



Annual Meeting February 25-27, 2021

Abstracts

Session 1 **Music and Racial Identity in the U.S. Church (plenary)**

Mourning, Judgement, and Resurrection: Christian Imagery in Reconstruction Era Music

Thomas Kernan, Roosevelt University

In her seminal study on death and mourning in the American Civil War, Drew Gilpin Faust draws on period accounts from diaries, correspondence, sermons, and press coverage in which surviving family members, communities, and much of the nation attempted to understand the profound human toll of the period. Clergy and laity across denominations turned to their theology to find meaning, offer comfort, and reconcile the war's many seeming paradoxes. However, Christian thought was not limited to mourning. On one hand, long-held claims by religious men and women for slave abolition pivoted to the cause of fraternity and equality for newly freed African Americans. On the other hand, Christian imagery was also used to signify racial difference with white Americans depicted beside crosses—markers of their righteousness—and black Americans depicted without such representation—a demonstration of skepticism about their beliefs. The war's wake and the period of Reconstruction that followed invited many and varied invocations of Christian identity and beliefs.

To examine the experience of Reconstruction through an overtly Christian lens is not new to the scholarly literature. Historians, such as Matthew Harper, Paul Harvey, and Edward J. Blum, have taken up this topic with regards to African Americans, postwar Southerners, and empowered white men, respectively. Moreover, Eric Foner and David W. Blight, consistently center religion in speaking about Reconstruction as a period that aimed to reconcile the Civil War's unfinished work. In this paper, however, I argue that unlike those studies' reliance on prose discourse, musical sources provide a still more poignant means to understand the varied Christian experiences of Reconstruction. Be it sheet music performed in homes, reports of music used in sacred rituals by black and white congregations, and Christian imagery included in popular song lyrics, this constellation of sources offers a window into a moment when citizens grappled with mourning, political judgement, and claims of a national resurrection.

Will Marion Cook: Song Writer and Theologian

Michael Chikinda, University of Utah

Will Marion Cook is probably best remembered as the composer of *In Dahomey*, the first full-length African-American musical that premiered at the New York Theatre in 1903. However, he was also a composer of sacred music. “Exhortation (A Negro Sermon)” – one of a set of three songs entitled *Three Negro Songs* – affords Cook an opportunity to present important spiritual truths in song. Indeed, Marva Griffin Carver explains that Cook, prior to the “New Negro” movement of the 1920s, was looking to explore the “universal rather than specifically racialized themes.” His “Exhortation” presents the universal lesson of turning the other cheek presented at the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:38-42).

This paper will first discuss Cook’s the design of the song: the first part presents the text from Matthew in a quasi-recitative style demonstrating an influence from operetta. It also proscribes a list of undesirable behaviors; then, in the second part, Cook employs a ragtime setting (a 4/4 meter and extensive use of syncopation). In terms of the text, it now affirms the positive by stating what *should* be done. The design of the song emulates the evolution of the Golden Rule. Theologian William Barclay explains that whereas a notable precursor states: “What is hateful to yourself, do to no other,” the transformed version states: “all things which you wish that men should do to you, so do you too do to them.” (Matthew 7:12). This transformation is also evident in the harmonies used by Cook. They are used in a transparent fashion in the first part in association with the negative only to be reimagined and developed in the second part to be used in association with the positive.

Thus, both the design and the harmonic development speak to a lesson of forbearance that creates the possibility of universal brotherhood. At a time when invective permeates so much of social discourse, it is a lesson that needs to be heeded now more than ever.

My Chains are Gone: Images of Enslavement and Freedom in Contemporary Worship Music

Anneli Loepp Thiessen, University of Ottawa, and David Bjorlin, North Park University

“My chains are gone, I’ve been set free.” American contemporary worship leader and songwriter Chris Tomlin sits at a run-down piano in an autumn forest, singing these moving words in the music video of his massively popular song. Intertwined are scenes from the 2006 film *Amazing Grace*, which tells the story of William Wilberforce, a leader in anti-slave trade legislation in the British parliament. John Newton, the poet behind the hymn “Amazing Grace,” is portrayed as a major influence on Wilberforce, prompting both the title of the movie and Tomlin’s corresponding rendition of the hymn. Tomlin’s chart-topping “Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)” is one of many songs in contemporary worship repertoire that draws on imagery of slavery, freedom, and chains. An analysis of the CCLI top 100 from June 2020 indicates that twenty-eight ranking songs use at least one of the following words: slave, chain, free(dom), or captive. While Tomlin’s chorus clearly situates language of captivity in the context of the history of American slavery, most songs since have divorced slavery from the historic context and spiritualized this language to refer to one’s individual captivity to sin.

This paper will first provide an in-depth analysis of contrasting popular worship songs that rely on imagery of enslavement and freedom, noting the ways that this image is contextualized and embodied in performance and suggesting possible reasons for its popularity. It is these same white evangelical congregations that rely so heavily on the language of slavery that are also the most reticent to admit to slavery’s lasting impact in terms of racial oppression and inequality (Emerson and Smith, 2001; Brown, Kaiser, and Jackson, 2014; Jones, 2020). Using Emerson and Smith’s concept of the “white evangelical tool kit,” we will argue that the tendency toward individualism,

antistructuralism, and ahistoricism has led white evangelical congregations to appropriate language of enslavement and freedom in correspondingly narrow and ahistoric—and therefore problematic—ways. Finally, we will end by suggesting possible strategies for white congregations to better use concepts of slavery and freedom within their congregational songs.

Session 2a New Music for Our Present World

“The Angel of Doubt”: Ancient Wisdom Poetry in the Music of the Punch Brothers

Hannah Porter Denecke, Florida State University

Since winning “Best Folk Album” for *All Ashore* at the 2018 Grammys, the Punch Brothers have established themselves as a significant cultural influence in North America. Much of this particular album features political critique, yet it also includes many personal vignettes related to family and parenthood. “The Angel of Doubt” is a unique track on the album, however. The piece itself is in an odd meter, often resulting in groups of seven or thirteen. This rhythmic tension creates an unsettling backdrop for the dialogue between the narrator struggling with doubt about his life as a musician, trying to keep his “demons at bay,” and a metaphorical Angel of Doubt, who continually reminds the narrator about his past mistakes. Strikingly, the narrator resists the Angel of Doubt with quotations from the book of Ecclesiastes. This paper explores the interplay between the wisdom of Ecclesiastes and the Punch Brothers’ “The Angel of Doubt.”

At first listen, the song seems merely to chronicle the distress of a musician haunted by doubt in the late evening hours. Yet the narrator himself seems also to struggle with memories of his past, reminded that he used to spend his time “striving after wind” and recollecting that “everything was meaningless” then. The Angel of Doubt responds in rap-like spoken word, this character a metaphor itself for the doubt within the narrator’s own mind. Philosophers George Lakoff and Mark Johnson provide a useful framework for understanding complex metaphors in their *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), and biblical scholar Michael V. Fox’s commentary provides framework for understanding the poetry and metaphors of Ecclesiastes.

Aside from this song, the album does not include other obvious references to the Judeo-Christian scriptures. The question then remains: why refer to Ecclesiastes in an album by a band that is not markedly Christian? For the Punch Brothers, this wisdom poetry spoke into the tension they felt with contemporary politics. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to global restlessness, unease, and malaise among musicians and artists everywhere, however. There is no better time to ponder the wisdom of Ecclesiastes, expressed anew through music.

Chembe Cha Moyo (Arrow in my Heart): Song in a Strange Land, 2020

Jennifer Thomas, University of Florida

When a Kenyan graduate student at a major American university searched in vain for art songs with Swahili texts for his final recital, a generous and accomplished composer, Nansi Carroll, filled the gap. She composed a new cycle of five art songs, *Chembe Cha Moyo* (Arrow in my Heart), setting Swahili poems by Kenyan-born sociolinguist and poet, Alamin Mazrui. Mazrui’s work (1988) emerged from his political activism and experience in detention, yet the texts speak to America’s cries for racial and social justice in 2020: “Countries set fire to themselves / While mothers weep / Children are suffering from the words we use to kill and destroy;” and “Ashamed, you look away, you let it happen. / You can’t look for a fight.”

For Carroll, each poem called forth an African American spiritual; the messages of Mazrui's poetry resonated with her lifetime of immersion in spirituals. Implicitly or explicitly, the spirituals examine, interpret, and sacralize the texts of the poems, and they underpin the musical fabric of Carroll's composition. Small musical motives and fragments allude to the spirituals' melodies without revealing their identity, or the spiritual boldly weaves the whole cloth. The integrity and impact of Carroll's work stems from its authenticity: the poetry was not appropriated as a gimmick or token, and the music did not caricature or trivialize either Carroll's artistry or the legitimacy of other musical traditions: the work emerged from the lives of Mazrui and Carroll. The cycle also married and celebrated the student's cherished heritages — transcendent, eloquent Swahili poetry expressed in complex, intersecting musical idioms. The intertwining of African and American, Swahili and English, spiritual and art song, traditional and contemporary musical idioms reflects the inherent multivalence in the history of the African American spiritual and of the Swahili language. The longing of the student to sing in his home language mirrors the rise of the Spiritual as a response to diaspora, displacement, and adaptation.

This paper examines and interprets the intertextual tensions and reciprocities created by both musical and textual juxtapositions.

Session 2b Improvisation and the Holy Spirit

“Reclaiming our Pentecostal Identity?” Music and Charisma in Ghana Methodist Churches

John Dankwa, Wesleyan University

The Methodist Church is one of the largest mainline churches in Ghana. For more than a century, congregational hymn singing, psalms, choir anthems, and songs in local dialects arranged in four-part harmony have defined worship in Ghanaian Methodist churches. Since the last decade, a careful examination of worship in Ghanaian Methodist Churches reveals varied patterns. Church services regulated by a more or less strict liturgies are blended with contemporary Charismatic and Pentecostal styles of worship. Speaking in tongues, prophesying, and healing have become significant aspects of worship in many Ghanaian Methodist Churches today. Called the gifts of the Spirit, these activities are often spearheaded through music. Hymns, Psalms, and contemporary gospel songs are sung in slow tempo, accompanied by synthesizer keyboards, bass guitars, drum sets, and other musical instruments. The songs are sung in a certain order so that the speed and volume build to a stunning climax, sweeping people into a trancelike state of nebulous passion. Whereas for some members of the church, this phenomenon is alien to Ghanaian Methodism, there are many others who contend that the contemporary liturgical praxis is a rebirth of the historical Wesleyan tradition. This paper will examine music and charismatic religious experiences in Ghanaian Methodist churches. It contends that the current traits of Pentecostal and Charismatic styles of music in Ghanaian Methodism undergirds the Church's philosophy of being relevant in contemporary times whilst at the same time remaining uniquely Wesleyan. This paper is based on ethnographic research in Ghana and the US since 2010. Over the past ten years I had the chance to witness innumerable church services, camp meetings, and prayer meetings, to conduct formal interviews with pastors, musicians and congregants, as well as engagements in countless informal conversations with Methodists about music and charismatic experiences in the church.

When a Song is a Prayer (and also a Song): The Bleeding Categories of Evangelical Worship Service Structures

Glenn Stallsmith, Duke University Divinity School

If one who sings prays twice—a quote mistakenly attributed to Augustine—how many prayers are offered when a worship leader sings extemporized words to God during and after a congregational song? Contemporary praise and worship songs are scripted, with prepared words displayed on screens for the purpose of congregational participation. The performances of these song styles, however, allow for spontaneity in some settings. Summit Church, an evangelical megachurch in the Raleigh-Durham area affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, worships in a contemporary style in which song leaders have the freedom to improvise outside of the composed texts and tunes.

This paper, by way of a case study of Summit’s worship services, examines performances of singers who use music to transgress standard evangelical liturgical structures. This freedom to sing prayers outside the constraints of a song’s prescribed lyrics and tune reveals a key feature of the adoption of contemporary praise and worship styles—namely, the spread of pentecostal and charismatic practices into other evangelical churches. By looking at the ways in which Summit’s singers employ verbal and musical markers of informality and authenticity, this essay engages the discussion among liturgical scholars about the *ordo* as a framework for understanding the structures of services in free church traditions.

Session 3a Church Music of Immigrant Communities

The Dallas Tamil Church and Musical Flow

Rachel Schuck, University of North Texas

Since its founding in 2012, the Dallas Tamil Church has served a multitude of Tamil-speaking families in the greater Dallas area. The church’s explicit mission is to provide an avenue for the Dallas Tamil community to both worship and be ministered to in their native tongue. While Monique Ingalls and Soloman Raj have explored the role of music in community-building within South Asian churches, ethnomusicologist Zoe Sherinian has contributed to research on Christian music in the Tamil Dalit communities of South India, and sociologist Prema Kurien has conducted rich studies in the religious assimilation practices of Indian-Americans, music’s role within assimilation practices of Tamil churches of the Southern Plains region is yet to be theorized.

Through performance and text analysis of two Tamil-language worship songs, I analyze how church performers both facilitate and challenge structures of assimilation within and beyond the local Tamil protestant community: accumulating, transposing, and mobilizing musical resources available in order to engage in complex negotiations of belonging in a U.S. context.

Drawing on ethnographic observations of the Dallas Tamil Church’s online events streamed between August 1 and November 8, 2020, interviews with church leadership and musicians, and an ongoing dialogue with my interlocutors, I analyze the ways evangelical church members of the South Indian diaspora assert their ethnic distinctiveness while simultaneously resting in the middle-class identity that characterizes this community at the margins of the American mainstream. These discourses entail lasting structural and ideological implications for the Tamil evangelical community on a regional and global scale.

Anglican Church Music in the United States: Tracing the Diaspora of English Traditions from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Century

Matthew Hoch, Auburn University

At the time of its founding in 1789 as the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, there was no distinction between the music of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican music heard in English cathedrals and parishes. For over two centuries, many of these traditions have endured, and Anglican repertoire can still be heard in many Episcopal churches throughout the United States, particularly in historic churches in the urban Northeast. Over time, however, newer traditions have also emerged, offering a distinctly American Anglicanism that merges the traditional liturgies of the Book of Common Prayer with the fresh sounds of the New World. This paper will examine the gradual Americanization of English church music over the course of the past 240 years within the Episcopal Church while discussing distinctive new genres and liturgies that have established themselves alongside traditional ones. Select parishes will be profiled that offer distinctly modern musical services while remaining true to Anglican liturgies: the jazz masses of Canterbury House at the University of Michigan; the all-Taizé services of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills; the all-Spanish liturgies heard at the School of Theology at the University of the South; and the "paperless" music that emerged from St Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco are several examples. The evolution of Episcopal hymnody over the past century will also be examined; becoming increasingly less influenced by its nineteenth-century English parent hymnals, an authentically American body of Episcopal hymns has now been established. The paper will conclude with speculation on the future trajectory of Episcopal Church music as we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century.

Songs in a Foreign Land: A Saga of Wendish Lutheran Hymn Singing in Nineteenth-Century Texas

Benjamin Kolodziej, Southern Methodist University

Although many national groups emigrated to Texas beginning in 1854, the Germans were probably the most numerous, settling entire swathes of the state, establishing businesses, schools, church, and social organizations. Some were motivated by economic or social concerns, but some came seeking the liberty to practice their faith freely. The Wendish people were representative of the latter, a small group of these Lutherans of Slavic background having initially been led to Central Texas by pastor, poet, and musician Jan Kilian (1811-1884). The Wendish primarily sought religious freedom from the strictures that had been established under the Prussian Union (1817), seeking hymnody and preaching that was illustrative of their orthodox Lutheranism.

I have spent this last year researching Wendish musical and liturgical practice, utilizing the primary sources at the Texas Wendish Heritage Museum and Archive in Serbin, TX. As such, I have focused my research on Jan Kilian's unpublished manuscript *Choralbuch für die evangelische lutherische Gemeinde in Serbin*, completed in 1872. A collection of 240 chorales, the manuscript was compiled in order to teach a new, German organist how to play hymns in the "Wendish manner," which differed from established, German practice. Although there has been much non-musical scholarship devoted to the Wendish immigration in general and Jan Kilian in particular, no one has studied this *Choralbuch* or its significance to Texas or Wendish Lutheranism. Not only do the inscriptions and notations in this volume elucidate the liturgical and musical particularities of Wendish hymn singing, it illustrates a timeless story. The volume's creation was borne from the controversy between an old Wendish organist, representing an old Wendish liturgical tradition, and a precocious young German organist recently called to the community, among unhelpful mediations

by Jan Kilian, parish pastor and considered the “Father of Lutheranism” in Texas, all while attempting to preserve their communities’ cultural identities. This lecture presents my musical, liturgical, and historical research findings, situating them within the larger cultural struggles and context of these immigrant communities, the lessons from which are applicable still today.

Session 3b CCM (Churches Controlling Music)

A “Musical Dictator”: Leo Sowerby’s Authoritarian Philosophy of Church Music

Joseph Sargent, University of Alabama

In a speech delivered August 27, 1958, at a convention of the Canadian College of Organists, Leo Sowerby (1895-1968) described the duties of Episcopal organist/choirmasters in distinctly authoritarian terms. He asserted that, in terms of job titles, “the designation ‘musical dictator’ would be a more accurate one, at least in the places where the best work is done.” As a composer and longtime music director/organist at St. James Episcopal Cathedral in Chicago, and later as founding director of the short-lived College of Church Musicians at Washington National Cathedral, Sowerby was a forceful advocate for improving church music standards, and his widely acknowledged status as the “dean of American church music” undoubtedly gave his opinions considerable weight.

Sowerby’s dictatorial comment was no casual, off-the-cuff remark, however. Documentary evidence from wide-ranging publications, speeches, and commentaries reveals a consistent, and highly authoritarian, view on the proper disposition of church music. With God as the ultimate authority, music is fundamentally aimed at divine glorification rather than the worshipper’s own edification or entertainment. As such this music should be dignified, sober, and solemn, excluding secular, popular, and sentimental influences. It further ought to be performed by trained professionals, who can produce the finest offerings to God and who may also thereby elevate the tastes of their congregations. And on a more practical level, strong centralized musical leadership and firm adherence to official Episcopal musical and liturgical policies are strictly required.

Besides analyzing the nature and scope of Sowerby’s authoritarian philosophy, this paper also interprets his perspectives as a dramatic extension of earlier twentieth-century movements to increase the professionalization of Episcopal organ and choral music. It further historicizes Sowerby by addressing later liturgical music discussions, such as the discourse surrounding the production of *The Hymnal 1982*, in which Sowerby’s authoritative vision is criticized in favor of a more diverse, congregation-oriented approach.

The Search for Musical Identity: The Journey of the Southern Baptist Convention to Establish Denominational Standards in Its Musical Practices (1938-1944)

Andrew Lucius, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

In the early 20th century, Southern Baptist music educators such as I. E. Reynolds (1879–1949) and B. B. McKinney (1886–1952) saw deficiencies in the music practices within Southern Baptist churches. They believed these deficiencies hindered worship at the local church level (Pendergraft, 2018). Throughout the country, Southern Baptist music practices were fragmented and inferior to the music that was presented in other parts of American culture. Eventually, through the work of later music leaders like William J. Reynolds (1956–2009) and Donald P. Hustad (1918–2013), the denomination would raise its musical standards, but before William Reynolds and Hustad could do their work in the seminaries, an argument had to be made for higher musical standards that

would be compelling for even the smallest churches. A deeper consideration of a philosophy of church music was needed.

In response to this need, the Committee on Church Music was established as a special committee to the Southern Baptist Convention from 1938–1944. Its purpose was to research the musical deficiencies and needs of local churches, to attempt to meet those needs through the resources of the national and state conventions, and to raise the standard of musicianship throughout the denomination. Through their presentations at the Southern Baptist Convention’s annual meetings, the committee established a musical philosophy that raised the standards of music and informed Southern Baptist musical identity.

This paper offers an analysis based on a close reading of the reports given by the Committee on Church Music to the Southern Baptist Convention as a way of tracing the development of a philosophical commitment to improve and expand the musical practices within the denomination. This development is important for Christian scholarship in music for several reasons. First, it provides an example of how one denomination sought to establish a musical philosophy that allowed for intentional music training and education without losing ministry focus. Secondly, these reports provide an example of how to dialogue and advocate for the priority of excellent musicianship in the context of ecclesiastical, evangelical worship that may be a guide for other organizations today.

Satan Sounds: The Ontology and Efficacy of the Sonic in Evangelical Anti-Rock Literature

Philip Bixby, Yale University

In 1985, the United States Senate held a hearing to discuss the potentially deleterious effects of the decade’s most popular rock songs. The hearing was convened at the behest of the Parents’ Music Resource Center, an organization that sought to affix “explicit content” labels to offensive albums. Over the course of five hours, the committee heard testimony from members of the PMRC and other sources. The PMRC’s discursive position was clear from its testimonies: because rock lyrics discussed violence, sex, and drugs, they encouraged children to engage in these activities. Therefore, parents needed to be warned about these explicit messages before allowing their children to purchase these records.

Any deliberation on the sound of rock is conspicuously absent from this official congressional discussion. However, the contemporaneous discourse of evangelical Christians concerned itself with the music’s sonic qualities in addition to its lyrical content. Evangelical anti-rock literature from the 1980s critiqued rock’s uniquely sonic dimensions, and described how those sounds could adversely affect the physical, psychological, and spiritual condition of human beings.

Through an analysis of several anti-rock texts, I argue that while both secular and religious criticisms of rock attack the genre’s lyrics for promoting immoral messages, the evangelical Christian discourse tends to implicate the sound of the music as a message in itself, investing sound with the capacity to convey negative spiritual forces and to traverse the boundary between the physical and the spiritual. Sound possesses a dual ontology in this literature, as a simultaneously physical and spiritual medium.

***Missa Baclayana* and 19th C. Hispanic Philippine Liturgical Repertoire: Reconciling *music ficta* and Compositional Practices**

Peter Fielding, Kennesaw State University

This presentation comments on 19th Century musical manuscripts housed in the Baclayon Museum at *La Purisima Concepcion de la Virgen Maria* (*The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary*) Parish Church in Bohol, Philippines. These fragile and non-circulating cantorales and musical documents embody Hispanic colonial liturgical practices in the Philippines and their analysis provides a lens to reflect on the historic liturgical influences on the Philippine diaspora, now constituting an ever-growing segment of the global Christian and liturgical music communities. Building on the 2010 pioneering work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexandra Chula and Asst. Prof. Dr. David Kendall, as well as contemporary Philippine performing ensembles such as the Loboc Children's Choir, these rare cantorals are rich repositories that have not yet been analyzed in music analytic terms in any great detail beyond the inclusion of basic *music ficta* accidentals and transcription into contemporary Treble and Bass clef notation. In addition to comparing Chula and Kendall's editorial decisions regarding *music ficta* in their engravings and contemporary performance practices of this repertoire, I will present analyses of the Philippine-sourced melodic materials and contrapuntal writing to broaden our understanding of Hispanic liturgical practices of the early 19th Century.

Between Embodied Performance and Digital Media: Theorizing Carpatho-Rusyn Chant

Peter Kohanski, University of North Texas

The Carpatho-Rusyns—an ethnic minority who trace their roots to the Carpathian Mountains—claim ownership over a distinct tradition of plainchant. Rusyn immigrants in the twentieth century brought this tradition, known as *prostopinije*, to the United States where two historically Rusyn denominations continue to perform the chant in their liturgies. Musicologists like Joan Roccasalvo (1986) have studied the textual sources for Rusyn chant. Evidence suggests, however, that despite its well-documented textual history, the *prostopinije*, has always been most meaningful to Rusyns during the corporeal acts of liturgy, worship, and congregational singing. Accordingly, I argue in this paper that any study that examines the *prostopinije* must consider its embodied form, an example of what Diana Taylor (2003) calls the repertoire, which transmits of knowledge through embodied memory and performance and interacts with the archive of historical records.

Part of that embodied memory is preserved and circulated in homemade digital recordings of the chant tradition on YouTube. Although Jonathan Sterne (2003), a media studies scholar, has argued that there is a violence or even “deadness” to recordings, I contend that because Rusyns produce and consume recordings of the *prostopinije*, these artefacts carry out valuable cultural work on par with its embodied performance. YouTube becomes a site of cultural remembrance for Rusyns. My work thus opens up new ways of understanding Rusyn chant through the digital mediation of its embodied performance in churches across the United States.

Christ in the Concert Hall: The Resurrection of the Passion in the 21st Century

Breck McGough, Baylor University

The days of composers writing solely for the church may be long gone, but sacred music has found a new and welcoming home in the modern concert hall. According to the classical music event database, Bachtrack, sacred music has become a major portion of the output of the most-performed living composers. In a world that is perceived as increasingly secular, sacred settings have become a popular form for new commissions in classical music. Beginning in 2000 with the Internationale Bachakademie Stuttgart's *Passion 2000* commissioning project, there has been a particular resurgence of concert settings of Christ's Passion. These settings have come from composers of different nationalities and faiths (and no faith), but they share the universal human story of death and resurrection through the particularly Christian lens of the Passion of Jesus of Nazareth. In past centuries, it was taken for granted that audiences would be familiar with the Passion narrative, but today it may be that composers have become the teachers of this story to an audience that may otherwise never interact with it. How do these twenty-first century composer-evangelists interpret the death of Jesus, and in what ways do these settings contradict, parallel, or nuance more traditional Passions?

In dialogue with theologians, music theorists, and musicologists, my examination will explore the way the Passion narrative is depicted musically and how the texts from the Four Gospels are used and interpreted in order to tease out the theological implications of the four *Passion 2000* commissions themselves: Tan Dun's *Water Passion after St. Matthew*, Osvaldo Golijov's *La Pasión según San Marcos*, Wolfgang Rihm's *Deus Passus*, and Sofia Gubaidulina's *St. John Passion*. I will also apply this analytical method to two later settings, Kaija Saariaho's *La Passion de Simone* and James MacMillan's *St. Luke Passion*, to show how the novel approaches used in the *Passion 2000* compositions have influenced more recent works.

“Who do you say that I am?”: Signifying “Jesusness” in James MacMillan's Passions

Samantha Arten, Washington University in St. Louis, and Isaac Arten, Saint Louis University

The question “Who do you say that I am?” posed by Jesus to his disciples in the three synoptic Gospels is key to their narrative and interpretation. This question challenges communities gathered around Jesus—in the ancient world and today—to articulate their understanding of his identity and significance. Depictions of Jesus in artistic forms make theological claims about the nature and character of God and humanity, the relationship between the two, and the ethical stance towards each other demanded by this relationship. This project, a collaboration between a musicologist and a theologian, is centrally concerned with the compositional choices made in setting a Passion narrative to music. Of particular interest are the theological implications of Jesus' voice: who does the composer say that Christ is, and how does the musical work direct the audience's gaze to locate Jesus?

James MacMillan's *St John Passion* (premiered 2007) and the *St Luke Passion* (premiered 2014), form the first half of his lifetime project of setting all four Gospels' Passion narratives. More recently, MacMillan composed a new resurrection chorus for Streetwise Opera's 2016 production, with *The Sixteen*, of an abridged version of Johann Sebastian Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. This paper will explore how these three works present distinct musical arguments about the identity of Christ—in the words of Penny Woolcock, director of the Streetwise *Passion*, how these works “signify ‘Jesusness.’” In MacMillan's *St John Passion*, Jesus is sung by an “angry” baritone soloist;

in the *St Luke Passion*, by a three-part children's choir; and in the *Streetwise Passion*, by a succession of eight amateur singers who have experienced homelessness. The images of Jesus shown in MacMillan's three *Passions* move from the abstract to the concrete, from the singular divine Jesus in *St John*, to the trinitarian Jesus in *St Luke*, to the most challenging depiction of a liberative Christology in the *Streetwise Opera's St Matthew*. Drawing on liberation theologians Jon Sobrino and Ada María Isasi-Díaz, we will analyze how the trajectory of MacMillan's *Passions* increasingly locates Jesus not only in the "everyman, everywoman" (Woolcock) but reveals the "Jesusness" of the vulnerable, those Sobrino identifies as the world's "crucified people."

Session 5a Lecture Recital

Paraliturgical Songs of the Greek Islands

Panayotis League, Florida State University

The traditional music of rural Greece is saturated with references to Orthodox Christian practices and beliefs. From the *kalanda* or carols sung at auspicious points of the liturgical calendar by children and adults alike, to retellings of saints' lives in the heroic register of epic poetry, to Carnival parodies of Good Friday hymns, there is a broad and deep repertoire of paraliturgical music, performed in a ritually-bound context, that belies a simultaneously reverent and playful engagement with the mystical, linguistic, and musical aspects of popular Orthodox Christianity in the Greek-speaking Aegean basin.

Drawing on over two decades of intensive experience as a performer and ethnographer in Greece and the diaspora, this lecture-recital presents a selection of songs from the islands of Kalymnos, Patmos, Symi, Rhodes, and Crete as well as the Aegean coast of Asia Minor, highlighting intriguing connections in musical, poetic, and ritual structure and practice with Byzantine psalmody, Greek and Turkish folk music, and pre-Christian calendrical customs. In recognition of the large and long-established Cretan and Dodecanese migrant communities in the Atlanta-Tampa corridor, the presentation will focus on songs specific to and still popular in these communities today.

Selections will be sung in various Greek dialects, accompanied by *laouto* (steel-string lute), *tsambouna* (goatskin bagpipe), and *toublerleki* (goblet drum). All pieces are of unknown composition, belonging to the collective folk tradition of the Greek Aegean.

Καλημέρα (Τα Φώτα) / *Kalimera (Ta Fota)*

Good morning, master and lady

Epiphany carol (Patmos)

Άγιος Βασίλης έρχεται / *Agios Vasilis erchetai*

Saint Basil is coming

Christmas carol (Kalymnos)

Τ' Άη-Γιώργη / *T' Ai-Giorgi*

St. George's Day carol (Rhodes)

Ο Διγενής ψυχομαχεί / *O Digenis psychomachei*

Digenis on his deathbed

Allegorical song on the Crucifixion (Crete)

Σήμερα μαύρος ουρανός / *Simera mavros ouranos*
Today the sky is black

The Virgin Mary's lament (Kalymnos)

Χριστός Ανέστη μάτια μου / *Christos Anesti, matia mou*
Christ is Risen, my love

Easter song (Asia Minor)

Παριανός σκοπός / *Parianos skopos*
(Kalymnos)

Wedding song invoking the Virgin Mary's blessings

Του Παερμιώτη / *Tou Paermiotti*

Song in honor of the Archangel Michael (Symi)

Session 5b Lecture Recital

New Sacred Music as an Ecumenical Resource for Faith Formation: An Interactive Introduction to Deus Ex Musica

Delvyn Case, Wheaton College (Massachusetts), Deus Ex Musica

Deus Ex Musica is a new ecumenical organization that promotes the use of sacred music as a resource for faith formation. Its signature event, which premiered live in 2019, uses newly-commissioned psalm settings as a springboard for discussion about Scripture. Initially presented live, the event has since been presented virtually by seminaries, universities, denominations, and churches across the US. It has been well-received by scholars, students, clergy, and laypeople representing a wide range of global Christian traditions.

This interactive session will an opportunity for attendees to experience a shortened version of the event and then engage in meta-conversations about the project. After a brief introduction to Deus Ex Musica's mission, its underlying philosophy, and this project's connection to contemporary trends in theology and religious pedagogy, participants will hear newly-commissioned settings of Psalm 57 by Xavier Beteta and Delvyn Case. Then, using Deus Ex Musica's guided listening resources, participants will discuss the ways the two different musical settings affect the interpretation and experience of each psalm. The session will conclude with a participant-driven meta-discussion about the event that could cover topics like musical hermeneutics; the relationship between musical composition and homiletics; issues in the use of the arts in religious pedagogy; theology of music; aesthetics; contemporary sacred music, and ecumenism.

Session 6a Simplicity and Silence, or . . . ?

"A Puzzle to Myself": Augustine and Musical Simplicity

Bennett Zon, Durham University

'Yet if I have the experience of being moved more by the singing than by the subject matter, I admit that I am sinning and deserve punishment and then would prefer not to listen to the singer. Just look at the state I am in! Weep with me and weep for me . . . O Lord my God, listen! Look and

see and have mercy and heal me; before your eyes I have become a puzzle to myself, and this itself is my weakness.’ (*Confessions*). Augustine famously angsts over music, but why is he so puzzled by it? Many have tried to answer that question; this paper adds to their quest.

Scholars tend to explore Augustine in ways that focus separately on music’s spiritual or physical characteristics. Bai and Scully use numerology to explore spiritual transcendence (‘Numbers: Harmonic Ratios and Beauty in Augustinian Musical Cosmology’, *Cosmos and History; De Musica as the Guide to Understanding Augustine’s Trinitarian Numerology in the De Trinitate*, *Augustinian Studies*) while Ghisalberti and Harrison concentrate on the physicality of emotions (‘Listening to Hymns and Tears of Mourning in Augustine’s *Confessions*, Book 9’, *Early Music; On Music, Sense, Affect and Voice*). This paper not only unites them but argues that Augustine considered music’s physical and spiritual characteristics totally inseparable, like God himself. It is very possibly the first paper to claim that the foundation of Augustine’s music theology lies in his specific understanding of that unity – in other words, in the doctrine of divine simplicity. As Ayres suggests that doctrine purports a spiritually divine yet physically human and indivisible God (*Nicaea and Its Legacy*). Augustine himself claims that ‘the divine nature transcends all that is mutable’ yet in music ‘We climb the steps in our heart and we sing a song of ascent’ (*Confessions*).

This paper uses a limited selection of writings to explore simplicity and its implications for Augustine’s music theology. It does this through a series of discussions, firstly on simplicity itself; then its place in the *Confessions* and *De Musica*; and lastly, by way of conclusion, as a form of psychological self-help.

Familiarity and Discomfort: Silence and Noise in Musical Worship

Michael Huerter, Baylor University

A contemporary worship leader leaves a glowing review on a website selling worship pad sound effects, describing the challenges this product saved him from with terms like “awkward pauses” and “dead silence.” A horror film features a tense scene set in an abandoned, eerily quiet Gothic cathedral, the silence looming and threatening. The world faces profound disruption as a pandemic shuts down businesses, schools, and churches, leaving them empty and silent. Silence is a meaningful cultural category, but how is it defined and what does it signify? Silence can be understood as an experience of sound that demarcates and frames performances and religious expressions, clarifying what belongs in worship and what is out of place. It also carries a range of positive and negative cultural and psychological associations, from intimacy and peace to separation and violence.

What are we to make of silence? Drawing insights from fields such as musicology, cultural studies, psychology, and theology, this paper argues that silence functions as a category to establish norms of comfort and meaning, to distinguish the border between the known and the unknown, and to reject sounds that direct attention in undesirable ways. Silence exhibits potential to create discomfort, and often draws our awareness to things we would rather avoid or ignore. But when our typical noise, busyness, and musical worship cease and give way to silence, might God meet us there? In this paper I will explore how the silences we face, seemingly threatening death, may give way to new life.

“We’ll Understand it Better By and By”: African American Spirituals in the Theory Classroom

Lauren Hartburg, Florida State University

During the 2019 Society for Music Theory plenary session, Phil Ewell brought “Music Theory’s White Racial Frame” to the attention of a discipline that continues to curate racism at an institutional level. The music theory classroom is a prime example of systematic racism since less than 2% of examples in music theory textbooks are by people of color (Ewell, 2020). One anti-racist response is the deliberate inclusion of non-white music in the classroom (Kim, 2020). Additionally, the challenges of “race talk” should be addressed and positive discussions of race fostered using Derald Wing Sue’s eleven successful strategies (2015). In an effort to begin providing a practical solution to the issue of racial injustice in music academia, I propose three teaching vignettes that present music theory concepts of varying levels and encourage classroom discussion of race and religion in African American Spirituals. The first example is a first semester ear training lesson on the minor mode where “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child” and Julia Perry’s arrangement of “I am a Poor Little Orphan” are used as one-part and two-part melodic dictations, respectively. Following the dictations, students are engaged in discussion on the racial injustice of a people being stripped of their “mother” land. The second vignette is a theory class exploration of phrase forms using “Deep River” and “I Stood on the Ribber ob Jordan” to introduce period structure, and Undine Smith Moore’s arrangement of “Come Down Angels” as a sentence model. Since all three spirituals contain lyrics relating to water and a crossing between earthly and heavenly realms, class discussion centers on the two-fold meaning of these texts—the more obvious Scriptural interpretation, and the subtler reading of the text as a cry for deliverance from the oppression of slavery. Finally, I present Charles Albert Tindley’s “We’ll Understand it By and By” as a harmonic analysis assignment where students encounter secondary dominants and the theme of overcoming trials that are often multiplied for those of less privilege. While far from a solution, these anti-racist examples encourage engagement in positive classroom discussions of race and religion.

The Global Encounter as *Communitas*: Inter-Pilgrim Musicking along the Contemporary Camino de Santiago

Hannah Snaveley, University of California, Riverside

In the effort to provide new ways of theorizing Christian rituals as global encounters (White 2012) and sites of music cosmopolitanisms, I offer an ethnomusicological perspective of inter-pilgrim musical events that occur along the Camino de Santiago (Camino), a historically Catholic pilgrimage in northern Spain. While ethnomusicologists have argued for the centrality of music on pilgrimages around the world, particularly for music’s role in encouraging pilgrims, constructing place, and crossing transnational borders, on the Camino it primarily facilitates cross-cultural encounters for pilgrims, though at varied levels of (mis)understandings. This paper explores the ways that participatory musicking connects international pilgrims who otherwise would not have come in contact with one another and reinforces the Camino’s Catholic heritage, despite the recent rise in non-religious walkers. The study is based on participant observation and autoethnographic engagement with musical rituals that occurred in two religious *albergues* (lodging for pilgrims) during the summer of 2019. Due to increased levels of fleeting global-local interactions between pilgrims, the twenty-first century Camino has become a site for cosmopolitan communal

formations, although they are often constructed on the basis of language or nationality. Throughout my research, the religious albergues were significant social spaces for interactions across these barriers, as they emphasized communal evenings and activities involving Western popular or Catholic musics after full days of walking alone. I argue that these participatory rituals utilized assumed cosmopolitan musical knowledges and religious backgrounds in order to create idealized senses of heightened community, conceptualized here in terms of Turnerian *communitas*. These encounters heavily relied on Western musical aesthetics in order to be meaningful for the pilgrims, and at the same time, national distinctions were constructed and broken down in order to create the feeling of a global pilgrim community. *Communitas* was only achievable after essentialized difference was first sounded, which it often occurred at the cost of excluding particular groups of pilgrims.

Session 9a Theoretical Perspectives on Twentieth-Century Sacred Music

Theological Contexts for Virtuosity: Listening to Messiaen's *Vingts regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* (1944)

Stephanie Venturino, Eastman School of Music and David Keep, Hope College

As Christian music analysts, how can we understand our profoundly spirit-led listening experiences? Our study pursues this question, examining Messiaen's monumental *Vingts regards* and its role in facilitating an aural encounter with God. We view this work through the lens of virtuosity, extending Samson's (2007) "relational field" for nineteenth-century music—focusing on connections between text, instrument, performer, and audience—to Messiaen's mid-twentieth-century piano cycle. Listening through the text, instrument, and performer in order to focus on the relationship between the listener and God, we posit a new intersection between virtuosity, spirituality, and temporality. Whereas most Messiaen studies prioritize Nattiez's (1976) poietic dimension (typically through characteristics such as rhythm, color, and birdsong), this approach is centered on how the listener perceives God via their esthetic position. This is made possible by the unlikely role virtuosity plays in heightening the potential for a divine encounter through the listening experience.

Our focus on the theological contexts for virtuosity responds to Fallon's (2010) call for less "over-interpretation of the theological significance of musical structure" as part of the "third wave" of Messiaen research, which prioritizes intersections between theology, music, and culture. If virtuosity was understood in morally ambivalent terms in the nineteenth century, its manifestations in the twentieth century found more diverse aesthetic contexts (Bauer 2019), acquiring associations in Messiaen's works with "dazzlement" (*éblouissement*), breakthrough (Maas 2009) and shock (Cochran 2014), which may represent the overwhelming nature of God's omnipotence when contemplated from a human perspective.

Non-functional Triadic Syntax in 20th-Century British Choral Music

Christopher Blakey, Durham University

Alain Frogley identifies 'juxtaposition of triads with roots a third apart and involving false relations' as a 'fingerprint' of the musical style of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Julian Rushton agrees, and suggests that Vaughan Williams employs such harmonic language for 'expressive purposes apparently connected to mystery, exaltation, or the (metaphorically) magical.' These statements find resonance in bodies of Music Theory which seek to explain such harmonic phenomena: Neo-

Riemannian theorist Richard Cohn, for example, suggests that these progressions are heavily associated with the ‘semiotics of the supernatural’. This harmonic language is prevalent in Vaughan Williams’s sacred choral music and remained an expressive option for British composers of sacred music throughout the 20th Century. Pieces by Anglican composers such as William Henry Harris, Kenneth Leighton, and John Sanders explore similar harmonic relationships, albeit in diverse and distinctive ways.

As Cohn argues, this musical language exhibits an established link to transcendent topics; the nature of the texts set in each case ground this in a specifically Christian expression. As such, these pieces clearly fall into the remit of Music Theology: an interdisciplinary field which, amongst other things, attempts to understand music as theology. Understanding these harmonic features is paramount to such an approach. Despite the applicability of existing bodies of theory to this repertoire, there has been very little scholarly attempt to analyse this music; there is a dearth of analytical scholarship on British Choral Music in particular and, indeed, triadic music in the 20th century as a whole. Music Theology, whilst sometimes turning its attention to this repertoire, tends to avoid engagement with music analysis and theory.

Drawing on research in Neo-Riemannian theory, this paper suggests that what Cohn describes as the ‘second nature of the triad’ generates non-functional triadic syntaxes which underpin the harmonic language in this repertoire. Using case studies from the composers mentioned above, and in light of recent research in the field of Music Theology, this paper will seek to explore how the interplay of these syntaxes is capable of grounding music in theological meaning.

Session 9b Local and Global

Burmese Christian Musicking and the Two-Fold Legacy of Adoniram Judson

Heather MacLachlan, University of Dayton

Burma, located in continental Southeast Asia and also known as Myanmar, is a predominantly Theravada Buddhist country. Christians make up approximately five percent of the national population. Buddhism and Christianity have received a proportionate amount of attention from scholars, which is to say that the English-language literature contains very little about Christianity in Burma (Schrober 2008:265). This presentation addresses the gap in the literature by focusing on the musical practices of Burmese Christians. The Christian community of Burma includes both Catholics and Protestants, and the Protestants are divided into many denominations. In the presentation I argue that twenty-first century Protestant Christians in Burma fulfill both aspects of a “twofold legacy” bequeathed to them by Adoniram Judson, the very first Baptist missionary to Burma (La Seng Dingrin 2009:485), and that their fulfillment of this legacy is manifest in their musical practices. Judson both rejected Buddhism as a false and pagan tradition, and, simultaneously acknowledged that Buddhism’s vocabulary and attendant concepts were indispensable to his ministry. He therefore relied on the Burmese language and the Buddhist worldview to translate portions of the Bible while insisting that new Christians must replace Buddhist ideas and behaviors with new practices and beliefs. Two centuries after the advent of Judson’s mission to Burma, the Protestant Christians who are his descendants in the faith fulfill his two-fold legacy. During Sunday morning services (and at other times when Christians gather), they participate in music inherited directly from nineteenth-century Anglo missionaries and in more recent music created in the Christian West. Sunday-morning musicking represents a complete replacement of local musical sounds and practices. By contrast, during outdoor evangelical concerts the other part of Judson’s legacy is fulfilled; during these concerts Burmese Christians perform

Buddhist-associated song and dance genres - which use local instruments, vocal stylings, and choreographies - in order to communicate the Christian message to Burman Buddhists. This presentation is based on several months of ethnographic fieldwork research conducted in Burma in 2018. In analyzing Burmese Christian musical practices and their significance, it constitutes a contribution to Christian scholarship in music.

Localization versus Globalization: Appraising the “Noise” in Ghanaian Charismatic Congregational Worship

Eric Amouzou, Baylor University

Ghanaian Charismatic congregational worship is popularly known for its relentless energy amid reactions to audible "shouts" by the worship leader and the congregation alike. From an outsider's perspective, this experience may not immediately make any sense compared to the liturgies of other more formal Christian worship traditions. To a Ghanaian Charismatic audience, this atmosphere represents a foretaste of God's presence among His people, thus seen as a medium through which one identifies, adapts, interprets, and practices worship that is culturally meaningful as well as spiritually enriching. By drawing on concepts from ethnodoxology and interpretivist theory, this paper argues that Ghanaian Charismatic congregational worship is a product of an ongoing interaction between Christianity and local culture. Further, it suggests that a contextual interpretation is significant to understanding the Ghanaian Charismatic worship experience. Also, "noise"—a term used to stand for the various audible gestures employed during Ghanaian charismatic worship—represents effective ways through which worshipers interact in a Ghanaian Charismatic context. Using two YouTube videos of renowned Ghanaian Charismatic worship leaders Joe Mettle and Denzel Prempeh as a case study, this paper analyzes the linguistic, sonic, and visual interactions between leaders, musicians, and the congregation during worship. The goal is to provide a framework for understanding the meaning and affect of Ghana Charismatic congregational worship.

Session 10a Sacred Music for the Nineteenth-Century Concert

“The Artist’s Highest Goal:” Navigating the History and Potential of Church Music in Robert Schumann’s *Missa Sacra*, Op. 147 (1852)

Sonja Wermager, Columbia University

When an admirer wrote to Robert Schumann in 1851 encouraging the composer to attempt an oratorio on a sacred subject, Schumann responded with the declaration, “To turn one's energies toward sacred music surely remains the artist’s highest goal.” During the final years of his career, Schumann increasingly turned to composing choral works with religious texts and subjects, culminating in his *Missa Sacra*, Op. 147, and *Requiem*, Op. 148, both written in early 1852 without any commission or explicit occasion. Schumann’s pivot towards sacred music was interpreted by his earliest biographers as a harbinger of his eventual institutionalization—a trope that continues to influence even some contemporary scholarship. More recently, however, reinterpretation of Schumann’s later years has led to a general consensus that in composing liturgical works Schumann sought to check the boxes of the major musical genres in order to claim a place in posterity next to the composers he most admired.

In this paper I argue that even this reinterpretation has missed something key about Schumann’s composition of a Mass setting. Specifically, it hasn’t accounted for Schumann’s deep

engagement with questions of church music throughout his career, first as a critic and later as a conductor. Analysis of his reviews of church music, his letters, and his activities as municipal music director in Düsseldorf demonstrates that Schumann throughout his career was keenly engaged in the questions that had earlier occupied E.T.A. Hoffmann and A.F.J. Thibaut, two writers who were influential in the formation of Schumann's views: namely, to what extent should contemporary church music be based on prior models, and what made a new work for the church authentic to the modern age? This paper proposes that Schumann grappled with these questions in composing his Mass setting, and that the *Missa Sacra*, Op. 147 represents a personal test of his long-held commitment, expressed in an 1835 issue of his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, "to acknowledge the past and its creations and to draw attention to the fact that new artistic beauties can only be strengthened by so pure a source."

Felix Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*: "Imaginary Church Music" or a Sublime Symphony?

Joshua Waggener, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Felix Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* (later published as Symphony No. 2) was commissioned for and premiered at the 1840 Gutenberg Festival in Leipzig, commemorating the 400th anniversary of Gutenberg's invention of moveable type. As Todd (2003) summarizes, "the symphony tied together the principal threads of the festival into a patriotic offering of thanksgiving. The work, three orchestral movements chain-linked to a cantata of nine movements, traced the triumph of light over darkness and celebrated Gutenberg's invention as the disseminator of God's word through the printed Lutheran Bible." The work was highly praised (initially), and the composer went on to lead repeat performances of the *Lobgesang* in other cities.

As scholars have repeatedly sought to answer (e.g., Bonds (1996), Minor (2012)), how does Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* represent such an eclectic range of historical, cultural, and theological themes? And how can we understand its reception, according to mid-nineteenth century aesthetic standards?

Through analysis of genre and form, this paper will demonstrate how Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* manifests an original genre—influenced by psalms and symphonies—unifying an eclectic range of sacred and secular styles. Furthermore, an aesthetic reading and reception summary will show that, in this "Hymn of Praise," diverse styles and sacred texts combine to express distinctly sublime concepts—including creation, light, and revelation—while "translating" the German past for the German present. This paper contributes to Christian scholarship in music through careful attention to the question of Mendelssohn's "imaginary church music" (Dahlhaus, 1974) and the use of sacred music genres for secular events.

Session 10b New Perspectives on Modern Worship Music

Can Worship Songs About Me Be Good? The Surprising Value of the "CCM" Movement as Viewed through Marion's Phenomenological Lens

Christina George, Xavier University

Recent scholarship (both academic and popular) concerned with congregational worship practice in the American "Evangelical" church has been marked by a distinct trend which aims to critique a contemporary tendency to prioritize the thoughts and experiences of the self in relation to God. This criticism often highlights a particular danger—a kind of religious solipsism which keeps one from properly relating to God and therefore unjustly reduces one's perception of the power of

God.

While this commentary on “self-based” worship may be both needed and constructive, this paper takes an opposite approach, giving a defense for the benefit of worship which begins with, or seems oriented around, the self. This defense is specifically rooted in and aided by the phenomenological project of Jean-Luc Marion in his 2008 text, *Au lieu de soi* (trans. *In the Self's Place*, 2012) and it employs Marion's framework of *confessio* and praise insofar as these are movements which originate within the self and extend outward toward God.

Ironically, criticism against contemporary, self-centric worship carries with it the dangerous assumption that the self's longing *can* be satisfied by one's prioritization of himself. If, however, man was designed to reach out toward God by first acknowledging his own desire, then a clarified understanding of one's desire to be met by God might actually serve to enhance our understanding of the positive impact of the contemporary “CCM” worship movement, insofar as knowledge of self does, indeed, lead to knowledge of God.

Of Animatronic Praise Bands and Worship Leading Chickens: Locating the Sacred through Evangelical Christian Worship Music Parodies

Monique Ingalls, Baylor University

US evangelical Christianity is not a religious movement traditionally known for its humor; however, evangelical satire and parody are thriving online. Farcical offerings—created by independent humorists and megachurch media ministries alike—frequently take the form of satirical news stories about church life or parody videos of church services. A favorite target of evangelical humor is pop-rock worship music. Satirical stories and parody videos lampoon simple or nonsensical song lyrics, local church bands' aspirations to pop stardom, and the all-too-predictable “spontaneity” of worship song sets. Drawing insights from research on evangelical worship music from ethnomusicology and liturgical studies, this paper argues that worship music culture is a popular topic for parody because the musically-facilitated “worship experience” is one of the most sacred rituals in contemporary evangelicalism. As a result, humorous accounts of worship can go only so far before profaning the sacred, and worship parody creators must effectively negotiate the line between humor and profanity to maintain their following. To demonstrate this process, I examine closely the context and content of selected videos from a worship parodist who has (so far) successfully navigated these boundaries. Beginning in May 2020, this anonymous creator(s) has released several artfully-produced worship song covers that are “performed” by a rubber chicken vocalist called the “Worshicken.” Using social media content analysis, I examine YouTube viewers' reactions to these viral video parodies, along with the video creators' defenses of Worshicken's “ministry,” that underscore the central aspects—including personal authenticity, purity of intentions, and individual experience—evangelicals find the most sacrosanct within congregational worship. The success of Worshicken, ultimately, is predicated upon its creators' ability to skirt the line between humor and profanity by performing sincerity of intentions and feel-good moral lessons, while offering the levity and relatability that only a rubber chicken worship leader can deliver.

Marcos Witt's "Trono de Alabanza:" An Initial Exploration into the Musical and Theological History of Latin American Praise and Worship

Adam Perez, Duke University Divinity School

Though praise and worship has become the *sine qua non* of global pentecostal-charismaticism, little research has explored its liturgical and musical origins in Latin America. This paper explores the early history of praise and worship in Latin American contexts, namely the theology embedded in the text and music of praise and worship pioneer Marcos Witt in the mid- to late-1980s.

During the 1980s large praise and worship conferences were being established across Latin America both by Marcos Witt and by North American conference leaders. These conferences spread the liturgical and theological message of the restoration of praise and worship. Witt is an important source for this history as he has been described as "the greatest innovator of evangelical music in Latin America" and "possibly the best-known Latin Christian artist."

The paper begins by providing a brief overview of Witt's personal and theological connection to praise and worship in North America. Next, it details the role of conferences in the 1980s for spreading this theology. Third, this paper will provide a theological and musical analysis of Witt's first album "Proyecto: Alabanza y Adoración." I discuss how the album employs both a cultural and theological hybridity that firmly identifies the album with broader trends in praise and worship while also distinguishing it from those same trends. To form the basis of the theological analysis, I will use the teaching materials found in two conference books: the 1985 *Northwest Music Minister's Conference* that Witt attended in 1985 at Bible Temple (Portland, OR) and the 1987 *Simposio de Alabanza* (Caracas, Venezuela).

Negotiations of Identity and Faith in Brazilian Christian Music from the 1960s to the 1980s

Marcell Steuernagel, Southern Methodist University

Since the 1980s, Brazil's Christian *gospel* music scene has grown in parallel with the rise of the *evangélico* population in the country, from about 4% in the 1960s to nearly a quarter of the population by 2010 (IBGE 2010). But the history of contemporary Brazilian Christian Music (MCB) begins in the decades that precede the *gospel* explosion. After the 1950s, MCB developed at a crossroads that included North Atlantic missionary input, Brazil's Catholic colonial heritage, and the influence of national and international popular musics. At this intersection, Brazilian musicians and pastors, questioning what it meant to be fully Christian and fully Brazilian, began transgressing the bounds of a missionary culture based on the hymnic tradition of the Northern hemisphere and its accompanying soundscape of organ, choir, and piano. By weaving Brazilian influences into their compositions, they developed a repertoire that simultaneously acknowledged these outside influences and moved beyond them.

To a large extent, these unique musical expressions were supplanted by the *gospel* industry, a reality reflected in scholarship. While the *gospel* phenomenon has received scholarly attention in Brazil (Cunha 2004; Dolghie 2007) and abroad (Burdick 2013), pre-*gospel* MCB remains underrepresented. This paper is a postcolonial contribution to the study of global Christian music that can help scholars further understand the complex webs of theological, social, and cultural negotiations inherent to Christian musicking. It focuses on MCB from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, drawing from Brazilian histories of MCB; ethnographic research with pastors and musicians active at the time; and musical recordings. As the study of church music becomes hospitable to

voices from outside the Euro-American axis, this study broadens academic perspectives on how Christians in the Global South negotiate tensions between foreign musical and theological influences and their own rich musical heritages.

Session 11b Arvo Pärt

Arvo Pärt's *Stabat Mater*: Musical Sighs Amidst the Mantric Minimalist Trope

Aleksandra Drozzina, Purdue University Fort Wayne

This paper focuses on Arvo Pärt's *Stabat Mater* (1985), a composition from the same time period as *Concerto for Choir* (1984–85) by Alfred Schnittke and *Sieben Worte* (1982) by Sofia Gubaidulina, and in which Pärt combines a religious Latin text with voices and instruments. These composers operated in a landscape, where the official Soviet state policy was atheism.

Pärt is deeply invested in the Johannine concept of Word/Logos/*Verbum*, and for him the words of religious texts are rooted in the divine Word itself and are thus sacred (Bouteneff 2015). I show how the musical phrasing arises from the syllabic structure of the poem. Additionally, I consider the role of musical topics and tropes of minimalist typology in this piece. Pärt employs the musical topic of sigh/*pianto* to both open the work and shape its overall nearly symmetrical arch form. The sigh topic is intertwined with the mantric trope—and together they help to frame the text, which deals with the crucifixion and with the Mother as the main witness and primary character at the tragic scene. The paper demonstrates how the musical topic of sigh/*pianto* situates itself within the mantric minimalist trope, and how together they further guide the subject matter of *Stabat Mater*, namely the crucifixion, and bring forth its nearly symmetrical musical form with multiple melodic and rhythmic retrogrades within. Application of methodological frameworks of topics and tropes highlights Pärt's unique treatment of the subject matter that has been set prior by other composers.

Pärt, the Cosmic Artisan: *Tintinnabuli* as a “Sober Gesture”

Tyler Thress, Ohio University

For many, Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) exemplifies “Holy Minimalism,” music which is intimate, contemplative, deeply spiritual, and closely linked to Contemplative Christianity. This is in no small part attributable to his *tintinnabuli* method, a compositional technique somewhere between serialism and sorcery. This characterization, however accurate, misses something important. Arvo Pärt's music is not minimalist. How, then, should one understand Arvo Pärt and his compositions? Building on musicologist Leopold Brauneiss' and theologian Peter Bouteneff's categorizations of Pärt as essentialist and reductionist, respectively, I will attempt to answer this question from the position of a framework laid out by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980). I argue that Arvo Pärt is best understood as, in their terms, a “cosmic artisan,” and that *tintinnabuli* is best understood as a “sober gesture,” a device which serves as “an act of consistency, capture, or extraction that works in a material that is not meager, but prodigiously simplified, creatively limited, selected” (Deleuze and Guattari, “1837: Of the Refrain” in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1980. 344-45). To this end I will also draw on Marguerite Bostonia's conception of *tintinnabuli* as metonymic, and Pärt's technique in his own words, which draw surprising and explicit parallels with Deleuze and Guattari's conception of “the sober gesture.” I posit that in this conception, Pärt's *tintinnabuli* is indeed a sober gesture, a system of processes by which musical, literary, liturgical, and theological materials are absorbed and

distilled to their very essence, transformed, and transcended in a way which fuses seemingly disparate musical, political, religious, and cultural-historical paradigms into a cohesive and unified musical language. This project is a small but critical step to de-mystify the so-called “Holy Minimalists,” a group of composers not yet well-understood by performers and listeners.