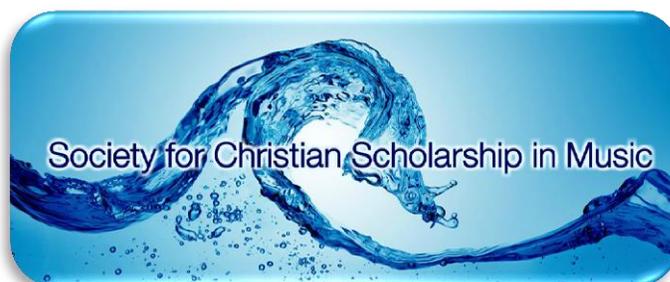


SCSM

NEWSLETTER



From the President

Stephen A. Crist

What does Christianity have to do with research in music? That question was on the minds of a handful of scholars when the seeds of the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music were planted early in 2002. Later that year, at a reception during the joint meeting of the American Musicological Society and the Society for Music Theory, this core group learned to its delight that many researchers were interested in exploring the intersections of faith and scholarship. Shortly thereafter, plans were made to inaugurate this work by holding the first annual meeting at the University of Pennsylvania. In the intervening decade, the SCSM has provided a place for scholars to pursue modes of musical inquiry informed by theology, liturgy, and praxis. Our conferences and receptions have also fostered a network of personal friendships that many have found to be deeply encouraging.

At this point in our growth it seems especially important to look outward. Our constitution affirms that "we are an ecumenical association, reflecting the worldwide diversity of Christian traditions, and seeking to learn from scholars outside those traditions" (scsmusic.org). We sincerely hope that all who are interested in our

mission of exploring "the connections between Christian faith and the study of music as an academic discipline" will feel warmly welcomed, without exception. The scholarly tapestry we are weaving, and the discourses we are developing, will be enriched by contributions from the broadest possible spectrum of individuals—people of all denominations (or none) and of all genders and ethnicities.

It is a singular pleasure to mark the launch of this *Newsletter*, our Society's first publication venture. We envision it as an extension of our receptions and annual meetings, providing a durable vehicle for communication. The type of publication it ultimately becomes will depend to some extent on you. We want to learn of your scholarly accomplishments and career transitions; the books, articles, blogs, and other media that have challenged and encouraged you; conferences that might be of interest to our membership; and other bits of news. We also want to provide opportunities for productive exchanges of viewpoints on vital issues. And we would like to hear from you about what else you would like to see in future issues of your *Newsletter*.

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In addition to attending events and contributing to the *Newsletter*, there are two specific ways you can help as we continue to move forward. First, point people to our website—scsmusic.org—and let them know we're here. Second, become a contributing member. Our dues are quite modest—only \$20 per year—but we rely on them to defray the costs of doing business and to allow us to award a cash prize at the annual meeting for the most distinguished graduate student paper. For details about how to join or renew your membership, click "Join" on our website.

The SCSM Publications Committee (Mark Peters, Andrew Shenton, Chelle Stearns, Timothy Steele, and

myself) has fostered a series of discussions over the past couple of years about how and when we might begin disseminating the results of our research and reflection in print and online. I especially wish to thank Mark Peters for his leadership of this committee, and welcome him to his new role as founding editor of the *SCSM Newsletter*.



Stephen A. Crist is president of the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music and associate professor of music history at Emory University.

Reflection: The Arts in Christian Perspective Today

Jeremy Begbie

The advantage of getting beyond fifty is that you become wise. Or at least, that is the way some others choose to treat you. And for some reason, possessing an English accent in the midst of a college in North Carolina adds an extra frisson of wisdom denied to those of mere American ancestry. All this is ridiculous, of course. Any wisdom I possess after about thirty years' involvement in the "theology and the arts" arena has come as a gift — through numerous conversations and friendships, and through the penetrating insights of several key authors. Acknowledging that immense debt to others, I offer just three broad comments on the current "state of play" regarding Christian reflection on the arts.

First, there needs to be gratitude. When I initially put my toe in the Christianity and arts river as a young musician in the 1980s, there was relatively little literature to help me, and what was available tended to follow fairly discrete traditions. I recall three main currents in those

days: the Roman Catholic (drawing on Jacques Maritain, Karl Rahner, and others), the liberal Protestant (looking especially to Paul Tillich), and the Dutch Neo-Calvinist (Hans Rookmaaker and Calvin Seerveld, with Nicholas Wolterstorff sitting a little to one side). Serious dialogue between these currents seemed relatively rare, and the overall readership fairly small. Today the situation is very different. Books, articles, and blogs on theology and the arts have multiplied exponentially, and the various traditions converse and mingle freely, often pulling others into the mix: nowadays artistic Reformed evangelicals are as likely to get their inspiration from Roman Catholics like Hans Urs von Balthasar and Henri de Lubac as they are from Rookmaaker or Seerveld. This burgeoning and criss-crossing of perspectives has undoubtedly borne immense fruit.

Having said this—and this is my second comment—as far as serious Christian scholarship is concerned, there is a huge amount yet to be done when it comes to music. Scan the courses available at the many institutions now offering "theology and arts" and the accent will very likely fall on imaginative literature and visual art of the last five hundred years or so. (Indeed, I have often found painting being treated as a kind of paradigm of "the arts"; visual ways of understanding artistic representation, for example, are often presumed to be the only ones available to us.) To be sure, drama is now attracting new interest—especially in relation to Scripture—and there have been some fine recent studies of faith and architecture. Film and theology is also an expanding field. But, with some notable exceptions, music is still lagging behind.

There are various reasons for this, among them the sheer difficulty of using words to speak about something that so quickly eludes language (as George Steiner writes,



“In the face of music, the wonders of language are also its frustrations.”¹). It is also notoriously hard to explain how music can be “meaningful,” since compared to language it seems so abstract, so semantically fluid.

Nonetheless, whatever the difficulties, there is something of a gap here which surely needs to be filled. And this is why a body such as the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music is so important. Through its efforts, along with other key initiatives, the possibility of developing rigorous and fertile scholarly work at the interface of theology and music now lies before us. We are already witnessing publications of striking originality from Christian scholars. In at least some “secular” institutions of music theory and musicology there is a new openness to theological matters and a growing recognition that the Christian faith offers intellectual resources of considerable depth and sophistication. And, not least, there are signs that contemporary theologians are beginning to see music as a field worthy of sustained attention.

A third comment. The potential of this fresh interest in the integration of faith and music can only be realized, I believe, if we are prepared to exercise a little courage – above all, the courage to be “faith-specific.” This could sound as if I am encouraging some kind of sectarianism or narrowness of mind, so I should explain what I have in mind.

Much current music theory and musicology has been marked by a passion to avoid abstraction: rather than speak of “music” in general we are told we need to make clear *what* music we are dealing with, *who* is making it, *who* is hearing it, in *what* circumstances, and with *what* interests. This stress on concrete specificity can doubtless be overplayed but its central concern is surely to be welcomed. The puzzling thing is that when it comes to theological matters, these same scholars – and, I am afraid to say, some who engage theology and music – seem to relinquish this concern with specificity. Terms such as “the transcendent” or “the spiritual” begin to be used liberally, and often in ways that bear little relation, if any, to the convictions and practices of particular people of particular faith traditions. Part of the concern here is to avoid putting off the agnostic or atheist by appealing prematurely to specific doctrines, creeds, and so forth. Undoubtedly, we need to be sensitive to the different kinds of language appropriate to different stages of a discussion. The danger, however, is that in the interests of good relations and intellectual respectability Christians will surrender their core confessions and make some *other* set of axioms drawn from elsewhere more foundational (and in practice, this often means those from the contemporary university). Attractive as this might seem, in the long run everyone loses out – and especially those

who are looking for intellectual rigor. The fact that SCSM declares itself specifically Christian in orientation is surely one of its great strengths – not because this indicates a refusal to engage or dialogue with non-Christians, but because it signals a reluctance to take refuge in some general but ultimately distorting concept such as “religion,” “the other,” or whatever. When SCSM is doing its job properly it will dare to believe that the particular commitments and traditions of this faith can provide unique and generative resources of inestimable value to the world of music scholarship. If it relinquishes that confidence, I suggest, it will lose its potency and promise.

One of my favorite poets recently offered a music-flavored reflection on the postmodern condition. In a culture enraptured with multiple voices and melodies, all jostling for attention, he asks: “does a love of one voice hear more or less?”² That, I would suggest, is the most important question the Christian scholar at large in the arts needs to keep in mind in the years to come.

Notes

¹ George Steiner, *Errata: An Examined Life* (London: Phoenix, 1997), 65.

² From “Motet,” in Micheal O’Siadhail, *Hail! Madam Jazz: New and Selected Poems* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1992), 123.

Some recent writings on theology and the arts

Begbie, Jeremy S. *Music, Modernity and God: Essays in Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming (2014).

Dyrness, William A. *Poetic Theology: God and the Poetics of Everyday Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.

Gorringer, Timothy. *Earthly Visions: Theology and the Challenges of Art*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011.

Jacobsen, Eric O. *The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012.

Jeffrey, David L., and Gregory Maillet. *Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.

Jeremy Begbie is Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology at Duke University and served as keynote speaker for the SCSM’s 2013 annual meeting at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

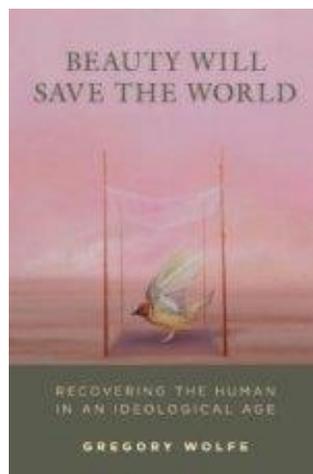
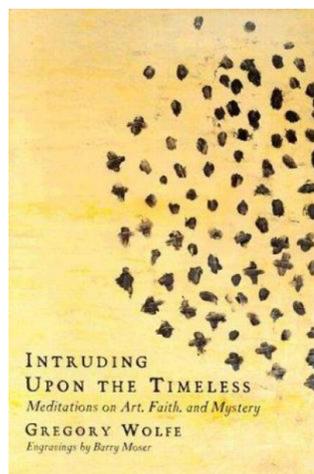
Resources on the Arts in Christian Perspective: Gregory Wolfe Mark Peters

Editor's note: This column, planned as a regular feature in the *SCSM Newsletter*, seeks to discuss a wide array of resources that address the arts in Christian perspective. It is my hope that this will introduce readers to resources they might not already know, highlight exemplary writings on the arts in Christian perspective, and provide a context for the SCSM's ongoing discussions of Christian perspectives on music scholarship.

Furthermore, by discussing a wide variety of such writings—particularly in the context of leading scholars' reflections on the arts in Christian perspective, such as the one by Jeremy Begbie that appears in this issue—the column seeks to represent both the diversity and the unity of Christian perspectives on the arts; that is, to recognize that there is no single Christian Perspective on the Arts, but rather a wealth of diverse voices across cultures, time, and different Christian traditions that speak into this issue, and that these many voices are best considered in dialogue with each other.

.....
Incarnation. Beauty. Mystery. Truth. Human. Imagination. Creation. Culture. Transcendence. Wonder. Grace.

These are some of the words you will encounter often when reading the works of Gregory Wolfe, editor of the literary and arts quarterly *Image* and director of the Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing at Seattle Pacific University. Especially since the founding of *Image* in 1989, Wolfe has been one of the leading voices in the United States in engaging the arts in Christian perspective. This column focuses on two collections of Wolfe's essays that provide good starting points for engaging his ideas on the arts: *Intruding upon the Timeless: Meditations on Art, Faith, and Mystery* (2003) and *Beauty Will Save the World: Recovering the Human in an Ideological Age* (2011).



Despite his long and prominent leadership in the field of theology and the arts, Wolfe does not present in any of his writings a systematic philosophy of the arts. Instead, reflections on the arts—primarily literature, poetry, and visual arts, but also theater and music—permeate all of his work. Wolfe emulates the humanist approach he sees modeled in Erasmus, who “preferred caution, nuance, and ambiguity—the accumulation of many small truths, rendered beautiful by art, to the monolithically proclaimed truth” (*Beauty*, xii).

The concept of a Christian humanism is, in fact, a theme throughout Wolfe's writings and is expounded in “Religious Humanism: A Manifesto” (*Intruding*, 71-79) and “Christian Humanism: A Faith for All Seasons” (*Beauty*, 29-46). Wolfe sees in Christian humanism—as embodied by such authors as Dante and Erasmus, as well as Fyodor Dostoevsky, T. S. Eliot, and Flannery O'Connor—an approach to the world that takes seriously the interactions of faith and imagination within the context of an historical sensibility. To the question of how Christians in general, and Christian artists in particular, should engage the world, Wolfe attests that “the distinctive mark of Christian humanism is its willingness to adapt and transform culture,” continuing: “Because Christian humanists believe that whatever is good, true, and beautiful is part of God's design, they have the confidence that their faith can assimilate the works of culture” (*Beauty*, 43). Wolfe describes such an approach to the world as the founding premise of *Image*, “that Christians have an obligation to nourish the culture of their time, and to enrich their faith by deepening and extending their imaginations” (*Intruding*, 33).

As a natural outgrowth of this focus on Christian humanism thus described, Wolfe explores Christians' engagement with culture and the arts throughout his writings. The following quotes reflect well Wolfe's approach:

“We sense that creativity lies at the heart of what makes us human, and that without it our lives would be spiritually and materially impoverished.” (*Beauty*, 96)

“True art achieves a ‘fresh idiom’ by twisting and posing its materials in such a way that meaning flashes out and we suddenly learn something new (which is usually something old) about the world.” (*Intruding*, 112)

Wolfe's earlier volume of essays, *Intruding upon the Timeless*, provides a selection of his editorials for *Image*. Given the source and format of these writings, each chapter provides a brief glimpse into Wolfe's visions for *Image* and, more broadly, for Christian engagement with culture. Wolfe describes the essays as "attempts to probe the ways that art and faith, poetry and prayer, can nourish and sustain one another" (*Intruding*, 14). While all the essays are well worth reading, I find the following to provide good entry points into Wolfe's thoughts:

- "Real Presence" (43-46), on the incarnational nature of art and on the ability of great art to "put us in touch with the presence of the other" (45).
- "Base Imitation" (97-100), on the sacramental presence of art.
- "Transfiguration" (115-18), on "beauty as a window onto the divine" (115).
- "Playing with God" (119-22), on imagination and play, wonder and mystery.
- "A Sacrifice of Praise" (139-42), with its provocative first sentence calling us to rethink conceptions of art and faith: "At the heart of every well-made work of art—no matter how dark or disturbing it may be—is an act of praise" (139).

Like *Intruding upon the Timeless*, *Beauty Will Save the World* collects Wolfe's essays written over a wide timespan. The essays included are more detailed, and broader in scope, than the reflective editorials of *Intruding upon the Timeless*; however, they treat many of the themes of the earlier volume. The first eight essays provide broad reflections and insights on Christian humanism and the arts (including Wolfe's personal inroads to, and interactions with, these ideas), while the remainder of the volume presents case studies with keen insights into the works of particular artists and thinkers.

In addition to "Christian Humanism: A Faith for All Seasons" (Chapter 4), two of the initial eight essays especially provide good introductions to Wolfe's perspectives. The first, "Art, Faith, and the Stewardship of Culture" (Chapter 3), explores the relationship between Christianity and contemporary culture, with a focus on mystery and the imagination. Wolfe argues that "imagination itself is the key to the cultural and spiritual renewal we so desperately need" (p. 20). He attests that art does not separate us from reality and action but rather provides us the space for a contemplation that more fully prepares us to engage culture, "to send us back [to the realm of action] wiser and more fully human" (p. 22).

"Ever Ancient, Ever New: The Catholic Writer in the Modern World" (Chapter 6) likewise probes the role of the arts in contemporary culture, with a focus on what Wolfe

calls "the modern Catholic Renaissance"—authors such as Jacques Maritain, Graham Greene, G. K. Chesterton, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Walker Percy. In reflecting on the nature of modern thought and on the creativity and concerns of these writers, Wolfe concludes that one of their underlying messages is the exhortation "to reach back into the richness of [the Christian] tradition and find ways to apply it to the present" (p. 74).

Wolfe's applications of his perspectives to individual topics is exemplified in Chapters 9-21 of *Beauty Will Save the World*, in which he devotes each chapter to the study of a particular person: six writers (Evelyn Waugh, Shusaku Endo, Geoffrey Hill, Andrew Lytle, Wendell Berry, Larry Woiwode), three artists (Fred Folsom, Mary McCleary, Makoto Fujimura), and four men of letters (Russell Kirk, Gerhart Niemeyer, Malcolm Muggeridge, Marion Montgomery). Of these, I am especially drawn to the essays on Andrew Lytle (Chapter 12), with its focus on memory and history; Larry Woiwode (Chapter 14), with its focus on imagination; and Russell Kirk (Chapter 18), with its focus on hospitality.

In his editorial for the pilot issue of *Image*, Gregory Wolfe explained his conception of what he identifies as the shared goals of religion and art: that both raise our awareness of ultimate questions and that both unite faith and reason, grace and nature (*Intruding*, 17). Throughout his writings, Wolfe argues that faith and art are not antithetical, but rather inseparable. He constantly, and creatively, asserts that "art begins and ends in wonder—it promotes a deeper sense of the mystery that bounds our experience" (*Beauty*, 220).

Works discussed

Gregory Wolfe. *Intruding upon the Timeless: Meditations on Art, Faith, and Mystery*. Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books, 2003.

Gregory Wolfe. *Beauty Will Save the World: Recovering the Human in an Ideological Age*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2011.

See also

Image imagejournal.org
Good Letters blog patheos.com/blogs/goodletters/
 Gregory Wolfe: Works gregorywolfe.com/works.html



Mark Peters is professor of music at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, IL.

Graduate Student Profiles

Joanna Smolko



Blenda Im

Affiliation: University of Pennsylvania, ethnomusicology (Ph.D.), second year.

Research Interests: I am interested in the relationship between music and belief in Korean Christianity. Broadly speaking, I ask, “What music does a particular congregation make, and why?” I am particularly interested in how congregational singing can be both an expression of and model for religious identity, and the role that global processes such as transnational migration and media circulation play in the formation of liturgical song repertoires and their respective theologies. My recent trip to Seoul over the summer rekindled my interest in the sounds of Korean Pentecostal worship, and I hope to pursue this avenue of inquiry in the coming months. Further down the road, I wish to help bridge the gap between ethnomusicology and liturgical studies.

Experiences with SCSM: I have been involved with the SCSM since 2007, when I was an undergraduate in my senior year at UCLA. At my first AMS meeting, which took place in Quebec City, I heard about the SCSM (then called the FMCS) and was encouraged by a couple of members (including our current president, Dr. Stephen Crist) to attend an evening coffee reception in the lobby of the conference hotel. Since then, I have kept the Society close for both the intellectual stimulation and supportive relationships that it has helped me foster. I have been serving in the capacity of Student Representative since 2011, and am always rejuvenated upon meeting colleagues new and old at our annual meetings.



Andrew Pester

Affiliation: Duke University, musicology (Ph.D.), fifth year.

Research Interests: I specialize in music of the French Third Republic with a particular emphasis on the organ and its repertoire, construction, and function in French culture. My dissertation, “L’Orgue fantastique: Imagination in the Organ Lofts of Paris, 1918-1939,” focuses on extra-musical imagination in French organ music between the two world wars. In my scholarship, I try to combine elements of the organ and its history with the social, cultural, and musical currents happening simultaneously beyond the church walls. I try to consider organ music both within and beyond these hypothetical boundaries.

Experiences with SCSM: In SCSM I have found a place where like-minded scholars (both seasoned and novice) can come together in what must surely be one of the most supportive environments within our discipline. This collegial, nurturing, and constructive environment — it seems to me — is all too rare within the academy. As graduate students, we are fortunate and blessed to be a part of this community in this stage of our careers.



Joanna Smolko teaches at the University of Georgia and Athens Technical College. Her research interests include American music, hymnody, and film music.

Graduate Student Prize, 2013: Melody Marchman Schade



The SCSM awarded the Graduate Student Prize for 2013 to Melody Marchman Schade (University at Buffalo, SUNY) for her paper “Reading Ottaviano Petrucci’s *Motteti A* and *Motetti Libro Quarto* as Devotional Books,” presented at the society’s annual meeting at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

The Graduate Student Prize is an award for the most distinguished paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music. The prize is open to all graduate students whose papers are accepted for presentation at the annual meeting. To be considered for the prize, students must submit their materials one month in advance of the meeting.

The Graduate Student Prize committee for 2013 was composed of Stephen Crist (chair), Tala Jarjour, and Mary Natvig. One committee member wrote the following about Schade’s work: “Melody Marchman Schade’s paper on Petrucci’s motet collections as devotional books expands our perception of how these prints were used in daily life. Her arguments are clear, and well founded, and her work contributes to our knowledge of the musical culture of the early 16th century.”

Schade is a doctoral candidate in Historical Musicology and Music Theory at the University at Buffalo, SUNY, and is in the final months of editing her dissertation, tentatively titled, “Devotional Petrucci: A Material Study of Ottaviano Petrucci’s Four-Voice Venetian Motet Prints, 1502-1505.” Her primary research interests include Petrucci, late medieval/renaissance sacred music, motets, late medieval reading practice, and codicology.

Annual Meeting, 2014: Trinity Christian College



The next annual meeting of the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music will be held February 20-22, 2014, at [Trinity Christian College](#), Palos Heights, Illinois.

Trinity Christian College is a liberal arts college in the Reformed tradition located in the southwest suburbs of Chicago. It is easily accessible from both Midway and O’Hare airports (with easier access from Midway). We will be hosted at Trinity by two SCSM members, Mark Peters, professor of music, and Yudha Thianto, professor of theology.

The program committee—Jennifer Bloxam, Mark Peters, Chelle Stearns, and Yudha Thianto—has just begun its work, following the October 1 deadline for proposals. In addition to the paper sessions growing out of this

process, the meeting will feature several special events.

Keynote address: Gregory Wolfe



The keynote address—on issues of the arts in Christian perspective—will be presented by Gregory Wolfe, editor of the literary and arts quarterly *Image* and director of the Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing at Seattle Pacific University. For more on Wolfe, see pp. 4-5 of this issue.

Concert: Allos Musica



Working at the intersection of classical, jazz, and world music traditions, James Falzone’s [Allos Musica](#) will present repertoire from the Middle East, Andalusia, and Brittany, alongside arrangements of Eric Satie and Falzone’s original compositions. Incorporating wind, string, and percussion instruments from around the globe, this unique quartet takes the listener on a contemplative yet lively journey where tradition and experimentation blend seamlessly.

Panel: *A Love Supreme*

The program will include an interdisciplinary panel—James Falzone (jazz studies, composition, theory; Columbia College Chicago), Steven Guthrie (religion and the arts, theology; Belmont University), and Emmett Price (ethnomusicology; Northeastern University)—engaging John Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme* (1964).

News from Members

Douglas Bachorik has begun Ph.D. work under Professor Bennett Zon at Durham University. The focus of his research grows out of study into the nature of music as portrayed in the Bible, with particular attention to multimodal experiences that combine music with other media.

Robin Harris reports several exciting developments on behalf of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE):

The ICE has launched the journal *Global Forum on Arts and Christian Faith*. The call for papers is ongoing, and there is still time to submit an article or review for Vol. 1, No. 1. For more information, visit: artsandchristianfaith.org/index.php/journal/index

The ICE also recently celebrated its 10th anniversary in Dallas, Texas, with a gathering of 120 people from around the world. The celebration was planned as the culmination of a 3-day "Roundtable for North American Arts Leaders," co-sponsored by Lausanne Arts, the World Evangelical Alliance [Mission Commission](#), the [World Arts](#) M.A. program at GIAL, and [ICE](#).

Adam Perez has entered the dual enrollment program at Yale Divinity School and Yale Institute of Sacred Music pursuing the Master of Arts in Religion with a concentration in Religion and Music under the direction of Professor Markus Rathey.

Robin Wallace's new music appreciation textbook, *Take Note: An Introduction to Music Through Active Listening* (Oxford University Press) will be released in February 2014.



The book is available for pre-order at amazon.com.

Bennett Zon presented "Science, Theology, and Simplicity: How Science Beat Theology in the Battle for Chant's Survival" at Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives Conference, held at Ripon College, Oxford, in August 2013.



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For membership and other information, please visit the SCSM website scsmusic.org

Please submit newsletter ideas and inquiries to Mark Peters mark.peters@trnty.edu