

AMMS



SCHOOL OF
MUSIC

American Musicological Society
Capital Chapter
Spring 2023 Meeting

University of Maryland
School of Music
Saturday, April 22, 2023

PROGRAM

- 8:30 a.m. Welcome / Registration / Dues / Refreshments
- 9:00 a.m. **Session I** (Barbara Hagg-Huglo, chair)
 - **Avery Faust**: “Musical Imagery of Queen Anne”
 - **Jackson Mann**: “Form and Appropriation: The Place of IWW Contrafacta in the Musico-Cultural History of the U.S. Trade Union Movement”
- 10:15 a.m. **Session II: Irving Lowens Award for Student Research** (Gretchen Carlson, chair)
 - **Shuang Wang**: “Kitsch in Alien Fantasies: Western Connotations in Creating Sci-Fi Musical Instruments”
 - **Nathaniel Harrell**: “Vaughan Williams’s *Sea Symphony*: An Ecomusicological Perspective”
 - **Calvin Evans Jr.**: “Hidden Figures in Film Music: Examining the Lives and Work of William Grant Still and William Vodery”
- 11:45 a.m. Lowens Award Voting & Lunch Break
- 1:15 p.m. **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**
Kip Lornell: “Drop the Bomb: DC’s Vernacular Music Scene in the Early 1980s”
- 2:30 p.m. **Session III** (Olga Haldey, chair)
 - **Nicole Steinberg**: “Witness Bearing in Holocaust Musical Presentation: The ‘(un)readability’ of Mieczyslaw Weinberg’s Opera *The Passenger*”
 - **Justin Mueller**: “Aribert Reimann’s *Lear* as Radical Adaptation”
 - **Laurie McManus**: “Processing Trauma Sonically in Ari Aster’s *Midsommar* (2019): The Role of Harmonic Signifiers and Diegetic Vocality”
- 4:15 p.m. Business Meeting / Elections / Lowens Award Results

With thanks to the School of Music and Division of Musicology & Ethnomusicology of the University of Maryland for hosting the meeting and for providing breakfast and lunch.

SESSION I, PAPER 1 (9:00 a.m.)

Musical Imagery of Queen Anne

Avery Faust

Queen Anne (1665–1714) of England reigned from 1702 (the death of William III) until her death in 1714. Her reign was a period filled with tension: the two-party system of the Whigs and Tories increased religious divisions, the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714) created discord throughout Europe, the political landscape shifted with the joining of Scotland and England with the Acts of Union (1707), and there was concern over who would succeed Anne as none of her children survived to adulthood. Though the queen was pregnant seventeen times, she only had five live births, all of whom died by age eleven. As a female monarch whose main purpose was to produce an heir, this lack of living children was serious, especially after a series of Jacobite rebellions. Furthermore, she was also regularly ill. She suffered from gout which caused her to be obese and have increasing mobility issues. And yet, despite her reality of being childless, ill, and burdened with many political conflicts, Anne was perceived as a strong, healthy, and fertile ruler at the time.

This paper explains how popular music during Queen Anne’s reign helped to create a pleasing image of her to the public. By comparing the queen to war goddesses and nature in music, composers created a strong, healthy, and positive image of Anne. Currently, there is not much musicological scholarship on Queen Anne or on how popular music functioned as propaganda. The musical evidence of Queen Anne’s musical image in this paper comes from the popular, printed sources of Thomas D’Urfey’s *Wit and Mirth* (1719) as well as two of John Eccles’s odes: *Inspire Us Genius of the Day* (1703) and *Awake Harmonious Pow’rs* (1704).

In popular music, Queen Anne is often compared to the goddess Pallas Athena, a tradition that started with Anne’s coronation medal which pictured Pallas Athena about to strike a monster. This comparison is made musically in the song “Firm as a Rock” from John Eccles’s 1703 collection *Inspire Us Genius of the Day*. Being depicted as Athena, the goddess of war, shows Anne as a fierce warrior and protector of Britain during the war. This collection was printed and purchased by English citizens, which led to her image as a warrior in citizens’ mind. Other musical works compare Anne to aspects of nature, for example spring overcoming winter. This metaphor is present in Eccles’s *Awake Harmonious Pow’rs* (1704). This collection used a nature metaphor to explain how England, led by Anne, would be triumphant over France in the War of Spanish Succession. This could also be understood as England experiencing a prosperous golden era now that Anne is queen. These popular songs that were distributed used these comparisons to create a specific image of Anne to the general population of England. Strategically comparing her to war goddesses and nature strengthened her position as a well-liked queen who was strong and healthy despite her illness and fertility issues.

SESSION I, PAPER 2 (9:30 a.m.)

Form and Appropriation: The Place of IWW Contrafacta in
the Musico-Cultural History of the U.S. Trade Union Movement

Jackson Mann

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is a United States-based international, revolutionary, industrial trade union. First founded in 1905, the Union expanded rapidly and came to dominate the U.S. trade union and socialist movements during the following decade. One of the most

lasting legacies of this period of dynamism was the Union's music. Especially between 1909, when the IWW produced the first edition of its most famous cultural publication, the *Little Red Songbook* (LRS), and 1917, the Union was host to a lively practice of contrafacta, especially of the canon of Protestant hymnody. The music of the Union has often been articulated as the musico-cultural setting stone of the 20th-century U.S. revolutionary working class. For example, in his forward to the centennial edition of Philip S. Foner's classic collection of the letters of IWW musician Joe Hill, guitarist Tom Morello claims that "without Joe Hill, there's no Woody Guthrie, no Dylan," following these two with a list of late-20th-century pop groups with more or less oppositional politics, including his own explicitly socialist rap-metal crossover band, Rage Against The Machine. The IWW here serves a key historiographical role as the genesis of "the modern age," since the Union "invented" one of the defining musical forms of the 20th century, the "political protest song." However, a more careful analysis of the Union's contrafacta reveals that its musical life was as much a cultural death as it was a birth. By putting the IWW's practice of contrafacta in dialogue with the contrafacta produced by the late-19th century U.S. trade union movement, this paper will argue that the IWW's musico-literary practice represents a musico-cultural transition period between the explicitly Christian cultural life of post-Bellum U.S. trade unions and the increasingly non-religious character of U.S. trade union culture post-1917.

SESSION II, PAPER 1 (10:15 a.m.)

Kitsch in Alien Fantasies: Western Connotations in Creating Sci-Fi Musical Instruments

Shuang Wang

In sci-fi series, the emergence of custom-made imaginary musical instruments, such as Kloo Horn (*Star Wars*), Ka'athyra (*Star Trek*), Baliset (*Dune*), and Circular Drum (*Avatar*), enriches the plot settings and storylines, as well as portrays amusing combinations of reality and fantasy. Although the instrumental interpretations from the mid-twentieth century until now vary and have been continuously changing due to developing technologies, they still fall into a cliché pattern of imitating existing instruments. In this paper, I argue that the sci-fi instrumentality has been fixed on a Western-centric mentality through the lens of Hollywood-guided industrial production. Whether these sci-fi instruments and musical civilizations are "advanced" or not is deeply solidified by a Western hegemonic approach of examining world cultures in reality. To demonstrate, I have done an illustrated comparative study between sci-fi instruments and paintings of instruments from the medieval period, such as those in the margins of the Luttrell Psalter and in the panels of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. This analysis unpacks the logical and philosophical understanding of sci-fi instruments derived from the Western culture. Building on this rationale and drawing from Stuart Hall's representation theory, I delve further into case studies of instruments mentioned above from popular franchises. In their presentations, alien races aiming for "high-class" showcase music inspired by Western classical music; in contrast, relatively primitive beings play non-Western music similar to the depiction of Orientalism as conceptualized by Edward Said. By tracing the filmographic evolution of instrumental appearances and timbres, this paper examines the mediation of sci-fi instruments between creators and targeted audiences with a critical view on the global impact of their cultural appropriation.

SESSION II, PAPER 2 (10:45 a.m.)

Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony*: An Ecomusicological Perspective

Nathaniel Harrell

The day after the premiere of Ralph Vaughan Williams's first symphony in 1910, a critic writing for the *Manchester Guardian* declared the work the finest piece of sea music that the English then possessed. The *Sea Symphony*'s immediate success and subsequent influence on young British composers raises questions regarding Vaughan Williams's musical representation of the sea and, more broadly, how the symphony portrays nonhuman nature, or conceptions of a nature that is "out there," beyond humans. In this paper, I consider some of ways Vaughan Williams's symphony portrays the sea and nonhuman nature in relation to humans and suggest that the work can help inform contemporary understandings of those relations in musicology. Drawing from scholarship on Vaughan Williams as well as recent scholarship in the field of ecomusicology, I present original analyses of selected passages from Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony* to explore how the work offers critical reflection on present-day conceptions of nonhuman nature and human-nature relationships. I borrow Aaron Allen's recent understanding of an anthropocentric-ecocentric continuum as a framework for musical interpretation. Through this new approach, I demonstrate how Vaughan Williams's setting of Walt Whitman's poetry deconstructs traditional boundaries between the human and nonhuman in the listener's imagination, and how the integration of the orchestra, the voice, and transcendentalist rhetoric of Whitman's poetry communicates both a division and cooperation between the two perspectives. I show how the symphony effectively navigates a continuum between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, that its focus shifts from one to the other throughout, encouraging an experience of the work that is, like the sea itself, in constant motion.

SESSION II, PAPER 3 (11:15 a.m.)

Hidden Figures in Film Music: Examining the Lives and Work of
William Grant Still and William Vodery

Calvin Evans Jr.

This presentation highlights the musical contributions of William Grant Still and Will Vodery, who laid the foundation for a rich legacy of black composers, arrangers, and orchestrators in the visual media industry. The research presented establishes them as the first Black composers to work for a major motion picture studio. Archival documents from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University and the Rubenstein Library at Duke University reveal the studios, films, and musicians that both Vodery and Still had a major impact on yet were not given recognition. Vodery's experience as a prominent orchestrator for Broadway and Still's success composing for major orchestras gained Hollywood's attention and moved them to the West Coast. Will Vodery and William Grant Still went uncredited on historical films such as *Pennies from Heaven* (1936) and *The Ziegfeld Follies* (1945) and worked alongside celebrated composers Dmitri Tiomkin and Oscar Hammerstein.

The presence of manuscripts & contracts confirms that William Grant Still and Will Vodery were the first major African American composers working in the film music industry. The absence of information concerning their daily life working for multimedia shows signs of wanting to forget events like racism, which William Grant Still's daughter addressed in a personal correspondence. The lack of this type of information is common when researching African American musicians. Vodery and Still's

experience serving as musical directors, arrangers, and orchestrators for major film studios never presented them the opportunity to become lead composer of a film project. This differed from their European counterparts like Franz Waxman and Dmitri Tiomkin, whose careers spanned from concert pianists to radio directors and then shortly after landed them films like *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) and *Lost Horizon* (1937). Still and Vodery had to achieve major heights, like composing the first score by an African American to be performed by a major orchestra or becoming the most sought out Broadway orchestrator, before they received any attention from Hollywood.

Terence Blanchard, Herbie Hancock, Quincy Jones, Duke Ellington, and others have broken monumental ground and opened doors for Black film composers of the future. However, who gets the credit for pioneering these champions of film music? Will Vodery and William Grant Still's time as composers, orchestrators, arrangers, and musical directors for prominent film studios of the early 20th century provided African Americans composers of the future with an outline of how to find opportunities in the film scoring industry. Due to their contributions, we have seen an African American win an Oscar for Best Original Score, hold a position as Vice President of the Alliance for Woman Film Composers, and continue to contribute to the film scoring society. They have given hope to a generation of composers of African descent, and their impact is still relevant today.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS (1:15 p.m.)

Drop the Bomb: DC's Vernacular Music Scene in the Early 1980s

Kip Lornell

Between 1980 and 1985 in particular, go go music, bluegrass, and punk were vital forms of vernacular music in Washington, DC. These genres seemed to be everywhere in the city: on the radio, on the streets, and at dozens of venues. While all three can still be heard in the DMV, their impact has been far diminished since their salad days. Using video clips, this presentation will document the impact of these musics during this time period and muse as to their shift in popularity over the past forty years.

Kip Lornell has been teaching at GWU since 1992 and will be retiring at the end of the semester. He has been writing and researching various forms of American vernacular music over the past fifty years and since 1972 has published seventeen books and scores of articles, essays, and book chapters on topics ranging from African American gospel quartets, bluegrass, the Black fiddle and banjo tradition, and go go music, to a biography of Lead Belly (winner of a 1993 ASCAP—Deems Taylor book award). His work has been supported by grants from the NEH, NEA, and various arts agencies from Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

SESSION III, PAPER 1 (2:30 p.m.)

Witness Bearing in Holocaust Musical Presentation:
The "(un)readability" of Mieczyslaw Weinberg's Opera *The Passenger*

Nicole Steinberg

"Readability" in the field of critical literature studies has most often referred to a work's accessibility, or its ability to create understanding, empathy or inspiration from its subject's direct and indirect experiences. What is then "unreadable" cannot be accessed in such a way. In her 2017 book

Textual Silence: Unreadability and the Holocaust, philologist Jessica Lang posits that the “readability” of Holocaust texts is only measurable against the presence of the “unreadable,” a necessary inability to empathize, prompting a necessary re-examination of Holocaust memorialization. Though this methodological framework is generally applied solely to literary texts, two musicological studies of traumatic repertoire have already provided the foundations for its musical application. Amy Lynn Wlodarski has defined witness bearing in music as a specific genre transmitting both “texture of memory” and “texture of fact,” while Maria Cizmic has identified the ability of music to “convey to listeners the ways in which trauma can shape memory and temporality,” essentially prompting the empathy necessary in achieving readability.

This paper explores the readability and unreadability of Holocaust testimony in staged opera through the case study of Mieczyslaw Weinberg’s 1967 Holocaust opera *The Passenger*. *The Passenger* was adapted from the Polish novel of the same name written by journalist, WWII resistance fighter, and Auschwitz survivor Zofia Posmysz. It graphically depicts the horrors of Auschwitz, both psychological and physical, through two adversarial characters: Anna-Liese Franz, an SS Overseer, and Marta, a Polish prisoner. Though the opera was never performed publicly during his lifetime, Weinberg saw his score published in 1974 with a preamble by Dmitri Shostakovich praising its unique “appeal to memory.” The opera was performed for the first time in a concert version in 2006, before premiering in a fully realized staged production at the Bregenzer Festpiele in 2010. The 2010 production, under the direction of Sir David Pountney, has since travelled internationally as the sole staging of the work. Through an analysis of the composition, performance and reception of *The Passenger*, this paper will demonstrate that empathetic accessibility to Holocaust testimony is heightened through the adaptation of this work in the operatic medium. The act of bearing witness is intensified both aurally and visually, narrowing the divide between the readable and unreadable, for better or worse. *The Passenger*’s witness frame is an invaluable artistic example of remembrance and a resource for historical literacy. This paper will also demonstrate that the act of bearing witness imparts secondary traumatic response in participants and audiences, prompting further challenges and opportunities for artistic engagement.

SESSION III, PAPER 2 (3:00 p.m.)

Aribert Reimann’s *Lear* as Radical Adaptation

Justin Mueller

Jean Marsden has coined the term “radical adaptation” to refer to the drastic tendency taken by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers to adapt Shakespeare’s works in order to better align them with contemporary political, aesthetic, linguistic, and literary trends. This paper seeks to borrow and expand upon the term and argue for its applicability to contemporary opera adaptation—i.e., beyond the realm of Restoration theatre. In a “radical adaptation,” playwrights might rewrite characters, remove unwanted plot intricacies, or alter complex syntax that later audiences might find too cumbersome. Marsden suggests that these refashioned plays served as “emblems of social and political security” for later eras.

Using Aribert Reimann’s *Lear* (1978) as a case study, I explore Shakespeare’s oeuvre as a continued source for operatic projects in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. I focus on the opera’s socio-political origins in Cold War-era Germany and its ties to other politically inflected readings of *King Lear* being written and performed around that time. I then shift focus to the opera itself, exploring Reimann’s attempts to convey Shakespearean themes via post-tonal idioms and the various dramaturgical approaches to staging the opera, both during its premiere and in subsequent

revivals. When looked at in this light, Reimann's *Lear* demonstrates how the idea of "radical adaptation" did not end with the Restoration—nor does it need to be confined to works for the spoken stage. Broadening the term's applicability to encompass other forms of reinvention allows for a richer understanding not only of the source material and its enduring legacy, but of the ways in which twentieth- and twenty-first-century opera can continue to speak to modern socio-political and ethical concerns, even when adapting works whose origins are not necessarily equally contemporary in origin.

SESSION III, PAPER 3 (3:30 p.m.)

Processing Trauma Sonically in Ari Aster's *Midsommar* (2019):
The Role of Harmonic Signifiers and Diegetic Vocality

Laurie McManus

Director Ari Aster referred to his folk-horror film *Midsommar* as a "breakup movie," which follows the relationship of protagonist Dani (Florence Pugh) and her emotionally distant boyfriend Christian (Jack Reynor). However, the film begins, like so many art-house horror films from the past decade, with a different familial trauma. In the opening segment Dani loses both her sister and parents in a murder-suicide. In the wake of this tragedy, Christian reluctantly invites Dani to Sweden to study and participate in a mid-summer pagan festival that he has learned about from his anthropologist colleague Pelé. As Dani, Christian, and friends travel to rural Sweden and meet Pelé's Swedish cult-family, they discover violent sacrificial pagan rituals, and Dani herself is absorbed into the cult over the course of the film.

Bobby Krlic's soundtrack charts Dani's journey from traumatized orphan to newly received cult member. Her trauma is processed through both a string-heavy soundtrack and through the power of diegetic vocal screams, sobs, and breaths—elements blended in powerful scenes. In the traumatizing prelude, atonal string tone clusters wail like sirens to match her sobs while the lower bass articulates an ominous $\hat{5} - \flat\hat{5} - \hat{1}$ motive. As she explores the bright, cheerful Swedish cult and its esoteric buildings, the soundtrack strings adopt a lush post-Romantic harmonic language that evokes the magical sound world of Wagner and Mahler, particularly in their nature mode. Later, Dani processes trauma vocally with other women of the cult in a climactic scene with group breathing and screaming—a kind of feminine appropriation of what Michel Chion calls the "screaming point" of the film. Ultimately this diegetic vocality and string-heavy soundtrack combine in the finale. Here the motivic minor-key sigh from the traumatic bass is transformed into a Romantic G-flat major ascending $\hat{5} - \hat{6}$ motive, which codes the final sacrifice (of Christian) as cathartic. Thus, the soundtrack relies on harmonic signifiers of pain and nature as well as diegetic vocality to suggest the healing of Dani's trauma. This paper provides a case study on how recent horror films sonically manifest trauma in their narratives.