

# JOINT MEETING

*of the*

*Pacific-Southwest &  
Northern California Chapters of the  
American Musicological Society*

Saturday, May 2 to Sunday, May 3, 2015

Department of Music  
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo



# SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 2

Davidson Music Center, Room 218

**8:15 – 9:00 AM** Registration and Coffee

**9:00 – 10:30 AM** **Session 1:** Alexandra Monchick (CSU Northridge), Chair

Survival with Sight and Sound: Experiencing the Okinawan *Uta-Sanshin* Tradition  
Jessica Stankis (Allan Hancock College)

“Strad Fever” and Sherlock’s Violin  
Kristi Brown-Montesano (Colburn School of Performing Arts)

**10:30 – 10:45 AM** Break

**10:45 AM – 12:15 PM** **Session 2:** Amy Beal (UC Santa Cruz), Chair

Milton Babbitt’s Unspoken Jewish Identity  
Alison Maggart (USC)

Mass Classical: America, Accessibility, and the Atlanta School of Composers  
Kerry Brunson (CSU Long Beach)

**12:15 – 1:45 PM** Lunch

**1:45 – 2:15 PM** Chapter Business Meetings

**2:15 – 3:45 PM** **Session 3:** Alyson McLamore (Cal Poly SLO), Chair

“Doing His Bit”: Vaughan Williams’s Wartime Film Music  
Jaclyn Howerton (UC Riverside)

The “Independent Music ‘Formula’”: Licensing, Power, and Value in the Contemporary Film and Television Music Industry  
Breena Loraine (UCLA)

**3:45 – 4:00 PM** Break

**4:00 – 5:30 PM** **Session 4:** Joel Haney (CSU Bakersfield), Chair

Woody Guthrie as Schematic Composer, and the Musical Meanings of “This Land Is Your Land”  
Alfred Cramer (Pomona College)

Opera, Modernism and the Failure of Language  
Amy Bauer (UC Irvine)

## Sunday, May 3

Davidson Music Center, Room 218

**8:45 – 9:30 AM**      Registration and Coffee

**9:30 – 11:45 AM**      **Dahl Competition:** Danielle Stein (UCLA), Chair

“They’re freaks, they’re phenomena . . . but I can really sing”: Canonicity, Legibility, and the Politics of Music and Gender in Joan La Barbara’s *Cathing*  
Charissa Noble (UC Santa Cruz)

“The Magic and Crudeness of the Electronic World”: A Cyborg Reading of Laetitia Sonami’s *Lady’s Glove*  
Madison Heying (UC Santa Cruz)

Funding “Opera for the 80s and Beyond”: The Role of Impresarios in Creating a New American Repertory  
Sasha Metcalf (UC Santa Barbara)

**12:00 PM**              Announcement of Dahl Winner

## ABSTRACTS

### **Survival with Sight and Sound: Experiencing the Okinawan *Uta-Sanshin* Tradition**

Jessica Stankis (Allan Hancock College)

Okinawa-shima, the largest island of the Ryukyu archipelago, and the site of its ancient capital Shuri, has represented the southernmost prefecture of Japan since its annexation by the Meiji government in 1879. Dissolution of the Ryukyuan nobility in the nineteenth century caused displaced aristocrats to settle in the local provinces, resulting in the dissemination of traditional “classic” performing arts outside of Shuri. Coexisting with a spectrum of indigenous folk music traditions, the songs of Ryukyuan classical music celebrate the memory of court ritual and have become intertwined with Okinawan identity. Central to classical music performance is the *uta-sanshin* tradition—singing with the three-stringed snake-skin lute *sanshin*. In the devastating wake of the Second World War, *sanshin* craftsmanship and performance continues to signify rejuvenation and survival of the Okinawan soul in sight and sound.

Experiencing *uta-sanshin* through the tutelage and testimony of those who survived the clash of Japanese and American military forces in the historic battle of Okinawa is the subject of this paper. Through select recordings, photos, and live performance, my presentation offers a critical and personal account of my fieldwork in Okinawa as it relates to the theme of individual and societal healing. Drawing from the stories of my *sanshin* teachers and meeting with the aged National Treasure Masao Shimabukuro, I convey *uta-sanshin* performance and *sanshin* craftsmanship in Okinawa as an expression of vulnerability and the healing process in one of the most heavily militarized locations on earth.

### **“Strad Fever” and Sherlock’s Violin**

Kristi Brown-Montesano (Colburn School of Performing Arts)

Why does Sherlock Holmes play the violin? Both the violin and its modern-day analog, the guitar, are still very much a part of Holmes’s image in contemporary film and television adaptations. Curiously, while most elements of the original Holmes connected obviously to author Arthur Conan Doyle’s life and associates, the motives behind Holmes’s passion for the violin (and for the Stradivarius in particular) remain obscure. Serious fans and experts—“Sherlockians”—have provided an impressive body of commentary on Holmes and music, but most of these studies are grounded on the quirky theory of Sherlock Holmes as a *real person*, bypassing questions of Doyle’s authorial motivation. Conversely, scholarship on Doyle offers few insights into Sherlock’s musicality, presumably because the Doyle had little interest in music and did not have close ties to professional musicians. Even the acknowledged literary precursors of Doyle’s “consulting detective”—Poe’s Dupin and Gaboriau’s Lecoq—are dead ends in terms of musical clues.

My investigation has turned up possible origins for Holmes’s violin, both fictional and non-fictional: the zealous—even cutthroat—interest in “Cremona” violins in England and Scotland; the brothers Alfred and Henry Holmes, the most famous British-born violinists during Doyle’s lifetime; the musical references in the “breakfast table” essays of Doyle’s literary hero, Oliver Wendell Holmes; the author and violin expert Charles Reade, a friend of Doyle’s uncle; Poe’s *Fall of the House of Usher*; and Hugh Conway’s “The Secret of the Stradavarius” (1881), a short story published in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, one of Doyle’s preferred journals. Finally, I will explore how the semiotics of the violin and music-making in the original Holmes stories have endured or been transformed in contemporary screen adaptations (*House M.D.*, *Sherlock*, *Elementary*), all of which signal dual aspects of three overarching categories: addiction/therapy, expertise/obsession, and intimacy/alienation.

## **Milton Babbitt's Unspoken Jewish Identity**

Alison Maggart (University of Southern California)

Milton Babbitt rarely spoke publicly about his Jewish heritage, even though he “regarded himself as Jewish and did not wish to be in any way evasive about being Jewish.”<sup>1</sup> Babbitt’s participation at the 1978 World Congress on Jewish Music is thus exceptional. In the roundtable “How does the Jewish Composer Relate to his Jewish Tradition?” Babbitt unsurprisingly affiliated himself Schoenberg.<sup>2</sup> After recounting how in a “cosmic cataclysm” destiny brought he (from Mississippi) and Schoenberg (from Austria) to New York City in the same year, Babbitt revealed, “We were always, as Jews, very much aware of what created this condition.”<sup>3</sup> More than solidarity, however, Babbitt underscored the profound differences between American-Jewish and European-Jewish experiences, claiming, “We [American-Jews] were...affected very differently...by what had happened to us [Jews, in general].”<sup>4</sup>

This paper explores how Babbitt, like many American-Jews in the postwar period, fashioned his Jewish identity around Jewish individuals and religious beliefs that complemented his personal, secular worldviews. Ecumenicalism, he claimed, was in fact “very centrally Jewish.”<sup>5</sup> First, I describe how Babbitt, treating Schoenberg as Moses and the university as fortress, mapped the Jewish Exile narrative onto the plight of academic composers. Second, I argue that premises of kabbalistic exegesis, specifically the meaningfulness of linguistic and numerical interrelationships, resonated with Babbitt’s referential aesthetics. Third, I examine *Glosses*, a work that (unusually) sets a religious text. The work’s three un-pitched vocalizations of “Lord” (1) realize the Jewish tradition wherein God, who in defying definition also resists signification; (2) gloss Schoenberg’s symbolic choral settings of “God”; and (3) reflect Jewish people’s history of being silenced.

## **Mass Classical: America, Accessibility, and the Atlanta School of Composers**

Kerry Brunson (California State University, Long Beach)

In his 2008 polemic against a perceived “softening” of modern music, Los Angeles Times music critic Mark Swed flexes his musical muscle by taking aim at Robert Spano and the Atlanta School of Composers. What classical music needs now, he asserts, is sharpening of atonal knives and a plunge into tempestuous oceans. Swed is quick to point to Spano and the Atlanta School as the tonal perpetrators, devoting the second half of the article to disparaging their aesthetic. His primary complaint stems from the belief that these composers write unchallenging music in order to cater to mass taste. As part of his mission upon joining the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as music director, Spano selected this group of composers to invest in over several years; his model includes premiering, repeating, recording, and touring their works. Spano contends that these composers are joined by distinct musical characteristics that represent both a generational and an aesthetic shift in contemporary art music.

Though Swed is an extreme example of the discourse, his comments nonetheless outline the central criticism that the Atlanta School of Composers face and illuminate the tenacious boundaries within classical music’s ever shrinking walls. I contend that this criticism not only applies to the Atlanta School’s assumed commodification of the art but also to their perceived threat to ontologies of classical music. In this paper I explore notions of accessibility as they emerged in the nineteenth century to distinguish between “high” and “low” classes of music and how the term is wielded in much the same way today to keep a firm grasp on the modern canon. I argue that Spano, through his living composer model, has created a sustainable prototype

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<sup>1</sup> Milton Babbitt, “Milton Babbitt,” in *The Music Makers*, ed. Denna Rosenburg and Bernard Rosenburg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 46-47.

<sup>2</sup> Milton Babbitt quoted in Judith Cohen, ed. *Proceedings of the World Congress on Jewish Music, Jerusalem, 1978* (Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature, 1982), 233–235.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 234–235.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

for repertoire building and community engagement within the arts. Not only does each of the Atlanta School composers enjoy several performances of their works annually, concerts at Atlanta's symphony hall featuring their music consistently and significantly outsell other classical events. I conclude that by embracing the global and popular music styles of the twenty-first century and incorporating distinct American themes into their works, these composers represent a new classical Americana.

### **“Doing His Bit”: Vaughan Williams’s Wartime Film Music**

Jaclyn Howerton (University of California, Riverside)

The British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams espoused a practical aesthetic, as he believed that composers must first address national concerns before reaching out to the international. Although too old to serve in the Armed Forces during the Second World War, Vaughan Williams was determined to serve his nation in its fight against fascism. Anxious for war work, he mentioned to his friend Arthur Benjamin that he would like to try his hand at film music. Benjamin contacted Muir Mathieson, the musical director of the wartime Ministry of Information, who quickly offered Vaughan Williams the opportunity to score the 1941 Michael Powell film, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. Shortly after, Vaughan Williams then scored the documentary-drama *Coastal Command*, a Crown Film Unit production made in 1942; it was directed and scripted by J.B. Holmes.

The men and women of the Coastal Command protected allied shipping from the Arctic Circle to the coast of West Africa, and from the Baltic Sea up to a thousand miles out into the Atlantic Ocean. The dramatic story created for the film consisted of re-enactments of everyday routines for the flying crews, tactical officers and ground staff of the RAF Coastal Command. Although there has been virtually no previous scholarship linking *Coastal Command* to the Sixth Symphony, musicologists have speculated on links between the symphony and another wartime film. This paper posits that the music for *Coastal Command* directly anticipated the general idiom and, in several instances, thematic material for Vaughan Williams’s Sixth Symphony, which he worked on throughout the Second World War. The research will examine and compare the musical phrasing and harmonic structuring between the audio and visual scores of both film score and symphony. In addition, this paper will track the history of revisions to both the film score and symphony as well as the editorial notes of Vaughan Williams’s wartime views on his music.

### **The “Independent Music ‘Formula’”: Licensing, Power, and Value in the Contemporary Film and Television Music Industry**

Breena Loraine (University of California, Los Angeles)

Since the 1980s, economic, political, and cultural values of neoliberal capitalism have contributed to a paradigm shift in cultural taste, which dismantles society’s taboos around the “sell-out” artist. Although some might still hold onto the thought of a pure art form unadulterated by commercial culture, most have come to appreciate—and in some cases to champion—the use of music by their favorite artists in diverse outlets, even major Hollywood studio productions. Meanwhile, increased ease in clearing copyrights and limited music budgets for most contemporary film and television projects have created a new business model particularly advantageous for independent musicians. In fact, the “independent music ‘formula,’” the use of music by undiscovered artists in television shows, has proven to be one of the most effective methods for “breaking” artists in recent years. As such, the role of the music supervisor, the individual responsible for selecting and/or clearing the rights to use preexisting music in audiovisual productions, has developed into a legitimate authority on taste and has been granted considerable creative freedom over the past decade.

While some musicians are successful at pitching music directly to supervisors, the one-stop music licensing shop has become the intermediary between most independent artists and supervisors. Licensing shops are responsible for procuring and organizing catalogues of musical works, which they later submit to supervisors. Although there are still power differences between independent artists and large music firms and publishing houses, by engaging in professional relationships with licensing shops, artists can minimize the distance between their position and that of decision makers in their field of production.

In this paper I argue that these hierarchical changes, coupled with ideologies of neoliberalism, have altered the film and television music industry, drastically impacting musicking. Drawing on work by Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, David Harvey, and others, as well as interviews and fieldwork conducted at a music licensing company, I examine issues of power and systems of value in order to identify cultural shifts. I also analyze stylistic trends in musical works to theorize the implications of the “independent music ‘formula’” in order to fill a dearth in scholarship.

### **Woody Guthrie as Schematic Composer, and the Musical Meanings of “This Land Is Your Land”**

Alfred Cramer (Pomona College)

It is widely known that Woody Guthrie composed “This Land is Your Land” (1940-44) in response to Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America” (1939), and that he chose as the tune either “When the World’s on Fire” or “Little Darling, Pal of Mine,” both of which he probably heard in recordings made in 1930 and 1929, respectively, by the Carter Family. Authors who have studied this constellation of songs have tended to discuss the political, ideological, and indeed religious connections and contrasts between “This Land Is Your Land” and “God Bless America” in terms of the kinds of verbal pictures they paint. But even if one grants that “This Land is Your Land” is relatively simple, musically speaking, it is not merely a verbal statement. As a song it gains power—musical power—from a network of elements involving rhetoric, allusion, and compositional structure.

I begin by correcting the accepted notion that “This Land” borrows musical material from the Carter songs and verbal material from “God Bless America.” In fact, “This Land” alludes musically to “God Bless America” quite clearly, especially to the latter’s seldom-heard verse. Thus it is not difficult to read “This Land” as a song that parodistically points out “God Bless America”’s commonalities with the Carter Family’s songs; yet I prefer to cast the song as an instance of composition using what Gjerdingen (2007) calls “schemata”—commonplace musical patterns that exist primarily as cognitive structures learned and ingrained by composers, other practicing musicians, and experienced listeners.

Guthrie’s compositional practice was schematic; notwithstanding his reputation, he rarely borrowed a tune wholesale. As a schematic vehicle for words, the tune of “This Land,” together with its harmonic implications, has had much to do with its becoming an anthem (in the popular-music sense of the word). Nevertheless, drawing on linguistic theories of prosody and discourse and a comparison of recordings by Guthrie and by Pete Seeger, I argue that Guthrie saw his song less as an anthem than as an entry in a conversation.

### **Opera, Modernism and the Failure of Language**

Amy Bauer (University of California, Irvine)

Andrew Bowie’s *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity* (Cambridge, 2007) calls for a philosophy that rather than speaking ‘of’ music, emerges ‘from’ it, one that takes music’s expressive, symbolic and non-representational resources seriously as challenges to philosophy. That music’s philosophy must be couched in linguistic terms proves a major obstacle to Bowie’s goal; how music might help philosophy retrieve something it has lost remains an open question. I offer radically different answers to this query in a survey of three modern operas that flip music’s subservient relation to representational language.

Claude Vivier’s *Prologue pour Marco Polo* (1981) takes a historical symbol of cosmopolitan travel and adventure and focuses on his human loneliness and isolation. Our incomprehension signals Polo’s struggle, for he speaks an invented language that forecloses understanding, and eventually seeks release through a spectrally-enhanced “voice of God, almost the voice of madness.” The plot of Salvatore Sciarrino’s *Luci mie traditrici* (1996–98) reflects the most flagrant melodrama, moving swiftly from professions of eternal love to the brutal murder of a Duchess, her lover and the servant who betrayed them. Yet passionate dialogues are conducted in short, stunted recitative that barely rises above a whisper, while a 20-piece ensemble supplies ambient punctuation that hovers between noise and tone. Ligeti’s “anti-anti-opera” *Le Grand Macabre* (1974–

77; rev. 1996) draws on a faux medieval mystery play set in the mythical Brueghelland on the eve of its destruction, and features mad arias, nonsensical battles, and ear-splitting screams.

In *Luci*'s subdued aesthetic, music quietly wrests control over text. By contrast, *Prologue* and *Macabre* question the libretto as not only a site of stable meaning but as a discourse intelligible as language. What links all three works is a modernist reading of opera's historical role in liberating music from the chains of verbal sense. Each work restages the traumatic point at which representation breaks down, and what is sayable gives way to what is unsayable, and irreducible to nonmusical expression. By performing the failure of language, each invokes an ethics of the particular, a musical discourse that "speaks" in place of a verbal text.

**"They're freaks, they're phenomena . . . but I can really sing": Canonicity, Legibility, and the Politics of Music and Gender in Joan La Barbara's *Cathing***

Charissa Noble (University of California, Santa Cruz)

Avant-garde vocalist, composer, and music critic, Joan La Barbara occupied a central role in late twentieth-century American experimentalism. Her early *musique concrète* piece *Cathing* (1977) features both her voice and that of Cathy Berberian, purported originator of extended vocal techniques. In a striking commentary, *Cathing* presents an excerpt of Berberian declaring in an interview that those who use extended vocal techniques are: ". . . freaks, they're phenomena, what they used to call me. But it wasn't really true in my case because I can really sing. . ."

Considering that scholarship on extended vocal techniques typically positions Berberian as founder, La Barbara's illumination of this provocative interview reveals a significant historical oversight surrounding Berberian's renunciation of extended vocality and La Barbara's musical response. This paper investigates the social-historical context of *Cathing* and its attendant gender issues. Drawing from the work of Judith Butler and Suzanne Cusick, I posit that Berberian's identification as a "singer" circumscribed her legibility as a musician due to cultural confluences of vocal and gender norms.

By contrast, the electronic treatment of musical texture and vocal timbre in *Cathing* substantiates La Barbara's claim of voice as "instrumental." By continually blurring the line between "human" and "technological" sound, *Cathing* challenges assumptions about the embodied nature of the voice through the rhetoric of instrumentalism and technology. This constantly shifting electronic treatment of both voices presents a sonic environment that subverts gender and vocal norms, and invites transformational possibility.

**"The Magic and Crudeness of the Electronic World": A Cyborg Reading of Laetitia Sonami's *Lady's Glove***

Madison Heying (University of California, Santa Cruz)

Composer and performance artist Laetitia Sonami is primarily associated with the *Lady's Glove*, an elbow-length glove embroidered with sensors that allow her to synthesize and manipulate sounds in real time. In performance, Sonami creates aural collages of whirring mechanic noise and static; the synthesized soundscape along with Sonami's controlled movement and her wire-laden glove give the impression that the figure performing is not entirely human, but some futuristic melding of human and machine.

This relates Sonami's work to the notion of the cyborg as developed by feminist scholar and biologist Donna Haraway. She defined a cyborg as an imaginative cybernetic hybrid of machine and organism constituted by social reality, science fiction, and irony. Haraway was particularly influenced by the theories of cybernetics—the study of systems—proposed by anthropologists Gregory Bateson who demonstrated the fluid boundaries between the "self" and its environment. The cyborg complicates Western hierarchical notions of the autonomous self because, as Susan McClary highlights, "it is unclear who makes and who is being made in the relation between human and machine."

The cyborg framework provides the means by which to analyze the musical and social implications of the merging of Sonami's body with technology to produce collages of otherworldly synthesized sound. In published and personal interviews Sonami explains that the *Lady's Glove* has shaped her compositional process from her gestures to the sounds synthesized. She exploits this influence by strategically establishing a



performance environment that is intentionally flexible; she considers her compositions “playing fields” that she explores in real-time. This requires absolute and precise knowledge of the glove’s presets, yet absolute willingness to change her piece “on the fly” and let the audience, environment, or *the glove* to suggest the next sound or gesture. Thus, her compositions attest to the uncanny ability of technology to influence human creation. Ultimately, Sonami’s work presents a radical mode of musical composition and performance: by allowing her pieces to evolve and respond to different performing environments, rather than creating a musical *object* she performs a cybernetic *relationship* between herself, the glove, and her audience.

### **Funding “Opera for the 80s and Beyond”: The Role of Impresarios in Creating a New American Repertory**

Sasha Metcalf (University of California, Santa Barbara)

In 1982, Howard Klein, arts director for the Rockefeller Foundation, declared, “Most American opera companies are about stars performing a limited repertory of established works, not in contributing to the development of a living art form.” He and other arts professionals from the National Endowment for the Arts and OPERA America expressed concern with the scarcity of new American operas and the stagnation of standard European repertory. Consequently, these organizations allocated an unprecedented amount of funding in the 1980s to new music-theater collaborations. OPERA America’s resulting program, “Opera for the 80s and Beyond” (OFTEAB), sought to expand the horizons of general directors, encouraging innovation with contemporary artists. This paper shows how a confluence of risk-taking impresarios and philanthropic institutions, specifically their support of Philip Glass, changed the American operatic landscape.

I focus on two influential directors, Harvey Lichtenstein at Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and David Gockley at Houston Grand Opera (HGO). Each shaped funding decisions at their respective institutions and as impresarios with established records of advocating a broader conception of American opera, they were frequently invited to participate in OFTEAB meetings. They promoted Glass in particular, believing his collaborative associations with avant-garde theater could revitalize American opera. They lauded Glass’s synthesis of popular and high art, noting that it attracted younger audiences and led to sold-out performances. The aesthetic frameworks that sustained their agendas were as important in shaping public perceptions about Glass as anything the composer said about himself. Under Lichtenstein’s direction, BAM presented Glass operas *Satyagraha* (1980) and *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) through the trend-setting Next Wave series of experimental dance, theater, and music. Gockley forged alliances transnationally through co-productions of Glass operas: *Akhnaten* (1984) and *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* (1988). Gockley’s successful marketing campaigns, including museum exhibitions and film screenings, attracted new audiences to HGO. Lichtenstein and Gockley caught the attention of other U.S. opera administrators, who then attended several of these operas via OFTEAB exploration fellowships. Drawing from interviews, meeting minutes, and correspondence, I uncover an institutional history heretofore absent from narratives of late twentieth-century American opera.