

**From the President:
Handel's Grand Music and Generous Spirit**
by Joshua Waggoner

Since his death in 1759, George Frideric Handel has been known for his ability to work hard, produce (or adapt) music quickly, and create works that surpassed all that had been heard before. For example, his *Messiah* was famously written in less than a month, incorporating material from several previous works. After some mixed reviews (largely due to its sacred subject matter in a work to be performed in theatres), *Messiah* increasingly contributed to the growing reception of Handel as a genius, one capable of producing original and expansive works of musical art.

You might say that, in *Messiah*, Handel was *generous* in his musical style, repeatedly giving his hearers more than they were owed, and more than they were expecting to hear. This generosity is perhaps most evident in the work's final three-part chorus "Worthy Is the Lamb." The chorus commences with stately Largo homophonic chords, with sopranos ascending to a high F-sharp in the second phrase. Then, an Andante section features descending strings accompanying the choir's sevenfold doxology: "to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." After another round of Largo and Andante sections, the first fugue of the chorus commences: "Blessing and honour, glory and pow'r, be unto Him" Repetition after repetition evoke not just a large choir of human voices, but that of "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them" (Rev 5:13 KJV). But Handel gives his most lavish musical gift in the final "Amen" fugue. Here extended melismatic phrases on this one word of affirmation continue in succession for (in some performances) almost five minutes, only interrupted by instrumental iterations of the same extended themes. Sopranos here ascend multiple times to high A's, accompanied by resplendent brass, timpani, and organ. As John Mainwaring describes the three parts of the *Messiah*'s conclusion,

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“... we find [Handel] rising still higher in the three concluding Chorusses, each of which surpasses the preceding, till in the winding up of the Amen, the ear is fill’d with such a glow of harmony, as leaves the mind in a kind of heavenly extasy” (*Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederick Handel* [1760], spellings original). In a performance of the complete oratorio, after over two hours of recitatives, arias, and choruses featuring soloists and choir, “Worthy Is the Lamb” is truly a *grand finale*.

But Handel was also known for his financial generosity, particularly in relation to performances of *Messiah*. When he premiered the work in Dublin in 1742, the *Dublin Journal* reported that Handel “generously gave the Money arising from this Grand Performance, to be equally shared” by a debtors’ prison and two hospitals. Although the work’s 1743 London premiere took place at the rented Covent Garden Theatre, its real success came through annual performances for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital, a hospital for children “found” on doorsteps and other places where their mothers (often young and unmarried) had abandoned them. After the first such concert in 1749 featuring Handel’s *Anthem for the Foundling Hospital* (HMW 268) – which concludes with the “Hallelujah” chorus from *Messiah* – concerts in successive years featured the full oratorio. To facilitate these *Messiah* performances in the chapel of the hospital, Handel donated an organ for the performance space, thus providing an instrument necessary for the annual performances which also served the facility year-round. After several decades of *Messiah* benefit concerts at the Foundling Hospital, Charles Burney declared that Handel’s *Messiah* “has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, [and] fostered the orphan ... more than any single musical production in this or any country” (*An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster Abbey, etc.* [1785]). Thus, from its Dublin premiere to its London success, and continuing after the composer’s death, *Messiah* represents not just Handel’s *musical* generosity, but also his consideration of the basic needs of those least able to provide for themselves: orphans from the streets of London.

This connection of *Messiah* performances with the needs of others continues today. For example, at Campbell University’s 2008 [Messiah Sing-a-long](#), concert attendees were “encouraged to bring canned food items for donation to an area food bank.” Likewise, just this month Grace Episcopal Church in Gainesville, Georgia advertised their *Messiah* performance with the notice that “Your ticket for admission is one non-perishable item for donation to the Gainesville-Hall Community Food Pantry.” These donations help people do something which Handel is known to have enjoyed – eating – and address the real need of food insecurity in their communities.

As you consider Handel’s generosity and the ongoing charitable activities related to performances of *Messiah*, you may be asking yourself, “What worthy cause might I contribute to?” Well, I’m glad you asked!

As we approach our [March 3rd – 5th, 2022 Annual Meeting](#), taking place at Mercer University in Macon, GA, SCSM is seeking donations toward the SCSM Travel Fund. This fund was established in 2016 to offer some modest assistance toward conference travel costs to SCSM members who qualify for reduced rate membership. This includes conference participants (presenters, panelists, or committee members) who self-identify as students, members of religious orders, adjunct professors, and those who are retired, unemployed, or underemployed. The amount of funding for each such participant that applies for support is determined by their need, the number of applicants, and, crucially, *the amount available in the Travel Fund*. Thankfully, due to proceeds from the 2021 SCSM online annual meeting, and other generous donations, the Travel Fund currently has a healthy balance. However, after disbursements for the 2022 meeting, the Travel Fund will be needing some replenishment.

Won’t you consider being generous (like Handel) and contribute to the SCSM Travel Fund? Online gifts can be made towards the SCSM Travel Grant at this [link](#):

<https://www.scsmusic.org/joinrenew-2/>

and can also be made in person at the March meeting. I look forward to seeing many of you in Georgia!

With anticipation,

Joshua A. Waggener, Ph.D.
SCSM President, 2021-2023

Joshua Waggener is Associate Professor of Music and Christian Worship at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC.



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The Townsend School of Music at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia is proud to welcome The Society for Christian Scholarship to campus for the SCSM 2022 Conference. Our local host will be Dr. Nathan Myrick, Assistant Professor of Church Music.

This year's conference looks to be a rich opportunity for hearing in-depth scholarship in a diverse range of disciplines as well as a chance to (re)connect with friends new and old. Registration will be open from 12:30 to 1:30pm on Thursday March 3rd, with greetings and opening remarks at 1:30pm. The first set of breakout sessions begins at 2pm, with an intriguing group of papers ranging from Contemporary Worship practices to the application of J. R. R. Tolkien's theory of "secondary creations" to the music of the Grateful Dead. At 4:15pm we'll have the privilege to hear the Keynote Address from Dr. Jean Kidula, Professor of Music (Ethnomusicology) at the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia. You won't want to miss a single minute!

The conference will end on Saturday with the Graduate Student Panel Discussion, with concluding remarks ending at 12:30pm. In between will be times to connect during coffee breaks, the banquet on Thursday evening, the business lunch on Friday, and more. There will also be a concert by The Mercer Singers on Thursday and a chance to attend "[A Night of Georgia Music](#)" on Saturday night. (And no, Matthew, this is not the country, it is music from the great State of Georgia... Next year Georgian Chant?)

Register now on the [SCSM website](#). We'll have in person and limited online offerings. See the next page for travel and accommodations information and then sign up soon.

Lots of gratitude to the Program Committee and many, many thanks to Nate Myrick for organizing and hosting us at Mercer University!

COVID Policy: SCSM Annual Meeting 2022, Mercer University

To promote a safe environment and adhere to reasonable COVID protocols, we require all in-person attendees, presenters, and performers to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 at the time of the conference. Upon arrival at the conference, attendees will be asked to show a CDC-issued vaccination card (including the name of the person vaccinated, the type of vaccination provided, and the date that the last dose was administered), or picture of such, as proof of vaccination. Alternately, attendees may use the free [VaxYes](#) service to verify their vaccination and identity. Based on rapidly changing conditions, Mercer and SCSM reserve the right to update this policy, for the safety of the campus and all participants.

We realize that there is a diversity of opinion on whether all participants should be required to be vaccinated, and we respect that. Ultimately, however, we are guests of Mercer, and, with COVID cases increasing again due to the Omicron variant, it seems best to go with the more stringent policy.

2022 Conference Information

AIRPORT

By air, fly to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), and take [the Groome Shuttle to Macon](#), or rent a car to drive the 1 hr to Mercer in Macon. Further instructions for riding the Groome are forthcoming. Check the [SCSM website](#) for more details.

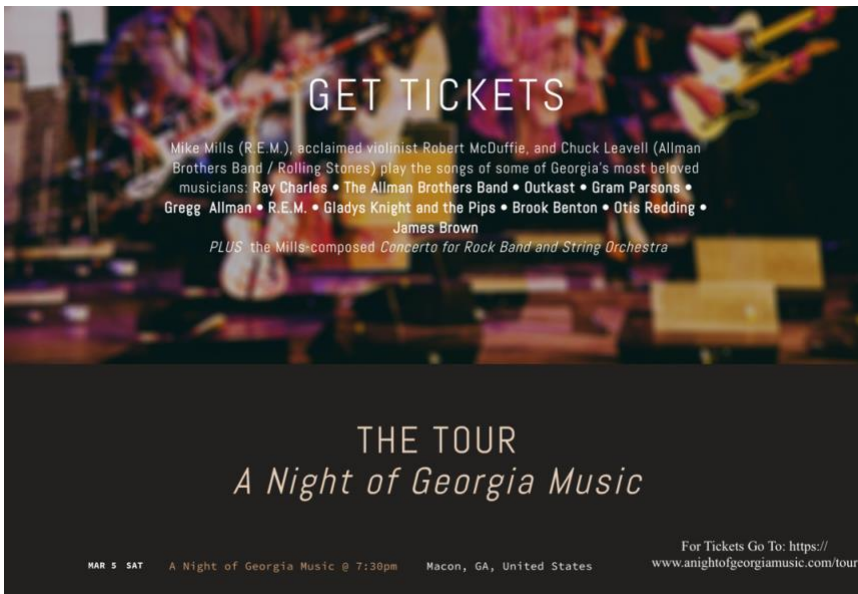
NEARBY HOTELS

- [Hilton Garden Inn Mercer University](#)
- [Towneplace Suites by Marriott Mercer University](#)

Other Suggested Activities:

Tours of: [Capricorn Recording Studio](#), [The Big House \(Allman Brothers Museum\)](#), [Tubman Museum of African American History](#), and the [Grand Opera House](#).

Saturday Night Concert, “A Night of Georgia Music”:



Note: We are planning on an in-person meeting, with the possibility of limited online offerings. If circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic require it, we will transition to a fully online format. Regardless, all conference participants need to be available during the days of the conference for synchronous sessions.

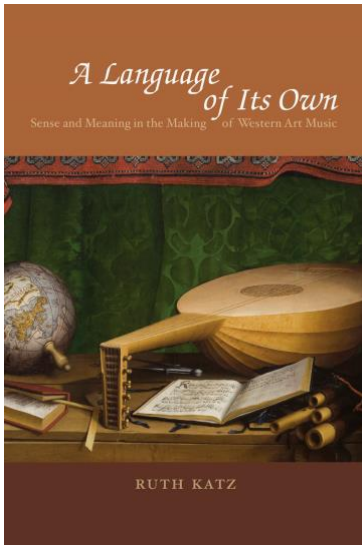
SCSM 2022 @ Mercer University: Keynote Address, Dr. Jean Ngoya Kidula

Jean Ngoya Kidula, Professor of Music (Ethnomusicology) at the University of Georgia, holds a Ph.D. from the University of California (1998), an M.M. from East Carolina University, and a B.Ed. (Music/French) from the University of Nairobi. Her research and publications are in African musicology, indigenous, contemporary, and popular music in Africa, gospel music in Africa and Sweden, African-American religious music, and composition in Africa and the Diaspora. She also is active in the performance of religious music, African choral music, and the Medieval and Renaissance vocal repertory.



Ruth Katz, *A Language of Its Own: Sense and Meaning in the Making of Western Art Music*, Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Review by Chelle Stearns



I still remember the wonder and awe that I felt in one of my undergrad music history classes when I heard about the premiere of Igor Stravinsky's ballet, *The Rite of Spring*. On that evening in Paris on May 29th, 1913, the agitation of the audience began as mild discomfort but soon devolved into a riot. People were provoked to the point of fighting with their neighbors, as many attempted to stop the performance. As the police were called in, the ballet continued but peace never returned that evening; or so the story goes. Whether or not

the audience was responding to the music or the choreography, we don't really know. It could have been the combination of primitive source material (based on a pagan ritual in which a young girl dances herself to death), the rhythmic energy of the orchestration, or the risqué and violent movements of the dancers of the *Ballets Russes*. Regardless of what caused the commotion, the picture that we were given as undergraduate music students was of mass pandemonium.

This was such a strange story for a late twentieth century young, American girl to hear. I had known this piece through Disney's *Fantasia*, and did not find it offensive or troubling. Actually, I really liked it. Why such an extreme reaction to a piece? After all, this was classical music, not rock-n-roll!

Not until years later did I understand that this reaction to new music in the twentieth century was not unique or even unusual. For example, a few years ago I heard a Fresh Air interview with the American composer Steve Reich. Terry Gross, the interviewer, read a story by Michael Tilson Thomas about the extreme reaction to Reich's *Four Organs* at Carnegie Hall in 1973. Tilson Thomas commented that there were at least 3 attempts by the audience to end the performance, then "one woman walked down the aisle and repeatedly banged her head on the stage, wailing, 'Stop, stop! I confess!'"¹

Later I realized that not only was the supposed riot at the premiere of *The Rite of Spring* not unique, but it was also not the first riot provoked by a classical music concert. Evidently, at the turn of the twentieth century in Vienna, unruly audiences were common, as composers experimented and expanded traditional forms. It is reported that audiences in 1902 were in an uproar over one non-

traditional chord found in Arnold Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*. You can only imagine their response to the premiere of his *Second String Quartet* in 1908, in which he adds a soprano soloist in the final two movements while tossing the elements of traditional triadic tonality into the air as if they would never land.²

Schoenberg later wrote that his

second string quartet caused at its first performance in Vienna...riots which surpassed every previous and subsequent happening of this kind. Although there were also some personal enemies of mine, who used the occasion to annoy me...I have to admit that these riots were justified without the hatred of my enemies, because they were a natural reaction of a conservatively educated audience to a new kind of music.³

Here we have one answer to why reasonably educated and polite people would present such extreme behavior upon hearing "a new kind of music." These audiences were more conservatively educated, meaning that they were trained to expect what they had heard before, guided by what were accepted as the well-known rules of Western art music. It can be said that this fissure between the conservative desires of concert goers and the inner compulsion of composers toward originality is one of the defining characteristics of twentieth century art music.

But how did such strong reactions and conservatively held beliefs about music come about? Even one hundred years after the premieres of Schoenberg's and Stravinsky's works, most audiences still expect certain sounds from the Western musical tradition. It is as if traditional music has a specific logic or language of its own that communicates in a particular way. And it is this language that was challenged and changed at the turn of the twentieth century. But where did this language come from?

It is this story, the story about the “making” of Western art music, that Ruth Katz expounds in her book, *A Language of Its Own: Sense and Meaning in the Making of Western Art Music*. Katz argues two foundational points in her book: 1) music is made by culturally bound people; and 2) people hear, or receive, music based upon how they have been trained to understand music. Throughout the book, she gives examples of how people from non-Western cultures perceive Western art music, showing that musical assumptions in the West are not normative but, instead, culturally formed. This assertion enables her to claim that Western art music is a unique and important cultural accomplishment while also arguing that music in the West is neither a “natural” nor an obvious outcome from the material of music. Instead, Western art music developed (or was “made”) through the interaction between practice and theory, with the former driving the latter.

Katz asserts that the theory and practice of music in the West was purposely constructed through social and technological means in order to establish both external and internal references in music. These references are the very processes by which composers, performers, and theorists set up the internal logic of music – what she refers to as “the language of music.” In other words, music eventually was able to function according to its own inner logic, even when coupled with external elements – such as words or metaphysical categories.

At one point, Katz looks in detail at how the technique of notation was able to facilitate the expansion and control of musical form and content. There was a desire to control both pitch and duration as liturgical chant became more complicated so that the vocalists could sing well together as more voices were added and compositions became longer. For her, the development of the basic musical building blocks was a crucial turning point in Western art music, rather than an assumed or “natural” way of thinking about music. The relationship between word and music was essential to this but even after music was able to stand on its own – in the age of “absolute music” – other points of reference were often sought.

The unfolding of music enabled more and more internal references to be developed in musical practice such that both vertical and horizontal considerations were taken into account in the construction of musical coherence. As triadic tonality was developed, music was able to stand on its own, without reference to word, but soon after, the philosophy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries propelled music into a more metaphysical role. Music was now able to express the inexpressible, giving deeper meaning to word and even to our inner lives. She refers to this as “the epistemological turn” – the how and the what we know.

It is at this juncture, Katz argues, that music moved from the inner language of form and tonality to the necessary expression of the inner life and creativity of the composer. Rather than follow the established rules and traditions of form and content, composers and audiences alike sought more expression. Wagner, following

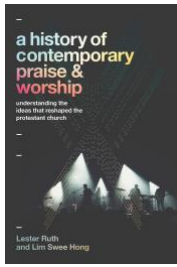
Schopenhauer, argued that music was able to illuminate the inner meaning of everything, especially poetry, which sounded out the inner life of humanity.

This turn toward originality and creativity enabled the amazing music of the nineteenth century Romantics, but it was also, as Katz points out, the very means of unraveling the carefully constructed language of music developed from Gregorian chant to Palestrina to Bach to Mozart to Wagner and then to Schoenberg. She argues that Schoenberg’s “emancipation of the dissonance,” begun in 1908, lead the way to this unravelling.⁴ The result of this was a fissure between composers and audiences. At the same time, music theorists strove to understand not only the practice but also the reception of music, searching for a way to articulate the necessity of the listener.

Overall, this is a sweeping book, jumping from detailed musicological discussions to key musical innovations to broad philosophical and social-technical assertions.⁵ I often found this book difficult to follow, most readers will want to skip over more detailed sections, as Katz herself encourages.⁶ I also hoped for a more nuanced philosophical understanding of music theory and practice, questioning the reasons why important shifts happened. Nevertheless, Katz’s obvious knowledge and experience compelled me to take her impassioned portrait of Western art music seriously. In the end, she does not call for an idealistic return to any particular rules, standards or periods of composition. Instead, Katz hopes that Western art music will be seen for what it is, a great accomplishment of humanity. What comes next? Well, that will be determined by the practice of the next generation of composers and audiences alike.

Chelle Stearns is Associate Professor of Theology at The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology.

SCSM Member News!



Lester Ruth (Duke University) & **Lim Swee Hong** (Emmanuel College, University of Toronto) published, *A History of Contemporary Praise & Worship: Understanding the Ideas that Reshaped the Protestant Church*. Dr. Ruth's note: "It's a detailed, comprehensive history of where the new form of worship that has swept across the globe, especially among Pentecostals and evangelicals, came from.

Here are some teasers to arouse your curiosity: think Canada, not southern California; think grappling with the Bible to develop worship theologies first, not the writing of new songs on acoustic guitars; think 1940s for the origins, not the 1960s; and think two lines of development, not a single one."



Erin Fulton (University of Kentucky/Emory University) published, "[“The Year of Jubilee Is Come’: Metatextual Resonance in Antislavery Hymn Parodies,”](#) in *Sonic Identity at the Margins*, edited by [Jessie Fillerup](#) and [Joanna K. Love](#), 75-96. [New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.](#) In 2020, [Fulton directed the compilation of the “Checklist of Southern Sacred Music Imprints, 1850-1925,”](#) which

assembled bibliographic data that will enhance the team's ability to research multiple facets of American sacred songbook publishing. This is part of a larger project working on preserving, digitizing, and creating public access for nineteenth century hymns. See the [Sounding Spirit Digital Library](#) to see the growing collection.

Eftychia Papanikolaou (Bowling Green State University) published, "[“Liszt and Religion,”](#) in *Liszt in Context*, edited by [Joanne Cormac](#), 163-172. [Cambridge University Press, 2021.](#)



Rebekkah Franklin (Oklahoma Baptist U.) published "[“A Crossroads of Theology and Performance: J. S. Bach's Passions in Twenty-First-Century American Festivals,”](#) *Doxology: A Journal of Worship and the Sacramental Life* Vol. 32: #3 (Ordinary Time 2021).



Breck McGough's (Baylor University) string quartet "[“In This Valley of Tears”](#) recently was recorded by the Baylor Faculty Quartet. In addition, his commissioned work, “Boanergés” for solo organ, premiered in Oklahoma City on November 15, 2021 at St James the Greater Catholic Church by organist David Anderson.

If your news was missed here or you have news of new jobs, publications, compositions, awards, recordings, etc. for members of SCSM, please write to scsm.news@gmail.com.

Endnotes for Review of Ruth Katz, *A Language of Its Own*

1. Terry Gross, *Fresh Air from WHYY: Steve Reich at 70*, October 6th, 2006. <http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=6209213&m=6209214>. (Accessed on August 17th, 2010.)
2. “Can one understand sound combinations if they hang forever in the air and never settle down; if they never gain a firm footing? I read somewhere of a device by which aeroplanes refuel over the sea without standing firm anywhere.... If that is possible, should one not do it?” Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, Leonard Stein, ed., Leo Black, trans. (London: Faber & Faber, 1984), 101.
3. Joseph Auner, *A Schoenberg Reader: Documents of a Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 57.
4. She also discusses in detail Schoenberg's later development of “serialism” or “dodecaphony.”
5. Her section on how the Camerata (“The Camerata: Custodians of a Paradigm” in chapter three) helped to form and construct early attempts at opera is especially good. Her argument is that the men of the Camerata purposely wove together not only word and music, but the emotional sense of the words and the drama.
6. In her preface, even Katz suggests that the general reader “skip technical explanations.”



From the Editor

“Música Callada” (“Silent Music”)
Federico Mompou, 1893-1987

The Catalan composer Federico Mompou’s “Música Callada” has been a consistent companion for me during these perplexing pandemic times. In moments when I am unable to concentrate or feel the task at hand is too much (anyone who quickly learned to record and edit lecture videos for the pivot to online classes understands!), Mompou’s intricate yet accessible mediations invite me back into the work at hand, often refocusing my mind and heart. At other times, the music simply leads me back into the numb frozenness of my thoughts and feelings, enabling a momentary thawing of my inner life.

Consisting of 28 small pieces, [“Música Callada”](#) was written between 1959 and 1967 and first performed in 1974. The music moves from deeply contemplative to playful to agitated, always returning to an inner silence. The work is a mediation on St. John of the Cross’ poem [“The Spiritual Canticle,”](#) itself a meditation of The Song of Songs. The poem imagines the search for the Beloved, of the soul’s longing for God. Mompou’s title is derived from a section where the Bridegroom calls for his Bride to return to him:

My Beloved is the mountains,
The solitary wooded valleys,
The strange islands,
The roaring torrents,
The whisper of the amorous gales;

The tranquil night
At the approaches of the dawn,
The silent music,
The murmuring solitude,
The supper which revives, and enkindles love.

Music is never just the words or ideas that a work is based upon, music seems to transcend the source and inspire new interpretations. New meanings arise through the notes. In this music of silence, longing is embodied and reawakened, stirring memories of presence, hope, possibility. Or perhaps the music is simply beautiful, reminding the listener that quiet and peace in music and life can be pensive or playful or inspiring (intake of breath or Spirit) or all of this at once.

Bernardo Sasseti (Portuguese jazz pianist) seems to have felt something of this inspiration from Mompou. On his 2002 album, *Nocturno*, he improvises two renditions of the [first movement of “Música Callada,” one with his trio](#) (featuring a moving solo from the bassist) and the other with just [Sasseti on piano](#). His 2005 recording, *Ascent*, is a further meditation on silence and

contemplation, beginning with, “The Revelation of Silence” and ending the album with “The Silence of the Night.” Sasseti’s interpretation is its own call to the Beloved, wondering what might approach at the dawn after the “murmuring solitude” of night. Perhaps the rekindling of love, faith, hope.

New life and creativity often arise from the encounter with silence and stillness. As a society, we are keepers and nurturers of this beauty (both musically and spiritually). May each of you feel or sense this in your own life, as you play, teach, write, compose, and inspire!

Peace, Chelle Stearns

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