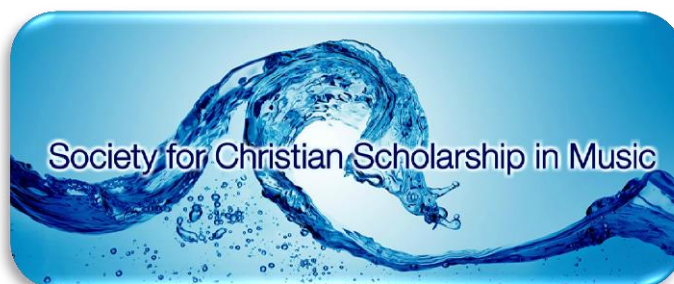


SCSM NEWSLETTER



Reflections on SCSM 2014 Bo kyung Blenda Im

In any given academic year, the sheer variety and number of conference offerings places me in the happy predicament of having to choose, quite carefully, where to commit my time, financial resources, and energy. However, the SCSM meeting consistently occupies a high priority in my annual conference cycle. The 2014 meeting hosted by Trinity Christian College was no exception.

Of course, my attendance rate is partially motivated by my responsibilities as the SCSM's Student Representative, but I would not have agreed to serve in this capacity had I not appreciated the fellowship and creative intellectual possibilities opened by the unique discursive space of the SCSM. A quick glance at the 2014 conference program (see pp. 4-5) provides a sense of the questions that the participants, roughly fifty total, brought to the annual meeting. Paper topics ran the gamut among music education, hermeneutics, aesthetics, and historical investigations, from the theological to the musicological and everything in the interstitial in-between. Veteran scholars presented their work alongside graduate students, some of whom gave their first public presentations of their

research, while others sought suggestions to fine-tune their dissertation chapters. I always appreciate the spirit of respectful exchange that underlies our paper sessions, as well as the gentle but firm commentaries necessary to move our scholarly conversations forward.

Conference highlights included the collaborative interdisciplinary panel on John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, corporate worship on Friday in which conference attendees joined the Trinity community for morning chapel, Gregory Wolfe's insightful sermon and keynote address on the Christian embrace of suffering, and a vibrant evening concert with James Falzone's *Allos Musica* ensemble. The spirit of generosity that pervaded the conference was unmatched. The care and compassion with which established professors shared their stories and experiences at the mentorship panel, the hospitality of Trinity Christian College, and the way in which the Peters family warmly welcomed attendees to their home modeled a way in which intellectual exchange could be successfully framed within an atmosphere of giving humility.

"Freely you have received;

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freely give" (Matthew 10:8). I wonder how this attitude of *kenosis* can further inform our scholarly conversations and practices, both within and outside of our official gatherings. How can the SCSM, as a scholarly Christian body, produce fresh knowledge that serves people and glorifies God? I believe this to be a key intellectual, spiritual, and practical project of the SCSM. Our meetings thus open up a unique discursive space in which each participant is free to be a *Christian scholar* who ventures outside preset limits in order to serve his or her respective community.

I left the SCSM Conference with the confirmation that I am partaking in, and belong to, a larger intellectual and spiritual project that calls for different modes of critical engagement, as we collectively strive to think outside established disciplinary patterns to create new knowledge

and provide fresh insights to the questions raised by current historical conditions. Within this open framework, the various aspects of my identity—my faith, my intellectual curiosity, and the ethical imperatives that accompany both—are neither mutually exclusive nor separated by the sacred/secular divide, as the Society confirms that the pursuit of truth can and should complement the pursuit of God.



Bo kyung Blenda Im is a Ph.D. student in ethnomusicology at the University of Pennsylvania. She serves as student representative on the executive committee of the SCSM.

SCSM 2014: Photo Gallery





Save the Date: Annual Meeting 2015

Location: Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Dates: February 12-14, 2015

Keynote Address: Robin Leaver

A particular emphasis of this conference will be to highlight the Special Collections of Pitts Theology Library, especially the psalmody and hymnody collection and the Kessler Reformation Collection. The library will be in a brand-new facility, and the Candler School of Theology will be celebrating its centenary.

Graduate Student Prize, 2014: Cesar Favila



The SCSM awarded the Graduate Student Prize for 2014 to Cesar Favila (University of Chicago) for his paper "Sacred Music and Its Sacred Space: The Early Modern Novohispanic Convent Coro," presented at the society's annual meeting at Trinity Christian College.

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 2014 was composed of Mary Natvig (chair), Robin Harris, and Robin Wallace. The committee praised Favila's paper for its depth of research, its thorough handling of the topic, and its significant and original contribution to the field.

Favila is a Ph.D. candidate in Music History and Theory at University of Chicago. He holds A.B. degrees in Music and Biological Sciences from University of California, Davis, and the M.A. in Music History and Theory from University of Chicago. Favila's Ph.D. dissertation, "Music in Early Modern Conceptionist Convents of New Spain," explores music in convents of the Order of the Immaculate Conception (Conceptionists) in New Spain and the issues of patronage, pedagogy, and devotion that made such music possible.

SCSM 2014: Program

February 20-22, 2014

Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, IL

Thursday, February 20

Paper session 1A – Pedagogy, Epistemology, & the Future of Music Education

Eftychia Papanikolaou, Bowling Green University, chair

- ❖ “The Harmony of Body and Soul: Music as a Way of Knowing in Augustine’s *De Musica*”
Aron Reppmann, Trinity Christian College
- ❖ “Teaching and Technology: The Future of Sacred Music Education in the Academy”
Andrew Shenton, Boston University
- ❖ “Beyond Ethnomusicology: Educational Methods and Resources for Multi-disciplinary, Multi-arts Analysis and Engagement”
Robin Harris, Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics

Paper session 1B – Music & Cultural Fusion: The Transgression of Sacred and Secular in Liturgical Space

Johann Buis, Wheaton College, chair

- ❖ “Modern Christian Mohawk ‘Medicine Man’: The Healing Music and Ministry of Jonathan Maracle and Broken Walls Ministries of Ontario, Canada”
Stacey A. Garrepy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- ❖ “Lowell Mason as European Art Music’s Translator: Skopos Theory and the Antebellum American Hymn”
Peter Mercer-Taylor, University of Minnesota School of Music

Panel 1: Engaging John Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme*

David Brodnax, Trinity Christian College, chair

- ❖ Panelists: James Falzone, Columbia College Chicago; Emmett Price, Northeastern University

Friday, February 21

Paper session 2A – Jesus for the People: Countercultural Crossovers

Benita Wolters-Fredlund, Calvin College, chair

- ❖ “ ‘Jesus is Just Alright’: The Jesus Movement and the Counterculture in 70’s Rock”
Olivia Mather, Independent Scholar
- ❖ “Converts and Crossovers: Black Gospel and the Music of Radical White Christianity at the Turn of the 1970s”
Kathryn Kinney, Washington University in St. Louis

Paper session 2B – Agenda & Hymns: Controversy and Debate in the Songs We Sing

Mary Natvig, Bowling Green University, chair

- ❖ “ ‘Songs of the Coming Church’: Sacred Music of the *Deutsche Christen* in the Third Reich”
Jonathan E. Blumhofer, Clark University
- ❖ “Embodying the Angels’ Song and Delineating the Christian Other in the Trisagion Hymn”
Armin Karim, Case Western Reserve University

Panel 2: Engaging Graduate Studies

Blenda Im, University of Pennsylvania, and Chelle Stearns, Seattle School for Theology and Psychology, co-chairs

- ❖ Graduate student panelists: Megan Francisco, Yale Institute of Sacred Music; Armin Karim, Case Western Reserve University; Andrew Pester, Duke University
- ❖ Faculty panelists: Johann Buis, Wheaton College; Stephen Crist, Emory University; Mary Natvig, Bowling Green University

Paper session 3A – Spirituality & Temporality: Time as Theological Aesthetic

Andrew Shenton, Boston University, chair

- ❖ “No Time Like the Present: Postmodern Religious Influence and Temporality in Philip Glass’s *Symphony No. 5*”
Nathan Burggraft, Eastman School of Music
- ❖ “Time and Eternity in the Second Movement of Johannes Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem*”
Adam A. Perez, Yale Institute of Sacred Music
- ❖ “*Tempus Sanctus*: In Conversation with David Kelsey on Singing and Eschatological Temporality”
Awet Andemicael, Yale University

Paper session 3B – Sacred Space and the Beauty of God

Tim Steele, Calvin College, chair

- ❖ “Sacred Music and its Sacred Space: The Early Modern Novohispanic Convent *Coro*”
Cesar Favila, University of Chicago
- ❖ “Mechtild of Hackeborn: Liturgy and/as Narrative”
Ilana R. Schroeder, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- ❖ “ ‘Streams of Paradise’: Sabbath, Music, and the Beauty of God”
Esther R. Crookshank, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Keynote address: Gregory Wolfe, “The Cave and the Cathedral: Meaning-Making In the Dark ”

Concert: James Falzone and Allos Musica

Saturday, February 22

Paper session 4A – Music & Devotion

Richard Strauch, Whitworth University, chair

- ❖ “The Gospel According to Mendelssohn: Spiritual Meaning and Liturgical Function in Mendelssohn’s *Three Motets*, Op. 39”
Siegwart Reichwald, Converse College
- ❖ “Hearing the 17th-century French Organ Mass ‘with Profit & Devotion’ ”
Neil Cockburn, Mount Royal University Conservatory

Paper session 4B – Imagination, Culture, & New Sounds: Cultural Memory & Layers of Meaning

Yudha Thianto, Trinity Christian College, chair

- ❖ “Morality and Devotion in Antonio Estevez’s *Cantata Criolla*”
Pedro R. Aponte, James Madison University
- ❖ “Sounding the Psalms Anew: Psalm 136 as Musical Cultural Memory for the Abayudaya Ugandan Jews”
Emilie Coakley, Yale Institute of Sacred Music

Paper session 5 – Music, Theology, and Imagination

Stephen Crist, Emory University, chair

- ❖ “L’Orgue fantastique: Imagination in the Later Organ Works of Louis Vierne”
Andrew Pester, Duke University
- ❖ “Apocalyptic Visions and Moral Education. Compositions by C. P. E. Bach and G.P. Telemann”
Markus Rathey, Yale University
- ❖ “Understanding Jazz In Europe: A comparison of Hugues Panassié and H. R. Rookmaaker”
William Edgar, Westminster Theological Seminary



Graduate Student Profiles

Joanna Smolko



Emilie Coakley

Yale Institute of Sacred Music, Master of Arts in Religion, Religion and the Arts, second year

Research Interests: My main research interests revolve around questions of inculturated musical practice, the role of music in forming and shaping national religious identities, and the power of music to initiate dialogue across religious and cultural boundaries.

Experiences with SCSM: My first experience with SCSM was last year, when the ISM hosted the society's 2013 annual meeting. Being new to the idea of an association created to foster and encourage Christian scholarship in music, I was impressed by both the high level of insightful and thought-provoking scholarship presented at the conference and the network of like-minded scholars present, seemingly committed to embracing both music and faith in a variety of cross-disciplinary contexts. Since then, and especially after attending SCSM's 2014 annual meeting at Trinity Christian College, I realize that I have found and been welcomed into a community of scholars whose passion and academic prowess can support and stretch the work I see myself doing in the future.



Stacey Garrepy

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, musicology, first year

Research Interests: I am interested in studying seventeenth-century German Lutheran music, particularly that of Heinrich Schütz, for my dissertation. In addition, I will be doing my master's thesis in the next year on popular music and its role in negotiating cultural identity in Germany during the time of Reunification. I am also interested in, and have presented on, music history pedagogy.

Experiences with SCSM: February 2014 was my first time to both attend and present at an SCSM meeting. I was so impressed by the focus on mentorship during the conference, seeing younger scholars paired with more established scholars during panels, and by the warmth and openness everyone displayed. I think I have found my niche!



John Michael McCluskey

University of Kentucky, Ph.D. candidate in musicology/ethnomusicology, fifth year (ABD)

Research interests: My research is centered on music and American sport. More specifically, my dissertation, "Music as Narrative in American College Football," examines the connection between on-field events and musical programming within the stadium, positing that music provides lyrical and stylistic commentary on the game's events and in so doing weaves a coherent narrative out of the action taking place on the field. The project is under the direction of Ron Pen.

Experiences with SCSM: I considered numerous other specializations before settling on music and sport, including religious songs in the American South (I'm an avid amateur shape-note singer) and the relationship between American protestant experience and early twentieth-century art composers. This resulted in my paper "'Being Nearer God or Being Nearer the Devil': Charles Ives's Compositional Years and Liberal Protestantism," which I read in February 2013 at the SCSM annual meeting at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. I had a wonderful experience at Yale, where I received constructive feedback on my scholarship, listened to several challenging talks, and was encouraged by numerous senior scholars whose Christianity is central to their research. I look forward to becoming further involved in SCSM throughout my academic career.



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

Ticky-Tacky Pedagogy

Robin Wallace

Pete Seeger, who died earlier this year, sang a song about “Little Boxes,” in which the repeated refrain is “they’re all made out of ticky-tacky, and they all look just the same.”

It would be easy for Christians to take offense at the way this song (which was actually written by Malvina Reynolds) seems to belittle the dignity of those who lead outwardly ordinary lives. For those of us who work in higher education, there is the added challenge of the song’s claim that university education also puts people in “little boxes all the same.” Nevertheless, as a Christian working in higher education, it’s fair to say that I find the challenge not to put either my students or myself into little boxes to be the Gospel in miniature. It’s precisely that inherent, individual dignity in each student’s intellectual life that I feel called to value and respect.

And what could be more box-like than the big textbook / anthology / recording / instructor’s manual / testbank etc. packages available for most of the survey courses that we teach? My new music appreciation textbook *Take Note: An Introduction to Music through Active Listening*, published by Oxford University Press, will come with some of these attachments as well, but it represents a determined attempt to break out of a box and allow students to do so as well.

That box is the approach to the introductory non-major class that I have often referred to as “music history lite.” It is premised on the idea that students come to college with some background in classical music and just want to learn more about it. That was probably true 60 years ago. Today, though, as we all know, students often come to college with no musical background at all, and they are certainly not prepared for the idea that any one repertory should be the focus of their collegiate studies. Thus, what we often do is roughly analogous to taking students who have never read any literature and giving them a superficial survey of English poetry from Chaucer to the present, after which they will never take a literature course again. They will emerge mystified by most of what they have read and will never have the opportunity to explore any of it in depth. If they are interested in different literary forms and traditions they will not even know where to begin.

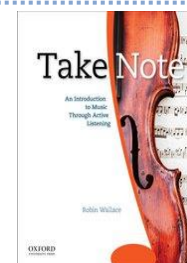
My skepticism about the value of this approach is not meant to be heard as an indictment of anybody who teaches in this way; I simply want to highlight the nature of the box in which they are forced to work. I don’t think it is presumptuous to suggest that Christian educators are in a unique position to grasp the limitations of that box. Like anything that merely points to God, the musical work itself is never the main subject. Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony – which ends up after all being the focus of my final chapter because this is the music I know best – will either be just fine without such attention or else will sink into obscurity. In neither case is the Gospel in any way challenged.

If, on the other hand, students are not invited to live with music as a window into the human soul, the chances that they will know how to break out of whatever little boxes life places them in will be diminished. Their own souls will be lacking an important resource for healthy growth. As a Christian educator, I believe that my first goal is to awaken students’ souls, not to indoctrinate them with my ideas or my tastes. Of course I teach ideas, and of course I teach the music that means the most to me – to do otherwise would be to give up the best window into my students’ souls that I have available. First and foremost, though, I see the music appreciation course as an opportunity to challenge students to grow spiritually: to awaken them to a lifetime of delight in beauty. What they learn in the process, at least in factual terms, is far less important.

I know some people will be disappointed with *Take Note* because it doesn’t contain their favorite pieces: the absence of Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* was noted with regret by multiple reviewers. Others will find that it still focuses too heavily on the classical repertory and doesn’t contain enough of ... well, there’s the problem, because there is never enough room for the music that means the most to every possible adopter. So, to come full circle, I would also like to suggest that those of us who teach this course need to get out of our own “little boxes” and teach something that’s not covered in the textbook and that doesn’t seem to fit, except from the perspective of a crooked, yet beautiful, spiritual journey of our own.



Robin Wallace is Professor of Musicology at Baylor University. For more on *Take Note*, visit <http://global.oup.com/> and [Dashboard for Take Note](#).



Musical Meaning and the Truth of Timbre

Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin

As mentioned by Jeremy Begbie in the previous issue of the *SCSM Newsletter*, compared to the outburst of Christian writing on the visual and literary arts in recent decades, there is as yet relatively little Christian scholarship in the field of music. Perhaps this is not surprising. In comparison to paintings, fiction, or film, music is more difficult to discuss in terms of message, meaning, or worldview. It is more abstract and semantically open-ended. At the same time, music and the other arts share a common root. They are members of the same family. That means that some of the things Christian scholars say about the other arts also apply to music. We could say, for instance, that music, like all other arts, is a gift of God intended for human flourishing. We could say that, whereas, say, the natural sciences seek insight into the structures and patterns of the physical world, the arts, including music, seek to articulate what it feels like to live in this kind of world—that they aim to express affective human experience. We could say that music, like all other arts, is a way of making sense of the world, a form of imaginative disclosure. It creates and conveys fine-grained, previously unformulated meaning.

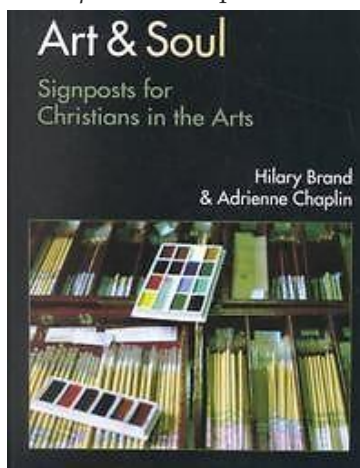
One of the questions that has always fascinated me as a philosopher of art is the question of *how* art conveys meaning—not just specific meaning, but any meaning at all. What constitutes the transition from a blot on a surface to a mark inviting human interpretation? Likewise, how does a physical sound turn into a tone pregnant with metaphoric meaning and significance? How can vibrations arising from stretched calfskin, strung cat gut, or blown reed pipes evoke such deeply felt emotions, create such exciting new experiences, and become such key components in the world we call “culture”? What causes this “giant leap for mankind”?

Of course, a lot depends on context. We pay attention to a mark on a surface when we *expect* it to be put there for

our attention, rather than being a mere accident or stain. Likewise, we listen to sounds in a certain way if we assume them to be produced with the intention of carrying meaning. Hearing meaning in sounds depends in part on its horizon of cultural conventions as to what a musical event is about. The same applies to understanding individual tones. Hearing musical meaning in tones depends largely on what went before and what comes after. It depends on the way we hear them as arranged in a specific order and pattern. However, I would like to suggest that at an even more basic level than that—even prior to being organized in a temporally ordered formal structure—tonal sounds create a sensuous sonorous experience that can evoke deep resonances with our life *as felt*. At the foundation of all musical experience is the textured, tonal quality of sound itself—its timbre. Timbre affects every aspect of music, from the sound of a simple voice or tone played on a specific instrument to the unique sound of a particular choir, ensemble, or orchestra. John Shepherd calls timbre music’s “tactile core.”¹ David Burrows even speaks about “truth in timbre.”²

Timbre is the neglected child of music analysis. Traditional music analysis typically focuses on the measurable, quantifiable “primary” parameters of pitch, harmony, and rhythm rather than on the elusive, subjective “secondary” qualities of musical timbre. Yet ignoring tonal timbre in music is like discussing a painting without reference to its texture and color. Some would say it ignores precisely that which, for most people, gives music and art their significance and immediate appeal.

It is, however, precisely this immediacy that also evokes worries. Many fear that tonal timbre appeals to the “lower,” corporeal senses rather than to the “higher” intellect. It arouses feelings that bypass rational control by appealing directly to our bodily instincts. Christians, too, have expressed concerns along those lines. Augustine, for one, was suspicious of the sensuous qualities of music—“the pleasures of sound”—and recounts in his *Confessions* how God had broken the bonds of his sinful enthrallment with them and had gradually weaned him off this “gratification of [the] senses.”³ For Augustine music was primarily a rational science, a way of elucidating God’s mathematical cosmic laws by means of rhythmic and harmonic intervals.⁴ For those influenced by this Augustinian perspective, the aural, physical quality of sound is considered a distraction from the cerebral, “spiritual” meaning of music. Spirituality, on these terms, is essentially non-physical and non-sensuous. “Spiritual music” is supposed to “transcend” the physical and aspire



to become what John Tavener calls “a mirror of heaven.”⁵ I will not here rehearse the theological critiques of this dualistic notion of spirituality, except to say that it is often more Greek than Hebrew, more Plato than Paul.

Musicologists such as Susan McClary and John Shephard point out that mainstream classical music tends to allow for only a very restricted range of timbres, excluding the raw, repellent and unrestrained.⁶ They interpret this as a sign of Western culture’s fear and suppression of bodily sensuality and social disorder.⁷ I was reminded of that when listening to the live broadcast of the premiere of James MacMillan’s new viola concerto, performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Lawrence Power as soloist last January.⁸ In the slow middle movement, we hear Power’s 400-year-old Stradivarius viola emit a series of shrieking, scratching, and scraping glissandi that are a world away from, say, the typically smooth and restrained sounds of Berlioz’s viola concerto, *Harold in Italy*, that I had heard at the Barbican two months earlier.⁹ Although equally moving, expressive and intense, there is no doubt that MacMillan’s inclusion of these raw and wailing sounds led to a very different *kind* of affective immediacy than the overall soundscape created by Berlioz.

MacMillan himself, perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, said this about the piece: “Whereas in the past I was interested in the idea of music representing other things or telling stories, music is essentially an abstract form. . . . In this case, the music is purely the notes on the page.”¹⁰ That may or may not be so, but MacMillan seems to know intuitively that in order to capture, if not a concrete story then at least a shared human experience, our time needs a different sound, a different timbre. In the second movement, the orchestra bursts into a slow motion cacophonous explosion followed by a xylophonic “fall-out” from which, as out of dust, a mournful, lone viola tune emerges. It is perhaps not difficult to hear in this an echo of the faint, lone voices of those who survived the kind of violent conflicts or natural disasters that have come to define our global political and ecological landscape. Whatever MacMillan may say, his pure “notes on the page” cannot *but* evoke, allusively and metaphorically, some of those universal experiences that, even if mediated by the news, have come to be part of our shared human consciousness.

Timbre, I suggest, is a unique creational gift that Christian scholars of music would do well to rediscover and explore. This will allow them to re-affirm the basic goodness of the physicality and sensuousness of textured sound and celebrate its rich metaphoric potential to carry what I would call “the imaginative disclosure of affective meaning” but could, with Burrows, be referred to as “the truth in timbre.”

Notes

- ¹ John Shepherd, *Music as Social Text* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 90.
- ² David L. Burrows, *Sound, Speech, and Music* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 32.
- ³ Augustine *Confessions* X, xxxiii, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).
- ⁴ Augustine, *De Musica* I, ii, trans. R. C. Taliaferro, in *Writings of Saint Augustine*, ed. Ludwig Schopp (New York: CIMA Publishing, 1947).
- ⁵ John Tavener in “Notes from the Celestial City: Jeremy Begbie talks to John Tavener,” *Third Way* 21 (December 1998), 20.
- ⁶ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) and John Shepherd, *Music as Social Text* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).
- ⁷ David K. Blake argues that, in contrast to the uniformity of sound of mainstream popular music “timbre is the primary vehicle by which indie music is produced and heard as different from its contemporaneous mainstream.” David K. Blake, “Timbre as Differentiation in Indie Music,” *Music Theory Online: A Journal of the Society for Music Theory* 18 (2012).
- ⁸ James MacMillan, *Viola Concerto*, Premiere, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Conductor: Vladimir Jurowski; Viola: Lawrence Power, Royal Festival Hall, London, 15 January 2014. Broadcast live on BBC Radio 3.
- ⁹ Hector Berlioz, *Harold in Italy*, London Symphony Orchestra, Conductor: Valery Gergiev; Viola: Antoine Tamestit, Barbican Centre, London, 12 November 2013.
- ¹⁰ Quoted in *Classical Music: The Voice of the Classical Music Industry* (January 2014) <http://www.classicalmusicmagazine.org/premieres/6363/>.

Suggestions for further reading

Begbie, Jeremy. *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007.

Johnson, Mark. *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Chichester: John Wiley, 2008.

Smith, James K. A. *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013.

Website: www.artway.eu

Blog: www.transpositions.co.uk

Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin (Ph.D.) is an independent scholar working in the area of philosophy of art and aesthetics. For eight years she taught philosophical aesthetics at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto where she was an Associate Member of the Advanced Degree faculty of the Toronto School of Theology and also served as President of the Canadian Society for Aesthetics. She co-authored the introductory textbook *Art and Soul: Signposts for Christians in the Arts* (IVP, USA, 2001) and is currently completing a monograph on the American philosopher of art Susanne K. Langer.

Resources on the Arts in Christian Perspective: *It Was Good* Mark Peters

Published in 2013, *It Was Good: Making Music to the Glory of God* (edited by Ned Bustard; Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books) presents a wide array of essays on music and music making in Christian perspective. The goal and scope of the volume are admirable: while most Christian scholarship on music has focused solely on music for the Christian church or other music that has been explicitly identified as “Christian,” *It Was Good: Making Music* takes a much broader view, engaging music both within and beyond the church, including music that would not be labeled “Christian.” It essentially asks: How can we think Christianly about all music and all aspects of music making?

It Was Good: Making Music is an ambitious project, exploring 30 different facets of music and music making in Christian perspective. These 30 facets are the keywords listed both on the volume’s cover and its title page, which I present here not in the order they appear in the book but rather grouped into what I see as the volume’s main categories:

- foundational issues: silence, freedom, creativity, delight, mission, language, truth
- techniques and genres: counterpoint, harmony, improvisation, blues, jazz
- aspects of music making: rehearsal, refining, songwriting, collaboration, listening, participation
- aspects of a career in music making: vocation, booking, touring, fame
- children and music: children, kids’ music
- music and the Christian church: suffering, minor keys, instruments, psalms, modern hymns, urban ministry

In addition to its wide array of topics, the volume’s contributors offer their perspectives from a variety of

backgrounds and experiences. They are performers (in a wide range of musical styles), composers and song writers, record producers, church music directors and worship leaders, theologians, and college professors.

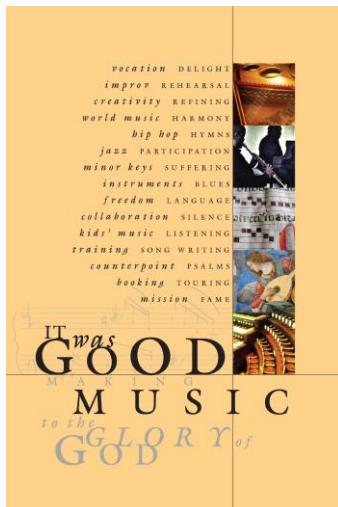
The essays are also written in a variety of styles. Some are academic in their approach, with structured argumentation and clear documentation. Others are personal reflections on a topic, with little or no engagement with other sources. Still others are interviews.

Finally, the essays treat a wide array of music and musical styles, including Johnny Cash, the Blues, J. S. Bach, the 77s, jazz, the Beatles, Hip-hop, Psalms, modern hymns, and even Alexander McCall Smith’s “Really Terrible Orchestra.” In addition, many of the contributors approach their topics from the perspective of their own creation of music (both in composition and performance). A generous sampling of music by the contributors is provided for free download on NoiseTrade (<http://www.Noisetrade.com/ItWasGood>).

If I consider *It Was Good: Making Music* primarily from an academic standpoint, I would have to describe significant flaws in the volume. There is very little consistency in the essays—in style, in approach, in length, or in quality. The volume is also not easy to use: the lack of documentation in some of the essays is frustrating; the authors’ names are not listed in the chapters themselves; the chapter titles are different than the keyword topics by which they are listed in the table of contents. And only a few of the chapters would I recommend as exemplary.

I believe it is fair, even important, to recognize such shortcomings. But I also believe that it would be missing the point to focus on these too much. In reading *It Was Good: Making Music*, I invite you to set its shortcomings to the side and consider the volume differently—not as a definitive scholarly statement on music in Christian perspective, but rather as the starting point for many good and fruitful conversations in which we engage each other, our colleagues, our students, and our church communities in thinking Christianly about music. *It Was Good: Making Music* provides many excellent starting points for such dialogue, including the following:

- Bethany Brooks’ “The Discipline of Delight” (pp. 33-51) calls us back to our fundamental experience of music, our “pleasure in the sensory experience of creating and hearing music” (p. 33). Brooks states her goals for the essay thus: “I want to provoke Christians to take delight in music . . . [and] to consider the



pleasure we derive from beauty that is mediated to us by other human beings or that we ourselves have a hand in creating" (p. 33). The essay presents a thoughtful and accessible consideration of beauty in music and does so in conversation with a wide array of authors, including Augustine, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, T. S. Eliot, Søren Kirkegaard, C. S. Lewis, Elaine Scarry, and Nicholas Wolterstorff.

- Four of the volume's essays treat well the idea of participation in, and engagement with, music in a variety of ways. I recommend reading these essays in conversation with each other: Steve Guthrie on harmony (pp. 131-41); Chelle Stearns on participation (pp. 159-70); John Patitucci on improvisation (pp. 219-25); and Kirstin Vander Giessen-Reitsma on booking (pp. 293-304). These four essays not only highlight the importance of our engagement with others in and through music making, but also allow us to view this issue through an interestingly varied set of lenses.
- Two other essays that complement each other well are Joy Ike on vocation (pp. 287-92) and Tom Jennings on rehearsal (pp. 89-96). These essays are particularly helpful in considering music from the perspective of performance and could especially provide good starting points for conversations with students about performing music—and about a lifetime calling to music making—in Christian perspective.
- A different way *It Was Good: Making Music* offers to enter personal connection with and conversation about music in Christian perspective is through the interviews it includes. Such interviews highlight the personal perspective of the one interviewed, while also inviting readers to consider ways in which we can enter into the discussion. I recommend especially the interviews with Shai Linne on Hip-hop (pp. 237-44) and with Keith Getty on congregational singing in the Christian church (pp. 275-80).
- Finally, two of the volume's essays in particular are historically based, getting at their subjects in a more indirect manner: William Edgar's essay on the reception of jazz mid-twentieth-century France (pp. 199-217) and Stephen J. Nichols essay on the role of fame in the life and career of Johnny Cash (pp. 313-24). Both Edgar and Nichols take distinctive approaches that encourage a deeper engagement with their particular subject and also more broadly with a consideration of music history in Christian perspective.

It Was Good: Making Music is an invitation—a call, even—to glorify God in music, to use and enjoy and make music in such a way that it points to God. This call is summed up in Stephen J. Nichols' words applied to music in the volume's

preface: "By enjoying God's world as God's gift, by enjoying the God-given relationships we have, by enjoying the work of our hands, by developing our God-given abilities, we are living for God and his glory" (p. 9). Much of *It Was Good: Making Music* would not necessarily be called "Christian scholarship in music," if we think of scholarship in the standard sense. It is, however, a provocation to think Christianly about music, a provocation we would do well to heed in our own scholarship and music making.

Additional reading—

It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God

It Was Good: Making Music to the Glory of God is best read in conversation with its predecessor, *It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God*, also edited by Ned Bustard (2nd ed., Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books, 2006). The two volumes are similar in both their approach and scope, with *It Was Good: Making Art* engaging fundamental issues in the arts—primarily the visual arts, but also with some reference to literature, theatre, film, and music—in Christian perspective. It includes 20 chapters plus a foreword and afterword, and is organized around three main sections: Part I—Creator; Part II—creating; Part III—created (see p. 5 for an orientation to this structure). *It Was Good: Making Art* shares both the strengths (especially the invitation to dialogue) and weaknesses (especially the inconsistency of the chapters) of *It Was Good: Making Music*.

I found the following chapters of *It Was Good: Making Art* to be especially beneficial for stimulating thought and conversation around Christian engagement with the arts:

- Adrienne Chaplin on beauty (pp. 33-50)
- James Romaine on creativity (pp. 87-116)
- Mary McCleary on craftsmanship (pp. 125-140)
- William Edgar on shadow (pp. 225-240)
- Charlie Peacock on mission (pp. 241-48)
- Makoto Fujimura on essence (pp. 295-306)
- Theodore Prescott on identity (pp. 307-32)

Information and purchasing details for both volumes can be found at squarehalobooks.com.



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News from Members

Johann Buis was appointed Member-at-Large on the Board of Directors of the American Musicological Society in Fall 2013, when Katheron Bergeron stepped down to become the 11th President of Connecticut College. He will fill her term through 2014. Johann has also been voted Chair of the Board of Directors of [SDG Music Foundation](#).

Robin Harris reports that the 2015 Global Consultation on Music and Missions will be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on July 5 through July 9. Further details forthcoming at www.gcommhome.org.

Joyce Irwin presented "Music among the ancient Hebrews in the work of Johann Lund (1638-1686)" at the meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in March. Lund wrote a large volume on Levitic ceremony and priestly practices based on the scholarship of Christian Hebraists of the 16th and 17th centuries.

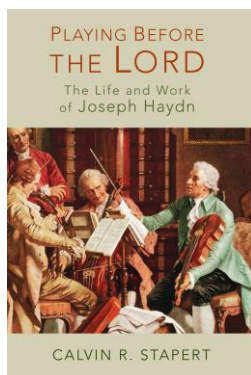
John Paul Ito's article, "Spiritual Narratives in Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 132," an early version of which was presented at the SCSM's 2009 annual meeting at the University of Notre Dame, appeared in the *Journal of Musicology* 30 (2013). A related essay on Beethoven's relationship to the theologian Johann Michael Sailer will appear this year in volume 11 of *Bonner Beethoven-Studien*.

Armin Karim will receive the Ph.D. in Musicology from Case Western Reserve University in May 2014 after successfully defending his dissertation, "'People, What Have I

Done to You?': The Good Friday *Popule meus* Verses in Chant and Exegesis, c. 380-880."

The International Council of Ethnodoxologists is offering three opportunities this summer for training in the area of music and arts in Christian missions based on **Brian Schrag's** book *Creating Local Arts Together: A Manual to Help Communities Reach Their Kingdom Goals*.

Calvin Stapert published a new book, *Playing before the Lord: The Life and Work of Joseph Haydn* (Eerdmans, 2014). Cal also participated in a colloquium on "Musical Meaning and Modernism" hosted by Ken Myers of Mars Hill Audio in February.



Joshua Waggener has successfully defended his Ph.D. thesis, "Mendelssohn and the Musical Sublime" and plans to graduate from Durham University (UK) in July, 2014. Joshua will continue teaching and coordinating music classes at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC, while also working with postgraduate students in a new Ph.D. concentration in Theology and Worship.

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