African American culture, have also served as the foundation of American popular music. Drawing upon objects featured in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture’s latest publication, Musical Crossroads: Stories about the Objects of African American Music (February 2023), panelists will explore the conference theme of crisis through the lens of American slavery and the music it brought forth in the United States. Each paper will provide an object case study interpreted through moments and events that have caused, responded to, or reacted to crises of culture, identity, or injustice.

Timothy Anne Burnside, “Hey, Sister. Go. Wear Something Silver”

Combining her unique skills as a singer, songwriter, performer, artist, and activist, Nona Hendryx has used her music to provide safe spaces “for those who [find] avenues of survival and joy outside the status quo” and fight the crises that threaten them. With Labelle and throughout her solo career, Hendryx’s music has been a transformative presence in LGBTQ communities.
That presence created a platform for her social justice work against Apartheid, advocating for LGBTQ rights, and fighting HIV/AIDS by creating awareness and raising money for those living with it.

Sasha Geffen highlights Labelle’s 1974 performance at the Metropolitan Opera House as a moment that “knocked something loose” in New York City’s concert scene and helped bring LGBTQ communities to the front of conversations about popular music. By 1974, Sarah Dash, Patti LaBelle, and Nona Hendryx had traded in their modest matching dresses of the 1960s for custom “spacesuit outfits” that represented the evolution of every aspect of Labelle. This discussion will use Hendryx’s silver stage outfit and a poster advertising Labelle’s performance at the Met to examine the relationship between Hendryx’s music and work off-stage and how they have intersected to lead and align with social justice movements around sexual identity and expression, racial and gender equity, and health and well-being.

**Hannah Grantham, “Black Music Driving Modernity”**

Drawing on themes in Musical Crossroads: Stories Behind the Objects of African American Music, such as innovation, Black feminist attitudes, and mobility, “Black Music Driving Modernity” investigates what music’s material culture reveals about the way Black people resisted and reimagined modernity. Music is a critical space where Black artists comment on the doubleness of their modern identities made possible by the enslavement of Black people and the dislocation of their culture. Modern objects from the NMAAHC’s collections document how musicians utilize things to express themselves, build community, make a living, and revisit their history in aural worlds while shaping popular music.

“Black Music Driving Modernity” focuses on a selection of modern objects, including a photograph of Mary Lou Williams with Cleveland radio DJ Bill Hawkins, Ford electrician Felton Williams’s steel guitar, a seal embosser used by the Colored Performing Rights Society of America’s President Perry Bradford, and a film clip of Bessie Smith performing “St. Louis Blues.” It discusses these hosts of “incessantly reforming constellations” to expose the networks musicians intersect with as they migrate and commune with listeners and consumers of Black entertainment. Further, the objects highlight how Black musicians experimented with modern technology and practices to reach audiences and disseminate their social theories that had tangible impacts on material life.

**Steven Lewis, “The Banjo in African American Material Culture”**

The profound cultural, economic, and political repercussions of the trans-Atlantic slave trade made it one of the most severe crises in human history. Its effects remain evident in the histories of Black cultures in the New World. This presentation will focus specifically on the banjo, an amalgamation of West African instrument-building techniques with European and Native American influences. Building on the work of Laurent Dubois and others, I will discuss how the development of the banjo in the 17th century Caribbean and North America represented a musical response to the crisis of cultural dislocation that characterized the middle passage. This discussion will be built around instruments from the permanent collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. A close analysis of these materials will
demonstrate how the banjo both reflected the cultural crisis instigated by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and how the instrument developed over the course of African American history. This presentation will also demonstrate the important role that material culture can play in researching early African American culture and the roots of American popular culture, especially given the paucity of written sources available.

Dwandalyn R. Reece, “The Racialized Voice in the Court of Public Opinion”

How does the scholarly and public fascination with the “racialized voice” affirm our conscious and unconscious biases about vocal identities? Black popular vocalists are judged, appraised and remembered when their vocal sound and presentation defy racial expectations. Is this a crisis of identity or a referendum on subjectivity and self-representation? Drawing from my own work on “the color of sound” and carrying on the discussion that Nina Sun Eidsheim introduced in The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre and Vocality in African American Music (2019), I will present three case studies using objects belonging to, or associated with Diahann Carroll, Whitney Houston, and the Fifth Dimension, to explore essentialized notions of sound, presentation, and voice. Theories of racialized sound have been at the center of American popular music since its inception, either as a symbol of cultural solidarity and authenticity or a tool of racial essentialism and social oppression. This crisis of the racialized voice, where musical sounds and tastes are fetishized, appropriated, or condemned, continues to dominate our musical discourse subjecting artists and listeners alike, to musical experiences that are more about identity politics than the aesthetic value of a performance or song.

F. Music, politics, and protest (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)


This paper examines gendered narratives in songs and musical practices associated with the 2020 protest movement in Belarus. During these protests, which were unprecedented in numbers and in their engagement of a wide cross-section of Belarusian society, women came to play central pragmatic and symbolic roles in the resistance to the Lukashenka regime, which draws on masculine imagery and Belarus’s patriarchal gendered power order for legitimacy. These protests were also notable for the large output of music associated with them. In this paper, I draw on concepts from critical citizenship studies to explore how Belarusian popular music, itself historically characterized by a gendered power order that excluded women from musical practices associated with political resistance, interacts with the “revolution with a woman’s face.” By approaching music as a platform where incipient gendered citizenships are embodied and negotiated, I intend to identify gendered narratives in and around protest music, and explore how these narratives relate to the evolving conception of gendered citizenship in Belarus.

Rebekah Mangels and Emily Bollinger, “Musicians for Change”

In this study, we explored ways in which musicians in Central Illinois attempt to influence social change. Previous research has claimed popular music genres such as rock and punk music simultaneously reinforced dominating structures while also subverting them. Using open-ended
interviews and qualitative methods of analysis, we found that participants reported varying levels of commitment to political activism. Through their lyrics, venue choices, and performance choices, participants have reportedly attempted to create more equity in areas such as mental health, race relations, reproductive rights, and gun control. Lastly, we found the participants played songs in popular genres, reaching local and even global audiences. Therefore, we concluded that the field of popular music studies would benefit from understanding musicians’ intentions for social change.


Music has always played a key role in social justice movements, as community reportage, aural forces of mobilization, and political performance. In examining this role, Redmond (2014) states, “These sonic productions were not ancillary, background noise – they were absolutely central to the unfolding politics because they held within them the doctrines and beliefs of the people.” Similarly, Kelley (2002) argues that music creates “a world of pleasure, not just to escape the everyday brutalities of capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, but to build community, establish fellowship, play and laugh, and plant seeds for a different way of living, a different way of hearing.”

Using my curatorial work as an example, including the “The People Who Keep on Going” from The Futures of Black Radicalism (Lubin & Johnson, 2017) and “The Mixtape as Maroon” from Black Ephemera (Neal, 2022), this multi-media presentation discusses ‘mixtape scholarship,’ an aesthetic of the mixtape that is connected to its history of subversion and ‘do-it-yourselfness,’ that operates outside and on the margins of dominant power structures (Glennon, 2018). This curation of music sonically evokes space, and articulates an acoustic environment of resistance and resilience, conveying sonic narratives of the disenfranchised, the under-represented, and the marginalized.

Suzanne Wint, “Prince Imagery in the 2020 Minneapolis Uprising”

As Minnesotans from around the Twin Cities gathered to clean up debris from clashes with the police in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, graffiti messages and murals also appeared on the plywood that protected shop windows. Peeking out among the images and phrases expressing frustration and hope were references to hometown musician Prince. Social media posts used the poster from Prince’s 2015 Baltimore Rally 4 Peace (after Freddy Gray’s death in police custody) to advertise a candlelight vigil. “Make Prince Proud” and the Love Symbol that served as the Artist’s name for a decade appeared in spontaneous and planned street art. The trend continued through the summer as women in Prince t-shirts appeared in a photograph from the first official gathering to discuss police abolition in Minneapolis. Building on my previous work on place and public mourning of Prince, I analyze images from social and legacy media and interviews with artists to I examine how references to Prince represented Minneapolis as a place of mourning after premature deaths of two Black men in a predominantly white city.
G. Queer and Trans Voices (Crisis of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Tamar Ballard, “‘I just (really) wanna feel myself/somethin’: queering internet time and the black spectacular”

Although Black creators utilize the internet in ways that forward self-determination and authorship, the objectification of Black folks online takes as many forms. Internet trends involving decontextualization or memeification of Black stories, bodies, and art are commonplace, digitizing a centuries long history of Black objectification. When songs and dances go viral, they often do so without credit or concern for context. And as a popular genre of internet trends, hip-hop artistry is particularly susceptible to misuse and misrepresentation.

This paper uses a queered listening practice informed by Alexandra Vazquez’s “listening in detail” to explore moments where hip-hop artists problematize internet objectification. Foregrounding an adaptation of Vazquez’s “experience with rather than account of,” this paper conspires with Denzel Curry’s “CLOUT COBAIN” and Childish Gambino’s Because the Internet (2013) in their privileging of lag and repetition to create an ever-present, deprivileging an imagined futurity. Rather than dismissing loops and breaks in these songs as inconsequential, these details take center stage in the push to queer the ordinariness of Black objectification online. I argue that these artists trade the clarity of a solution for the pursuit of slowing down internet time and dreaming toward José Esteban Muñoz’s promise of what’s “not quite here.”

Jordan Brown, “The Quare Canon: Queer Women-Identifying Songs of the Twenty-First Century”

Although it might seem like the Obergefell v. Hodges Supreme Court decision on marriage equality (2015) brought an era of reconciliation, safety measures are more important now than ever for the woman-identifying queer community (Human Rights Campaign). The LGBTQ community has experienced many losses of life as a result of hate crimes, from the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando to the Club Q shooting in Colorado Springs in November 2022 (Ray). Furthermore, the lesbian community continues to encounter great erasure when it pertains to safe communal spaces, as seen for example in the rapid decline of lesbian bars in the United States. Building on E. Patrick Johnson’s notion of quare studies, I propose that the quare canon, or queer-identifying songs specifically resonating with queer people of color, is a new mode of communication, allowing for a safe cultural exchange between members of the queer women communities of color in the twenty-first century (Johnson, 124-158). Using canonical discourse by Marcia J. Citron (1993) and queer theory discussed by Fred Maus (2018) and Suzanne Cusick (1993), this paper aims to be a more inclusive contribution to queer theory built off of the existing majority white gender and sexuality theoretical framework.

Katelen Brown, “‘Venga ya, venga la revolución’: Queering Traditions through Punk Performance in Costa Rica”

Within the San José, Costa Rica punk scene, a smaller subscene has emerged and constructed its own counterpublic space used to protest the specific political, social, and environmental inequalities faced by queer folks and women in Costa Rica. This sub-scene actively promotes
queer kinship and feminist solidarity, using shows as opportunities for camaraderie and to support local activist organizations. Over the years, genre boundaries within the scene have widened to include many who identify themselves with punk in a more abstract ideological sense. And while punk scenes are often assumed to explicitly remove themselves from dominant cultural traditions, the technique of reading against the grain of cultural texts has been as, if not more, significant for the queering of musical and lyrical forms used by many punks in San José. Through their musical outputs, bands draw on the queer and feminist potentials of contorting and distorting popular cultural forms, while simultaneously connecting ancestral cultural practices with decolonial praxis. In this paper, I will demonstrate how bands use Guanacasteca forms like bombas típicas in their music to signal inherited connections to the land and culture, as they simultaneously disrupt the homophobic, misogynistic, or colonial baggage these forms may carry.

**Magdalena Fürnkranz, “‘Smash the Cistem’: Trans Voices in Austrian Hip Hop”**

In the mid 2010s, Mavi Phoenix started out as a rapper in the Austrian music scene and was quickly considered the spearhead of a new feminist hip hop movement. In 2019, the musician outing himself as trans on the social media platform Instagram. Even though Phoenix describes his transition not as a “political statement”, he symbolize himself as a feminist who fights against sexism and transmisogyny.

Meanwhile, the trans activist and rapper Kerosin95 not only aims to be a role model for trans and non-binary teenagers but to give them visibility. Their EP “Trans Agenda Dynasty” can be described as a reckoning with heteronormativity and gender stereotypes. Kerosin95 promotes the slogan “Smash the Cistem” by taking on right-wing transphobic narratives in a self-empowering way.

In this paper, I discuss the music, performance, public image and activism of Mavi Phoenix and Kerosin95, by focusing on musical and visual reactions to trans violence, the role of sound and language in the aforementioned artists’ concepts as well as the de-/construction of transphobia in pop culture. I draw on work dealing with transmisogyny and empowerment in popular music to highlight how musicians deal with experienced threats, empower their fans and critique hegemonic power relations.

11:15 am-12:45 pm – Session 11

**A. Feminist spaces and confronting sexual violence (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)**

**Nicol Hammond, “Justice! Justice! Gone Gone Gone: Music About Rape in South Africa”**

In this paper I examine the musical representation of rape, protest, and communal mourning by South Africans in a context in which the politics of music and noise, and the meaning of violence are overdetermined by race. In particular I consider the role that sonic representations of racial difference play in making meaning for audiences of Karen Zoid’s 2015 song “Justice! Justice!”, and Zoid and Freshly Ground’s 2018 song “Gone Gone Gone (Song for Khwezi).” “Justice! Justice!” memorializes Anene Booysen, a teenager whose violent 2013 rape and murder sparked
widespread protests in South Africa. “Gone Gone Gone (Song for Khwezi)” envoices Fezekile Kuzwayo, the complainant in the 2006 rape trial against Jacob Zuma, who later became president of South Africa. Zoid’s punk-inspired rock sound and Freshly Ground’s upbeat Afropop offer starkly contrasting sound worlds for commemorating and protesting rape in South Africa. Both songs have been used as protest anthems by a complex and interconnected network of queer rights organizations, and I offer an analysis of both the songs and their reception as a lens into the co-construction of race and gender in contemporary South Africa.

Lea Jung, “‘Taking Up Space’ – Safer and Digital Spaces Created by Feminist Music Networks”

In the last years awareness and demands for more gender equality in music industries have increased in German discourse also through movements like #deutschrapmetoo or #punktoo which manifest the general #metoo-movement to the local scenes. Incessantly, activist music networks work to improve gender equality through different approaches.

My paper, based on a multidimensional situational analysis, shows how the work of four activist networks (two international, two local) rooted in different genres and practices can be seen as directly connected to perceived issues concerning spaces: Such as creating “safer” spaces as a reaction to the experience of male gendered spaces in music industries by organizing FLINTA*-only jam sessions (anonymous network) and women-only orchestral weekends (Frauenorchester Berlin). Or creating digital spaces by websites and databases for visibility as a reaction of the perception of invisibility and exclusion of FLINTA*+ musicians (“grrrlz* to the Front”; female:pressure). Space in that sense is an active part of the production of power and social relations. Especially subjective experiences and feelings resulting in the power-related production of space shine a light on exclusion mechanisms. Insights in these networks provide findings about possibilities and limitations of alternative and extended participation in safer and digital spaces.

B. Music and Politics in Hong Kong (Political Crises stream)

Hei Ting Wong, “Cantonese Popular Music in Remixes for Sociopolitical Narrations in Hong Kong”

This paper studies the use of Cantonese popular music (“Cantopop”) in “current music videos” (“current MVs”) in the television program Headliner (1989-2020), produced by Hong Kong’s sole public service broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong (“RTHK”). Current MVs were a collective production of remix videos combining audio and visual materials, including soundbites, footages, and still images of sociopolitical issues and music as the narratives. Mostly, the musical choice was Cantopop. Cantopop, as a profit-oriented product, is usually packaged as apolitical for a broader market; it went through re-contextualization to narrate serious social issues. I conducted participant observation at RTHK and interviews with the production team members for learning current MVs’ production. I also did data scraping, coding and analysis of audiences’ comments on the current MVs on Facebook for understanding their perception. This demonstrates Cantopop’s capability and capacity, other than that of entertainment, to carry sociopolitical messages. The data reveals that current MVs successfully reached the goal in
attracting the public’s attention to think about and discuss news, particularly during the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement (2019-2020). I argue that Cantopop, current MVs, Headliner, and RTHK, assisted in constructing a public sphere for open discussions and emotional expressions on sociopolitical issues.


In 2019, amidst the peak of the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement in Hong Kong, the song “Glory to Hong Kong” was heard in almost all protest sites and frontiers. Following a year of unprecedented social unrest, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) government imposed the National Security Law (the Law) on Hong Kong on 30 June 2020, and has since silenced its civil society. As many view the Law as a total crackdown of the Hong Kong that used-to-be, it is estimated that at least 200 thousand people have fled the city since the Law’s imposition. Such a historic exodus sees the diasporas continuing to commemorate the Movement on dates of importance by gathering and chanting “Glory to Hong Kong” in different parts of the world. Using Saussure’s structuralist framework (Culler, 1981) and Small’s concept of musicking (1998), this article traces the evolving meaning of the song to these Hong Kong diasporas. By looking at the musical arrangement, lyrics, music videos, and performance of the song, I argue that the song and its practice 114symbolize a sense of resistance towards Hong Kong in the Post-Law era, as well as the perseverance, remembrance and reinvention of the sociocultural identity of “Hong Kongers.”

C. Country Rap: Racecraft, Resonance, and Rhetoric (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Country rap or “hick-hop,” though seldom recognized in mainstream publications, has a passionate fanbase on the ground and a massive online following. In spite of this, vestiges of the genre have only recently emerged in mainstream popular culture (e.g. SNL skits, Rolling Stone features). It has also generated little scholarly literature, falling into the gap between hip-hop studies and country music studies, which have long been segregated due to their music-industry-led racialization as Black and white, respectively (Miller 2010).

Performed primarily by white people in the Southern U.S., country rap encapsulates many seeming contradictions. It offers images and sounds associated with rural, white working-class identity while also drawing from a sonic vocabulary derivative of–and associated with–Black experience in the US. Country rap crafts a self-contained aesthetic world wherein, according to the logics of the genre, a white woman twerking in a confederate flag bikini carries no contradictions. Still, like its ascendent genres, country rap purports to be authentic, muddying any straightforward notion of appropriation. Through an examination of race, masculinity, and mud, this panel excavates the culture and politics of country rap.

Alex Blue V and Kyle DeCoste, “The New Outlaws”

Outlaw Country was a movement that sought to separate country music from the music industry’s (Nashville’s) ideas about how country should sound. The subgenre was often accompanied by outsized ideas about masculinity linked to rebellion and criminality. This paper
argues that the legacies of outlaw country can be found in contemporary country rap (also known as hick-hop). Country rap artists are not bound to ideas of how country or rap should sound, while still being accountable to both audiences.

Through discursive analysis that includes lyrics, interviews, and other forms of media, this paper asks how the explicit introduction of a racialized (Black) musical genre like hip-hop changes or challenges the figure of the outlaw, as the stakes of being outside the law change according to one’s racial identity. Whereas white artists might grow their hair long or get tattooed to inhabit what is perceived as an outlaw persona, simply being Black in America is enough to be perceived as criminal—a criminality that is a matter of life and death. This paper utilizes a critical race studies approach to delve into the racial politics of the outlaw figure and how it has been formulated and reified in country and country rap.

Kyle DeCoste and Alex Blue V, “Get It Out the Mud: Constructing the Dirty Self in Hick-Hop”

Whereas hip-hop tends to be hyper-specific in its claims and lyrical allusions to place and home (see Forman 2002), country rap takes a divergent approach in locating place. Its lyrical references to place tend toward the general: “the country,” “the holler,” “the South.” How do these notions of place and home move from the rural to even more general, settler-colonial claims on the entirety of the United States? One strategy for making territorial claims lies in the frequent use of a common feature of rural space and place: mud. It’s seen covering trucks, as the central thematic of mudding (the practice of driving vehicles through mud bogs); covering bodies, as a visual signifier of class difference and jouissance in the abject (Kristeva 1982); and referenced in lyrics meant to represent place, identity, and class. Mud conveys authenticity as a rural counterpoint to rhetorical uses of “the streets” in hip-hop. Through analysis of music videos, this paper considers mud in country rap as an articulation of the abject, a construction of the “dirty self,” a carrier of authenticity, and a method of emplacement through the literal covering of oneself with the land.


What is “country” and who gets to define it? In answering this question, I take a Third Wave Whiteness approach that resists “essentializing accounts of whiteness” in a discursive study of contemporary popular country music subgenres. Through highlighting the differences between Whites, including how Whites discriminate against one another (e.g., White trash, trailer trash, chauvinism, heterosexism), we can show the constructed nature of Whiteness.

To make the differences between Whites—and therefore the constructed nature of Whiteness—more visible, I foreground popular subgenres of country music that are often dismissed as (White) trash music: bro-country and country-rap. Specifically, I highlight how the socio-economic and cultural fractures between Whites are revealed through a cross-genre analysis of racial rhetoric in song lyrics, artist profiles, and online fan communities. I argue that in contemporary Nashville establishment music, artists’ repeated and often-nostalgic utilization of racially coded terms like “country” or “redneck” evokes a top-down racialized cultural identity,
regularly unbound by geography, that maintains White habitus and is articulated by largely wealthy, White, male artists.

D. The Politics of Time and Space (Political Crises stream)

Grant Wong, “Listening to the Future: The Soundscape of the 1962 Seattle World’s Fair”

The 1962 Seattle World’s Fair, the first world’s fair hosted by the United States in the Cold War era, aimed to reassure Americans of their country’s vitality in the wake of the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik 1. Officially known as the Century 21 Exposition, it claimed to be the embodiment of a future defined by capitalist consumption and technological advancement.

But what did it sound like? The fair’s “World of Tomorrow” exhibit featured a foreboding score that evoked the otherworldliness of outer space. Its Playhouse hosted live performances by artists including Benny Goodman, Ella Fitzgerald, and Nat King Cole. Souvenir records of narrated tours and Seattle-themed tunes allowed listeners to imagine themselves at the fair, as did “It Happened at the World’s Fair” (1963), an Elvis Presley film. This paper examines how these sounds functioned within the context of the fair to emphasize how built environments and lived experiences are defined by the act of listening. Sensory history analyses of audio recordings and fair guidebooks reveal that this soundscape helped its listeners cope with Cold War fears and imagine twenty-first century dreams. At Century 21, the future was heard as much as it was seen.

Sara Gulgas, “A Countercultural Disordering of Time as a Response to Political Crises”

In the 1960s, rock musicians incorporated the sonic signifiers of the distant past (harpichords, string quartets, counterpoint) into the modern soundscapes of electronic psychedelia. Rather than view this as a desire for earlier times, I argue that re-imagining the soundscapes of a distant past acted as a catalyst for developing alternative visions of social organization in the present. I highlight the counterculture’s use of absurdity as a weapon of subversion by connecting the Beatles’ pig metaphor in “Piggies” to the Youth International Party’s nomination of a pig for U.S. President in 1968. The harpsichord and string arrangement plays a crucial role in the song’s satirical meaning as these instruments are juxtaposed with sardonic lyrics and pig snorts. In Procol Harum’s “A Whiter Shade of Pale,” the countercultural disordering of time is sonically portrayed through the organ’s stylistic reference to J.S. Bach’s Wachet auf, which becomes a signal of awakening one’s state of consciousness. The banned promotional video alternates between Vietnam War footage and the group walking around the ruins of an English court. This alternation between current conflicts and ruins representative of the consequences of earlier conflicts suggests that solutions are not always found in the romanticization of the past.

Jacob Eichhorn, “‘And here is where I’ll end it’: Formal Incompleteness as a Representation of Death in Popular Song and Multimedia”

Within the literature on music and death, authors often expound upon the cultural role or societal function of music in relation to death, especially in ruminations on the performance of works unfinished, which equate unfinishedness with incompleteness. In this paper, I differentiate between unfinishedness and incompleteness according to historical-fictional author as agent and
work-persona as agent, respectively, to explore the abrupt ending—a special formal and storytelling device in popular song and multimedia that combines finishedness and incompleteness as a symbolic representation of death. Leaning on theories of closure in popular music, I define a listener’s song ending expectations within which unmarked and marked endings emerge. Within this semiotic framework, I analyze Dolly Parton’s “The Bridge,” a first-person story song in which the narrator—pregnant and abandoned—seemingly jumps from the eponymous bridge to end her life. However, when Parton performed “The Bridge” on an episode of The Porter Wagoner Show, the songstress altered the original ending by adding the final line of the refrain to the last verse. The live performance addendum achieves completeness, which, consequently, obscures the narrative. The ensuing interplay of surprise and emotion undergirds an understanding of Parton’s alternative ending for a pre-Roe mass TV audience.

Selected Bibliography


E. “Archipelago,” Original Music and Non-Profit Community Building in a Time of Crisis: A Case Study (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

This panel describes the creation of Archipelago: Songs from Quarantine, a musical collaboration of professors and musical colleagues produced separately and remotely online during the early months of COVID-19 with the goal of creating compelling music in the service of fruitful community engagement. The multi-volume project began with the recognition of the opportunity presented by creating music as a fundraising tool, in this case for the Central Music Academy, a nonprofit that has provided over 40,000 lessons to underprivileged children in Lexington, KY since 2004.
The result was Songs from Quarantine, a multi-album collection of original ambient instrumentals. The project has continued post-lockdown, amid uncertainties about new emerging variants of COVID; a third volume was released in October 2022, again benefiting CMA. All are distributed mainly via Bandcamp (https://archipelagosongs.bandcamp.com/).

In this session, we discuss the project’s unique creative process, the limitations of online musical collaboration and communication, and the choices made as writers and artists in promoting both the project and CMA’s nonprofit efforts. It also explores how such creative work plays into identities as college educators (in communication, music, and rhetoric, respectively) and as community partners. Its success illustrates how relationships between nonprofits and community members demand constant nurturing, especially in times of crisis.

Scott Whiddon

Dr. Scott Whiddon will introduce the project as a whole and focus on initial branding efforts as well as how such work relates to the teaching of nonprofit/community-based writing courses. Along with the aesthetic and compositional concerns offered elsewhere in our panel, we hope to emphasize an often-forgotten consideration: the arts, especially in mid-sized cities like Lexington (with a rich literary landscape, 4 long standing art galleries, the longest running women’s writing organization in the US, and more) play a significant role in local economic development as well as identity formation. According to Thompson, Berger, and Allen of the Gatton School of Economics at the University of Kentucky, before COVID, the economic impact of arts organizations in Kentucky was something akin to $22 million in worker earnings and 1,324 jobs. Their study – again, before COVID – also showcases how the arts had a significant impact on quality of life across the Commonwealth. This part of our panel will also explore why and how we chose Central Music Academy of Lexington – a National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award Finalist and a National Endowment for Arts Foundation grant recipient, before COVID – as the focus of our fundraising and awareness-building.

Kevin Holm-Hudson

Although some of the songs for the Archipelago project used conventional structures (such as the verse-chorus structure or AABA song form), we also took the opportunity to create forms that were more spontaneous, less predictable, and organic. Sometimes one collaborator would upload a brief fragment; others would then add their own ideas in response to it, loop it, or transform it electronically almost beyond recognition. The process of “forgetting” standard pop forms was aided by using Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt’s Oblique Strategies cards, as well as other self-imposed compositional limitations (such as emphasizing the flaw in a damaged instrument). Eventually the songs became a kind of therapy, a sonic journaling of our results to a rapidly changing and potentially dangerous world. Dr. Holm-Hudson discusses the creative and practical choices we made as musicians, presenting four of our less conventional tracks, drawing on the embodied image-schema theory of Candace Brower. Brower proposes the following image schemas as most important in our cognition of tonal music: CONTAINER, CYCLE, VERTICALITY, BALANCE, CENTER-PERIPHERY, and SOURCE-PATH-GOAL. Although Brower’s theory was not a direct inspiration in creating the Archipelago tracks, it does form an interesting conceptual backdrop with which to experience these works.
The project emerged as a two-pronged initiative, embodying both a personal desire for creative expression, and an altruistic one incorporating an element of social value. Thus, each evolving element – from creative decisions about musical structure, melody and tone, to the demands of low-to-no cost project branding and promotion, to rhetorical and tactical choices about publicity initiatives – was grounded in considerations of audience, process, practical realities, and desired outcomes, both artistic and social. All three participants provided volumes of recorded musical building blocks that resulted in more than an hour of original multi-instrumental ambient music. Dr. Gleason describes how, rather than constraining the project, COVID and its associated quarantine opened new avenues of creative development, both individually and jointly. As producer and principal arranger, he also helped his colleagues navigate the technical intricacies and limitations of composing and performing as an ensemble while never in the same room, nor in real time. Empowered by an array of digitally-based recording and musical instrument technology, and unencumbered by the need for lyrics or even traditional song forms, this freedom was a powerful accelerant in the creative process. The resulting individual compositions might be described equally as composed and assembled.

F. Crisis Converted: The Politics of Midwestern Music (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

The epicenter of deindustrialization in the 1980s, the Midwest became the busted firewall that led to Trump’s election in 2016. We talk about East Coast-West Coast hiphop rivalries supplanted by southern voices, but what about the region of Bone Thugs and Kanye? As befits an international conference set in Minneapolis, we propose to look at the politics of midwestern music from different musical and chronological angles, focused on the region not as a problem child but as a highly catalytic converter, with music at the center of efforts to turn toxicity into more sustainable emissions.

Eric Weisbard, “Long After the Thrill: Midwestern Arena Rock and the Populist Right”

On one side of the chronology, we have the striking workers of Youngstown, Ohio, recalled by Jefferson Cowie in Stayin’ Alive as an interracial, rock loving bunch seen in the early 1970s as potential new faces of the labor movement. On the other, we have Wisconsin’s Paul Ryan, who as Speaker of the House could only salute business owners on Labor Day – but whose love of one arena rock band was such that, in 2012, Illinois-raised guitarist Tom Morello had to editorialize: “he is the embodiment of the machine that our music has been raging against.”

This presentation, meant to grapple with how a short explanation aimed at college students might present the story, will weave together John Mellencamp, Howard Stern, Clear Channel, the “earth dog”-to-MAGA pipeline, and Barack Obama’s Springsteenisms to see how far we have gotten in answering a fundamental, yet somehow hard to answer question that informs the “crisis in popular music.” Simply put, what turned out to be the enduring political effects of blue-collar rock?
Running from the late 80s through 2010, 97Xtrabeats was the weekly dance music program on Oxford, Ohio’s 97X WOXY. Using archives of Xtrabeats playlists, station documents, and recordings of old Xtrabeats programs, I argue that Xtrabeats provides a window onto an alternative history of 90s alternative music and alt rock radio. In contrast to the aggrieved white masculinity centered in accounts of “bro-ified” alt rock radio or Nine Inch Nails fandom, Xtrabeats tells a story in which the 2000s indie dance renaissance sparked by Le Tigre’s first album—known today as “indie sleaze”—is less a revolution and more an evolution from a long tradition of critical, feminist, and queer alternative dance music. Pulled from a 1989 station memo, this paper’s title shows that WOXY’s affinity for Chicago label Wax Trax!—with its queer owners and many queer artists making industrial music that was to varying degrees influenced by the house music drifting north from the Warehouse—tells a more queer and less overwhelmingly white history of modern rock. This story continues today as strong Wax Trax!-y influences can be heard in queer underground techno by artists such as Soft Crash, and even in Lady Gaga’s work.

Francesca Royster, “Sudan Archives, Jamila Woods and the Sounds of the Midwest Black Femme Fantastic”

In this paper, I’ll look at the music of Black femme recording artists Sudan Archives and Jamila Woods to ask how their performances helps us hear, see and feel the power of Black imaginative freedom as a tool to navigate the precarity of Black existence in these “unprecedented times,” from the Covid-19 Pandemic, to police violence and the January 6th insurrection, to gentrification to public school closings. From Cincinnati, OH and Chicago, IL respectively, Sudan Archives (Natural Born Prom Queen) and Jamila Woods (Legacy! Legacy!) are rooted in the politics of these city landscapes and their accompanying historic and present structural inequalities, even as they offer blueprints for the transcendence of them. Sudan Archive’s polyamorously perverse musicianship and Jamila Woods’ fluid, resistant storytelling come out of a context of future-reaching arts movements in their cities to be found in public schools and Black Churches, dance clubs and home studios, organizations like Young Chicago Authors, poetry slams like Louder than a Bomb, hip-hop, drag and other creative spaces. Both artists experiment with personas in their work to explore fantasy and proxy selves that are shaped by Black Midwestern space and place, while also incorporating global and even intergalactic sonic connections.

G. Race and appropriation (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Sharri K. Hall, “The Black Voice in White Evangelicalism”

The Black Gospel Tradition is the natural outpouring of Black belief in an anti-Black America expressed in the freedom from oppression offered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Black gospel is as much an expression of faith, as it is a practice of self-actualization in the midst of systemic dehumanization. In predominantly-white Evangelical churches, the use of Black gospel in worship has caused the commodification of Blackness and Black sound lending to issues of assimilationism and color-blind racism. Using Nick Couldry’s study of the neoliberal voice
(Couldry 2010), Charrise Barron’s concept of “bridging liturgies” (Barron 2020), and Braxton Shelley’s models surrounding “vamp” and “tuning up” (Shelley 2020 & 2021), this paper will explore how the ‘neoliberalization’ of Black gospel sounds undercuts the use of Black gospel, making it a vehicle for capital, and undermining the ritual and tradition at the heart of that musical expression. This paper will seek to understand the use of the Black voice in the neoliberal social economies of white Evangelicalism, the ethical implications of the use of that music outside its original context, and ultimately, the harm caused to the people and communities from whom that music is appropriated.

Charlotte Markowitsch, “Observing Transculturation Through the Blues Appropriations of the White Stripes”

Contestation which follows the label of cultural appropriation has sent various popular artists into states of social crises, sparking debates which echo throughout popular music culture. Despite this, white popular rock band, the White Stripes, have drawn significantly from African-American Delta blues culture without causing contestation.

Academic inquiry into cultural appropriation posits that while absorption of Black culture has been ubiquitous throughout mainstream music history, instances of cultural appropriation perpetuate notions of exploitative power disparity and misrepresentation, and cause widespread contestation throughout minority groups and their allies. However, limited research has investigated how white artists are able to culturally appropriate without causing aggrievement.

Through an investigation of the White Stripes’ appropriation of Son House’s ‘Death Letter Blues’, this paper looks into contexts which allowed popular white artists to appropriate African-American culture without sparking a cultural appropriation crisis. Despite power disparity between the appropriator and the appropriated, the White Stripes, as a popular rock band, emulated a 121igitaliza process of appropriative transculturation whereby Delta blues traits were absorbed into the 20th century evolution of rock music. Combined with transculturation, intentional methods of respectful representation and stylistic disguise mitigated the perception of cultural appropriation in the White Stripes’ performance.

2:15-3:45 pm – Session 12

A. Voice, technology, and media (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Alexandra Burkot, “The Racial Ambiguities and Technologic Realities of FN Meka”

August 2022, Capitol Records made headlines as the music company signed, and subsequently dropped, the artist FN Meka, a virtual “robot rapper” purportedly powered in part by artificial intelligence. The initial endorsement of this digital entity, whose creation capitalized on the mystique of new and emerging AI- and crypto-based technologies, and whose music, lyrics, and design were based on the artistic trends of “clout rap,” a sub-genre of rap which has been criticized for placing a greater emphasis on the social media presences and public controversies of its stars, rather than their musical output, was met with a strong backlash, raising questions of authenticity, creative exploitation, and technological racism. This paper interrogates the
constructed life of FN Meka, examining images of wealth, masculinity, and structural anti-black violence, and comparing them to the aesthetics of both clout rap and the greater hip-hop mythos. Drawing on theories of commodification of black culture, including scholarship by bell hooks and Eric Watts, I argue that the potential viability of virtual musicians represents a new type of star-making machine, one which ever more efficiently exploits the labor and image of working artists.

**Ye Rin Kang, “Whose Voice Is This? Virtual Identities in Popular Music”**

Music is about performers and perceivers meeting through melody. Therefore, the question of who performs in front of which audience determines the form and meaning of music. The discussion of ‘who’, or identity, is crucial in popular music, which is closely related to society. This topic has been changing since the 2010s, especially during the COVID-19 era. With the rapid development of virtual reality and its increased use in music, a new chapter has begun on the expression and recognition of singers’ identities. It is now possible for popular musicians to hide their identities or choose which identity to show. This leads to epistemological changes in singers’ identities. This study explores the virtual identity of current pop music singers through the case of virtual idols and the TV programme Alter Ego. These examples ask what identity means in popular music. Virtual identity allows popular music singers to express different identities beyond those with which they were born or acquired. It also invites an interesting discussion in that a virtual identity reveals the irreplaceable, real ‘self’ among the numerous identities from which popular singers can choose.

**Lee Kimura Tyson, “Harmonizing the Self: Self-Duets, Vocal Multiplicity, and Gendered Performance through Social Media Technologies”**

In the mid-2010s, music-centric apps such as Acapella, Smule, and TikTok enabled users to easily record and share musical “self-duet” videos—performances that extend overdubbing techniques into the audiovisual realm by multiplying and layering the self to create sonically and visually spectacular duets. Whether used to showcase an individual’s vocal harmonizing or multi-instrumental abilities, demonstrate a musician’s increased skills or stylistic shifts over time, or expand one’s musical resources, self-duet videos are a performance and refashioning of the self. I examine self-duet videos as a social media microgenre, tracing their roots in historical techniques of solo musical virtuosity and technological innovation. I focus in particular on transgender self-duets on YouTube and TikTok, in which trans singers demonstrate sonic and gendered vocal changes by combining audiovisual recordings from different stages in their vocal transition, especially before and after the start of hormone therapies. I argue that trans self-duets reparatively engage the past as an ambivalent source of pleasure and potential, in tension with mainstream narratives in which trans individuals are expected to associate their past selves with shame. In a time of conservative backlash against expanding notions of identity, self-duet videos offer a creative intervention into reductive narratives of essentialized selfhood.

**B. Late capitalist style and songcraft (Economic Crises stream)**

**Maximilian Spiegel, “New Ways to Love, New Ways to Imagine: Popular Music, Experimentation, and Crises of Knowledge”**
A recent transnational, stylistically and socially heterogeneous formation of popular-experimental (often electronic) musics has been tackling contemporary problematics and crises through explicit recourse to scholarly, politically charged knowledges. In diverse and contradictory ways, artists such as Elysia Crampton, Holly Herndon, Speaker Music, and those affiliated with the NON Worldwide collective operate at the intersection of activism, scholarship, and artistic experimentation. Inspired by scholars from Donna Haraway to Fred Moten, but without forming a homogeneous community or identifiable genre, they explore questions of identity, power, technology, temporality, and more. The existence of such activist-scholarly-artistic practices is not novel, but this paper suggests that a set of transformative cultural forces explains their recent proliferation and visibility. I will especially focus on the ways in which contemporary “crises of knowledge” (Lawrence Grossberg) and struggles over truth and authority shape artists’ responses to urgent socio-political issues. What defines this emergent formation is a reflexive-experimental sensibility—a logic of social mediation that shapes musicians’ lived experience as perpetually conscious of power relations, to be explored by embracing the unknown. In its re-articulation of power to knowledge to imagination to experimentation, this sensibility also highlights the affective charge of intellectual and scholarly work.

Richard Elliott, “Auburn Hair, AI and Afterlives: ‘Jolene’ as Song Object”

On 31 October 2022, the musician Holly Herndon released a version of the Dolly Parton classic ‘Jolene’ that had been created by Herndon’s digital/deepfake ‘twin’ Holly+. The track appeared as a video, with a 3D digital model of Herndon/Holly+ performing the song in a ‘glitchy pastoral world filled with old trucks and farm houses’ (Pitchfork). The Halloween timing no doubt played a part in the responses by some online commentators that focussed on the ‘creepy’ and ‘uncanny’ aspects of this song object. Responses from YouTube commenters were initially positive, with several praising Herndon’s inventiveness, though some online responses were quick to connect this new venture in artificially intelligence (AI) to questions of ethics and copyright, echoing concerns raised more broadly around the quickly evolving field of AI-powered image and sound generators. In this paper I use Holly+’s ‘Jolene’ to ask a range of questions not only about AI-generated pop, but also about the status of songs and the objects they both use and become. What might this song and video have to do, for example, with the recent ‘material turn’ and what it reveals about the anxiety over a move from a world of things to a world of information, or ‘infosphere’ (Han 2022)? From a pop song studies perspective, what implications does it have for the hallowed tradition of the cover song? What directions might we follow when considering the intriguing notion of ‘electric betrayal’ (NPR)? Finally, to what extent has song always been a form of artificial intelligence?

C. Music Competitions and Contested Identities (Political Crises stream)

Nikolai Klotchkov, “Socio-political Implications in Popular Music Contests: Eurovision 2022 Case Study”

Success in popular music is measured in a variety of ways. Some of the most systematic paradigms of measuring the success of music are the contests. One of the biggest pop music
competitions in the world is Eurovision Song Contest. There are two significant aspects of this contest: first, portion of the result depends on votes from general audience; second, the contest has a strong nationalistic logic. Given these aspects, it can be argued that the art by itself is not the primary assessment. The most recent and perhaps the most controversial example of this is Eurovision 2022, where Ukraine took the victory and had scored the history-high number of votes from the general audience. In light of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, a simple question can be asked – was this victory because the art was “good” or this have nothing to do with the music per se (e.g. such as empathy, political propaganda, etc). This paper argues that the results of Eurovision 2022 were deeply influenced by the current political situation in Europe and have the most direct connection to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, while the artistic dimension was in the background.

Marek Susdorf, “Dutch Politics of Musical Representation at Eurovision: Commodification of Musical Legacies of Slavery and White Nationalism”

This talk addresses the long-standing Dutch politics of musical representation at Eurovision, thanks to which the former colonial power has publicly advanced its self-concept into that of a benevolent proponent of celebratory multiculturality. I will present these complex issues on the case of 2021’s Eurovision organized in Rotterdam, when Afro-Surinamese artist Jeangu Macrooy represented the Netherlands with a song entitled “Birth of a New Age,” in its structure, visuals, and lyrics directly referring to the ages of slavery instituted in Suriname by the Dutch between the mid-1600s up until its abolition in 1863. A short analysis of this song and the performance’s context will provide me with a framework against which I demonstrate how the music industry appropriates, recontextualizes, and sells musical legacies of slavery as postcolonial, global South’s hybrids. This, in turn, creates certain possibilities for commercialized pop-versions of such sonic remnants, used for the global North’s benefit to showcase the reputed progressiveness and equality of the Western liberal participatory democracy. A brief presentation of the public reception of this performance will allow me to show how this politics obscures the monstrosity of White nationalism ingrained in the country while its government exports a self-image of inclusion and solidarity.

D. Music, Media, and Community (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)


Based on my ethnographic example of Shen Ai (God Love) Indigenous Children-Aetós Studio in Taipei, this paper offers insights into music initiative, social media strategy and identity empowerment through a marginalized indigenous community during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper explores what factors, and how these urban indigenous youth, from being invisible in predominantly Han-Taiwanese society, are with its newfound recognition. In celebration of Taiwan’s 110th National Day on October 10th 2021, indigenous youth of Aetós Studio performed anti-pandemic song “Hand in Hand” in native languages at the Presidential Office. This song was initially written in mandarin, sung by mainstream musicians, to show the solidarity during the SARS outbreak in 2003. Afterwards, the members of Aetós Studio were inspired and reconstructed “Hand in Hand” in indigenous languages in the 2021 soft lockdown period; and
their virtual performance received an overwhelming response on social media. This paper examines how this transmitting and re-interpreting anti-pandemic song in native voices served as a distinctly musical expression of indigenous identities and how these amateur musicians of Shen Ai Indigenous Children-Aetós Studio empower their cultures and communities through performativity, and sheds light on the discussion of community-based music initiative and social media strategy in Contemporary Taiwan.


The Ann & Ben Show is a series of four comedy music videos created by Singaporean artistes Annette Lee and Benjamin Kheng, that “dig[s] deep into the pain and pleasures of the Asian kid experience”. Debuted during the COVID-19 pandemic, they sought to bring joy and foster a sense of belonging among Singaporeans. Through relatable topics such as Singaporeans’ love for bubble tea and the anxiety of ordering "caifan", these songs strive to capture the essence of being Singaporean. As a young nation, Singapore has struggled with its lack of established heritage. Although some scholarship has focused on popular music in the decades since Singapore’s independence, there is a dearth of literature on contemporary music. By analyzing their visual, musical and linguistic elements, I situate these songs within a larger history of humor and parody in popular music in Singapore in order to explore how these practices have cultivated a sense of belonging during a time of crisis. I argue that the songs are successful because they highlight elements unique to Singaporean culture through references to meme culture and current trends. This analysis seeks to examine the place these songs have in Singapore while considering issues of inclusion and exclusion.

Dina Farouk Abou Zeid, “The Role of Media and Globalization in New Musical Culture in Egypt”

The paintings of the walls of the temples and tombs besides many antiquities and monuments show that music and singing were very important in Ancient Egypt mainly during religious rituals. Also, Egyptian music has been influenced by its location as an Arab, African and Mediterranean country besides being very close to Europe. And, it has gained popularity in the Arab world due to the popularity of Egyptian cinema. In these last years, Mahraganat, a new genre of music has appeared in Egypt with Arabic and Western music besides strange lyrics. It is influencing and being influenced by cultural, social, economic, political and technological changes. It has started in slums in Cairo and has gone viral among Egyptians especially the youth even between high and middle social classes. Mahraganat is a new phenomenon that needs to be studied. So, the researcher conducted a survey of 100 Egyptian university students to examine its popularity. The results show that Mahraganat is an example of the shift from univore taste to omnivore taste among youth. Also, mass media and new media have been playing an important role in its widespread and popularity.

E. Race and European popular music (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Kimi Kärki, “Ariosophic Whiteness in the Nordic Far-right Metal Music Videos”
Nordic Far-right populist groups’ propaganda opposes primarily immigration and refugees from the third world, and the ‘Cultural Marxism’ – as white supremacist terrorist Anders Breivik called it – of the organizations they see supporting this kind of ‘Great Replacement’, change of population to reduce the amount of ‘white people’, as one of their conspiracy theories would have it (by Renaud Gamus). These groups portray Nordic region as originally racially pure, historically white pagan region, that has special warrior ethos, a heroic mythological, mostly Viking past. The racist subcultures that have appropriated this kind of relatively pseudohistorical rhetoric have primarily existed within metal – black metal, NSBM in particular – and neofolk genres. The way these subcultures have organized varies depending on the country, and the specific Nordic developments of the Post-War history – be it influenced by the pressure from Third Reich or Soviet Union.

In my paper I will analyse examples of music and propaganda videos of racist musicians. I will start my analysis from Richard Dyer’s concept of ‘Whiteness’, and combine that to cultural historical contextualization of Nordic Ariosophy and esoteric pseudoscience, and, furthermore, the specific multimodal strategies to produce affective videos to further their means.

Kim Ramstedt, “Naming Racism in European Music Scholarship”

Although there is an abundance of research that deals with music and BIPOC minorities in Europe and, at least implicitly, also with race, few studies explicitly address how processes of racialisation, essentialisation, appropriation and exclusion in music adds to our understanding of racism. In this paper, we review how recent scholarship on popular music in Europe has addressed race and how this body of knowledge is equipped to deal with the systematic and structural injustices that can be categorized as racism. Analysing articles from established journals within the field, our aim is first to map the different ways racism is manifested in and through music in Europe with the aim to develop a common ground for an anti-racist music scholarship and then to critically evaluate how racism is discussed in research. Regarding the latter, we will primarily assess if the scholarship under review 1) explicitly names racism, identifies its origins and gives victims of racism tools to articulate their experiences, 2) conceptualises racism not as an anomaly, but as one of the fundamental principles that European societies are built on, or if it 3) highlights damages caused by racism for the purpose of emphasising musical qualities.


In the last decade, the rise of right-wing populism in France shed light on a society that saw itself as hegemonically white and currently underestimates or exoticizes the contribution of minorities to its culture. In this context, French popular music is the locus of a constant negotiation between the pluralistic forces of the society, that right-wing populists like Eric Zemmour often described as an on-going crisis, or the decline of French identity and culture. In this communication, we will discuss the case of French R’n’B singer Aya Nakamura, whose music and success is highly representative of the tensions above 126entioned. Examining the song “Pookie” (Warner, 2019) from a musicological perspective, we will question how the specificity of Nakamura’s flow challenges common representations of the musical identity of chanson
française. We will try to demonstrate that Nakamura’s style and innovative prosody are not so much putting French Chanson in crisis, but are rather reflective of a tradition that has continually mutated since 19th Century by bringing the linguistic heritage and formal specificities of chanson into contact with external contributions, whether they be Anglo-American or originate in immigration from different French regions, continental Europe, the Maghreb or Sub-Saharan Africa.

F. Blackness, Identity, Sociality (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Varun Chandrasekhar, “Clownin’ in Blue: Mingus and the Jazz Absurd”

Albert Camus famously stated racism forces the marginalized subject to live in a constant state of absurdity (Himes 1965, 1). Philosopher Lewis Gordon (2000, 2022) created the term “Africana Existentialism,” to describe the way pan-African populations have navigated these conditions of oppression. To Gordon, jazz, with its unique ability to reflect a specific African-American critique of society, serves as a demonstration of existential resistance. This paper provides a close reading of Mingus’s “The Clown” to demonstrate how the piece, through its numerous atypicalities (its orchestration, the voice-over, its free improvisation) recasts jazz as an absurdist art form.

My interpretation combines theories from Esslin’s (2001) conception of the “theater of the absurd,” Bhaktin’s (2009) historicization of the clown, and Fanon’s (2008) existential psychoanalysis of the white gaze as a means to understanding the piece. I argue Mingus, within Baraka’s (1999) paradigm of jazz, forces the listener to notice the absurd debasement of an African-American art form. In absurdist terms, Mingus’s compositional idiosyncrasies reject the normative expectations that a jazz listener would use to approach the tune. Thus, within the existential paradigm, these quasi “fourth-wall” breaks reveal Mingus’s critique of the corporatized cooption of jazz in a manner that galvanize the audience.

Works Cited


Jaehoon Lee, “‘My music is words and my words are music’: Sun Ra’s Sound Studies”

This paper examines Sun Ra’s theorizing of sound through musical and poetic forms. By closely addressing his performances and poems, I attempt to render audible Ra’s unbounded dedication to exploring the political possibilities of sound, as well as his aspiration to disturb and go beyond the established systems of signification. The existing Sun Ra scholarship largely fails to acknowledge his less articulated project to theorize about sound and its more outspoken form: poetry. Promoting his songs and poems as ways of thinking about and in sound, I attempt to bring into hearing Ra’s radical, in-depth resounding of popular music of his era. To this end, I first trace Ra’s mission to deflect and re-signify the normative racial markers that saturated popular music—especially jazz—through new sounds. Then I close-read a few exemplary samples of Ra’s poems that both formally and semantically theorize this sonic re-(S)ignifying. Arguing that poetry, especially lyric, has been understood to rhetorically detach itself from rational knowledge, I contend that Ra’s poetry was integral part of his do-it-yourself project to theorize how to think and argue in sounds—thus to circumvent the oppressive rationalistic system of signification and representation.

Yuma Morooka, “‘I loves you, Porgy’: Sentimentality and Intimacy in James Baldwin’s Another Country”

Scholars locate an African American community as the source of the folk authenticity of the blues and investigate the blues’ influence upon African American literature. Revealing the richness of African American literature, they preclude an analysis of the instability of identity and the potentiality of popular music in James Baldwin’s novel Another Country. Built on these critiques, this presentation poses a question: is it possible to conceptualize commercialized black music in Another Country as a potential, affective catalyst for a public sphere in which various characters have a critical dialogue concerning their subjection to discourses and reach their mutual understanding or love? This proposition revises Jürgen Habermas’s concept of the bourgeois public sphere by incorporating the potentiality of a mass communication, affect, and social constructionism. In Another Country, although diverse characters are subjected to discourses of race, gender, and sexuality proliferated by the history of slavery, they simultaneously experience affect. Their affect is neither entirely public nor private in the sense that it can neither exist without the discourses nor be completely regulated by them. I argue that commercialized black music potentially provokes their affect, producing a public sphere in which they critically discuss discourses’ interference with their affective domain.

G. Femininity, Freedom and Crisis in Punk and Pop (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

Marie Comuzzo, “‘It’s about damn time’: Body Liberation in Lizzo’s Music”

A positive force for the representation of Black women and large, fat, bodies, American singer, rapper, and songwriter Lizzo has become a star during the Covid-19 pandemic. In a recent
interview with Apple Music, Lizzo explains that “About Damn Time,” her latest hit and lead single of Special (2022) celebrates “our survival and how far we have come.” Much of her work, she continues, is directly stemming from her desire to uplift people and broadcast a message of acceptance: “if you love me, you love everyone like me, with a body like mine… accept all of me.” How does this message translate into sound? And what impact does it have socially? A week after its release, it washed over TikTok with millions of people dancing Gomez’s choreography; and on YouTube it garnered 97 million views and over 30 thousand comments, most of which were centered around the body – her body. In this paper I argue that “About Damn Time” is a musical expression of a full-bodied coming out not just from a long and difficult isolations, but also from a queer, Black, and body liberation perspective that has important social and political ramifications, especially for Black and large bodies.

Katelyn Hearfield, “‘Lady Gaga Hits Rock Bottom!’: Embodied Crises in Pop Performance”

This paper considers Lady Gaga’s turn from synth-heavy dance pop to a vocal-heavy analog style in the mid-2010s, following her diagnosis with fibromyalgia. Gaga’s work has long experimented with themes of disability, to the point that she has been criticized for glamorizing disability in her 2009 music video for “Paparazzi,” but a mid-performance injury in 2013 triggered the onset of the painful auto-immune disease. Her fifth studio album, Joanne (2016), is a rumination on the fate of her paternal aunt—for whom the album is named—a gifted artist whose hands were crippled by the auto-immune disease lupus and who died at nineteen. I analyze the music of Joanne alongside Gaga’s performance of the 50th-anniversary tribute to The Sound of Music at the 2015 Oscars, comparing her career shift to that of Julie Andrews, the 1965 Maria von Trapp who lost her voice to a botched surgery meant to cure her vocal nodules. Theorizing Gaga’s post-diagnosis projects—including Joanne, two jazz albums with Tony Bennett, and award-winning acting roles—through the lens of disability studies, I reflect on the struggles of female artists when their bodies in crisis undermine the very art they live to produce.

Alyxandra Vesey, “Rewind and Quicksand: Bikini Kill and Le Tigre Return to Crisis Mode”

In summer 2022, Bikini Kill and Le Tigre joined a robust cohort of veteran musicians who embarked on reunion tours postponed by the COVID-19 pandemic. They also struggled to manage the demands of touring; frontperson Kathleen Hanna’s vulnerabilities as a Lyme disease survivor; and the vagaries of an ongoing public health crisis. Bikini Kill rescheduled the Southern and Mid-Atlantic dates of their North American tours for spring 2023 after band members contracted COVID, while Le Tigre gave one performance at This Ain’t No Picnic after a seventeen-year respite from touring. These two Hanna-fronted bands are especially productive case studies for examining musicians’ navigation of COVID-era reunion tours, as they challenged rock venues’ toxic masculinity by prioritizing women and girl fans’ safety and accessibility. Building upon Bikini Kill’s “girls to the front” crowd-control policy, which they criticized as gender essentialism during their reunion tour, this presentation analyzes the bands’ stage performances, interviews, and social media posts in order to demonstrate how they problematized the reunion tour’s constructed image of triumphal nostalgia by framing their older
music output as expressions of crisis and political depression for cultural and economic conditions that either went unresolved or worsened in the intervening decades.
A. Hip Hop Politics (Political Crises stream)

J. Griffith Rollefson, “Black Lives Matter = End Direct Provision: Glocal Solidarities in the Ubuntu Project (2021-22)”

This paper recounts and theorizes the community-engaged arts-practice research project “Ubuntu: Local is Global”—an initiative of the CIPHER: Hip Hop Interpellation research project that culminated in a televised documentary on the Irish national broadcaster, RTÉ. (1) In collaboration with young people and youth mentors from the local NGOs, Cork Migrant Centre and Kabin Studio, the project generated new arts outputs and knowledges by asking young rappers, slam poets, beatmakers, and dancers to consider and respond to the word “ubuntu” (Zulu for humanity: literally “I am because we are”)—a concept that I theorize as “a gem of hip hop knowledge.” (2) The hour-long performance on our local university campus not only created stunning new pieces of art, and new iterations and understandings of the ubuntu gem, but forged bonds between these young people of diverse, African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian backgrounds and under-resourced youth from Cork’s North Side, advancing the national conversation on immigration, belonging, and the future of Ireland.

(1) “Ubuntu: Local is Global” filmed for episode 6 of RTÉ Change Makers, Dir. Ciaran O’Connor (New Decade 2022). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEV_IgorLaY&list=Plo8-GxQ7C67BOQFDHFLwQDglUZzyBOnMK&index=22&ab_channel=Irish Universities Association

(2) For more information about the Cork Migrant Centre, please visit https://corkmigrantcentre.ie/. For more information about the Kabin Studio, please visit https://gmcbeats.com/thekabinstudio/.

Drew Daniels,” (Young) Thug Life: The Continuation and Consequences of Rap on Trial”

Rap lyrics have historically been argued successfully as evidence in criminal court cases, and this practice is contributing directly to the ongoing incarceration of Black artists in the United States. In many instances these cases have set legal precedents that have resulted in the incarceration of hundreds of rap artists. Amateur artists and even teenagers have also been targeted on the basis of their social media posts.

In this paper, I center Andrea Dennis and Erik Nielson’s work, Rap on Trial, to call attention to the history of the normalization of rap lyrics and accompanying media as permissible and probative evidence. I will examine this phenomenon through its legal and ethical frameworks through multidisciplinary scholarship including legal and criminal justice, sociology, and musicology, and draw specific connections to the ongoing high-profile case involving Young Thug and the YSL record label in Fulton County Georgia. The discourse surrounding rap and
hip-hop culture and its relationship to criminal justice is shaped by racial politics, media, and by the academy. I will provide solutions for music educators and scholars to help combat the devastating consequences that Rap on Trial practices have on communities of color, especially Black youth through the school-to-prison pipeline.

Janne Rantala, “Peace and Contemporary War in Mozambican Rap Performance”

Based on my engagement with Mozambican Hip Hop communities over a decade, this paper examines rap music, which addresses two separated contemporary wars in Mozambique with very different dynamics, both nevertheless sharing social and political exclusion of local people as one of their root causes. For two decades, post-civil war (1976-1992)/ post-Cold War Mozambique was celebrated as a success story of international co-operation and peace building. This came to end in 2013 when former civil war parties ended up into a new armed conflict in two central region provinces, which is still not adequately resolved. In 2017, a situation became even more sinister when brutal jihadist insurgency started in impoverished but nature resource rich northern region. In a recent decade, a number of songs are being published addressing different dynamics of these two conflicts, performing their histories or trying to contribute stopping them. Acknowledging that Mozambican rappers who comment these conflicts, partly belong to same generations than jihadist insurgents whose local vernacular designation is ‘alshababi’ (from ‘youth’ in Arabic), this paper aims to focus on different perspectives to contemporary war through rap tracks from three Mozambican regions. Expanding the temporal scope, the paper also reflects that many of these tracks perform histories, which precede contemporary conflicts invoking dead personas who lived in earlier periods, but which are found relevant for the present-day situation.

B. Mediating Taylor Swift (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)

Kate Galloway, “Taylor’s Cats and Multimodal Expression: The Visual and Acoustic Ecologies of Participatory Screen Media and Taylor Swift’s Branding”

On November 11, 2022, one of Taylor Swift’s beloved cats, Benjamin Button, joined her “Anti-Hero” social media remix video challenge. It’s him, he’s the problem. In the YouTube short, Swift awkwardly cradles him as a text overlay lists his “Anti-Hero” traits: Lets human sleep in my bed, enables her co-dependency. The documentary Miss Americana (2020) opens with Swift at the piano as Benjamin Button playfully crawls along the keyboard, depressing keys with his small paws, and playing along with Swift. This multispecies musicking moment sparked the creation and sharing of GIFs, memes, and reels of Benjamin Button, Meredith Grey, Olivia Benson, and Swift’s musical moments, including filming for social media, recording in the studio, and casually playing and listening to music at home. Swift’s cats are central to her branding and these are just a couple of the ways Swift’s feline friends are woven through her screen media and participatory fandom community. By analyzing examples of this hyper-specific media modality, I argue for a visual and acoustic ecology of screen media. One that connects setting, narrative, artist persona, fandom, and music, which fosters a mode of audiovisual listening that contribute to our ongoing understanding of physical, virtual, and social environments.
Paula Harper, “‘It’s Me, Hi, I’m the Problem It’s Me’: Taylor Swift’s Midnights and TikTok Audio-bait”

Following TikTok's explosive rise, it has become almost commonplace to suggest that certain newly-released songs have been "engineered" for virality as audios on the platform. This claim is rarely leveled as a compliment to a song or its creator; instead, it connotes artifice and exploitation, as well as a suggestion of wildly uneven musical quality between audio excerpt and entire song. The "TikTok-bait" charge is also rarely supported by articulations of features or techniques that might comprise such strategic engineering, or how and why they might function.

In this paper, I suggest some formal strategies that might constitute “audio-bait” in a short-form video “imitation public.” I center recent promotional work around Taylor Swift’s album Midnights--both a chart-topping full-album success and a partitioned trove of earwormy viral audios. Analyzing excerpts from Midnights' singles, their circulation, and fan/creator responses on platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, I outline both musical features and industry tactics that were employed to make select excerpts of Swift tracks amenable to audiovisual arrangement on short-form video remix platforms. More broadly, I read claims of TikTok engineering through longer histories of anxieties regarding new media's impact on musical creation and the music industry.

Leslie Tilley, “‘Raisins in the Potato Salad’? Analyzing Sound, Identity, and Reception in Taylor Swift’s ‘September’ Cover”

When Taylor Swift released her cover of Earth Wind & Fire’s disco/R&B classic “September,” the internet exploded. While some listeners applauded the track’s beauty and iconic “Swift-iness,” many lambasted it as not merely boring but deeply problematic. We can begin unraveling this polarized reception through a close musical analysis of the two versions. But a fuller picture of diverse listener perceptions necessitates what adaptation scholar Linda Hutcheon (2013) calls “double vision”: a consideration of Swift’s cover as both product and process simultaneously; a consideration not just of the original and cover versions as musical objects but of their artists and listeners as agents of creation and reception in specific times and places. Enmeshed in Swift’s sonic choices, and in their wide-ranging reception, are undeniable issues of identity: of the artists and their histories, of the listeners and their scenes, of the genres and their soundworlds, and of the song versions themselves. In this paper, I present a multi-modal analysis of “September,” exploring nuances of race and gender, genre and expectation, familiarity and scene, belonging and appropriating in cover performance practice. This analysis then forms the basis of a new theoretical framework for analyzing identity in cover creation and reception.

C. Songs of Sickness (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

Dane–Michael Harrison, “Just as an Added Factor I’ve Invited my Chiropractor”: Decadent Medicine in the Songs of Cole Porter”

The 2020 pandemic gave rise to widespread commentary upon the socio-economic inequities that permitted the American upper-middle class to avoid exposure to the COVID virus through work-from-home, etc., while the working class continued with tasks that entailed far higher risk.
The upper classes’ greater access to medical intervention and prevention was merely the latest iteration of an older societal dynamic in the U.S., which we can observe threading through some of the songs of Cole Porter, whose career was launched during the decade of the 1920s, following the health disasters of the Great War and the 1918 flu pandemic. Porter’s inherited wealth likely insulated him somewhat from the serious medical problems that arose, for many, from those global events. His songs have long been analyzed as expressions of his quasi-aristocratic station (by Alec Wilder, for example). Unsurprisingly, health treatment in his lyrics can seem more recreational than urgent. I will examine several of Porter’s songs, including “The Physician” (1933) and “My Most Intimate Friend” (1935), which vividly evidence the unresolved social disparities in medical access that defined health crises ranging across a century from the 1918 pandemic to our own.

Bronwen McVeigh, “A Case of the Tubercular Blues: Song, Sickness, and Stigma in Early Twentieth-Century Black Communities”

In “Hustlin’ Dan” (1930), Bessie Smith tells the tale of her once vivacious lover. She sings that her “rough and tumble” man was an excellent gambler, that he was an even better lover, that one morning his tuberculosis finally overtook him and she lost him forever. Smith forefronts the suffering left behind when illness ravages a beloved’s body. And more specifically, by describing her failed appeals to Jesus, Smith also critiques harmful stereotypes surrounding sufferers of diseases like tuberculosis that disproportionately impacted the African American community in the early twentieth-century. Building on scholarship in Black Studies and Medical Humanities about Blues, I argue that “Tubercular Blues”—a fairly common theme in early twentieth-century songs—offers insight into how Black communities navigated the social stigma associated with disease. Historical understandings of tuberculosis as a degenerative disease that consumes the body into a state of living death inspired erroneous associations with the “degenerate” living and sexual promiscuity associated with characters such as Smith’s Dan. Indeed, blues that invoke the illness often focus on the social conditions that supposedly proceed its onset. Yet artists criticize figures like doctors and religious authorities who refuse to engage with the “immoral” ill, using the voice to defy harmful stereotypes about decaying, voiceless victims of illness.

Matthew J. Jones, “Enfreaking the AIDS Crisis: Conspiracy Theory and Monstrosity in Frank Zappa’s Thing-Fish”

Conspiracy theories and monsters emerge in moments of crisis. Conspiracies offer the illusion of clear-cut narratives of good and evil that act as a slave for the abrasions and alienations of contemporary life. Monsters act as metaphors for a variety of social anxieties, fears, and feelings. Conspiracy and monstrosity merge in the discourses of the AIDS crisis, as theories abounded about the origins of the new disease, and stigma against people with AIDS (PWAs) engendered their enfreakment, a term I borrow from David Hevey (1992). On the much-maligned Thing-Fish, Frank Zappa employs conspiracy and monstrosity to reckon with society’s fears of sex, the body, pleasure, and the Other in the age of AIDS. A hybrid work, Thing-Fish draws on tropes of blackface minstrelsy, musical theater, theater of the absurd, science fiction, and horror. This is especially evident in the Mammy-Nuns, Zappa’s hybrid monster, which he uses to cast doubt on the discursive constructs that some clung to like magic talismans during the early years of AIDS.
and through which Zappa articulates a hedonistic philosophy that flies in the face of other contemporary efforts to fight AIDS though austerity measures (reducing the number of sexual partners, for example). Anticipating Douglas Crimp’s assertions about promiscuity as a salvific practice by several years, Zappa continually returns to the body and its polymorphous perversity as the solution to the HIV/AIDS. Only by embracing our inner freak, Zappa argues, will we defeat HIV/AIDS and the true monster: repressive, puritanical culture.

D. Media and Authenticity (Media, Data, and Information Crises stream)

Theo Cateforis, “‘STP Ain’t from SD’: Fakes, Fabrications, Scams and the Crisis of Authenticity in ’90s Alternative Rock”

In 1993, Atlantic recording artists Stone Temple Pilots (STP) were nominated for best album at the San Diego Music Awards. The only problem? While the band’s promotional materials claimed they had emanated from San Diego’s thriving club scene, many local musicians objected that STP were actually a commercialized Los Angeles band. In response, a San Diego musician printed up tee-shirts proclaiming “STP Ain’t from SD.” This was but one of many clashes that roiled the early ‘90s American musical landscape, when the majors aligned their artists with alternative’s hip cultural cachet and the underground was spurred to retaliate. In this paper, I examine how the major labels, in sociologist Richard Peterson’s terms, “fabricated authenticity” for their alternative artists, at a time when many fans viewed overtly corporate ties with deep suspicion. This ranged from the creation of imprints like Atlantic’s Seed Records, or what Maximum Rocknroll magazine derisively referred to as “scam indies” that assumed the veneer of standalone labels, to the strategic placing of major artists like Alanis Morissette in small alternative club venues. In an environment where figures like Kurt Cobain routinely denounced “false alternative,” the fostering and illusion of authenticity was a point of deep contention.

References:

Steve Jones, “Music in the AI Age: Another Crisis of Authenticity?”

AI software is increasingly in use in audio production, from remixing to mastering, and adds another layer of complexity to debates about authenticity in popular music. This paper asks whether another crisis of authenticity is brewing, explores the current state of AI in popular music and contextualizes it within existing debates about authenticity, technology and value in popular music.

For example, the Beatles’ Revolver 2022 reissue was different from previous reissues due to use of “de-mixing” software developed by Peter Jackson’s WingNut Films for the Get Back documentary. Originally created to separate the Beatles’ dialogue from the music they were making, the software was repurposed by Giles Martin to isolate tracks, permitting Revolver’s remixing. However, is the software is isolating tracks or creating new ones altogether? In an interview one developer said about it, “newer neural nets can guess what an instrument would’ve sounded like and then synthesize something that sounds natural and consistent with the mix” (Brown, 2022).

References


Mui Kato, “Understanding the Role of AI in Recreating a Dead Musician’s Performance: The Case of Hibari Misora”

This paper responds to reputed crises associated with utilizing artificial intelligence to recreate the performances of dead musicians. It focuses on the production process, arguing that understanding the actual roles of both AI and human beings is necessary for considering the future use of such technology. The paper investigates a project, led by Yamaha and the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, that in 2019 recreated the voice of famous Japanese singer Hibari Misora (1937–89). For critics, the project seemed to represent two crises associated with AI: its replacement of human labor and its appropriation of personal data, exemplified by deepfakes. While musicologists have recently considered AI’s role in music production in comparison with other technological tools, their accounts are incapable of dispelling these concerns because actual production processes were not sufficiently taken into consideration. This paper examines the issue from an engineer’s perspective by drawing on a personal interview. Following an analysis of the AI Hibari’s representations associated with the technology, the paper explains the project’s production process, focusing on the engineers’ efforts and the technology’s limited capability adjusted for narrow objectives.
E. African Music and Afrobeat (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Victoria Grubbs, “Producing the Popular in Postgenocide Rwanda: HITMAKERS Documentary + Discussion”

In this presentation, I will screen and discuss a short documentary which is scheduled to be filmed in Jan 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda. The short film documents the “HITMAKERS Battle,” a local musical event which showcases the catalogs of two of Rwanda’s top contemporary music producers in a song-for-song battle. The competition features eight rounds that are judged by audience participation. This documentary is a small sample of the ethnographic fieldwork that forms the foundation for my current book project, Kumve Meze Neza: Sounding Blackness in Rwanda, which demonstrates how Rwandan popular music circulates semiotic feelings of blackness in the aftermath of genocide to produce the impossible condition of reconciliation. Furthermore, it reveals how the orientation towards blackness mobilized by Rwanda’s popular music industry is radically distinct from an identification with race, ethnicity, nationality, or humanity.

Joshua A Kerobo, “‘Why don’t you want to walk for peace?’: The #EndSARS Movement, Police Brutality, and Political Activism by Afropop Artists in Nigeria”

On October 8th, 2020, members of the #EndSARS Movement launched in 2017 by Nigeria’s human rights activists peacefully protested Nigeria’s Covid-19 lockdown measures, and its police brutality by a unit known as the “Special Anti-Robbery Squad” (SARS). Shamelessly on October 20th, 2020, the Nigerian army and police shot at the protestors, killing 12 people and injuring hundreds more in what became known as the Lekki Toll Gate shooting – a disgraceful display of Nigeria’s postcolonial institutional decay. In response, Nigeria’s Afropop celebrities composed and circulated songs that became part of a tradition of popular social consciousness set by Fela Kuti during the late 1960s. In this presentation, I draw upon archival research and media discourse to problematize the term Afropop. Secondly, I discuss the social/political circumstances that gave rise to the #EndSARS movement. Lastly, I analyze Nigerian Afropop musician Burna Boy’s “20:10:20” (2020) to demonstrate the sonic material that he employs as a template of protest. By examining the musical soundscape that renders music a potent site of protest in the context of brutality by the SARS police unit, I contend that Afropop artists are at the forefront of the production of social-cultural discourse on post-coloniality and governance in Nigeria.

Kabelo Chirwa, “Cycles of Colonization: Contextualizing Billboard’s U.S. Afrobeats Chart”

In support of the voices that vehemently oppose the term Afrobeats, Korede Akinsete writes in an article for OkayAfrica, “to name something is to claim ownership.” While the United States is not guilty of inventing the term Afrobeats, the March 2022 announcement of the Billboard U.S. Afrobeats Chart implies that the West African popular music genre has been, to some extent, claimed by U.S. music markets. The Billboard U.S. Afrobeats chart, while signifying the success
of Afrobeats musicians, reflects colonial histories in which white, western institutions work to appropriate African traditions and guide the discourses about how these traditions are defined.

In this paper, I outline the colonial practices employed by U.S. popular music institutions, particularly those that are enacted by Billboard. I argue that while Afrobeats artist, fans, and cultural entrepreneurs work to cultivate a sense of local community in a culture and genre that is rapidly expanding, they must also navigate cycles of colonization. Specifically, Billboard is implicated in processes of erasing or obstructing local identities and homogenizing African communities.

F. Asian music scenes and identities (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Wonseok Lee, “K as a Floating Signifier: The Meaning of K in Multiethnic K-pop”

K-pop has been considered Korean popular music. Though some might argue that Korean ethnicity is important to determine whether it is K-pop, the importance of Korean ethnicity has declined over the past decades as it has become more common to see non-Korean musicians in the industry. In other words, the ethnic boundary of K-pop has expanded from Kyopo 고포 (people of Korean descent born and raised in the US, Canada, Australia, etc.) musicians in the early 1990s to non-Korean ethnic musicians today not only from neighboring countries, such as mainland China, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines, but also from afar countries, such as Russia, Italy, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Brazil, and Argentina. This paper explores how and why K-pop has absorbed diverse ethnicities, what it brings about transitions, and eventually how the meaning of K in K-pop is differently interpreted depending on the way individuals see multiethnic K-pop. In doing so, I argue that K in K-pop does not exist as a fixed concept but exists as what Stuart Hall refers to “floating signifier” in the K-pop industry.

Paul Gabriel L. Cosme, “‘Sorry, Goodbye...evermore?’: Beyond Taylor Swift and Mimicry in Moira dela Torre and Filipino Popular Music”

From rock to ballad, Filipinos mimic American culture so perfectly that they are criticized for not performing their own music. But Original Pinoy Music (OPM), a genre created in the Philippines as a generic label for Filipino popular artists, does more than imitate. In 2018, Moira Dela Torre, a Filipina singer-songwriter, topped the charts after years of foreign domination, signaling changes in OPM’s reception. Yet her sentimental songs resemble Taylor Swift’s works: Dela Torre’s “Patawad, Paalam” (Sorry, Goodbye) exhibits similar heartbreaking content, textures, and vocal quality to Swift’s “evermore.” Historically, Filipinos reflected foreign cultures as conditioned responses to colonialism and state oppression, copying Western music to avoid colonial persecution and gain global recognition (De Kosnik 2017). Dissident musicians avoided censorship by creating music that sounds like Western rock while state officials utilized American pop to sanitize violence (Maceda 1985; Mangaoang 2019). Today, Filipinos produce songs to reflect local experiences like the EDSA Revolution and common cultural or childhood experiences. This paper illustrates that OPM no longer merely borrows from American sound, transcending genre differences by focusing on local experiences which assert a Filipino identity.
References


**Jonathan Chan, “Performances of Identity in The Post-2019 Hong Kong Indie Music Scene”**

This paper is an ethnographic examination of the changes in the practices and relationship networks that the Hong Kong indie music scene has undergone since 2019. The indie scene is a loose community of musicians, participants and audiences dedicated to DIY and alternate forms of music activity in Hong Kong. Through these practices and discourses, the scene demarcates itself apart from the mainstream music sphere. Hong Kong’s 2019 protest movement and subsequent COVID-19 pandemic was significant not only for Hong Kong culture, but also the indie scene as it brought about a multitude of changes. The scene has fragmented into smaller venues and audiences in recent years and zero-COVID policies have made continuing live music activities legally precarious. Despite this, some in the indie scene observe that gig attendance
rates have increased and there is a renewed interest by some in this sector of Hong Kong culture, catalysed by a renewed drive to preserve and support local culture as a form of resistance. Through ethnography and interviews with participants of the scene, I discuss these changes and demonstrate how these activities constitute a performance of cultural identity.

10:45 am-12:45 pm – Session 14

A. Four Global Perspectives of Economic and Operational Realities of Music Cities and Governmental Support in Times of Crisis — Denver, Melbourne, Reykjavík, and Liverpool (Economic Crises stream)

This panel examines the post-pandemic music life of four cities in the US, Australia, Iceland and the UK. The cities have all been defined or presented in one way or another as a ‘music city’ due to their rich contemporary music life and/or heritage. Despite the success narrative embedded within the image of a music city, we argue that the music scenes experience economic and operational issues on the ground, both created by the pandemic, but also pre-existing problems exacerbated by the pandemic. We will discuss how support, or the lack thereof, from governments (local and state) and taxpayers has been a factor, as well as the implications of public policy decisions and directives. We consider what can be learned from different approaches taken in the four examples discussed and how the findings can be applied to other cities.

Storm Gloor, “Multiplied or Magnified? How Challenges Within the Denver Music Ecosystem During the Pandemic Were Not Entirely New, and the Progress in Addressing Them”

Prior to the pandemic, the city of Denver, Colorado certainly exemplified the characteristics of a thriving music city. It was the next location for a late-2020 ill-fated convening of international community leaders and organizations involved in the concept, in part to observe the area’s innovative programs and initiatives. As the pandemic canceled that event and others, stakeholders from every part of the Denver music economy organized and activated in response to many new challenges. While the systemic damage to the music sector attributed to the pandemic was absolutely real, might it also have exposed the pre-existing deficiencies of local music production and consumption? Might the system already have been broken in ways that simply magnified? If so, where are we now in addressing those issues? While the community’s response to the unprecedented disruptions is certainly worth noting, in this presentation we will also examine those issues that may have been more exacerbated, rather than directly caused, by the pandemic and how they have been addressed. How does Denver’s recent experience as a music city compare and contrast to other U.S. communities?

Shane Homan, “Reputations and Local/National Intersections: Melbourne Music After the Pandemic”

With over 400 live music venues and 350 annual festivals, the Victorian State Government in 2018 proclaimed Melbourne as the ‘music capital of the world’ (Visit Victoria 2018). Throughout the COVID lockdowns, ‘contemporary music’ suffered a 63% decline in revenue in
2020, with Victoria experiencing a decline in national revenue share (Live Performance Australia 2020). Only ‘47% of venues licensed for live music in 2019 renewed their licenses for 2021/2022’ (Music Victoria 2022). This presentation examines the city at the intersection of State and Federal Government responses to COVID-19. Firstly, I will consider the measures of state support against a backdrop of other emerging venue issues (e.g. minimum performance wage campaigns). Secondly, the pandemic reignited dormant debates about the role of music/popular culture and the extent to which governments and taxpayers are prepared to support cultural ecosystems. Thirdly, can the city recover the (structural, social and policy) gains it has amassed in the past 50 years as a ‘live music capital’?


Icelandic music has been well documented by journalists and documentary makers, where the idea of ‘the Icelandic sound’ has been prominent and often linked to nature and landscape (Hall 2019). Despite this most of the musicians, bands and venues are based in Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland. Firstly, I examine the branding of Reykjavík as a music city and explore if it’s image draws on stereotypes of Icelandic music (featuring nature and landscape) or focuses on the city and the music-making itself. Secondly, I will discuss the ‘Reykjavík Music City’ development project, which has the aim of ‘growing Reykjavík further as a music city by creating favourable conditions for thriving musical activities throughout the city’ (Reykjavík Music City 2022). It is funded by the municipality and demonstrates a commitment to supporting the local music scene. I will investigate its reception within the music sector. If it has supported the local scene, which has been struggling economically. Or does it serve more as a branding strategy to draw attention to the city’s music life without meaningfully impacting the conditions of musicians and other music makers within the city.

Mathew Flynn, “Nul Points!: Do Occasional Headline Making Events Obscure the State of Perennial Crisis Experienced by Regional Music Sectors?”

Liverpool’s (UK) rich musical history is well documented, and was instrumental in its award of UNESCO City of Music status in 2015. Underlining its present-day relevance, in 2022 Liverpool beat proposals by other UK cities to be selected to host the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest. Since the city’s 1960s heyday, there have been periodic newsworthy events that often leverage Liverpool’s heritage and present a narrative of a progressive music city. However, these one-off stories of momentary success contrast with the economic and operational reality of crisis, struggle and survival experienced by most of Liverpool’s musicians and organisations that champion new talent. This contrast opens up underlying and persistent questions: 1. Do occasional mediated images of occasional success limit the willingness of local, regional and national policy-makers to shape and support investment in the day-to-day operations of Liverpool’s music sector? 2. What changes to information, data, sector analysis, and mediation could offer a more balanced overview? This paper offers a progress to date examination of these questions as they pertain to Liverpool, and offers some thoughts as to how the findings apply to other cities of music.
B. Work, Capital, and Collaboration (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)


The COVID pandemic laid bare pre-existing inequities in the popular music industry, notably along lines of race and gender. Additionally, the pause in live paid shows demonstrated how challenging it is for all non-superstar musicians to make a living. The wealth gap between megastars and most working musicians is striking: this presentation synthesizes recent studies to demonstrate how, rather than leveling the playing field, online music streaming has largely failed to produce sustainable income for large numbers of working musicians. In a time of economic crisis, these inequities reveal how barriers are exacerbated for Indigenous women as well as Latinas, Black women, and other women of color, people of different abilities, and LGBTQ2+ people. And yet, despite intersecting crises, audiences are drawn to popular music, and artists stubbornly persist in their sometimes-un glamorous labor. Analyzing new interviews with Los Angeles-based musicians and industry professionals alongside economic data following non-megastar musicians in the United States and globally, this presentation delves into the current realities of musical labor. Following Sarah Ahmed’s theorization, the presentation asks how crisis could also be an opening. What might these intersecting crises be opening into, and how can listeners hear—and be part of—better ways forward?


Shannon Garland, “Sofar Sounds: Venture Capital, the Housing Crisis, and Musical Work for Free”

Sofar Sounds is a live music and video start-up that promotes intimate musical experiences across the globe. It is financed by venture capital and relies on the making of city spaces into luxury commodities through real estate speculation, as well as unpaid labor. Events consists of artists playing short sets in unconventional settings, like apartment living rooms and company offices. This itinerancy and ad-hoc structures allows Sofar Sounds to save on commercial business licenses, rent and backline costs, as with traditional venues and promoters. Importantly, while it has paid staff in some cities and now runs throughout the world on a “franchisee” model, it has been built upon unpaid—volunteer—work. Remuneration practices for the performing musicians are mixed. This paper discusses how Sofar Sounds’ success has both required and been a response to the transformation of city spaces into sites of cultural consumption for those who can afford to rent in them, as well as the mass displacement caused by this spatial valuation as real estate firms reap the rewards of cities’ dense sociality. It explicates the entwined crises of remuneration for musicians in the digital era, the housing crisis, and the role of “fictitious capital” in it all.

Xiaochan Liu, “The Crisis of Uncertainty Faced by Chinese Platform Musicians and Their Coping Strategies”

This paper contributes to the conference theme of “Popular Music in Crisis” by focusing on crisis of uncertainty faced by Chinese musicians who upload music directly to music streaming platforms. The crisis of uncertainty, means the lack of autonomy of musicians in the platform ecosystem. They lack control when faced with an inequitable revenue system, opaque recommendation systems, and arbitrary use of their works in streaming platforms. Based on this phenomenon, this paper argues that platform musicians are not completely passively involved in the production of platform music, but struggling to actively gain control through their own practices. They grasp the characteristic of these platforms and use it for themselves through trading outside the platform, and by signing up for multiple platforms to attract listeners. Through semi-structured interviews with 23 platform musicians, this paper aims to explore the crisis of uncertainty that Chinese music streaming platforms have brought to musicians and their strategies for coping with it. The paper also explains how these strategies prompt Chinese music streaming platforms to launch more functions which allow individual transactions, adding new challenges yet also providing new possibilities.

Pascal Rudolph, “‘It’s all in his mind.’ – Auteurcracy, Collaboration, and the Musical Idea Work Group”
How do filmmakers work with pre-existing music? Using the Danish auteur Lars von Trier as an example, I will discuss some answers to this question. In 2020 and 2021 I conducted interviews with the musicians, composers, editors, sound designers, and music researchers for Trier’s films. I build on Ian Macdonald’s production-situated conception of the ‘Screen Idea Work Group’ (2012) to posit the ‘Musical Idea Work Group’ (MIWG). The MIWG refers to a working group that comes together to develop a film-musical idea. It refers to all persons who are in some way directly involved in the development of this idea. The basis for the analysis of the production processes comprises qualitative and semi-structured insider interviews (Bruun 2016). While previous film music research tends to analyze artists (persons) or music (products), here I focus on contrasting descriptions of highly collaborative working processes with the prescriptive mechanisms of film reception. In this way, I demonstrate a more holistic understanding of authorship while accounting for previous constructions of Trier as an ‘auteur mélomane’ based on critical perceptions of how he utilizes music.

C. Media, Gender, and (A)political Identities in COVID-19 Era AAPI and Asian Musical Performance (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed glaring racial and gender disparities throughout the world, felt especially in the rise in anti-Asian sentiment in Western countries and the blaming of the pandemic on Asians. Artists in this time were forced to pivot to a locked down world and had to find new ways to reach more distanced audiences. Some used music as a tool of empowerment and political action in response to these inequities, while others turned to music for comfort and escapism.

This panel explores musical responses by Asian American and Asian artists to the extraordinary conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person and virtual performances provide outlets for musicians to offer responses to these conditions of crisis: resistance to restrictive gender frameworks, activism in the face of racism, and, in some cases, an opportunity to come together in a virtual space not tied to politics or social concerns. Papers in this panel discuss South Asian Americans in digital spaces, Asian-American and -Canadian womxn confronting anti-Asian hate, creative responses to gendered stereotypes of Korean p’ansori singing, and resistance to patriarchy in Japanese rock.

Conner Singh VanderBeek, “Apoliticism and Hyperreality Among Diasporic South Asian Musicians on Social Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic”

On May 16, 2020, NYC- and LA-based PopShift – an organization that promotes South Asian diasporic popular culture – livestreamed Housefull on its YouTube channel. Housefull was a weekend-long playlist of pre-recorded performances by over 50 South Asian artists from the US and Canada. Artists performed in genres ranging from hip-hop and DJ sets to R&B and Bollywood song – all in a mixture of Hindi, English, and Punjabi. PopShift held Housefull as a fundraiser for MusiCares.

Beyond scant mentions of MusiCares, neither Housefull 1, nor its sequels on June 26, 2020, or May 15, 2021, mentioned the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, or the spike in anti-Asian
hate crimes across North America. Neither did programmed artists or similar South Asian popular culture outlets. This paper examines the careful curation of diasporic South Asian social media and influencers’ elision of politics and social issues outside of their ethnic/racial cohort. Drawing from the work of Rene Lysloff (2003), Jean Baudrillard (1981), and Claire Kim (1999), this paper confronts the apoliticism of this social media community and explores how influencers construct a hyperreal space of popular culture that, in a time of global crisis, distanced itself from North American political and racial issues.

**Mayna Tyrrell, “Raging Asian Womxn: Politics, Gender, and Taiko in the Stop Asian Hate Movement”**

Taiko emerged in the U.S. during the development of pan-Asian solidarity through the Asian American movement of the 1960s. Asian American taiko has served as a site for exploration and celebration of Asian American identity. Taiko performers demand to be seen and heard through the aesthetics of taiko, including the strong stance, physical stamina required, and loudness, which disrupts myths of the quiet, docile Asian. Asian American women have utilized taiko as a site to assert strength and power in a society that renders them submissive and sexually available through gendered orientalist tropes. The political roots of taiko in the U.S. remain strong with many groups and while taiko offers a space to perform joy, it is equally equipped to express rage. This paper examines how North American taiko performers construct a new framework for pan-Asian solidarity in response to the intersectional violence directed towards Asian women in the wake of the Atlanta spa shootings of 2021. By utilizing the work of Deborah Wong (2019) and Angela Ahlgren (2018), I aim to trace recent developments in Asian American (and Canadian) feminist and queer practice in North American taiko and explore how those practices address the recent rise in anti-Asian sentiment.

**Sunhong Kim, “Creative Liberalism, Musical Hybridity, and Selling Seoul in Inalchee’s ‘The Tiger is Coming’”**

The binary of Western and non-Western music has long been reproducing geographical power dynamics and ideological paradigms (Finchum-Sung 2012) and prevents us from understanding the diversity of Western music as a concept. Although this ideological concept is pervasive in contemporary South Korean music culture, I problematize the political discourse around South Korean musicians’ impressions of Western music. In doing so, I analyze the hybrid musical production of contemporary pop-oriented alternative music by the band Inalchee, who promoted cultural and popularized aspects of Seoul during the pandemic in 2020 in a tourism advertisement funded by the state-sponsored Korean Tourism Organization. Inalchee’s “Tiger is Coming” reveals the musical hybridity of two disparate timbral and tonal systems that place pansori singing style in dialogue with quasi-New Wave music. Through an analysis of the music, lyrics, the visuals that make up the tourism advertisement in this piece, and interviews with musicians, I will unpack how Inalchee’s theme of liberalism manifests in intercommunication between the co-creators in the process of music-making. I argue that their intention to recontextualize pansori is future-oriented and an affirmation of the hope to break down power relations between musical genres in the future by distancing Inalchee’s musical practices from the actualities of life in urban Seoul.
Yiqing Mitty Ma, “Josei Rock and Border-Crossing: Multivocality and Gender Transgression in Recent Live Performances of Japanese Rock Music”

In Happy Hour (2021), Okazaki suggests “Josei Rock” to describe “the wide variety of women rock groups from Japan.” (14) This paper examines the crisis of voice (Couldry, 2010) in ethnography of two all-female Japanese rock band, SCANDAL and CHAI conducted in 2022 in North America. SCANDAL is known for “Shōjo S” as the theme song of anime Bleach (2009). Many recognizes the “cuteness (kawaii)” in their voice. CHAI dubbed themselves as “Neo-Kawaii rock band”—as a criticism to the misogyny kawaii culture. In my analysis, I observe the multivocality in their performances. Specifically, how their performance “singing with many voices” (Meizel 2020, 5) as a resistant to the neoliberal expectations? How the artists create their own otherwise-denied spaces? How they perform gender transgressiveness that challenges the Japanese gender norms? How they find their multiple voices outside the Japan? Through the analysis of vocal production (Heidemann 2014) and ethnography, this paper concludes that these bands performs multiple voices of identities that intersects race, gender, and culture that falls beyond the western defined chest-head voice dichotomy and “race of sound” (Eidsheim 2019).

D. Negotiating actual and virtual spaces for musical expression during the COVID-19 crisis in France (Pandemics and Health Crises stream)

MUSICOVID (CNRS/Université Sorbonne Nouvelle/Université de Tours/Université de Bordeaux) is a French multidisciplinary project funded by the National Research Agency. It brings together researchers from complementary disciplinary backgrounds, such as musicologists, historians, sociologists and anthropologists. With this panel, our aim is to present how French (and some foreign) actors have adapted or developed strategies to pursue musical activities and expressions in the midst of the pandemic. These strategies include the creation of online content, as well as the organization of both online and in-person events. We will try and show to what extent these initiatives did inject meaning in the social lives of participants, and in the very principles of singing, dancing, and bringing people together thanks to music.

Marion Brachet, “Amateur Songs and Covers as Chronicles of Mobility Restrictions in France”

While only a few famous professional French artists have explicitly sung about the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds and hundreds of songs written during and about lockdowns have been shared on YouTube by both comedians and amateur musicians. Some remain confidential, but some did reach a large public and have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times. These songs are sometimes original ones, but most take the form of covers in which lyrics have been changed (“goguettes”). This impressive corpus constitutes rich chronicles of the pandemic in France, with songs punctuating each step of the mobility restrictions, from initial lockdowns to curfews and restrictions linked to vaccination status. This presentation aims at analyzing the social role of these amateur practices, for both artists and viewers: the songs often share a light tone, commonplace jokes about daily life under lockdown (toilet paper shortage, boredom, weight gain, etc.), but also a form of popular poetry that seems to carry a decidedly collective message of support for the French people – be it as a unified nation against the virus, or as a people against its political class.
Manuel Roux, “Producing Other Spaces to Better Find Each Other”

There is a broad consensus to describe the period of health restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic as being synonymous with a total halt in live music. Many publications have been produced to try to assess the impact of such an event on the cultural industry and more specifically on the so-called "live music" sector. However, in spite of the bans, some actors of the counter-cultural scene have tried hard to pursue and even radicalize their cultural commitment to defend a music that can only be "In Real Life'' while facing the thorny question of the risk of contamination and the ethical choices that result from it. This presentation will aim to question the way in which some of these French protagonists have negotiated new counter-cultural spaces far from the conventional places of stage production in order to preserve the social link against all odds.

Frédéric Trottier-Pistien, “Night-Clubbing Covid”

Nightclubs have often been shut down for a longer period than other cultural venues, such as cinema, museum or concert-hall. They have been considered a threat, a battleground in the fight against Covid. This rhetoric was disqualifying and denying club culture and parties as a core element in social bonding, while we had to maintain social distancing. In France, a part of the electronic music sector has found opportunities and ways to still make music or create events. If some activities (some already considered as such) were illegal or underground and boomed in free parties and house parties, the main shift happened on livestream. From 2020-2021, nightclub or concert venues were both a laboratory from livestream experience to scientific experience. But what happened to the making of music? And by extending Blacking’s anthropological question, How Musical is Livestream?, this presentation is based on two case studies: first one is about Reviens La Nuit, a test-party to evaluate Covid transmission and the other is a one-night “Movement at Home” livestream auto-ethnography, a Detroit techno festival which turned into two Twitch streams. It aims to question the configurations of club ethics and politics and to describe a search for music, interactions and attachments through questioning affects, embodiments and mimicking/commodificating some aspects of the club culture.

E. Music and/as Climate Crisis (Environmental and Ecological Crises stream)

Kyle Devine, “One Thing to Another: Music, Climate, Capital, and the Work of ‘Crisis’”

Everywhere you look, the musical world is changing—overhauling itself in response to climate crisis. There are records made of plants, stereos that run on sunshine, concerts powered by dancing. There are industry-specific carbon calculators and emissions audits. There are organizations that size up (and draw down) the environmental impact of music on all levels. We are witnessing a climate-oriented transformation of what music is and how it comes to be, not just what it is about or how it sounds. Call it the Great Recomposition.

All of this is needed. At the same time, I argue that the Great Recomposition addresses the wrong problem. Crisis designations typically name moments of “more or less disorderly transition from one accumulation regime to another” (Frédéric Lordon). In this sense, the
musical world’s rally against climate crisis is an agent of a wider shift from petrocapitalist accumulation to ecocapitalist accumulation. To confront the contradictory reality of our situation—in music as elsewhere—requires reframing the problem and regrouping, not only around climate and crisis, but also against capital and class. As long as the climate crisis is addressed primarily as a climate crisis, then the crisis of our planet cannot actually be addressed.


In June 2021, the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research published ‘Super-Low Carbon Live Music: a roadmap for the UK live music sector to play its part in tackling the climate crisis’. Commissioned by the Bristol trip-hop group, Massive Attack, the report recommended a series of targets to achieve the elimination of carbon emissions. While some academics have asked questions about how we can make music making more sustainable (Pedelty 2012) or suggested that musicians and fans can work towards environmental sustainability (Brennan 2021), I argue in this paper that the staging of music festivals and stadium tours, and the consumption of recorded music via streaming platforms will continue to be unsustainable. Like the restrictions that we had to live with during the Covid 19 lockdowns, more radical ideas may be required: a possible cap on the number of music festivals that can take place or a limit on the amount of recorded music that can be uploaded to Spotify. Rather than setting unachievable targets about carbon emissions or thinking that the climate crisis is something that can be solved by music businesses working together, we may need to move beyond the very idea of sustainability.

References


Wolf-Georg Zaddach, “‘Death of Mother Earth, Never a Rebirth’? Reflections on the Relationship Between Music, the Climate Crisis and Environmental Sustainability”

In 1988, when the U.S. thrash metal band Metallica lamented environmental pollution, deforestation and related social problems in their song "Blackened" and sang of the "Death of Mother Earth", the World Commission on Environment and Development's Our Common Future report had been published for less than two years. This report emphasized the need for sustainability and intergenerational justice in the face of critical climatic and environmental change processes, although global warming continues. Preventing continued global warming requires change in all areas of life, including all practices associated with music (Ribac and Harkins 2020, 14). Based on a study of the problems and challenges of a sustainability shift and music (Zaddach 2022), it is argued that music can and must contribute significantly to transformation and coping (Kagan 2011, 2015; Kagan/Kirchberg 2016). Following this, concrete
recommendations for action in research, teaching, and knowledge transfer will be outlined, emphasizing in particular the relevance of interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration. Concrete examples will be used from the field of Artistic Research (Zaddach 2022) and Citizen Science to highlight important research perspectives that at the same time emphasize the relevance of science communication and the responsibility of research in general.

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Zaddach, Wolf-Georg. 2022. “Black Metal Medi(t)ation: Climate Crisis and Sonic Urgency“.

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**Mark Pedelty and Marceleen Mosher, “Musical Organizing for the Apocalypse”**

Music organizes bodies, ideas, and institutions. Given the species’ deep history of musical entrainment and ritual, it is therefore no great surprise that environmental movements bring music to bear in their organizing efforts. However, environmental movements have far fewer financial, technical, and professional resources than opposing institutions. Oil company advertisers, corporate event planners, and anti-regulatory rally organizers alike utilize advanced sound design and popular music in their public campaigns, one of many advantages leading to their collective success. That makes musical creativity essential for community organizations and broader environmental movements. Cultural creativity can bridge resource disparities between cash strapped, community-based movements and polluting industries. This video will draw on arts-based research with stewardship organizations based in Minnesota and Washington State to build an argument for the organizational power of popular music, music video, and participatory performance. The fifteen-minute video will begin with a succinct presentation of the argument before featuring clips from Ecosong.Net music videos to illustrate. The video will end with a trailer for “Preservation Trust” (working title), the musical collectives’ most ambitious project to date, an ongoing project designed to apply lessons learned from fifteen years of arts-based research, media making, and musical organizing.
Simon Zagorski-Thomas, “How Should Vocational University Popular Music Courses Be Differentiating Themselves from Training Courses?”

In the 21st century we have witnessed a decline in classical music higher education and a rise in popular music – particularly in vocational courses. At the same time, vocational training, both through platforms like LinkedIn Learning and YouTube and through private providers such as BIMM, Full Sail, SAE and Point Blank has become increasingly task and technology focused. In addition, the music industry has progressively ‘outsourced’ artist development to the freelance and hobbyist sectors and reduced income streams for artists have made the portfolio career model a necessity for the vast majority of those seeking to make a living out of music. How should popular music higher education rise to these challenges?

Using the lens of Practical Musicology, I will explore how practice research and pedagogical research can provide a theoretical framework for critical thinking about these practical and vocational problems. The ecological and embodied approaches to cognition are used to theorise quality judgments and aesthetic, pragmatic and activist approaches to setting criteria for assessing one’s own and other’s creative practice. This provides educators, students and practitioners with a toolbox for thinking beyond the task and technology approaches to practice and for re-establishing substantial differences between education and training.

Samantha Bennett, “Secrets and Revelatory Discourse in Music and Audio Technology Culture”

Dirty little secrets. Secret weapons. Trade secrets. Secret ingredients. The secrets of recording success. Phrases so ubiquitous in music and audio technology culture that, in the 21st Century, they serve as powerful mechanisms in both the production and consumption of music and audio technologies and skillsets. Whilst notions of secrecy have pervaded electronics discourse and practice since the mid nineteenth-century, secrets and concomitant revelatory discourses pervade to the point of defining 21st Century music and audio culture. Such potent discourse(s) serve to historicize, mythologize, imagine and commodify skillsets whilst amplifying technological fetishization. Secrets discourse is rife in—and cuts across—several music and audio technology milieux, yet so rarely is it interrogated.

This paper draws upon recent research to be published in a Cambridge Element Series Edition. Grounded in a history and psychology theoretical framework, and focused on concepts including ‘secret weapons’, ‘trade secrets’, ‘secret locations’, ‘secret ingredients’ and ‘secret powers’, this research examines secrets and revelatory discourse as part of a continuum of the protection of tacit knowledge. Packed with examples and qualitative data drawn from manufacturer publications, trade shows, online fora, industry associations, retail, textbooks, scholarship and education, and focusing on both purveyors and receptors of secrets and revelatory discourse, this presentation elucidates the mechanism of secret holders, secrets, revelation and listeners as being intrinsic to music and audio technology culture. In the 21st Century, the largely perceived ‘democratized’ music and audio technology landscape is yet to be matched with a democratization of skillsets. The results of this research illustrate how, in the
potent distillation of music and audio technology knowledge and skillsets into commodified 
secrets, little to nothing is revealed.

Patryk Mamczur, “‘Spotify Killed the Rock Album Star’: Crisis of Album-Oriented 
Popular Music Studies?”

Since the beginning of the so-called Album Era in the 1960s, both rock journalism and popular 
music studies tended to focus on long-play albums. Some of us researched hit singles, others 
were interested in live performances, but it was rock album – the more “concept” one, the better 
– that seemed to attract our attention the most. The situation started to change at the beginning of 
the 21st century, with the popularization of digital formats, and more recently, with the arrival of 
streaming services. More and more people argue that: the pleasure of interacting with albums 
decreased when we traded two-sided vinyl records with large covers for digital files and JPG 
images (Greg Kot), finding and playing single songs is now easier than ever before (Caroline 
Sullivan), and modern customers don’t have time to listen to one-hour-long albums (Mark 
Richardson, Alan Cross).

I don’t agree. While it’s true that the economy of streaming music altered our everyday musical 
experience, according to my research the long-play album still holds a special place, especially in 
rock music – it’s just the nature of these albums and their promotion that changed. During my 
speech, I’ll present the details of this research, and argue why we shouldn’t abandon the album in 
our studies.

Tyler Sonnichsen, “Critical Geography, ‘Symbolic Gentrification,’ and Crises in Popular 
Music”

The crises popular music has faced during the COVID era, while stark, are nothing new. As 
music scholars and fans across many disciplines argue, corporate consolidation and market 
constrictions have been persistent for generations. However, I argue that a critical geographic 
approach, often minimized in Popular Music Studies, would profoundly highlight threats to the 
circulation of culture and cultural life writ large and make them comprehensible from a spatial 
standpoint.

‘Symbolic Gentrification’ provides a critical, spatial, and historic understanding of capitalist 
crises in popular music creation and distribution. ‘Symbolic’ stems from Pierre Bourdieu’s 
symbolic capital, where dominant groups impose meanings upon subordinate groups. 
‘Gentrification’ is a spatial manifestation of these hierarchies – a “revanchist urbanism” (Smith 
1996) whereby dominant groups ‘take back’ cities from subordinate groups.

Symbolic Gentrification seeks to understand how these hierarchies in Popular Music (e.g. 
MTV’s phase-out of music, Spotify’s unethical algorithmic business model, and many others) 
have played out both culturally and non-representationally.


3:15-5:15 pm – Session 15

**A. Sounds of Faith and Worship (Political Crises stream)**


The sanitary measures taken to face the COVID-19 pandemic in Argentina had a full impact on the religious celebrations of Holy Week. In the Quebrada de Humahuaca, a region with a mestizo and indigenous population that preserves the tradition of local Catholic pilgrimages, all religious journeys to the high-altitude sanctuaries of Punta Corral and Abra de Punta Corral were suspended. Massiveness characterize these pilgrimages, and Pan flutes bands (known as sikus bands) from the province of Jujuy are among the central social actors. Throughout the year, the bands’ activities are focused at these events, so the suspension of the pilgrimages prompted reckless attitudes and calls to disregard government regulations. The bands’ members finally gave in to ecclesiastical mediation, reorganizing the route of the procession that takes place in the city of Tilcara by resorting to the sound/musical aspect of the rituals.

In this article, I describe and analyze local bands’ strategies and means that local musicians adapted and created to give virtual continuity to their musical production in two moments of Holy Week: the procession of Via Crucis and the pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Abra de Punta Corral.

**Jesus Miguel Rodríguez Castillo, “Pandemic Serenade to a Devotional Tradition”**

There is no other manifestation than identifying the people from Barquisimeto, Venezuela, than the Divina Pastora procession each January 14. This catholic manifestation started in 1856 and for more than a century this massive procession has concentrated the millions of believers from the city and the cities around. But there is an orchestra that has played year by year for about a century has played for this religious manifestation: la Orquesta Mavare. Nevertheless no matter how difficult it was, this orchestra has always been there, playing a serenade to Divina Pastora and taking an important role receiving the image of Divina Pastora. Even in the years 2021 and 2022 when the pandemic situation increases the economic impact in Venezuela La Mavare has not stopped to play in this very important catholic manifestation. For that reason this research is an approach, fundamented over de performance studies, about how this situation changes the way how interactuate the orchestra with its audience: the structures of the orchestra, the repertory, and all what to carry on on the covid framework years.

**Teresita Lozano, “Ghost Smuggling Ballads and the Holy Coyote: Testimony and Sanctification of the Undocumented Migrant Journey”**

Mexican immigrants to the U.S. are feeling increasingly targeted by anti-immigrant rhetoric associated with the ongoing immigration reform crisis. Feelings of imposed criminal identity and
threats to the fate of the undocumented community have led to musical trends centered on a collective ghost story marked by themes of persecution and survival. Based on musical testimonies circulating YouTube, undocumented migrants are singing of an apparition who smuggles them across the U.S.-Mexico border. This phenomenon of corrido (ballad) composition, which I define as ghost smuggling ballads, narrates the near-death experiences of migrants and their encounters with the ghost of Saint Toribio Romo. Saint Toribio, who migrants have adopted as the Holy Coyote (Smuggler) and Patron Saint of Immigrants, was a Mexican priest killed in 1928 during the Cristero Rebellion. The Catholic Church canonized Saint Toribio in 2000 but has never recognized him as the patron of immigrants. Drawing on ethnographic work in Mexico and social media, I explore how ghost smuggling ballads serve as testimonies of survival and miraculous intercession, humanizing and sanctifying the undocumented transborder journey. Furthermore, I demonstrate how these ballads serve as migrant self-representation within immigration political discourse, redefining the undocumented journey and role of the smuggler as sacred.

Catherine Provenzano, “Popular Music, Politics, and Performed Christianity from Justin Beiber’s ‘Holy’ to Sean Feucht’s ‘Let Us Worship’”

In the summer of 2020, Christian music superstar Sean Feucht went on his “Let Us Worship” tour. He was protesting what he deemed to be discriminatory restrictions on gathering for Christian worship during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, even as, as he contested, BLM protesters were freely allowed to congregate. Feucht’s position is not unusual; it summarizes the whataboutism that allowed some church leaders to position themselves as uniquely oppressed in America as church doors temporarily closed. Spanning the pandemic, pop stars Justin Bieber, Chance The Rapper, and Kanye West were performing their flirtations with personal and musical Christianity. By using Christianity as something that both floats and is fixed, I show how these (Christian and secular) celebrity figures insulate themselves from political engagement and critique through masculinist alignments with God, and, ergo, authority. In turn, I examine what these performed alliances allow, in Ashon Crawley’s observation, to be “forgotten,” and consider how popular music can play a role in dehistoricizing and flattening notions of oppression. I draw on interviews from my attendance of Feucht’s August 2020 concert in Pasadena, California, and the complex and mixed critical responses to secular artists’ embrace of the spiritual.

B. Instruments and Identities (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

Ulrich Adelt, “Temporaliies of Rhythm Guitar Practice in Moments of Crisis”

In this presentation I aim to apply a number of theoretical approaches regarding time and temporality to rhythm guitar practices in different musical genres. I want to build on Steve Waksman’s seminal analysis of the electric guitar as technophallus by shifting the focus to rhythm and by including genres like disco, early country, and reggae that engage black, female and/or queer temporalities in moments of societal crisis. In my reading, one of the key concepts for understanding rhythm guitar is what Barbara Tomlinson and George Lipsitz have labeled “accompaniment,” which can be understood both musically and methodologically.
Specific examples in my presentation will be Chic guitarist Nile Rodgers, who opened up musical and physical spaces for black and brown gay men, “Mother” Maybelle Carter, who influenced legions of (mostly male) folk, bluegrass, and country musicians with her technique, and Bob Marley, whose persistent skank beat helped to shape a decolonial musical universe now commonly known as reggae. As I argue in my presentation, by reimagining (musical) time, these three artists complicated and challenged white heterosexist conceptions of what Elizabeth Freeman has called “chrononormativity.”

Brian F. Wright, “Before Bootsy: James Brown’s Early Electric Bassists and the Development of Funk”

Codified by James Brown, funk replaced traditional pop songwriting with complex, interlocking grooves that foregrounded the role of the rhythm section. In particular, Brown’s music positioned the electric bass as its focal point, situating it as the primary driver of the groove. Yet, while Brown has been widely credited as funk’s founding father, relatively little attention has been paid to his bass players. In this paper, I reconstruct the chronology of Brown’s early electric bassists, including Bernard Odum, Hubert Perry, Sam Thomas, Tim Drummond, and “Sweet” Charles Sherrell. Building on the work of Allan Slutsky, Chuck Silverman, RJ Smith, and Anne Danielsen, I then analyze these bassists’ individual musical contributions and contextualize them within the trajectory of Brown’s career—from his early successes in R&B, to his crossover appeal during the end of the Civil Rights Movement, and finally to his becoming an outspoken advocate for Black pride. Through their collaborations with Brown, these musicians crafted danceable bass lines that helped establish funk as one of popular music’s most influential and culturally significant styles. At the same time, their stories shed further light on the crises over Black identity that ultimately reshaped funk’s racial politics in the late sixties.

Adrianne Honnold, “The Saxophone is ‘Alright’”

Similar to qualities often associated with rap music, the saxophone symbolizes coolness, masculinity, and authenticity, and it augments those characteristics in Kendrick Lamar’s “Alright” (2015). In contemporary American popular music, the saxophone functions to enhance social characteristics through its historical and symbolic associations to qualities with which it has been endowed by the artists that play it, in the context of their performances, and in combination with the shifting identities that it has acquired over time as a musical object with an iconographical presence in popular culture. Jazz musicians in mid-century America exuded ‘transcendental balance’ and ‘calmness in time of stress’, in other words—coolness—in the face of oppression, and rap artists in the 2010s carry on this expressive tradition. Through a discussion of the background and context for the release of “Alright”, an examination of the themes of race, coolness, and masculinity as they relate to both rap music and the saxophone, and an exploration of the musical characteristics of Terrace Martin’s performance on the track, the outcome of this paper is an illustration of the ways in which the saxophone operates as a consequential aural, visual, and social component of contemporary mainstream music.

Francesca Inglese, “‘An Unlikely Pairing’?: Black Violin and the Racialization of Musical Instruments”
In the United States, the violin has a history as an instrument of tremendous flexibility, associated with competing people, spaces, and imaginaries: angels and the devil; exquisite concert halls and rustic back porches; “masculine” virtuosity and “feminine” sweetness; and genres from old time to jazz to Western classical music. Yet despite the instrument’s long history in Black American music, and the many African American violinists and fiddlers who shaped the instrument, the violin has overwhelmingly been constructed as an instrument tied to whiteness.

Enter Black Violin, a Florida-based musical duo that blends classical with hip hop. Comprised of two classically trained string players, violinist Kevin Sylvester (Kev Marcus) and violist Wilner Baptiste (Wil B.), and self-described as “two Black dudes playing violin,” the duo has reframed the violin via the gendered and racialized associations of hip hop. I demonstrate how Black Violin resignifies a musical instrument associated with whiteness and Western classical music, and challenges racist stereotypes of Black men. In so doing, I call attention to the racialization of musical instruments, the long history of genre-bending Black violinists, and the critical place of the violin in Black music.

C. Black Feminist Theory on Queer Hip Hop (Crises of Identity and Subjectivity stream)

In the last decade, thanks in part to the disclosures of artists such as Frank Ocean and Lil Nas X, the discourses around queerness and hip hop have shifted away from the erroneous belief that the two are mutually exclusive. As media have focused on contemporary male artists, however, the longer history of queer participation in hip hop and the queer aesthetic underpinnings of the genre have remained largely underdiscussed. This panel seeks to reposition the longer Black queer lineages of hip hop’s history and aesthetics and underscore the need for Black queer feminist approaches to the genre.

The authors on this panel explore queer aspects of hip hop from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, each paper presents various points of entry for considering the queer expressions and implications of hip hop. These papers consider: queer embodiment and performance in New Orleans bounce music and dance post-Hurricane Katrina; Missy Elliott’s Black feminist and queer music making endeavors as they manifest within her musical collaborations with other Black women artists; and braggadocio raps as homoerotic seduction between male rappers and their audiences. Taken together, these papers illuminate the intersections between hip hop studies and queer studies.

Lauron Kehrer, “‘Sissy Style’: Gender, Race, and Sexuality in New Orleans Bounce”

Post-2005, following Hurricane Katrina, queer and trans rappers became the dominant force in New Orleans bounce, a dance-centric hip-hop genre specific to that city. Inspired by the language of bounce rappers themselves, who self-identify as gay and reclaim a once pejorative term to openly express their sexual and gender identities through their performances, the term “sissy bounce” has been used to describe this phenomenon. Since the genre first developed in the early 1990s, dancing, or “shaking” as it is called locally, has gone hand-in-hand with the music. More recently, bounce dance styles, including twerking, have drawn mainstream attention: “twerking” is now part of the national vocabulary, but is largely misunderstood, particularly from a queer perspective. This paper contextualizes bounce music and dance within the city’s tradition of second lines. Drawing on interviews and fieldwork conducted in New Orleans, I
illustrate the ways shaking reflects gender and sexual fluidity among its queer and trans participants, as well as its role as kinetic community response to trauma inflicted by Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. Ultimately, I demonstrate that shaking is an example of both a racialized and gendered performance and a performative act in which gender and racial identity are co-constructed.

**Elliott H. Powell, “‘Representing for my Ladies:’ On Missy Elliott, Collaboration, and Black Queer Feminist RELATIONALITIES”**

This paper seeks to contribute to the growing body of Black feminist and queer studies scholarship on Missy Elliott. In particular, this paper looks at Missy Elliott’s Black feminist and queer music making endeavors as they manifest within Elliott’s musical collaborations with other Black women artists. I examine Elliott’s relationships with Black women associated artists Tweet, Jessica Betts, and Sharaya J, as well as their collaborative songs “Oops (Oh My),” “Whisper,” and “Banji,” respectively, in order to emphasize how collaboration and collectivity inform and shape the Black queer and feminist worlds that Elliott engenders. Importantly, I analyze the mutual masturbatory fantasies of “Oops (Oh My),” the queer breakup-sex-turned-friends-with-benefits themes of “Whisper,” and the Black queer and trans ballroom aesthetics of “Banji” to highlight Elliott’s commitment to cultivating Black queer and feminist networks of community, care, and desire. In the end, this paper uses the collaborative work of Missy Elliott as a means to showcase the role and power of the intramural in Black queer feminist cultural production.

**Antonia Randolph, “I get in ya!’: The Homoeroticism of Braggadocio Rap”**

This paper analyzes the homoerotic construction of intimacy between putatively straight Black male rappers and male fans in hip-hop. I argue that rappers avoid emotional vulnerability with Black female sexual partners by channeling their desire for connection and affirmation into their relationships with male fans. I liken the seductive structure of braggadocio rap, where male rappers describe why the listener should admire them, to a lover trying to convince someone to sleep with them. Rappers seek to enter the listener’s inner world, penetrating their ears with lyrics to win them over. Or as Keith Murray says, “It’s just like that/I get in ya! (1994)”. I analyze lyrics from the 1990s and 2000s about how fans “jock” rappers and about rappers “getting” fans “open” to show the homoeroticism of the intimacy between male rappers and fans. The homosocialization of intimacy in hip-hop, which encourages men to meet their emotional needs with other men at the expense of closeness to women, helps preserve rappers’ claim to heteronormativity in their eroticized relationship with male fans (Randolph 2022). Still, male rappers turn to homophobia towards fans who “jock” them to prevent the homolatency of their bonds from being read as homoerotic (Bailey 2013).

**D. Musical Authoritarianism and Protest Music (Political Crises stream)**

**Ali Cenk Gedik, “Turkish Popular Music Betwixt and Between Authoritarian-Neoliberalism and Neo-Fascism: The Musical Appearances of Neo-Ottomanism”**
The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has succeeded in making neo-Ottomanism both official and dominant ideologies and an important part of popular culture during the last 20 years in Turkey. Neo-Ottomanism has also accompanied the change from a parliamentary democracy to an authoritarian regime during this period. Recently, the gradual increase in coercive politics have narrowed down the discussions about the quality of the regime rather betwixt and between authoritarian populism and neo-fascism. Consequently, musical appearances of neo-Ottomanism has reached far beyond musical articulations such as the rise of mehter bands and the change of the ‘Funeral March’ of Chopin with an Islamic hymn for Turkish Military Bands. In addition to the repression of resisting musicians and banning the live music after 24.00 all over the country, canceling music festivals and concerts has become regular daily politics also related to neo-Ottomanism. Finally, we will try to discuss such musical appearances of neo-Ottomanism in Turkish popular music betwixt and between authoritarian-neoliberalism and neo-fascism based on ethnographic data, as well.

REFERENCES


Fiorenzo Palermo, “Zetazeroalfa and the Eternal Fascist Response to Crisis”

The Italian group Zetazeroalfa engaged in several rhetorical strategies in their work that articulated characteristics peculiar to what Umberto Eco described as "Eternal Fascism": a constellation of features that when present gives rise to a "fascist nebula." These features are identifiable in Zetazeroalfa’s choice of musical genres, which included styles often associated with dissent such as rock, punk, and ska, lyrical themes expressing reactionary impulses like the cult of tradition and the fear of difference, and in some of the rituals associated with their fandom—as for instance the “mattanza”, a performance of violence and machismo during live shows developed from the practice of moshing. The archetypal fascist articulation in Zetazeroalfa’s music is clearly in dialogue with a political, economic, and social crisis which affected Italy (as well as other Western European countries) in the last few decades and needs to be better understood.

The questions igniting this research therefore are: How did Zetaseroalfa's music articulate an eternal-fascist response to a sense of crisis? How did the band understand and adapt an eternal fascist response to their current political circumstances? And finally, what does this case study tell us about music and crisis more broadly?

Sepehr Pirasteh, “Pushing Against the Social Norms Through Different Ways of Creating Protest Music”

The death of 22-year-old Jina Mahsa Amini in police custody, Iran has faced a new political upheaval under the motto, “Women, Life, Freedom.” While international news coverage of these demonstrations has focused on women’s rights, the protestors have been explicitly demanding broader political changes encompassing freedom, justice, and democracy, in ways that recall
previous Iranian political movements. Based on the experience of having organized and participated in demonstrations in the diaspora and observed videos of demonstrations in Iran, this paper analyzes the use of voice and sound in these protests. First, protesters link past movements to the present through symbolic elements, poetic structures, and rhythms. They create affective resonances by setting certain words of chants in specific voice registers and by marching in place. They cross boundaries and push against social norms through strong language, forming a dialectical tension between themselves and security forces.

Second, I show that protest performances in Iran and its diaspora have different characters due to vastly different legal frameworks. Protests at Iranian universities are presentational due to the risks of prosecution. In contrast, US protests among the Iranian diaspora are more participatory, due to the privilege of freedom of assembly. In both locations, the repetition of the formal and rhythmic structures of chants once used for the removal of the Shah in 1979 are repurposed to demand not only political change but also social change.

**Joanna Zienkiewicz, “Protest Music Against Right-Wing Populism: Alternative Responses to Crisis”**

Among many of today’s challenges, we face the rise of right-wing populism, which pits ‘good people’ against ‘corrupt elites’. As described by Benjamin Moffitt, populism gets its impetus from the perception of crisis, and simultaneously induces crisis through dramatization and performance. Popular music is at times involved in this performance, but so far, its role in resisting populism has been under-researched. In my presentation, I analyze the multimodal strategies of resisting right-wing populism as expressed in protest music based on examples from Poland.

In 2015, a right-wing populist party, Law and Justice (PiS) won the Polish elections. Since then, widespread opposition to its policies manifests in movements, which often protest with song and dance. By now, over 80 songs were written to challenge PiS’ rule, diverse anti-PiS playlists were created, and live music is still performed during street protests. As I will show, such protest music reverses populist rhetoric, presenting an alternative understanding and response to today’s crises. By showing how social divides can be complicated, protest music has the potential to undermine the right-wing populist myth that all contemporary social grievances can be directed against ‘elites’ from the ‘ideological left’.

**E. Media economies (Economic Crises stream)**

**Meng Yao, “Platform Economy, Pan Entertainment and OST Production in Film and TV”**

This paper contributes to the conference theme “Economic Crises” by investigating the unreasonable payment and unemployment conditions faced by music producers in the Chinese film and TV OST industry. In China, "film and TV OST" （影视OST）refers to the score and original soundtrack written for a movie or TV series. In 2019, the OST of the series “The Untamed” set a record for digital album sales in QQmusic with annual sales of 40.14 million. The issues are traced to Tencent Group establishing the "Film, TV+Music" Alliance as a strategy in 2018, producing numerous OST works with over 100 million plays each song. This paper
examines how the Tencent Group develop and incubate film and TV OST works by relying on subsidiaries (film and TV, karaoke, music and so on) and alliances with film and TV companies. Through semi-structured interviews with OST producers and platform-side practitioners, this paper explores the difficulties experienced by composers and musicians as platforms leverage their advantages to channel the traffic generated by film and TV OST to their in-group subsidiaries, establishing a closed loop of content consumption and maximising their profits.

Elena Razlogova, “From ‘Save WFMU’ to ‘WWOZ in Exile’: Mutual Aid in U.S. Independent Music Radio”

In 1990, sued by four neighboring stations and facing astronomical legal fees, DJs from a freeform New Jersey college station WFMU drew on their relationships with musicians to organize legal fund benefits at such diverse venues as avant-garde The Kitchen, anarchist ABC No Rio, punk CBGB, and Afro-Latin SOB’s (Sounds of Brazil). Fifteen years later, Hurricane Katrina knocked out WWOZ, a New Orleans community station that aired an eclectic mix of jazz, R&B, Cajun, and Caribbean music. WFMU shared its online streams with WWOZ for six weeks, until it went back on the air.

While 1960s freeform radio is well documented, scholars have paid little attention to its transformation from the 1970s on. Drawing on the above and other cases, this paper will show how freeform DJs built social connections across music scenes, far beyond the oft-mentioned alternative rock. Into the twenty-first century, independent radio and internet stations have used their common commitment to sonic diversity to adopt collective, inter-institutional mutual aid strategies, to use an anarchist concept coined by Peter Kropotkin. These support networks provide an economic model of solidarity and survival for alternative media, crucial for the centralized music streaming present.


**Edmond Tsang, “The Transformation of Recording Studios in Hong Kong after the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997”**

The Cantopop market has shrunk since the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Its position has been replaced by Mandapop and K-pop. Due to the shrinkage of the market, international music companies and local big labels have become increasingly conservative, making significantly cuts in the budgets for music productions, and thereby leading to the closure of various large recording studios. Owing to advancement in digital technologies, a number of small project studios, which have been established in Hong Kong in recent years, have started to make significant contributions to Cantopop development. This study attempts to understand the transformation of recording studios in Hong Kong, with particular emphasis on how digital technologies provide suitable soil for the growth of different kinds of project studios. In light of the transformation, this paper aims to answer the following questions:

1) How did technological development contribute to the rise of project studios?
2) What are the differences between the traditional large recording studios and the project studios?
3) How did the project studios lead to a new musical landscape in Hong Kong?

New insights are offered based on interviews with owners and stakeholders of such studios.

**Pablo Infante-Amate, “Patronage and the Nature of the Popular Music Economy in Equatorial Guinea”**

Recent ethnographies have explored the transformations taking place in African music industries under the influence of neoliberalism and the introduction of digital technologies and the internet. Yet in highlighting differences between Africa and the Western music industry, this literature risks downplaying Africa’s internal trajectories and giving the impression that all African music industries are being steadily (if unevenly) incorporated into global capitalism. This paper offers a contrasting case through an ethnography of the popular music economy in Equatorial Guinea—an oil-rich, long-standing authoritarian state. In Equatorial Guinea, music is rarely considered a commodity to be exchanged in an abstract “industry,” but a medium used by the local political elites to boost their individual prestige and by musicians to enter networks of patronage and secure access to the spectacular revenues generated by the recent oil boom. Drawing on 12 months of fieldwork, I argue that the local music economy is best understood not through theories of market exchange, but through the longue durée of regional logics of wealth and power accumulation. The paper ultimately calls for a wider definition of the music industry: one that avoids teleologies and presuppositions about the impact of digital capitalism on music exchange across the world.