

Annual Meeting of the



**SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP IN MUSIC**



March 13-15, 2025  
Belmont University  
Nashville, Tennessee

The Society for Christian Scholarship in Music promotes the exploration of connections between Christian faith and the academic study of music. We are a cross-disciplinary society including ethnomusicologists, music theorists, musicologists, scholars of liturgy and of church music, theologians, and practicing church musicians. The Society understands itself as having an ecumenical Christian identity, reflecting the worldwide diversity of Christian traditions. The Society also sees it as vitally important to learn from scholars outside those traditions, and scholars who do not identify as Christian are welcome to join as full members.

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### **Local Arrangements Coordinators**

Steve Guthrie (Belmont University)  
Adam Perez (Belmont University)

The Society would like to thank the following people for their generous support and assistance: Belmont's *Creative Arts Collective* for their generous financial support; Dr. Adam Perez and Dr. Steve Guthrie, local conference hosts and coordinators; Dr. Monique Ingalls, keynote speaker; Geraldine Latty and Carey Luce, pop-up choir leaders; Andrew Osenga, Randall Goodgame, Kevin Twit, Dwan Hill, and Russell Mauldin, invited panelists; Sally Dodd, Jill Pappas, Haley Lynn, and Logan Heinsch, Belmont Events Management Staff; Alyssa Dituro, CAC program coordinator; Emma Morgan, flowers; and the program committee, the session chairs, the presenters, and the panelists of this year's conference.

**SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP IN MUSIC  
CONFERENCE PROGRAM  
BELMONT UNIVERSITY, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE  
MARCH 13-15, 2025**

*Unless otherwise indicated, all events will take place at  
Janet Ayers Academic Center (AYRS)  
Belmont University, 1501 Wedgewood Avenue, Nashville, TN 37212  
(parking available in garage below the building – use North Elevators)*

*“\*” Denotes an online presentation*

**Thursday, March 13**

**Thursday**

**11:00am–1:00pm      Meeting of the Executive Committee w/ Lunch (AYRS 4098)**

**11:45–1:00pm      Registration (AYRS Fourth Floor Conference Room)**

**1:00–1:15pm      Welcome & Opening Remarks (AYRS Gabhart Chapel)**

**1:15–2:15pm      Session 1: Plenary (AYRS Gabhart Chapel, ground floor)**

**“Pop-Up Choir” with Geraldine Latty**

In this interactive session, Geraldine Latty-Luce will lead a pop-up choir, guiding participants through the process of learning contemporary worship songs by ear. Through dynamic teaching and engagement, attendees will experience how these songs are adapted to resonate with the distinct sounds and characteristics of contemporary Black Gospel music.

Drawing on composers from Isaac Watts to Michael W. Smith and using musical features found in pop/rock, world, folk, and classical genres, this session offers a hands-on exploration of vocal blend, rhythm, and other performance elements, highlighting the ways that choral singing as a valuable sung worship expression, continues to evolve within contemporary worship traditions.

**2:15–2:30pm      Break**

**2:30–4:15pm      Session 2: Concurrent (AYRS 1034 and 1037, on the first floor)**

A. Patristics and Orthodox Theology (AYRS 1034)  
*Chelle Stearns, Independent Scholar, chair*

“Competing Choirs and the Christian Community in Clement of Alexandria’s *Protrepticus*”  
Daniel Aaron Webster, Welch College

“Anaphora, Anamnesis, Apocalypse: Music and Time in the Hymns of the Great Entrance in the Orthodox Church”  
Dmitriy Stegall, University of Texas Austin

“‘Singing with the Seraphim’: The Imitation of the Angelic Choir in the Homilies of John Chrysostom”  
Matthew Pinson, Welch College

### B. Hymnals, Liturgical Music, and Culture (AYRS 1037)

*Donté Ford, Wheaton College, chair*

\* “A Tale of Two Baptist Hymnals: Connecting the Brazilian *Hinário para o Culto Cristão* (1991) and The North American *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991)”

Armando Ferreira, Baylor University

\* “*Sankofa: A Case Study of Afro-Nova Scotian Liturgical Choral Repertoire and Aural Skills Pedagogy*”

Peter Fielding, Kennesaw State University

\* “Avant-Garde Liberationist Music: A Lutheran Brazilian Perspective on Liturgical Musical Composition”

Fernando Berwig Silva, Southern Methodist University

**4:15–4:45pm**

### Coffee Break (AYRS First Floor Atrium)

**4:45–6:30pm**

### Session 3: Concurrent (AYRS 1034 and 1037)

### A. Composers & Practice (AYRS 1034)

*Ellen George, Pierce College, chair*

“Sound, word, ontology, community: Introducing the Choral Music of E. N. Bawa”

I. J. Yarison, Dougherty College, University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

## “Alec Wyton’s Holistic Church Music Philosophy”

Joseph Sargent, University of Alabama

“The Cambridge Songs (*Carmina Cantabrigiensia*)”

Jim Taylor, LeTourneau University

### B. Hymnbooks & Choral Singing (AYRS 1037)

*Mark Peters, Trinity Christian University, chair*

\* “Outward and Visible Signs in Eton’s Choirbook”

Antony Pitts, Excelsia University College, Sydney

“A Contentious Children’s Hymnal: The Lutheran Hymnary Junior in the Norwegian-American Immigrant Community of the Upper Midwest, 1916”

Sarah Waters, Belhaven University

## Dinner on Own

**Friday, March 14**

**8:00–8:30am**

**Registration & Coffee (AYRS First Floor Atrium)**

**8:30–10:15am**

## Session 4: Concurrent (AYRS 1034 and 1037)

### A. Sacred Music in Contemporary Culture (AYRS 1034)

*Matt Bickett, Independent Scholar, chair*

“The Fivefold Coding of *Indiana Jones and the Abbey of Thelema*”

Matthew Arndt, University of Iowa

“‘Our Lord was not silent’: Soundtrack and Adaptation in Martin Scorsese’s *Silence*”

Danielle Kramer, University of Iowa

“Sonic Lamentations: Mogwai’s Music Theology in Pandemic Narratives”

Michael Tang, University of Birmingham, *Life Seeks Understanding*

B. Composers, Choirbooks, and the Practice of Singing (AYRS 1037)

Joshua Waggener, *Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, chair*

“English Hymnody from Leipzig Conservatory Professors: William Bradbury’s Album Book from Germany”

Joanna Pepple, Lee University

“Hearing J. S. Bach’s *Magnificat* Together”

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian University

“Spafford’s Draft and Bliss’s Score: Genesis of Text and Music in ‘It Is Well With My Soul’”

Timothy R. McKinney, Baylor University

**10:15–10:45am**

**Coffee Break (First Floor Atrium AYRS)**

**10:45–11:45am**

**Session 5: Plenary (AYRS Gabhart Chapel, ground floor)**

**“New Forms of Choir and Community” Panel**

*Monique Ingalls, Baylor University, chair*

Panel: Dwan Hill, *The Choir Room*; Geraldine Latty, Baylor University; & Russell Mauldin

This session explores the shifting role of the choir in contemporary church settings, particularly in the wake of Contemporary Worship Music (CWM) and its powerful influence. As traditional choral structures adapt—or in some cases, disappear—new forms of vocal ensembles, worship teams, and congregational singing practices are emerging. How is CWM engaging with the heritage of the choir? In what ways does it seek to reclaim or redefine choral traditions? Through discussion and musical examples, this session will examine the evolving expressions of choir and their significance in contemporary worship.

**11:45–1:00pm**

**Lunch and Business Meeting (AYRS 4th Floor Conference Room)**

**1:00–2:45pm**

**Session 6: Concurrent (AYRS 1034 and 1037)**

A. Beauty, Theology, & Music (AYRS 1034)

*Andrew Shenton, Boston University, chair*

“‘Captivated by the Music’: Addressing John Newton’s Concerns with Handel’s *Messiah*”

Joshua Waggener, *Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*

“Sonic Ritual: Defending Theological Beauty in the Music of Arvo Pärt”

Hope Chun, Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University

\* “Listening to Angelic Rationality—The Aural Theology of Maximus Confessor and its Exegetical Potential through the Music of Arvo Pärt”

Ming Wilson, University of Michigan

- B. Gender & Sacred Music (AYRS 1037)  
*Nathan Myrick, Mercer University, chair*

“Women, musical instruments, and worship: an exploration of the gendered performance of worship music”

Abigail Cawte, Durham University

“Breath of Heaven: Female Voices and Bodies in Contemporary Praise and Worship Music”

Kelsey Kramer McGinnis, Christianity Today, Grand View University

“Sacred Music and Affirming Identities in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries”

Stephanie A. Budwey, Vanderbilt University

**2:45–3:00pm**

**Coffee Break (First Floor Atrium AYRS)**

**3:00–4:45pm**

**Session 7: Concurrent (AYRS 1034 and 1037)**

- A. Sacred Music in the English Tradition (AYRS 1034)

*Joseph Sargent, University of Alabama, chair*

“The Emergence of Distinctively Anglican Musical Identity”

Joel W. West, Nashotah House

“Conciliarity in Worship: A Study of Choir Seating in England’s Cathedrals and Village Churches”

Mikel Hill, Saint Tikhon’s Monastery Music Institute

“Ethnic Sounds in Sacred Spaces: Early 1900s Catholic London as Nationalisms Battleground”

Tavish Daly, Duke University

- B. Choir & Community (AYRS 1037)

*Cathy Ann Elias, DePaul University, chair*

\* “Recovering Manhattan’s Interracial Fellowship Chorus, 1947–1965”

Andrew Moenning, Duke University

“The Collaborative Anthems of Dan Forrest: Choir, Congregation, and Worship in Christian Community”

Samantha Inman, Stephen F. Austin State University

“Bring the Choir Back: The Disappearance & Reappearance of Gospel Choirs in the Twenty-First Century United States”

Sylvia Jones, Baylor University

**4:45–5:00pm**

**Break**

**5:00–6:15pm**

**Keynote Address (AYRS Gabhart Chapel, ground floor)**

**“Singing in the Kingdom: Understanding Eschatological Imaginaries through European Gospel Choirs”**

**Monique M. Ingalls, Baylor University**

*Introduction:* Steve Guthrie, Belmont University

The idea of heaven occupies a central place in Black American sacred music; indeed, theologian James H. Cone argued that the notion of heaven within the Negro spirituals serves as the foundation for “black eschatology.” This eschatological discourse is embedded not only within song lyrics, but also within musical sounds, extramusical framing, and even Black-originated musical institutions. The gospel choir has come to represent an idealized, “heavenly” space where the marginalized are empowered and people from diverse backgrounds live in harmony. Yet gospel choir performances often embody multiple, sometimes conflicting, eschatological hopes, ranging from various Christian visions of paradise restored, to more “secular” yearnings for a post-racial utopia.

In this presentation, I aim to highlight and untangle some of the complex eschatological discourses within gospel choir performances, albeit far outside the originary context of gospel music. Specifically, I will examine gospel choir performances at the 2024 *Gospelkirchentag* (billed as the “European Gospel Choir Festival” in English), where gospel choirs have taken root and flourished over the last few decades. “Welcome to Paradise” was the theme of this three-day event, which drew over 5,000 participants from every corner of Europe. Here, mass gospel choir performances became a platform for eschatological exploration. Drawing from the interpretive work of theologians James Cone and Eboni Marshall Turman, along with models from musicologists Braxton Shelley and Cory Hunter, I will examine the diverse “eschatological imaginaries” revealed in two key mass choir performances at this festival. In doing so, I demonstrate how choirs enable singers to negotiate cultural, theological, and ethical beliefs about humanity’s ultimate “end,” offering participants not just imaginations, but also *audiations*, of a future where the world resounds as it should.

**6:15–7:30pm**

**Conference Dinner (AYRS Fourth Floor Conference Room)**

**7:30–9:30pm**

**Plenary Panel and Concert (AYRS Gabhart Chapel, ground floor)**

**“New Hymn Projects for the Modern Church” Panel Discussion and Concert**

*Steve Guthrie, Belmont University, chair*

Panel: Andrew Osenga, *Anchor Hymns*; Randall Goodgame, *The Scripture Hymnal Project*; and Kevin Twit, *Indelible Grace*

This interactive panel discussion will explore the role of “hymns” and “hymnals” in shaping communal identity, theological expression, and liturgical practice in contexts impacted by contemporary worship movements. The panel will feature music from three prominent, recent projects that aim to preserve and extend the heritage of hymnody in some distinct modern church music contexts. Live performance provided by the panelists and guests.

**Saturday, March 15**

**9:00–10:45am**

**Session 8: Concurrent (AYRS 1034 and 1037)**

A. CCM/CWM (AYRS 1034)

*Adam Perez, Belmont University, chair*

“Faith and Fame: The Representation of Christian Contemporary Music at the Grammys®”

Andrew Shenton, Boston University

“From Driving Guitars to Atmospheric Keyboards: The Changing Instrumentation of 2010s Worship Music”

Shannan Baker, Baylor University

“The Soundtrack of Young Faith: Insights from a Multi-Site Study”

Emily Andrews, Samford University

B. Music, History, and Interpretation (AYRS 1037)  
*Peter Mercer-Taylor, University of Minnesota, chair*

\* “The ‘Work of the People’: Church Singers as Workers in Late Imperial Russia”  
David Salkowski, University of North Florida

“Community Building as Priority in Volunteer Church Choirs: An Ethnographic Study”  
Jon Snyder, Baylor University

“Investing in Worship: Communal Worship Ethics in the Time of Finance-Dominated Capitalism”  
Matt Bickett, Independent Scholar

**10:45–11:15am**                      **Coffee Break (First Floor Atrium)**

**11:15am–12:15pm**                      **Session 9: Plenary (AYRS 1034)**

**Graduate Student Panel Discussion: “UnCertainty: Navigating Feelings and Experiences of an Unknown Future”**

Alexandra Dreher, Yale University, Convener

Panel: Chelle Stearns, Independent Scholar; Joseph Sargent, University of Alabama; Sylvia Jones, Baylor University; and Daniel Aaron Webster, Welch College

Is one to resolve, embrace, or erase uncertainty in the various facets of their life? What does it mean to continue “the work” when all sources of stability are gone or seem to be hanging on by a thread? From the pressures of passing exams and finishing dissertations to financing one’s education and finding a job, trying to find certainty in unCertainty can be a large facet of graduate and Ph.D. student experience. This landscape of uncertainty is further complicated by new pressures not only on students but also on the humanities in general. In discussion with current students and faculty, this panel explores understandings of uncertainty and how they navigate it in the changing landscape of modern universities and academic life.

**12:15pm**                                      **Valediction (AYRS 1034)**

## **Abstracts**

*“\*” Denotes an online presentation*

**Thursday March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**1–2:15pm: Session One: Plenary**  
**“Pop-Up Choir” with Geraldine Latty**

In this interactive session, Geraldine Latty-Luce will lead a pop-up choir, guiding participants through the process of learning contemporary worship songs by ear. Through dynamic teaching and engagement, attendees will experience how these songs are adapted to resonate with the distinct sounds and characteristics of contemporary Black Gospel music.

Drawing on composers from Isaac Watts to M.W. Smith and using musical features found in pop/rock, world, folk, and classical genres, this session offers a hands-on exploration of vocal blend, rhythm, and other performance elements, highlighting the ways that choral singing as a valuable sung worship expression, continues to evolve within contemporary worship traditions.

**Geraldine Latty** is a songwriter, performer, worship leader, vocal coach and choir director. Currently residing in Texas, serving as an international research scholar at Baylor University in the Dunn Center for



Christian Music Studies. Her musical worship journey has taken her from leading 10,000 people gathered in sung worship in Australia to performing at the Royal Albert Hall in London, from street parties to cathedrals, from singing and songwriting with teenage single parents to BBC radio and TV appearances, from leading with a community choir at the local venues to running many “Sing Gospel” pop-up choir sessions around the UK and Europe.

As a professor on the Music and Theology degree program at London School of Theology, she has lectured on Songwriting, Vocal Improvisation, Corporate Worship Studies, and Worship Performing Arts. In 2023-24 she and her multi-instrumentalist husband Carey Luce, were Directors of Worship Arts at Dordt University, Iowa.

Geraldine has also released 4 solo albums with Kingsway/Integrity Music and contributed to numerous “live worship” albums. With Carey she has recorded an additional 4 albums including *Can You See It?*, a Christmas album *Holy Night* and two community pop-up choir resources *Hold On* and *Freedom*.

## **2:30–4:15pm: Session Two: Concurrent**

### **A. Patristics & Orthodox Theology**

**Daniel Aaron Webster, Welch College**

#### **“Competing Choirs and the Christian Community in Clement of Alexandria’s *Protrepticus*”**

Doru Costache identifies the choir as a literary motif in early Christian writings in which the function of the church and the order of the cosmos are described using choral language (2021). As Costache notes, early Christians “construed the universe as ordered, melodious, and theologically meaningful,” teaching that the chorus of the church should mirror the orderly chorus of the stars.

In the late second century, Clement of Alexandria shared this cosmological and musical ecclesiology, employing the same musical imagery as other Christian writers. But Clement’s worldview applies the word *χορός* (chorus) in other ways. Throughout his *Protrepticus*, in multiple passages, Clement employs this imagery to contrast competing choirs. In one such instance, he refers to the chorus of Greeks (Ἑλλήνων . . . χορῶ) that sing a different song than the righteous chorus (*χορὸς οἱ δίκαιοι*) under the direction of the Word, the great Chorus Leader (*χορευτῇ*). My research question is straightforward: what is the theological significance of Clement’s references to *χορός* in the *Protrepticus*, especially when these choruses are competing?

I hope to contribute to the 2025 SCSM annual conference program, “The Choir and Community,” by providing a theological and cultural examination of Clement’s use of *χορός* in the *Protrepticus*. This study will demonstrate that the Christian community is not only a unified chorus that resembles the order and unity of the stars but also a corrective voice that counters competing philosophies. I will argue that Clement views the “chorus of the righteous” as a countercultural voice that manifests a better ethic than the Greek chorus, promotes a healthier telos for human flourishing, and envisions an eschatological community under the leadership of Christ, the New Song.

**Dmitriy Stegall, University of Texas Austin**

#### **“Anaphora, Anamnesis, Apocalypse: Music and Time in the Hymns of the Great Entrance in the Orthodox Church”**

“We, who mystically represent the Cherubim, and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the Life-creating Trinity, now lay aside all earthly cares, that we may receive the King of all, Who comes invisibly upborne by the Angelic Hosts.”

These words of the Cherubic Hymn, sung during the Divine Liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Church, present a vision of singing in imitation of the supratemporal worship of angels. In this paper, I will examine how the Cherubic Hymn and its Lenten counterpart “Now the Powers of Heaven” serve as musical examples of a unique tripartite experience of liturgical time for the Orthodox faithful. This moment in the liturgy

allows the faithful, according to Orthodox theology, to mystically participate in three levels of time, simultaneously: the present linear time, events of the Biblical past, and the ongoing supratemporal worship of God in heaven. By singing and hearing these hymns, the participants take part in a concrete present liturgy (the beginning of the anaphora), re-present the Biblical entrance of Christ into Jerusalem (in preparation for the anamnesis, where the Passion is recounted) and receive the apocalyptic vision of Christ entering His heavenly throne room, escorted by the angelic host. In all of these moments, the earthly expression of music reflects the singing of the angels in heaven, which can only be understood as out of time.

By drawing on theologians such as Clement (1959), St. Dumitru Stăniloae (1971), and St. Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 1st century), as well as musicologists such as Conomos (1974), von Gardner (1980), and Vladyshevskaya (2022), I will demonstrate how music enables and is essential to this intersection of time(s) for the Orthodox faithful. Further, brief musical analysis of both melodic and tonal (modal) content in specific examples of the Cherubic Hymn and “Now the Powers of Heaven” from late medieval Byzantine, early modern, and modern Slavonic sources, will highlight how varying expressions of sacred music in Orthodoxy have rendered this particular historical and supratemporal belief into an audible heavenly soundscape.

**Matthew Pinson, Welch College**

**“Singing with the Seraphim’: The Imitation of the Angelic Choir in the Homilies of John Chrysostom”**

The early development of the primitive church largely centered on liturgical questions: *who* and *how* were they to worship? The motif of the angelic choir in early Christian literature settled on the nexus of these two questions. The angels were to be rejected as objects of worship, yet they were to be embraced as a doxological model for the church’s divine adoration.

The relationship between the choir of the church and the choir of the angels was addressed in the writings of figures such as Clement of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Basil of Caesarea, but the motif’s liturgical and theological significance culminated in the work of John Chrysostom. In several of his homilies, he calls for the church to join the choir (χορός) of the angels in the act of singing (ᾄδω) praises to God.

The angelic choir motif in early Christian literature, especially in Chrysostom’s writings, lacks thorough analysis in current scholarship. More notably, the significance of Chrysostom’s depiction of the imitation of the angelic choir as an act of singing has not been examined. In this paper, I will offer a study of the angelic choir motif in Chrysostom’s homilies in the context of his overall theology. My analysis will reveal that Chrysostom understood the church’s emulation of the song of the angelic choir as a means to the reconciliation of heaven and earth.

For Chrysostom, joining the choir of the angels meant emulating their liturgical formulas as well as their sacred order. This correlation between communal singing and the recapitulation of humanity’s divine *telos* has profound implications for a contemporary understanding of the theological and eschatological role of the church choir. Ultimately, I will argue that Chrysostom used the motif of the angelic choir as a model for corporate worship, a metaphor for the reconciliation between God and humankind, and a witness to the divine power of the church chorus in recapitulating humanity’s place in the kingdom of God.

**B. Hymnals, Liturgical Music, and Culture**

**\*Armando Ferreira, Baylor University**

**“A Tale of Two Baptist Hymnals: Connecting the Brazilian *Hinário para o Culto Cristão* (1991) and The North American *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991)”**

The Brazilian Baptist hymnal *Hinário para o Culto Cristão* (*Hymnal for Christian Worship*, HCC) was the second and last hymnal published by the Brazilian Baptist Convention, in 1991, the same year that the

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) published *The Baptist Hymnal (TBH)*. Both the *HCC* and *TBH* hymnals appeared at a time of theological, ideological, and political transition in global Baptist contexts. In addition, Baptists in both contexts were contending with musical changes which had begun in the 1960s and 1970s. Drawing insights from comparative research on Brazilian and North American Baptist hymnody, this paper discusses the historical links between these hymnals, focusing particularly on the SBC's influence in the process of drafting the *HCC* and on the committee's editorial decisions. The paper offers a historical analysis of the compilation of the two hymnals, through researching archival sources in both the USA and Brazil. Interviews with key figures are also used to illuminate the process of curating repertoire of these hymnals and to identify the degree and types of North American influence in the *HCC*'s editorial process. Examining the relationship between *HCC* and *TBH* is significant because it provides insights on the interface between music and missions in the context of the Baptist denomination and its missionary work. Establishing connections between these two hymnals, published at the same time though in different countries, can lead to new perspectives on hymnological discussion, based on works of authors like Rommen (2007) and Turino (2008).

**\* Peter Fielding, Kennesaw State University**

**“Sankofa: A Case Study of Afro-Nova Scotian Liturgical Choral Repertoire and Aural Skills Pedagogy”**

Building on the themes embodied in Michelle Williams' *African Nova Scotian Restorative Justice* (2013), the Canadian Museum for Human Rights *The Story of Africville* (2017, 2023), and Province of Nova Scotia's *Journey to Light: A Different Way Forward* (the Final Report of the Restorative Inquiry—Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children [2019]), the Helen Creighton Folklore Society's 2019 release of *Sankofa Songs: African Nova Scotian Songs from the Collection of Dr. Helen Creighton*, serves to raise awareness of the solo and community choral forces of the 1940s-era congregation of the Seaview African-United Baptist Church and the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. Building upon the preliminary work of the Society for American Music Hampsong Education Fellowship in *American Song: Sankofa Songs: African Nova Scotian Songs from the Collection of Dr. Helen Creighton*, this case study serves to situate these choral communities, share newly-minted transcriptions of these historical field recordings, and provide examples to where this repertoire can be woven into undergraduate aural skills curriculum as sight singing materials.

In addition to its historical and cultural value, the *Sankofa Songs* release presents an opportunity for pedagogical innovation. The newly transcribed musical materials provide an excellent resource for integrating African Nova Scotian choral traditions into contemporary music education. These songs can be utilized in undergraduate aural skills curricula, where they can serve as rich, culturally resonant examples for sight-singing practice, thus fostering a deeper understanding of historic African diasporic liturgical music within academic settings. Through this integration, *Sankofa Songs* not only preserves a vital cultural legacy but also enhances the diversity of musical learning experiences in higher education.

**\* Fernando Berwig Silva, Southern Methodist University**

**“Avant-Garde Liberationist Music: A Lutheran Brazilian Perspective on Liturgical Musical Composition”**

Although contemporary global social struggles are vastly different from what Luther faced in the sixteenth century, the reformer's theology of music offers a conceptual opportunity for creating music that speaks to the concerns of today—especially within the Western Christian world, where liturgical musical innovation appears to be dichotomized between an archaic Western aesthetics of past musical idioms and the appropriation of different folk musical styles (Steuernagel 2008, 7). Through the exploration of the compositional process of my liturgical choral setting, *A Mass for the Missing* (2023), this paper provides a framework for liturgical music composition in which the aesthetic priorities advocated by twentieth- and twentieth-first-century *avant-garde* composers can interact and embody the theological priorities of Latin American Liberation Theologies—and its church musical repertoires (see Hawn 2003; Silva Steuernagel

2024). In the paper, I refer to pre-compositional materials, musical analysis, and personal reflections on the piece's reception after its premiere at a worship service held in the spring of 2023 at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Marcell Silva Steuernagel emphasizes that the role of Luther's incarnational theology was essential in the reformer's view of music: Luther recognized the necessity to be in the world, to see the world, to listen to the world, and to know how to speak to the world (Silva Steuernagel 2017). Moreover, Latin American Liberation Theologians have long explored Luther's legacy in developing a theological agenda that responds to pressing social issues in their communities (Westhelle 2021; Neeraj Ekka 2020; Altmann 2015). Similarly to the work of these theologians in connecting Luther's theological heritage, despite its problematics, to Latin American Liberation Theology's frameworks, I argue that Western modernist and post-modernist compositional and aesthetic priorities, when partnered with socially located musical and theological enterprises such as the Latino Protest Music and the Liberationist Hymnody, can help churches move forward with incarnated and contextual liturgical goals.

#### **4:45–6:30pm: Session Three: Concurrent**

##### **A. Composers & Practice**

**I. J. Yarison, Dougherty College, University of St. Thomas, Minnesota**

##### **“Sound, word, ontology, community: Introducing the Choral Music of E. N. Bawa”**

Under the overarching theme of THE CHOIR AND THE COMMUNITY, this paper will first introduce the Northern Nigerian composer E. N. Bawa to the larger academic community. Monographs and articles on Nigerian Art Music provide copious information about this genre of music in the southeast and southwest of Nigeria but are blank on northern Nigeria. It is assumed that art music and choral music do not exist in northern Nigeria. It is a lacuna. This paper aims to be a prelusive step toward repairing this and thus contribute to musicology, ethnomusicology, and Christian scholarship specifically.

Second, the paper will examine the choral music of E. N. Bawa under the rubrics in the title. “Ontology” will look at the worldview under which Bawa's music and compositional activities are subsumed. Community will look at how his music functions within his given community (Christian and northern) and how it contributes to undergirding it. “Word” references, first, *logos*, a specific idea within the Christian community and, second, how E. N. Bawa conceives his work as participating in the “*logos*.” Finally, “sound” forms part of this introduction to E. N. Bawa and his work. It asks the question: What kind of choral sound is E. N. Bawa's choral music? In this section representative musical examples will be examined.

**Joseph Sargent, University of Alabama**

##### **“Alec Wyton's Holistic Church Music Philosophy”**

The tumultuous history of American church music in the 1960s and 1970s, and the debates between advocates of “quality” music and those favoring more diverse and popular elements, are by now well known. Among Episcopal musicians navigating these tensions, there were few figures more influential than Alec Wyton (1921–2007). As president of the American Guild of Organists, longtime music director and choirmaster at New York's St. John the Divine Cathedral, and coordinator of the commission on church music that produced the 1982 Episcopal Hymnal, Wyton was uniquely positioned to take a leadership role in shaping the musical engagement of Episcopalian choirs and communities.

My paper assesses Wyton's impact on Episcopalian music during this period of rapid transformation, taking a holistic view of his activities as a composer, organist, music director, arranger, author, and editor. Wyton has sometimes been perceived as essentially a populist, thanks to eye-catching maneuvers such as inviting Duke Ellington and Leopold Stokowski into his sacred spaces, along with his well-publicized organ arrangement of Billy Strayhorn's song “Lotus Blossom.” But I argue for a more nuanced reading of Wyton's influence, based on a wealth of source material including published articles, interviews, and musical

analysis. In defiance of tendencies to be aligned into discrete “serious” and “popular” camps, Wyton refused to accept this dichotomy and instead embraced features from both realms, as part of a philosophy to inspire all church-goers toward greater spiritual enrichment.

Myriad aspects of Wyton’s musical activities bear out this mixed approach. Close study of a representative sample of his hymn tunes, choral works, and organ pieces reveals a calculated focus on accessibility, in terms of acknowledging congregational tastes and abilities. Yet Wyton was also vocal about supporting high standards of church music-making. He advocated for modern composers to write thought-provoking sacred repertory, spoke repeatedly about the benefits of rigorous youth church music education, and upheld traditional Anglican psalmody to the point of publishing his own Anglican psalter. In an era of deep conflict, Wyton sought a balanced solution that would keep church music relevant to contemporary society while also maintaining musical and theological integrity.

**Jim Taylor, Professor of Music and Director of Fine Arts, LeTourneau University**  
**The Cambridge Songs (*Carmina Cantabrigiensia*)**

The Cambridge Songs, as they are called, are a collection of eighty-three medieval Latin poems found near the end of the *Codex Cantabrigiensis* (C, MS Gg. 5.35) housed at the Cambridge University Library. The poems deal with issues in northern Europe before the Norman Conquest (1066) and include sacred songs, descriptions of the beauty of nature, panegyrics, laments, admonitions, humorous tales, and more. The collection has been said by one scholar to be the most important collection of Latin poetry between Charlemagne and *Carmina Burana*.

Upon the author’s discovery of the Cambridge Songs in 2014, he determined to compose four suites for choir, soloists, and orchestra, each approximately twenty minutes in duration. The four suites were completed in 2022, and have been performed locally in Texas, in New York at Carnegie Hall, in Ukraine with the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, and in Paris at L’église de Madeleine under the direction of the composer.

The presentation will include a look at the history and purpose of the collection and move to the compositions, the composer’s *modus operandi*, and the hearing of various movements through concert recordings.

**B. Hymnbooks & Choral Singing**

**\*Antony Pitts, Excelsia University College, Sydney**  
**“Outward and visible signs in Eton’s Choirbook”**

Eton College has produced twenty British prime ministers but only one Choirbook: the giant manuscript of the Eton Choirbook is one of the greatest surviving glories of pre-Reformation England, consisting of sacred music for many voices, originally sung by the Choir as part of the daily liturgy. However, reading its intricate and colourful musical notation is an all-but-lost art today. After exploring its notation over the last 25 years in workshops and performances in Europe and Australia with Cappella Pratensis, TONUS PEREGRINUS, The Song Company, and TONUS AUSTRALIS, it seems clear that when we perform music from a long time ago from the written instructions which the original musicians used, we get “closer to the music,” closer both to the way it sounded, and to the psycho-physical experience of the 15<sup>th</sup>- and 16<sup>th</sup>-century performers and their community. Thus turning over the pages of a giant early 16<sup>th</sup>-century choirbook is the entry into another world, historically, musically, theologically, and physiologically. The outward and visible signs on the page—the musical notation in “black-full” mensural notation—convey to us the inward musical structure in a way which is lost in the bland score notation of modern editions. Comparing specific musical passages read directly from the Eton Choirbook by modern choral performers with the same passages sung earlier by the same singers from modern editions teaches us about those margins of difference—in terms of mental mapping, ensemble dynamic, melodic contours, creative freshness, and even spiritual grace. There is arguably a sacramental aspect to an artefact of such historical and artistic pricelessness when it becomes the mediating element in the communal transaction between a

composer living half a millennium ago in a very different world and a grouping of performers reading and singing aloud from the black and red dots on the page. Working both from the momentous DIAMM (the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music) facsimile with introductory text by Magnus Williamson and from new performing editions used for the TONUS PEREGRINUS recording on Naxos, and numerous workshops (from Tilburg in 1999 to Eton itself in 2023).

**Sarah Waters, Belhaven University**

**“A Contentious Children’s Hymnal: *The Lutheran Hymnary Junior* in the Norwegian-American Immigrant Community of the Upper Midwest, 1916”**

As the three largest Norwegian-American Lutheran synods prepared to celebrate their impending denominational union in 1917, an editorial team of pastors published a children’s hymnal, *The Lutheran Hymnary Junior*, in 1916. Although this fully bilingual hymnal, a companion to the congregationally-oriented *The Lutheran Hymnary*, was ostensibly designed to unify Lutherans of Norwegian background in the upper Midwest, it did not fulfill this goal. The five polemic essays offered in its *Preface* take an antagonistic tone towards those Lutherans who would permit the erosion of traditional music in favor of modern revival hymns. *The Lutheran Hymnary Junior* represented an eleventh-hour attempt to preserve the Scandinavian Lutheran chorale tradition in the face of encroaching Americanization.

This research explores the discrepancy between the stated intentions of this “children’s” hymnal, which was not particularly child-like in its musical contents, and its more salient quality as a musically conservative manifesto. The editors argue in the *Preface* that “we are throwing overboard our choicest hymns and tunes from the past and manufacturing a multitude of more commonplace ones.” They carefully selected pieces that are characterized by the “stately swing and reverential spirit” of Lutheran chorales, as they described it, as opposed to the “feeble and sensuous” nature of American Gospel hymnody. This paper identifies and analyzes six historic hymns that exemplify the editors’ chorale conservation project. This research also examines why *The Lutheran Hymnary Junior* was never republished: acculturation, an embrace of the English language during World War I, and lay enthusiasm for contemporary musical styles all combined to make this hymnal culturally obsolete within a decade.

Little recent research has been pursued on this topic, although three dissertations on Norwegian-American Lutheran music (1961, 1965, 1971) briefly addressed the debate. This quarrel over hymnals a century ago reflects broader themes that transcend its specific time: the tensions between first and second-generation immigrants, the extent to which churches should absorb popular musical styles, and how music education can be used to shape the values and beliefs of the young.

## **Friday March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

### **8:30–10:15am: Session Four: Concurrent**

#### **A. Sacred Music in Contemporary Culture**

**Matthew Arndt, University of Iowa**

**“The Fivefold Coding of *Indiana Jones and the Abbey of Thelema*”**

The genre of the cinematic mashup, typified by *The Dark Side of Oz* (the combination of *The Dark Side of the Moon* and *The Wizard of Oz*), challenges the notion that music with film is “sound on screen,” as Michel Chion subtitles his book *Audio Vision*. Sound on screen equates to what Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner would call a single-scope conceptual blend, framed by the filmic narrative. But the cinematic mashup presents a double-scope blend, where sound and screen contribute equally to an emergent, pluralistic whole.

This paper introduces the five codes of music (both audio and visual), the equivalent of Roland Barthes’s five textual codes, and it shows how analysis of these codes of music and language sheds light on such plurality. The codes of both music and language are parallel in that they are based on the same five root

tropes of inquiry identified by Stephen C. Pepper, which are the *purposive act*, *integration*, *machine*, *similarity*, and *event*. Moreover, I suggest that these tropes are themselves derived from music and language in the first place. By linking music with the tropes that ground inquiry into everything, I extend the Intergalactic Music Theory of Everything, introduced by Daniel K. L. Chua and Alexander Rehding, which posits that everything can be music.

I analyze *Indiana Jones and the Abbey of Thelema*, the combination of Jean-François Charles's new album *Missa brevis Abbaye de Thélème* with the visuals of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. As a parallel case to the somewhat more familiar *The Dark Side of Oz*, the mashup helps one to recognize the general phenomenon of fivefold coding as highlighted in such double-scope blends. Through its pluralistic coding, the mashup synergizes Christian elements in both sources in an uncannily artful, open-ended way.

**Danielle Kramer, University of Iowa**

**“‘Our Lord was not silent’: Soundtrack and Adaptation in Martin Scorsese’s *Silence*”**

Shusaku Endo's 1966 novel *Silence* tells the story of two Portuguese Jesuit priests that travel to Japan during the seventeenth century. Though a work of fiction, the novel is rooted in history, being inspired by the widespread persecution of Christians by the Japanese government and the persistence of the underground church during this period. For his 2016 film adaptation of the novel, director Martin Scorsese had originally envisioned a film score that made use of traditional Japanese music, but he abandoned this idea because he didn't want the score to just be an “interpretation of a Westerner who had been influenced by Japanese film.” Instead, Scorsese opted for a score that focused on the sounds of nature.

The resulting score by composer duo Kathryn and Kim Allen Kluge takes a minimalist approach, using droning strings, haunting vocals, and hollow flutes throughout. Most prominent in this score, however, are the sounds that some might consider to be sound effects rather than music, including cicada noises, rainfall, ocean waves, and wind. For these, the Kluges worked directly from the novel, considering the multifaceted ways these sounds contribute to the theological elements of Endo's story.

In this presentation, I argue that the Kluges create their own adaptation of and theological response to the novel by translating these symbols into an audible format. My analysis draws from Jellenik (2010), who conceptualizes the film soundtrack as an adaptation of the film, and Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins's (2010) argument that adaptation theory should consider more elements than plot fidelity. Additionally, Fitzpatrick (2010) argues that translating symbolic elements to an audiovisual format can create additional dimensions that connect the text to other art forms. The main examples I analyze are the use of Shinto music to reinforce the antagonist's arguments against Christianity, the paradoxical use of water as both a restorative symbol and a method of torture, the psychologically and spiritually deafening incorporation of insect and bird noises, and the varieties of literal and metaphorical silence that serve as a central theme.

**Michael Tang, University of Birmingham, Life Seeks Understanding**

**“Sonic Lamentations: Mogwai's Music Theology in Pandemic Narratives”**

This paper examines how Mogwai's instrumental post-rock compositions functioned as a form of contemporary spiritual lament during the COVID-19 pandemic. While traditional theological discourse reveals significant tension between competing approaches to music's revelatory capacity, the pandemic created unprecedented conditions where secular artistic forms fulfilled spiritual functions typically reserved for liturgical experiences. Focusing on Mogwai's 2021 album “As the Love Continues,” which achieved remarkable commercial success during lockdown restrictions, this study explores how wordless music established contemplative environments that transcended physical isolation.

Drawing on James K.A. Smith's theological framework of “temporal awareness,” I demonstrate how Mogwai's sophisticated compositions addressed pandemic disruptions to conventional experiences of time. Their extended structures and dynamic progressions exemplify what Smith terms “spiritual timekeeping” – a practice that recognises both human finitude and transcendent possibility. This temporal restructuring parallels Walter Brueggemann's analysis of biblical lament, which identifies a movement from orientation

through disorientation to new orientation. Mogwai's sonic architecture mirrors this psychological journey, creating space for authentic expression of grief while pointing toward transcendence.

Methodologically, this research integrates textual analysis of critical reception with June Boyce-Tillman's multidimensional framework of musical-spiritual experience. Jennifer Wakeling's approach to textless music provides analytical tools for understanding how meaning emerges through interaction between sonic structures and listeners' subjectivity. The unprecedented mainstream success of this experimental album suggests a significant democratisation of access to this typically elite musical form during collective crisis.

This research contributes to theological discourse by illustrating how secular music can create what Turner identifies as liminal spaces – threshold states between ordinary reality and transformative experience. By examining how instrumental post-rock fulfilled functions of spiritual lament during pandemic isolation, this study suggests that theological understandings of music's revelatory potential must now account for how extraordinary collective trauma creates new pathways for encountering transcendence beyond traditional religious contexts.

## **B. Composers, Choirbooks, & The Practice of Singing**

**Joanna Pepple, Lee University**

### **“English Hymnody from Leipzig Conservatory Professors: William Bradbury's Album Book from Germany”**

From 1847 to 1849 the hymnodist William Bradbury (1816–68) traveled to Leipzig, Germany in the pursuit of discovering how Europeans taught music. Bradbury chronicled his travels by writing in installments of his experiences for the *New York Evangelist*.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to Bradbury's writings for the *New York Evangelist*, another artifact from his travels remains: an album book that he had in Germany, with inscriptions and signatures from Jenny Lind, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Robert and Clara Schumann, Richard Wagner, and many more. These pages chronicle Bradbury's friendships with faculty from the Leipzig Conservatory as well as other notable European musicians. Bradbury's album book resides today at the Library of Congress.

In these pages, one can study and understand nineteenth-century relationships with musicians, and in particular the European mentors who had a direct influence on Bradbury, who would become one of America's best-known hymnodists in the nineteenth century, writing the music for *Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us* (1859), *Sweet Hour of Prayer* (1859), *Jesus Loves Me* (1862), and *He Leadeth Me* (1864).

Additionally, one can find in this album hymns in English set to music by C. F. Becker, Moritz Hauptmann, Joseph Joachim, Louis Spohr, and Carl Friedrich Zoellner, using texts by Emily Taylor and Isaac Watts. Perhaps these Leipzig musicians were paying tribute to the visiting American hymnodist by setting English hymn texts to music in their own compositional style.

A study of the texts and compositional styles of these short hymns found in Bradbury's album book points to the germination of a cultural exchange: these esteemed Leipzig professors wrote short English hymns for a visiting American hymnodist. Bradbury's reverence for the European style of music is no secret as he returned to the United States to publish multiple volumes of hymns with music inspired from these traditions. Examining these short hymns in his album book reveals Bradbury's early inspiration of bringing European musical style to nineteenth-century American hymnody.

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<sup>1</sup> Juanita Karpf, ““Would that It Were so in America!”: William Bradbury's Observations of European Music Educators, 1847–49.” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 24, no. 1 (2002): 5–38.



**Mark Peters, Trinity Christian University**  
**“Hearing J. S. Bach’s *Magnificat* Together”**

This paper reflects on the conference theme, “The Choir and the Community,” by considering how choices of those organizing a performance of J. S. Bach’s *Magnificat* shape a gathered audience’s experience of it. It is offered from the perspective of reception history, that pieces of music continue to matter to people after their composer’s death, often in contexts far removed from their original. The paper explores live performances of Bach’s *Magnificat* in the United States from its 1875 première to the present. It is based on a study of the first and the most recent performances of Bach’s *Magnificat* by two churches, six music festivals, three early music ensembles, and seven symphony orchestras across the U. S. Through select case studies, it explores ways audiences experience Bach’s *Magnificat* differently in varied contexts.

First, the *Magnificat* is heard much differently when presented in a church service rather than in concert. I will present two examples of the *Magnificat* within Lutheran Vespers services, exploring these performances in the context of the church presenting it, the order of service, the liturgical occasion, the other music included, and the roles of the congregation in the service. I will continue with a consideration of factors that shape an audience’s experience of Bach’s *Magnificat* in concert settings, including the different roles of audience members and performers, the concert hall, the performing ensemble, concert programming, and the occasion for the performance. I will both discuss examples from particular U. S. performances and reflect on larger trends in performances across the country.

This study presents an example of one way a piece of choral music composed more than 300 years ago continues to be heard and valued by performers and audience members today.

**Timothy R. McKinney, Baylor University**  
**“Spafford’s Draft and Bliss’s Score: Genesis of Text and Music in ‘It Is Well With My Soul’”**

The story of how Horatio Gates Spafford came to pen the words to the hymn “It Is Well With My Soul” in 1873 following the tragic loss of his daughters on a transatlantic crossing is well known. According to Spafford family legend, as Spafford himself subsequently crossed the ocean, the ship’s captain informed him when they were passing near where the shipwreck had occurred. Deeply moved, Spafford began drafting the hymn text that was later set to music by family acquaintance Philip Bliss. It is lesser known that Spafford’s draft survives and gives glimpses into his creative thought process as he considered various alternatives and discarded or improved them. In my paper I trace the evolution of Spafford’s hymn and analyze the choices that are preserved in the draft, providing a close reading of the structure and content of the text. We will see that some of the draft alternatives contained more personal expressions prompted by the tragedy than does the final version, which was completed at a later time and included the iconic and more broadly theological final line that Spafford could not find in the initial draft. I next demonstrate how Bliss’s music responds to the hymn’s poetic devices and imagery that sometimes agree and sometimes conflict between stanzas, an inherent challenge in strophic musical settings. I argue that the antithesis between Spafford’s opening lines in his first stanza (...peace like a river...sorrows like sea billows...) prompted Bliss’s profound turn to minor harmony at the beginning of his second musical phrase, and that restless sequential nature of the harmony in Bliss’s third phrase drives toward and sets up the expanded cadential progression that comprises the bulk of the final phrase and appropriately complements the affirmational statements he recognized in the final line of each of Spafford’s stanzas. Bliss’s added refrain then brilliantly underscores these affirmations by using only the primary triads and simple melody. The marriage of this text and this music provides valuable insight into how music can enhance the expressive power of already powerful words of Christian faith, a marriage that has spoken peace and hope to countless Christians for 150 years.

**10:45am–11:45am: Session Five: Plenary**

**“New Forms of Choir and Community” Panel Discussion**

**Dwan Hill, *The Choir Room*; Geraldine Latty, Baylor University; & Russell Mauldin.**

This session explores the shifting role of the choir in contemporary church settings, particularly in the wake of Contemporary Worship Music (CWM) and its powerful influence. As traditional choral structures adapt—or in some cases, disappear—new forms of vocal ensembles, worship teams, and congregational singing practices are emerging. How is CWM engaging with the heritage of the choir? In what ways does it seek to reclaim or redefine choral traditions? Through discussion and musical examples, this session will examine the evolving expressions of choir and their significance in contemporary worship.

**Dwan Hill** is a 3x GRAMMY award-winning, 2x Dove award-winning, a 2x ASCAP Rhythm and Soul award winner, songwriter, producer, musician, writer, and church leader based in Nashville, TN. In addition to completing his Bachelor's of Music Education and Masters of Composition degrees at Belmont University, Dwan has toured worldwide as the music director for CeCe Winans as well as with renowned artists such as Lauren Daigle, Jonny Lang, Drew Holcomb & The Neighbors, and Tauren Wells.

Most recently, he spends much of his time in Music City writing songs for Integrity Music in partnership with his own publishing companies *Big Buddy Music* and *Let Them Hear*. His chart-topping songs as songwriter, publisher, or producer include two #1 gospel radio hits “Believe For It” by CeCe Winans and “He’s My Rock” by Bri Babineaux.

Known for his creative approach and quirky style, his artistic projects include *Mister Pride* and *Good Time* which present his unique and contemplative life stories through witty lyrics and top-notch musicianship. He has had the honor of being a featured speaker and special guest performer for InQuiker, NAMM, WorshipLife (LifeWay), GMA Immerse Conference, and TEDx Talks.

**Geraldine Latty** is a songwriter, performer, worship leader, vocal coach, and choir director. Currently residing in Texas, serving as an international research scholar at Baylor University in the Dunn Center for Christian Music Studies. Her musical worship journey has taken her from leading 10,000 people gathered in sung worship in Australia to performing at the Royal Albert Hall in London, from street parties to cathedrals, from singing and songwriting with teenage single parents to BBC radio and TV appearances, from leading with a community choir at the local venues to running many “Sing Gospel” pop-up choir sessions around the UK and Europe.

As a professor on the Music and Theology degree program at London School of Theology, she has lectured on Songwriting, Vocal Improvisation, Corporate Worship Studies, and Worship Performing Arts. In 2023-24 she and her multi-instrumentalist husband Carey Luce, were Directors of Worship Arts at Dordt University, Iowa.

Geraldine has also released 4 solo albums with Kingsway/Integrity Music and contributed to numerous “live worship” albums. With Carey she has recorded an additional 4 albums including *Can You See It?*, a Christmas album *Holy Night* and two community pop-up choir resources *Hold On* and *Freedom*.

For 39 years, **Dr. Russell Mauldin**, has sustained his music career in Nashville as one of the most prolific and best-selling composers in church music with millions of choral books sold, 100+ published musicals composed, and confirmed performances on six continents. Working also with major artists and orchestrating for Inspirational film compositions, he is a Grammy-nominated record producer and six-time GMA Dove Award winner. He has also owned and led several music industry businesses through the years.

He was ordained in 2015 and completed a Master's degree in Religion in 2018. In 2017, he helped plant a new church and became Associate Pastor and Trustee at Seeds Church, a growing and flourishing interdenominational church in Middle Tennessee. In early 2024, Russell was certified through the NCCA as a Licensed Clinical Pastoral Counselor and has recently earned a PhD in Clinical Christian Counseling. He is also a certified Life Coach through the AACC. Russell is currently composing, consulting, and producing contract with Brentwood Benson Music and doing freelance work.

**1–2:45pm: Session Six: Concurrent**

## **A. Beauty, Theology, & Music**

**Joshua Waggener, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

### **“‘Captivated by the Music’: Addressing John Newton’s Concerns with Handel’s *Messiah*”**

In 1784, George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) was commemorated in London through a series of concerts. According to Charles Burney’s account (1785), the two performances of *Messiah* at Westminster Abbey during the event were both “magnificent to the sights, and ... mellifluous and grateful to the ear.”

Yet, amongst leading figures in the British evangelical movement, not all were pleased with the grand spectacles. In a “short drama,” the poet William Cowper (1731–1800) tersely pronounced that “God is greatly dishonoured” with the worship of Handel. The former slave-captain, author of “Amazing Grace,” and preacher John Newton (1725–1807) responded to the celebration more loquaciously with his *Messiah: Fifty Expository Discourses, on the Series of Scriptural Passages, which form the Subject of the celebrated Oratorio of Handel* (1786). In these sermons, Newton describes Handel’s music as mere “entertainment” and “an ornament of the words,” offering only temporary “pleasure.” He denies that the oratorio, as sung by a massive choir which surely included unbelievers, was truly “sacred music.” He warns of the dangers of being “captivated by the music” and diverted from the “weighty sense” of the divine words, which he declares “sublime.”

This paper will propose that attention to specific features of Handel’s musical rhetoric in *Messiah* may allay at least some of Newton’s concerns. Specifically, Handel’s choruses evoke something more than a temporary experience in their use of imitation and fugue, which simulate eternal praise. His recitatives and arias express comforting affections and doctrinal convictions that—if not felt and believed by the soloists—could indeed be affirmed by many of the listeners. Lastly, Handel’s word painting may serve to impress the meaning of the words more effectively than words alone. Building on the work of Ruth Smith (1995), Calvin Stapert (2010), and Larry Sowders (2016), and giving attention to the reception of Handel’s *Messiah* from the eighteenth century to the present, this paper will contribute to Christian scholarship in music by reconsidering the aesthetic and theological impact of Handel’s “sacred oratorio” on singers and listeners from the past as well as the communities that experience it today.

**Hope Chun, Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University**

### **“Sonic Ritual: Defending Theological Beauty in the Music of Arvo Pärt”**

This paper responds to the critiques leveraged against the Holy Minimalist tradition—and specifically the music of Arvo Pärt—by composer James MacMillan. Due to its apparent lack of transformation by way of musical conflict, MacMillan charges Holy Minimalist music as being reflective of sentimentality rather than beauty. According to MacMillan, musical beauty devoid of conflict is better characterized as sentimentality, as it effectively jumps directly to Easter morning without dwelling on the cross. Through an examination of his musical attention to time and special consideration of ritual in relation to the Orthodox faith, this paper constructs a defense of theological beauty in the music of Arvo Pärt, responding to MacMillan’s critique by adjusting the criteria of what qualifies as the theologically beautiful in music.

I engage in musical analysis of Pärt’s *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978) and *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten* (1977) to propose an expanded understanding of “conflict” and “transformation” in music: through *Spiegel im Spiegel*, I suggest Pärt’s creation of a dwelling space, appealing to a theology of Holy Saturday to argue that Pärt’s music is very much a part of the crucifixion narrative; through *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*, I turn to Pärt’s Orthodox faith to suggest semblance between his music and the transformational aims of ritual.

This paper contributes to Christian scholarship in music by affirming the “New Simplicity” style of Pärt and others as theologically and musically substantive, especially in light of its considerable popular appeal. It also pays particular attention to Orthodox Christianity, a tradition not commonly explored within the intersection of theology and the arts.

**\* Ming Wilson, University of Michigan**

**“Listening to Angelic Rationality—The Aural Theology of Maximus Confessor and its Exegetical Potential through the Music of Arvo Pärt”**

Despite the wellspring of recent innovative scholarship applying the *logoi* cosmology of Maximus Confessor (c.580–662) to topics including ecological stewardship (Wirzba, 2021), therapeutics of desire (Blowers, 2016) and visual aesthetics (Tsakiridou, 2013), no one has addressed the sonic dimension clearly embedded within this influential theologian’s extant corpus. Starting with his bold axiom, this presentation asks just how “music encompasses all the disciplines.” Taken from his chief work on cosmological contemplation, this phrase is within a host of musical analogues that connects aurality to rationality. Emphasis on rational (*logikos*) listening later elaborated as a physical-spiritual sense that helps transfigure objects of physical perception into a spiritual offering toward loving union with God. The *Mystagogy* further provides templates for the transformative function of hymns operating within the Divine Liturgy as a means of realizing an angelic level of perception. In conversation with prominent exegetes (von Balthasar, 1962; Wood, 2022; Summerson, 2024), this paper provides the first comprehensive overview of a Maximian musical theology, noting both tensions and constructive possibilities.

This presentation then goes beyond explanatory *theoria* by applying the above theological insights to the contemporary perception and creation of sacred music. The oeuvre of Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) serves as an appropriate starting point for such praxis. As a post-Soviet convert to Orthodox Christianity, Pärt left behind his native land and rejected the avant-garde musical community, ultimately seeking communion with early theological and chant traditions (Bouteneff, 2015; Shenton, 2018), and his biographical trajectory of asceticism followed by mystical knowledge is considered here as a potent realization of Maximus’s theology. The Maximian program for contemplation, including cataphatic modes of being and the apophatic limits of timbre and temporality, provides theologically informed categories to clarify previous analysis and critiques (Brauneiss, 2010; Begbie, 2011; Sholl 2012). These include wrestling with theological categories like divine activity (*energeia*), creaturely participation, and hypostatic union within the composer-composition-performer nexus to elucidate the musician’s unique bearing of the *Imago Dei* as a communing with creation. The conclusion expands the theological-musical vocabulary developed here toward mutually illuminating dialogue among distinct Christian traditions and other sacred musical cosmologies.

## **B. Gender & Sacred Music**

**Abigail Cawte, Durham University**

**Women, musical instruments, and worship: an exploration of the gendered performance of worship music**

The use of drum kits and electric guitars have become a common sight in many charismatic church services throughout the UK, however the involvement of women instrumentalists in those bands remains low. There is a preponderance of male instrumentalists in these church worship bands that does not correspond to the gender demographic of the church congregations at large. This, I believe, is an indication that the creation, production and performance of contemporary worship music is gendered: women’s participation is limited to where their activities support this. In this paper, I present my doctoral research, that seeks to explore the peripheral position of women instrumentalists and examine the practices of contemporary church musicians within charismatic churches. My research builds on literature addressing the performance of contemporary Christian music (Ingalls, Landau, Wagner 2013; Steuernagel 2021; Thornton 2023), by engaging with these same issues through the lens of feminist musicology (Cohen 2001; Koskoff 2014; Whiteley 1997). I take an interdisciplinary approach, to explore questions of gender and experience in worship.

I analyse interviews that I have conducted with women instrumentals who are part of charismatic churches’ worship teams, to explore my research questions: i) What does it mean to perform as an instrumentalist in contemporary worship music? ii) How is the congregational worship space gendered?

By approaching the performance of worship music from the perspective of women, I show how their presence (or lack thereof), firstly disrupts assumptions about leadership by highlighting the many ways and

places in which leadership is found, and secondly, questions the benefits of using a rock band instrumentation for all participants.

**Kelsey Kramer McGinnis, Christianity Today, Grand View University**  
**“Breath of Heaven: Female Voices and Bodies in Contemporary Praise and Worship Music”**

A voice signals a particular body, a gendered body (Cavarero 2005). In the Christian imagination, where the dichotomy of male/female is often an essential part of the created order, female bodies and voices carry particular associations and meanings. When a woman sings on a stage or in front of a church sanctuary, her voice signals something, because the presence of a female body in a sacred space is not neutral. Her voice is attached to her body, and it tells you certain things about her body—the size of her vocal chords, whether she has a head cold.

Contemporary Praise and Worship Music (CPWM) became an industry force in the late 1990s, driven in part by the popularity of male figures like Matt Redman, Tim Hughes, and later Chris Tomlin, who managed to capitalize on the mainstream enthusiasm for singer-songwriters like John Mayer and Chris Cabrera (Dashboard Confessional) and usher in an era for worship music defined by the “guy with guitar.” The women who participated in the worship music industry of the late 90s and 2000s tended to be featured performers, chosen for the “girl songs,” reflective ballads or selections that required more vocal agility and expressivity. During contemplative songs, the breathiness of particular female voices served as a proxy for intimacy.

In popular music studies, examinations of female voices have illuminated the ways timbre, range, body size, and race impact the way a vocalist is perceived (Pecknold 2016, Schutte and Miller 1993, Dibben 2008). By applying analytical frameworks from popular music studies and gender studies to CPWM, we see that gender plays a key role in determining who sings which songs from the platform in churches that use this music, and how the female voice has been used to help construct the emotional arc of a worship service.

**Stephanie A. Budwey, Vanderbilt University**  
**“Sacred Music and Affirming Identities in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries”**

This presentation will explore the role that Christian sacred music has played in the movement for equal rights in the LGBTQIA2S+ community. Just as music played an instrumental role in the Civil Rights Movement, it has also been a driving force in the struggle for justice in the LGBTQIA2S+ community. I will look at this history by examining the songs themselves and collections of songs, including the *Trial Hymnal* (1981) and the *Metropolitan Community Church Hymnal Project* (1988–1993) from the Metropolitan Community Church, the Hymn Society’s 2019 collection *Songs for the Holy Other: Songs for: Hymns Affirming the LGBTQIA2S+ Community*, and contemporary Christian artists such as Semler and Flamy Grant. Additionally, I will draw from sources such as Lynne Gerber, Siri Colom, and Ariana Nedelman’s “The Pink and Purple Church in the Castro” (online) to look at the role that music played in the Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco, Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison’s *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) to consider the role of music in social movements, and Nathan Myrick’s *Music for Others: Care, Justice, and Relational Ethics in Christian Music* (Oxford University Press, 2021) to offer how Christian sacred music can be ethical for the LGBTQIA2S+ community by contributing to its flourishing.

There has been very little scholarship that looks at LGBTQIA2S+ Christian congregational song, but I will build on my previous work in this area, including “Queer Congregational Song: Past Celebrations, Current Resources, and Hopes for the Future” in *Queering Christian Worship: Reconstructing Liturgical Theology* (Seabury Press, 2023), “Liturgies of Livability or Liturgical Violence: What Kind of Space is Christian Congregational Song Creating for LGBTQIA2S+ and Nonbinary People?” (*Religions*, 2023), and “‘Draw a Wider Circle—or, Perhaps, Erase’: Queer(ing) Hymnody” (*The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song*,

Spring 2016). It is vital to continue to explore the role that Christian music can play in creating liturgies of livability for LGBTQIA2S+ people.

### **3–4:45pm: Session Seven: Concurrent**

#### **A. Sacred Music in the English Tradition**

**Joel W. West, Nashotah House**

##### **“The Emergence of Distinctively Anglican Musical Identity”**

Social identity is a psychological construct that both defines belonging within a group and boundaries between one group and another (Howard 2000). Identity has recently become important for church planting and other evangelism efforts where a religious group needs to articulate to prospective members how it is distinct in terms of beliefs and worship practices (Alger 2023).

Within the American context, religious identity within ethnic churches has often had a strong national or cultural character, tied to language, music or other practice brought by immigrants to American (Mitchell, 2006). Music has also served as a powerful mechanism to transmit beliefs, values and other aspects of denominational identity from one generation to another (Clark 1993)

The Anglican identity often emphasized common liturgy over doctrinal boundaries. For centuries, worship in the Church of England and national churches reflected a unique shared liturgy, forged through 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Reformation influences upon the inherited medieval traditions (Nichols 2018).

For the global Anglican Communion, recent discussions of an Anglican musical identity have tended to emphasize differences (Roberts 2013). At the same time, the distinctiveness of the Anglican musical identity has proven increasingly important, helping to support cathedral tourism and the continuing relevance of the great English cathedrals (Jenkins & Gledhill 1996; Ashley et al. 2022).

While Continental and English Protestant influences upon Anglican music remain visible to this day, this article traces the emergence of a distinctive Anglican musical identity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Church of England. It discusses how forces in the 19<sup>th</sup> century converged to help development of a unique identity, both in juxtaposition to other national churches, and among the various Protestant denominations of England. That identity was recognizable through specific works, integration within the liturgy and how it was enacted in practices.

From this, it considers how it was disseminated other Anglican provinces and the factors contributing to the attenuation of a distinctly Anglican identity beginning in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, it considers the impact of a distinct (versus attenuated) identity upon 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches to Anglican evangelism that emphasize experiential vs. doctrinal attraction.

**Mikel Hill, Saint Tikhon’s Monastery Music Institute**

##### **“Conciliarity in Worship: A Study of Choir Seating in England’s Cathedrals and Village Churches”**

Christian worship is often constructed as a dichotomy between performer and audience. A choir performing a cantata offers praise to God and for the congregation’s inspiration. Their goal is *objective*—that is, outside the self. The audience—and presumably God—listens, passively receiving in a *subjective* form of worship. This paper introduces a third mode of worship, one that is *conciliar*. Conciliar worship is exercised for the benefit of the performers themselves as a self-contained, communal activity. The worship circle is one current effort to represent a conciliar worship. The unique configuration of the chancel area in English churches presents another less examined example.

This paper explores the idea of conciliarity in worship through a survey of the arrangement and orientation of choir seating in Britain’s churches. In many examples, choir members face neither the altar nor the nave but instead face each other. Drawn from recent field visits to dozens of churches and cathedrals in England

and Wales, this study outlines the historical presence and current function of chancel seating. Ernst Meyer (1982) defines secular chamber music as a musical conversation whose goal is the benefit of the one who plays instead of the one who listens. This paper adopts Meyer's scholarship and applies it to the study of Christian worship in order to demonstrate that the historical and present arrangement of chancel seating represents a mode of communal worship that is performed for the sake of inner transformation.

As in the United States, choir participation in Britain's cathedrals is diminishing (COE 2022) and the chancels of her village churches are often empty. This condition threatens the loss of a visible illustration of conciliarity in worship for both choir and congregation. This paper urges a fresh appreciation for the function of chancel seating and serves as an opportunity to revolutionize our understanding of worship. It thereby seeks to inspire a renewed sense of communal worship in which there is neither performer nor audience, but one body of Christ "addressing one another in psalms and hymns" (Eph. 5:19).

**Tavish Daly, Duke University**

### **"Ethnic Sounds in Sacred Spaces: Early 1900s Catholic London as Nationalisms Battleground"**

The Tudor Revival and the English Folksong Revivals played a major role in the development of Catholic repertoire in Edwardian England. Sir Richard Runciman Terry, in his post at the new Westminster Cathedral, embarked on a nationalist project that sought to restore pre-Reformation English sacred music to its supposedly Catholic birthright. Alongside Terry and his disciples were the remnants of London's Embassy Chapels, once havens of foreign Catholic culture during the Penal Codes. Many of these chapels retained their ethnic identities following Catholic emancipation in the nineteenth century, retaining also their native musical traditions. Scholarship on this area of English Catholic church music has given Terry extensive treatment, positioning him (correctly) as the most influential Catholic musician of this era, but also erroneously claims that he did much to "popularize" Tudor Era sacred music. At the true popular level of the Church, Irish immigrants also sought to preserve their native traditions within the liturgy but were frequently censored. A study of the music-liturgical priorities of London's Catholic populations reveals how one's construction and expression of nationalism within the liturgy is inextricably linked to their social class and their ethnic role. The ability of English composers to write music that was effectively sacred was the foundation for Terry's nationalism, and, while Terry and the Church hierarchy offered music theory-based arguments for the effectiveness of their music, these arguments can also be ascribed to cultural priorities and ethnic essentializations. For diasporic communities, the ethnicity of the sound in their sacred music played a direct role in their nationalisms, engaging also in ethnic essentialization to assert their culture's Catholic legitimacy in London. Ultimately, social and racial class (and, concomitantly, ideological distance from the Catholic hierarchy) determined the legitimacy of ethnic sounds in sacred spaces. Consequently, native and economically privileged nationalist projects were allowed to succeed within the Catholic Church at the expense of diasporic communities. Untangling this web of various nationalisms in sacred music also brings into question the nature of sacred sound, and the role that ethnicity may or may not play in its creation, reception, and dissemination.

## **B. Choir & Community**

**\* Andrew Moenning, Duke University**

### **"Recovering Manhattan's Interracial Fellowship Chorus, 1947–1965"**

In late 1942, the Interracial Fellowship of Greater New York was established as an interdenominational Christian organization with an aim to "help the church to follow the ideal of eternal brotherhood" (*The New York Times*, Apr 8, 1946). Hosting monthly meetings at churches throughout Manhattan, the Fellowship provided racially integrated worship services and sought to address social issues present in the community. Beginning with the 1947 celebration of Race Relations Sunday, a chorus was formed to represent the Fellowship, known as the Interracial Fellowship Chorus (IFC). Initially, the choir functioned merely as the official musical unit of its parent organization; however, under the direction of Harold Aks, a Juilliard alumnus, the choir became an entity of significant cultural stature up to the point of its dissolution in the mid-1960s.

In this paper, I seek to recover the historical record of the Interracial Fellowship Chorus, which, to this point, has received no scholarly attention. Relying largely on newspaper records gathered from *The New York Times* and prominent African American newspapers such as *New York Amsterdam News* and *The New York Age*, I examine the cultural, social, and political import of the choir in dialogue with current scholarship on community music making (Higgins 2012).

My research suggests that the IFC occupied a distinctive position in the cultural life of midcentury New York City. Holding no auditions for membership, this interracial, intergenerational, and interfaith choir was comprised of volunteers who believed in its social vision and enjoyed singing. The IFC not only performed at religious and civic services but was also respected in art music circles, presenting ten Haydn masses throughout the 1950s (many of which had never been performed in NYC before) and several Handel oratorios to great acclaim. The IFC also developed the Interracial Music Council, which commissioned works for the IFC by contemporary composers and sponsored non-IFC concerts that were aligned with their mission. I conclude that the IFC is a distinguished example of the intersections between music, religion, and social action in the early days of the civil rights movement in the United States.

**Samantha Inman, Stephen F. Austin State University**

**“The Collaborative Anthems of Dan Forrest: Choir, Congregation, and Worship in Christian Community”**

Many traditional Christian worship services include two categories of music: congregational singing and special music. Choral anthems belong to the latter category, with a rehearsed group presenting music to a silent congregation. Externally, congregants become more passive during this part of the service even though the ideal is for worship to continue in their hearts and minds as they listen. One strategy for communicating this concept is the occasional inclusion of collaborative anthems. Such works mix more demanding sections intended for the rehearsed musicians with simpler sections in which the congregation joins with the choir. This paper examines the musical strategies and worship implications of select collaborative anthems by the acclaimed composer-arranger Dan Forrest.

Analysis of six collaborative anthems by Forrest illustrates three types. The first is the hymn arrangement. His version of “Great is Thy Faithfulness” adds the congregation for the final verse, and “Crown Him!” offers the option of adding the congregation for the first and last verses. The second type is the anthem with hymn quotation, in which the congregation sings during the quotation only. “Forevermore” alternates Forrest’s original music with verses of “O God Our Help in Ages Past,” and “Come Find His Rest” interweaves a modern song by Erik Dewar with the older hymn “I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say.” The third type is the original anthem with a refrain simple enough for the congregation to learn by the end, as in “Blessed is the Lord (Benedictus)” and “I Lift My Eyes (Psalm 121).”

In all three types, the congregational portions serve a climactic role. Congregants move from listeners to singers, viscerally responding to what they have just heard and adding their voices to increase the dynamic far above what the choir alone could produce. Collaborative anthems condense the alternation of choir and congregation most often separated by musical numbers into a single number. In so doing, such works dramatize the role of response within the worship service and emphasize how choir and congregation together constitute a single worshipping community.

**Sylvia Jones, Baylor University**

**“Bring the Choir Back: The Disappearance & Reappearance of Gospel Choirs in the Twenty-First Century United States”**

In recent years, many church musicians have lamented over the disappearance of choirs from churches. As a result of decreasing congregation sizes, predominantly Black churches have experienced dwindling and disappearing choirs. History shows that choirs began to dissipate from churches due to major events like the emergence of the Praise and Worship music genre, the Worship Wars, and the COVID-19 Pandemic. The question, “Where is the choir?” is still being asked. More importantly, church musicians have said,



“Bring the choir back.” If the choir needs to come back, where and why did it leave? In this paper, I argue that Black gospel choirs did not disappear; rather, they were reimagined in spaces outside the church. This paper will argue its thesis by using quantitative and qualitative methodology to analyze the appearance of the Black Gospel Choir and its aesthetic in secular mainstream media from 2014 to 2023 through general media reception. This scope will include Nick Jonas’ gospel version of “Jealous” in the Pop Music genre, the emergence of the Sunday Service Choir in collaboration with Kanye West in the Hip-Hop genre, and the dominance of Maverick City Music in the Contemporary Christian Music genre. By analyzing these performances, artists, and groups, this paper will examine the perceived value of the Gospel Choir in secular and sacred arenas. This phenomenon will be useful to practitioners and artists alike to understand the importance and trajectory of the Gospel Choir in the broader scope of the music industry.

## **5:00–6:15pm: Keynote**

**Monique M. Ingalls, Baylor University**

### **“Singing in the Kingdom: Understanding Eschatological Imaginaries through European Gospel Choirs”**

The idea of heaven occupies a central place in Black American sacred music; indeed, theologian James H. Cone argued that the notion of heaven within the Negro spirituals serves as the foundation for “black eschatology.” This eschatological discourse is embedded not only within song lyrics, but also within musical sounds, extramusical framing, and even Black-originated musical institutions. The gospel choir has come to represent an idealized, “heavenly” space where the marginalized are empowered and people from diverse backgrounds live in harmony. Yet gospel choir performances often embody multiple, sometimes conflicting, eschatological hopes, ranging from various Christian visions of paradise restored, to more “secular” yearnings for a post-racial utopia.

In this presentation, I aim to highlight and untangle some of the complex eschatological discourses within gospel choir performances, albeit far outside the originary context of gospel music. Specifically, I will examine gospel choir performances at the 2024 *Gospelkirchentag* (billed as the “European Gospel Choir Festival” in English), where gospel choirs have taken root and flourished over the last few decades. “Welcome to Paradise” was the theme of this three-day event, which drew over 5,000 participants from every corner of Europe. Here, mass gospel choir performances became a platform for eschatological exploration. Drawing from the interpretive work of theologians James Cone and Eboni Marshall Turman, along with models from musicologists Braxton Shelley and Cory Hunter, I will examine the diverse “eschatological imaginaries” revealed in two key mass choir performances at this festival. In doing so, I demonstrate how choirs enable singers to negotiate cultural, theological, and ethical beliefs about humanity’s ultimate “end,” offering participants not just imaginations, but also *audiations*, of a future where the world resounds as it should.

**Monique M. Ingalls** is a researcher, teacher, network builder, and church musician. She is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Research & Graduate Programs for the Dunn Center for Christian Music Studies at Baylor University. Published in the fields of ethnomusicology, religious & theological studies, media studies, and hymnology, she is the author of *Singing the Congregation* (Oxford University Press, 2018) and co-editor of six academic books, primarily on aspects of congregational singing. Her research centers on present-day Christian congregational and choral music-making, addressing themes such as worship music in global Pentecostalism, online religious music practices, musical localization within world Christianities, and Black British gospel music. She is co-founder of the biennial “Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives” conference and serves as senior editor of the *Congregational Music Studies Book Series* with Routledge Press. In addition to her classical training as a pianist and choral singer, she has also enjoyed stints as a cover band keyboardist, a Javanese gamelan player, a singer of Georgian polyphony, and a folk/pop/gospel choir director. Her newest musical challenge is learning to play accordion.

## **7:30–9:30pm: Evening Session & Concert**

### **“New Hymn Projects for the Modern Church” Panel Discussion**

**Monique Ingalls, convener**

**Andrew Osenga, Randall Goodgame, and Kevin J Twit, panelists**

This session offers a dynamic blend of performance and panel discussion. This interactive gathering will explore the role of recent hymn-related projects in shaping communal identity, theological expression, and liturgical practice. Through both singing and conversation, we will consider how contemporary congregational song functions within worship and its broader implications for church life today. The session will feature three panelists and a live house band.

**Andrew Osenga** is known for his honest songwriting and gutsy guitar playing, and is a veteran of the Nashville Christian music community. He has worked extensively with Andrew Peterson, Steven Curtis Chapman, Caedmon's Call, Mission House, Sandra McCracken, Citizens, the FAITHFUL Project and many others. Most recently, he founded and leads Anchor Hymns, a community of artists creating new sacred songs, and releases music prolifically as a solo singer/songwriter, while writing weekly about music and culture on his popular Substack newsletter. In addition, Andrew serves as Creative Director for the intergenerational worship project “In Every Generation,” in collaboration with Belmont University. More importantly, Andrew would tell you, he’s a part of a rich community of artists and storytellers, painting a picture of an authentic life with Jesus through music and words. He lives in Nashville with his wife and daughters, and hikes at Radnor Lake every morning he can.

**Randall Goodgame** is the founder of *The Scripture Hymnal Project*, a physical hymnal and 8 album series to help the church grow in biblical literacy through congregational worship. Randall is also the creator of the Dove Award-nominated Christian family entertainment series Slugs & Bugs, and the author of several children’s books including *Jesus and the Very Big Surprise* (The Good Book Company, 2020). Randall and his wife, Amy have three children and live in Nashville, TN.

**Kevin J Twit** is a graduate of Berklee College of Music and Covenant Theological Seminary. He worked in the music industry for several years both as a guitarist and recording engineer. He served as a Pastor at Christ Community Church for 8 years and has been the RUF Campus Minister at Belmont University since 1995. In 1999 Kevin began *Indelible Grace Music* with some of his students. *Indelible Grace* has been at the heart of the movement to reset old hymn texts to new music and they have recorded 8 CDs as well as a documentary film, “Roots And Wings: The Story Of Indelible Grace And The RUF Hymns.” Kevin is also an adjunct Professor at Covenant Seminary and Belmont University teaching classes in hymnody and has lectured widely on topics of hymns and worship. Kevin is married to Wendy and they have 3 children, including a daughter they adopted from China in 2005.

## **Saturday March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

### **9–10:45am: Session Eight: Concurrent**

#### **A. CCM/CWM**

**Andrew Shenton, Boston University**

#### **“Faith and Fame: The Representation of Christian Contemporary Music at the Grammys®”**

The Grammy Awards, established in 1959, have increasingly acknowledged CCM, with categories such as Best CCM Performance/Song and Best CCM Album providing a platform for artists to reach global audiences. This essay explores the impact of the Grammys on CCM from the perspective of a voting member of the Recording Academy. It acknowledges that the recognition and visibility afforded by the Grammys benefits artists, genres, and audiences within this niche.

Using a mixed-methods approach, this essay draws on data from various industry reports, along with interpretation of media coverage and public discourse surrounding Grammy nominations and wins for CCM

artists, focusing on themes of faith, cultural identity, and genre boundaries. For example, the Recording Industry Association of America notes CCM saw significant growth, with revenue increase of over 30% from 2018 to 2021. More recently, the entertainment data site Luminate reports that in the US, the Christian/Gospel genre was the fourth-fastest growing through week ending 5/30/24 when analyzing overall consumption.

Case studies of notable Grammy winners, such as Chris Tomlin and Lauren Daigle, demonstrate a direct correlation between wins and artist success. Although pre-eminent in the awards industry, the research also notes significant problems in voting structure and emphasis of the Grammys and how this influences the concept of “cumulative advantage,” which suggests that musicians who achieve awards success are more likely to receive additional opportunities, leading to greater success over time, to the detriment of less well-known artists.

By understanding the interplay between faith and popular culture through the lens of the Grammys, this study contributes to broader discussions on genre classification, cultural representation, and the evolving identity of contemporary Christian artists. It posits that the visibility and prestige of the Grammys not only validates the genre within the broader music industry but also fosters a sense of community among artists and audiences. The findings underscore the Grammys’ role as a vital force in promoting and sustaining CCM, shaping its trajectory and influence in contemporary culture.

**Shannan Baker, Baylor University**

**“From Driving Guitars to Atmospheric Keyboards: The Changing Instrumentation of 2010s Worship Music”**

Contemporary worship music has been explored in depth textually, but only in recent years has the music been studied rather than lamented for its perceived simplicity. In 2015, Joshua Busman explored the complexities of the genreification of praise and worship.<sup>2</sup> In 2017, Monique Ingalls identified the genre sound shifts in contemporary worship from folk to pop to rock, especially with the British invasion in the 2000s.<sup>3</sup> In an interview, David Crowder describes how he likes to cross these genres, using the example of combining an 808 drum sound with a banjo. While people have identified how the sound has shifted and how it is being subverted, the core instrumentation of contemporary worship music, specifically in the 2010s, has not been defined.

This paper will provide an overview of the instrumentation of the CCLI Top 100 songs in the 2010s. The primary source is Multitracks.com, which provides audio tracks that churches will use to supplement their sound on a Sunday. These labeled tracks include instrument tracks (e.g., electric guitar, organ, percussion) and vocal tracks (e.g., choir and alto or tenor parts). Data mining will be used to collect instrumentation data from the Multitracks website. After the data is collected, quantitative methods will be used to analyze trends across artists and decades. This paper will illustrate how new songs have shifted in their primary instrumentation and what instruments create the average “band” of the 2010s worship sound.

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<sup>2</sup> Joshua Kalin Busman, “(Re)Sounding Passion: Listening to American Evangelical Worship Music, 1997–2015” (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2015), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1689691201?pq-origsite=summon>.

<sup>3</sup> Monique M. Ingalls, “Style Matters: Contemporary Worship Music and the Meaning of Popular Musical Borrowings,” *Liturgy (Washington)* 32, no. 1 (2017): 7–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2016.1229435>.

**Emily Andrews, Samford University**  
**“The Soundtrack of Young Faith: Insights from a Multi-Site Study”**

It is widely assumed that a key means of engaging young people in the church is through musical practice, particularly repertoires that reflect their own, popular musical sensibilities—something contemporary. This is also evidenced in a strong historical trajectory in secondary literature (Eskridge 2013; Lim and Ruth 2022; Payne 2024). Against the backdrop of declining religious participation in North American contexts, particularly by its youngest cohorts (Voas and Chaves 2016), extant literature in academic and popular spheres presents numerous theoretical interventions for youth liturgical engagement. However, there is a dearth of scholarship regarding young people’s phenomenological experiences and values of various liturgical forms and musical practices.

This paper amplifies the often-marginalized perspectives of young people by highlighting some of their self-identified “favorite songs” for public worship settings and attending to the design for and engagement of congregational song in liturgical settings especially focused on youth. The analytical approach operationalizes a methodological framework consonant with practical theological discourse, prioritizing descriptive and interpretive categories as foundational to subsequent normative and pragmatic interrogations (Osmer 2008; Sonnenberg et al. 2014), here prioritizing “what is going on” and, at a preliminary level, “why it is going on.”

The empirical foundation is drawn from the inaugural phase of the *Young People and Christian Worship* (YPCW) study—a binational, multi-site, mixed methods, ecumenical research initiative designed to phenomenologically parse how adolescents and emerging adults (ages 13–29) experience public Christian worship in a range of liturgical expressions (YPCW 2024). The initial research phase was conducted during summer 2024, strategically situated within six university-based summer programs focused on Christian worship pedagogies with teens and/or emerging adults.

Methodologically, this paper synthesizes data from two primary sources: a survey instrument (n=155) and extensive participant observation protocols (38 worship services, spanning 29 observational days). By excavating participants’ “heart songs” and analyzing their musical engagement across liturgical modalities, this paper contributes empirically grounded insights to address the lacuna of research on youth and Christian worship in North America.

**B. Music, History, & Interpretation**

**\* David Salkowski, University of North Florida**  
**“‘The Work of the People’: Church Singers as Workers in Late Imperial Russia”**

In Late Imperial Russia, Orthodox Church music experienced an unprecedented blossoming in terms of the size of the repertoire, the prestige of the genre, and the stylistic range of compositions. This growth in repertoire implied changes to how and by whom this music was performed, as the positions of psalmists with quasi-clerical status was undermined by professional regents (choir directors) and semi-professional choristers. The ranks of these musicians grew at the same time that those of industrial workers swelled, whose trade unions and workers’ councils are recognized as major factors leading the way to revolution.

Church singers have typically been jettisoned from this historiography, not only because of the Orthodox Church’s association with the forces of reaction, but also because the type of work they performed—religious work and musical work—are both frequently conceptualized as what Jim Sykes calls “non-normative labor” (2020), functioning as praise or celebration, but not work as such.

Nevertheless, church singers began to see themselves as workers on the eve of revolution. Choristers referred to themselves as the “proletarians of the musical world,” while composers of church music increasingly lobbied for rights of “intellectual property” and even referred to their works as their “capital.” Drawing upon archival sources and the early twentieth century periodical press, I demonstrate that each constituency within this tiered labor sector began to create their own forms of collective action and mutual aid. Considering this material in the tradition of Marxian class analysis, I argue that singers performing the

liturgy—the “work of the people”—were indeed part of the wider revolutionary moment. At the same time, I argue that the ideological contours of their overlapping professional spheres as music workers and religious workers constrained the possibilities for the broader networks of solidarity that this moment might have entailed.

**Jon Snyder, Baylor University**

**“Community Building as Priority in Volunteer Church Choirs: An Ethnographic Study”**

This study explores the competing priorities of church choir directors on musical excellence, worship leadership, and, specifically, community building. While one function of church choirs is to lead corporate worship through song, this research argues that the choir also serves as a microcosm of the larger congregation, reflecting the community’s diversity and shared faith values. Drawing on the work of Mike Brewer and Liz Garnett, this study highlights how effective choir directors balance the musical and social dimensions of the ensemble to foster community life.

This research explores these issues through ethnographic and interview-based methods. Ten churches were chosen, encompassing various denominations, director genders, ages, church sizes, geographic regions, and educational backgrounds. Each selected ensemble submitted two recorded rehearsals. Afterward, the researcher conducted one-hour interviews with each director to reflect on the rehearsal techniques and their alignment with the ensemble’s goals.

This paper examines four traits from the observed interactions that characterize a choir community: inclusion, acceptance, uniqueness, and a familial bond. These traits are critical in creating a choir that welcomes all individuals, regardless of their musical ability or background, and fosters personal relationships among members. The study underscores how corporate singing transcends the technical aspects of performance to engage with the choir’s deeper social and spiritual needs, providing a space where members connect, support each other, and express their faith together.

This paper uses examples from multiple church choirs to identify practical strategies for building community through song. Additionally, the choir’s role as a unifying force within worship services is examined, highlighting its ability to address societal barriers related to race, age, and socio-economic differences. Through corporate song, choirs model inclusivity and social harmony, engaging with issues relevant to the church and the larger society.

This research contributes to discussions on the role of the choir in social life by illustrating how choral music in church settings offers more than just a musical experience; it becomes a vital space for community building, social connection, and spiritual growth, reflecting the larger cultural and liturgical life of the congregation.

**Matt Bickett, Independent Scholar, Organist**

**“Investing in Worship: Communal Worship Ethics in the Time of Finance-Dominated Capitalism”**

In this paper, I reflect on strategies grounded in commitments basic to Christianity for addressing worries about the effects of financial markets on Contemporary Praise and Worship (CPW) musical practices. Through this reflection, I explore possibilities for a theological response to demands placed on CPW practitioners and worshipers by corporate actors’ valuation of the worship song as a financial asset. Recent theological scholarship demonstrates the potential for Christian beliefs to disrupt the means by which financial markets place dehumanizing demands on workers and consumers. Following this work, I explore options offered by trinitarian reflection, Christological doctrine, and reflection on sin for their applicability to disrupting the pernicious effects of the valuation of the worship song as a financial asset.

I argue that a focus on the doctrine of sin most effectively turns attention away from strategies of response grounded in a desire for a CPW aesthetic entirely freed from market considerations and instead offers possibilities for faithful engagement with CPW musical practices given their embeddedness in financial markets. Throughout the argument, I respond to Nathan Myrick’s recommendations for ethical reflection

in congregational music studies and engage Andrew Mall's work on the political economy of CPW alongside recent writing by theologians on the dominance of finance in contemporary Christian life. The paper also contributes to interdisciplinary music studies by bringing together systematic theological work with ethical and economic considerations in congregational music studies.

### **11am–12pm: Session Nine: Plenary**

#### **Graduate Student Panel Discussion: “UnCertainty: Navigating Feelings and Experiences of an Unknown Future”**

Alexandra Dreher, Yale University, Convener

Panel: Chelle Stearns, Independent Scholar; Joseph Sargent, University of Alabama; Sylvia Jones, Baylor University; and Daniel Aaron Webster, Welch College

Is one to resolve, embrace, or erase uncertainty in the various facets of their life? What does it mean to continue “the work” when all sources of stability are gone or seem to be hanging on by a thread? From the pressures of passing exams and finishing dissertations to financing one's education and finding a job, trying to find certainty in unCertainty can be a large facet of graduate and Ph.D. student experience. This landscape of uncertainty is further complicated by new pressures not only on students but also on the humanities in general. In discussion with current students and faculty, this panel explores understandings of uncertainty and how they navigate it in the changing landscape of modern universities and academic life.