

Annual Meeting of the



**SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP IN MUSIC**



February 26-28, 2026  
Trinity Christian College  
Palos Heights, Illinois

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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**SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP IN MUSIC  
CONFERENCE PROGRAM  
TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE  
PALOS HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS  
February 26-28, 2026**

“\*” Denotes an online presentation

**Thursday, February 26**

**11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Meeting of the Executive Committee w/Lunch** (Administration Building, Fireside Room)

**12:00–1:00 p.m. Registration** (Ozinga Chapel, East Lobby)

**1:00–1:15 p.m. Welcome & Opening Remarks** (Ozinga Chapel, Van Namen Recital Hall)

**1:15–2:15 p.m. Session 1: Plenary Lecture-Recital** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

“Recontextualizing Lament Through the Lens of African American Spirituals”

Sylvia Jones, soprano, with Isaac Montgomery, piano; Baylor University

**2:15–2:30 p.m. Break**

**2:30–4:15 p.m. Session 2: Concurrent**

**A: Contemporary Praise and Worship Music** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

*Adam Perez, Belmont University, chair*

“Pedagogy through Praise: Age-Diverse Approaches to Music Learning and Theological Formation in Contemporary Worship Music”

Laura Benjamins, Redeemer University

“CPWM and the Far-Right in Brazil: Hillsong within Authoritarian Christian Contexts”

Fernando Berwig Silva, Southern Methodist University

**B: Psalms and Cantatas** (Ozinga Chapel, Choral Room)

*Eftychia Papanikolaou, Bowling Green State University, chair*

“Your Song Will Instruct Me”: The Psalms as Didactic Music in Clement of Alexandria”

Daniel Webster, Welch College\*

“‘What are these wounds?’ Fauxbourdon as ‘Sweet’ Mutilation in Buxtehude’s *Membra Jesu Nostris* (1680)”

Malachai Bandy, Pomona College

“The Theatrical and the Theodramatic: A ‘Performance Interpretation’ of Liszt’s *Psalm XIII*”

Kaitlyn Bennett, Grove City College

**4:15–4:45 p.m. Coffee Break** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

**4:45–6:30 p.m. Session 3: Concurrent**

A: Popular and Folk Genres (Choral Room)

*Eric Amouzou, Mercer University, chair*

“J. Cole’s *Born Sinner* (2013) and the Paradox of the Secular-Christian Rap Subgenre”

Aaron D’Zurilla, Independent Scholar

“Paul’s Letter to the American Folk Revivalists: The Influence and Impact of American Hymnody on Paul Simon’s Songwriting”

Gabrielle Sanchez, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

B: Musical Communication (Van Namen Recital Hall)

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

“More Spacious than the Heavens: Employing artificial echo to create a musical space in John Tavener:

*Hymn to the Mother of God*”

William Gomes, Independent Scholar

“‘Just Your Speech / And My Beloved’: The Rhythmic and Metrical Impact of Text in David Lang’s *just* (after song of songs)”

Micah Mooney, University of Michigan

“More Than Words?: Non-Textual Communication in Trotta’s *Seven Last Words*”

Kyle Berry, Baylor University

**Dinner on your own**

**Friday, February 27**

**8:00–8:30 a.m. Registration and Coffee** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

**8:30–10:15 a.m. Session 4: Plenary Panel Honoring Timothy Steele** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

““Musical Networks, Genealogy, and the Tree of Jesse in Fifteenth-Century France””

Jeannette Jones, Boston, MA

“*Faithless* or Faithful?: Springsteen’s Spiritual Soundtrack to *St. Agnes’ Stand*”

Joanna Smolko, University of Georgia and University of North Georgia

“The Whole Story: A Perspective on Christian Scholarship in Music.”

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College

**10:15–10:30 a.m. Break**

**10:30–11:45 a.m. Session 5: Concurrent**

A. Poster Session (Van Namen Recital Hall)

*Xieyi “Abby” Zhang, Georgia State University, chair*

“The State of Church Music in Europe: Lowell Mason’s Sabbatarian View on His European Tours of 1837 and 1853”

Kim Arnold, Oklahoma Baptist University

“The Salience of Silence: Hearing Divinity in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* (BWV 244)”

Jessica Hua, Claremont Graduate University

“Motives and Structural Levels: Where Biblical Typology and Schenkerian Analysis Rendezvous”

Ryan Krell, College Conservatory of Music—University of Cincinnati

B. Music-Text Relationships (Choral Room)

*Cathy Ann Elias, DePaul University, chair*

“Philip the Chancellor: Music and Poetry on Virtue and Humanity”

Micah Torcellini, Indiana University

“The approach to religious texts among the pioneers of Holy Minimalism: An Analytical Study of a Contemporary Musical Style”

Mario Soliman, International School of Choueifat-Al Ain\*

**11:45 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Lunch and Business Meeting** (Administration Building, Fireside Room)

**1:00–2:45 p.m. Session 6: Concurrent**

A. Personal Expressions on Theology and Worship (Choral Room)

*Malachai Bandy, Pomona College, chair*

“The Pastor-Poet: E. A. Hoffman’s Legacy of Pastoral Hymnody”

Matthew Naizer, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Grouping, Meter, and Meaning in *His Mercy Is More*: The Hymns of Matt Boswell and Matt Papa”

Samantha Inman, Stephen F. Austin State University

“‘What We Want Older People to Know’: Youth Agency as Intergenerational Witness in Christian Worship”

Emily Andrews, Samford University

B. Christian Music in Asia (Van Namen Recital Hall)

*Keri Hui, Hong Kong Baptist University*

“The Sound of Naga Hills: Indigenous Musical Expressions in Naga Christian Worship”

Sen Kikon, Baylor University

“Ragas for Christ: A study on the practice of Carnatic music among the Syrian Christians in India”

George Pioustin, University of California, Los Angeles

“Charming and Renouncing A Locality’s Context: A Case of Christianizing Traditional Cantonese Opera for Hong Kong Protestant Worship”

Joshua Ching Yuet Kan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**2:45–3:00 p.m. Coffee Break** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

**3:00–4:45 p.m. Session 7: Concurrent**

A. Historical Hymnody (Choral Room)

*Peter Mercer-Taylor, University of Minnesota, chair*

“God as Divine Tuner in Puritan Literature”

Keri Hui, Hong Kong Baptist University

“Hymns to Parents and the Genderless Aesthetic of Eighteenth-Century Plainsong”

Emily Travaline, The Graduate Center, City University of New York\*

B. African-American Music (Van Namen Recital Hall)

*Zig Reichwald, Westmont College, chair*

“Before Dorsey: The Unrecognized Influence of Charles Albert Tindley on the Theological Grammar of Early Gospel”

Hugo Encorrada, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Sacred Strength: Empowerment Through African American Worship”

Christopher Young, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

“The Path to ‘Hymn in Honor of St Martin de Porres’: Mary Lou Williams’s Conceptualization of Jazz as a Sacred Language

Ellen Shaw, Michigan State University

**4:45–5:00 p.m. Break**

**5:00–6:15 p.m. Keynote Address** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

“Musical Hermeneutics: Lessons from the African Diaspora”

Emmett G. Price III, Berklee College of Music & Boston Conservatory at Berklee

**6:15–7:30 p.m. Dinner on your own**

**7:30–8:30 p.m. Session 8: Plenary Lecture-Recital** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

“Olivier Messiaen: Glory and Dazzlement in the *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*”

Micaela Lum, University of Southern California

**8:45 p.m. Graduate Student Reception**

**Saturday, February 28**

**8:00–8:30 a.m. Coffee**

**8:30–10:15 a.m. Session 9: Concurrent**

A. Music, Worship, and Experience (Van Namen Recital Hall)

*Shannan Baker, Baylor University, chair*

“Musicking as a Catalyst for Reconciliation”

Benjamin Ray, Yale University

“The Sacred Spectrum Project: Enhancing Worship for Neurodivergent Children Through Music and the Arts”

Nathan Myrick and Eric Amouzou, Mercer University

“Threshold Music: Liminal Sound and Formation in Congregational Worship”

Eunice Kim, Kennesaw State University

B. Bach and Handel (Choral Room)

*Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, chair*

“Bach’s *Musical Offering*: A Biblical Exegesis of the Chamber Music Repertoire”

Vijay Ratiney, Bordeaux Montaigne University\*

“Between Suffering and Love: The Aesthetic Duality of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*”

Sindy Yang, Yale University

“Handel’s Anthems as ‘Temple Musick’: The Fulfillment of Arthur Bedford’s Biblical Ideal for Anglican Cathedral Anthems”

Joshua Waggener, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

**10:15–10:45 a.m. Coffee Break** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

**10:45–11:45 a.m. Session 10: Plenary Lecture-Recital** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

“Margaret Bonds’s 1959 Compositional Pivot to African-American Spirituals”

Toni Esker, Trinity Christian College

**11:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Break**

**12:00–1:00 p.m. Session 11: Plenary Graduate Student Panel: Choosing Collaboration** (Van Namen Recital Hall)

Panelists: Effie Papanikolaou, Bowling Green State University; Adam Perez, Belmont University; Kaitlyn G. Bennett, Grove City College; Fernando Berwig Silva, Southern Methodist University

**1:00 p.m. Valediction**

# ABSTRACTS

*“\*” Denotes an online presentation*

## **Thursday, February 26**

### **1:15–2:15 p.m. Session 1: Plenary Lecture-Recital**

#### **“Recontextualizing Lament Through the Lens of African American Spirituals”**

**Sylvia Jones, soprano, with Isaac Montgomery, piano; Baylor University**

Christian worship should include the full spectrum of human emotions. Joy, wonder, peace, penitence, anger, and sorrow are all a part of both Christian scripture and broader human experience. Yet it is easy for churches to lack a balance of equal inclusion of these feelings, notably lament. An entire book of the Bible is devoted to lamentation. Moreover, numerous Psalms capture the complex web of emotions that underpin lament as the psalmists pour out their inner thoughts of grief, anger, and desperation. Even so, there is a notable lack of lament songs in many churches in 21<sup>st</sup>-century North America.

Historically, lament is a central component in the songs of enslaved Africans in the United States, known as Negro Spirituals. These songs were born in response to the oppression many suffered in enslavement. Such songs expressed pain, made supplication to the Lord, and served to comfort others. Today, spirituals possess significant power when recontextualized to meet the needs of the local congregation. However, musicians are sometimes hesitant to use spirituals for reasons ranging from cultural isolation to a lack of understanding of the genre, among other reasons. Historical context is essential, but spirituals can also be analyzed for their broader themes and recontextualized in ways that honor the tradition, remember the past, and speak to Christian worshippers today.

This recital, performed by soprano and piano, will demonstrate how spirituals can be repurposed and recontextualized by emphasizing their texts and connecting them to themes of justice. The first half will feature traditional concert settings of spirituals by H.T. Burleigh, Roland Hayes, William Averitt, and Margaret Bonds. In contrast, the second half will highlight Rosephanye Powell’s reimagining of spirituals in response to the death of George Floyd and other events of 2020. This lecture recital invites worship leaders, musicians, and scholars to rediscover the role of lament in Christian worship and to consider how the spiritual tradition can continue to guide worship communities in expressing grief, resilience, and hope.

### **2:30–4:15 p.m. Session 2: Concurrent**

#### **A: Contemporary Praise and Worship Music**

#### **“Pedagogy through Praise: Age-Diverse Approaches to Music Learning and Theological Formation in Contemporary Worship Music”**

**Laura Benjamins, Redeemer University**

Church worship music ranges from the incorporation of traditional hymns to Contemporary Worship Music (CWM), a Christian congregational song repertoire influenced by Western popular music styles (Ingalls, 2018). Worship teams typically lead and perform CWM, consisting of vocal and instrumental

groups that include drums, keyboard, and guitars. With the introduction of CWM and popular musical instruments into churches, some worship settings can be understood as sites of informal (Green, 2002) and non-formal (Veblen, 2012) music-making (Author, 2019), encompassing practices such as listening, composing, and arranging, often led by the learner. However, the Christian church remains a unique context of music teaching and learning that has not been extensively addressed in recent music education literature.

This project explores how music teaching and learning, along with the musical and theological formation of congregants, can be understood as a form of “musical curriculum” within church settings. Focusing on two Reformed Christian churches in Canada, this study examines the music learning processes, pedagogical techniques, and curriculum used by worship leaders, and how these practices influence the musical and theological formation of adults, adolescents, and children. By investigating churches as educational spaces, this project offers practical insights for worship leaders and music directors on how to engage congregants as active, reflective participants in worship through music. It builds upon my dissertation research, extending data collection from solely worship musicians to congregants, while integrating innovative music learning theoretical perspectives.

In this paper, I draw on data collected in October 2025 through observations, document analysis, and interviews conducted in two Reformed Christian churches. Each church served as an individual case and primarily employed CWM as their primary genre of worship music. Data from each case was analyzed individually, followed by cross-cases analysis, guided by frameworks related to music learning (Green, 2002, Veblen, 2012), theological formation (Smith, 2013; Wolterstorff, 2015), and musical development (Folkestad, 2006; Wright, 2016). Findings from this study will strengthen my efforts to advocate for a deeper integration of music education and church music research, potentially opening new avenues for both teaching and scholarship in this interdisciplinary space.

**“CPWM and the Far-Right in Brazil: Hillsong within Authoritarian Christian Contexts”**  
**Fernando Berwig Silva, Southern Methodist University**

This paper examines how congregational singers at Hillsong Church São Paulo connect the sounds and practices of Contemporary Praise and Worship Music (CPWM) to far-right, Christian nationalist imaginaries imported from North Atlantic political and religious movements to Brazil. Drawing on an ongoing ethnographic project, I trace how Hillsong music’s affective power and sonic palette—its polished timbres, emotional intensities, and corporate branding—operate as ideological technologies that discipline bodies and cultivate authoritarian desires (Freire and Macedo 2018).

Building on Leah Payne’s argument that CPWM in the United States functions as the “sound of patriotism” (2024, 86), I extend her insight to the Latin American context, showing how Hillsong’s worship music becomes “the sound of interventionism”; it reproduces White North Atlantic ideals of order, purity, and progress. These timbral markers of “modernity” become part of participants’ discourses around morality, nationalism, and divine destiny—key tropes in the rhetoric of contemporary far-right movements in Brazil and the United States today.

My project particularly engages with Cristina Rocha’s theorization of cosmopolitan religious networks, which she refers to as “Cool Christianity” (Rocha 2024). I highlight the ambivalence of these congregational performances: while Hillsong’s global sound aesthetic reinscribes colonial hierarchies, local musicians often interpret their participation as emancipatory work. By situating Hillsong within Brazil’s current political landscape—despite the church’s apolitical stance—I argue that CPWM practices often constitute an affective scaffold for the development of Christian nationalist sentiments, serving as training sites for congregations to *embody* far-right political and religious goals.

## **B: Psalms and Cantatas**

### **“Your Song Will Instruct Me”: The Psalms as Didactic Music in Clement of Alexandria”**

**Daniel Webster, Welch College\***

The Church has widely recognized the musical origins of the Hebrew Psalter, but many churches have resorted to *saying* the Psalms rather than *singing* them. As with any translation project, the difficulty with translating the Psalms is achieving beautiful and excellent poetry that is accessible for the singer and theologically accurate. In this paper, I aim to answer this question: To what extent did early Christians view the Psalms as music?

The late second-century writer, Clement of Alexandria, asks Christ to teach the Church about the Father with a song. After quoting Psalm 22:2, Clement entreats Christ: “Sing praises and declare to me God your Father. Your story shall save; your song shall instruct me” (*Prot.* 11). This passage reveals an early Christian perspective on the Psalms as a source for musical instruction for Christians.

With more than eight hundred references to music across his corpus, it is no surprise that Clement quotes the Psalms more than any other Old Testament book. Jana Plátová has already provided a comprehensive treatment of all of Clement’s references to the Psalms (2018); my purpose is to consider his views on the Psalms as music. How does Clement see the Psalms as music, and what role do the Psalms play in the musical life of the Church? In this paper, I will argue that Clement views the Psalms as didactic music for the edification of the Church.

### **“‘What are these wounds?’ Fauxbourdon as ‘Sweet’ Mutilation in Buxtehude’s *Membra Jesu Nostr* (1680)”**

**Malachai Bandy, Pomona College**

Dieterich Buxtehude’s *Membra Jesu nostri* (1680) comprises a cycle of seven Passion cantatas, each a meditation on an isolated body part of the crucified Jesus. The manuscript source exists not in typical staff notation but in German organ tablature: a specialized graphic system functioning as a “map” for the body, eschewing visual melodic contours in favor of physical keys to be touched by human fingers.

Responding to Buxtehude’s embodied notation system, this paper probes *Membra Jesu nostri* through three topical lenses engaging the physical: dismemberment, androgyny, and “sweetness,” which pervade the text’s anatomical description. Musically, Buxtehude casts the cantata to Jesus’s breast in extended parallel motion recalling the arcane harmonic technique *fauxbourdon*. An initiated reading (via Burmeister, Praetorius, Elders, Carruthers) reveals potent symbols of “sweet” marital union and honey, transposed from rhetorical traditions predating Buxtehude by 200 years. The cycle’s “dismembered” *dispositio* into individual body parts meanwhile evokes Christian discourses on dissection by 17th-c. scientist-mystics (Böhme, Maier, Khunrath). These tracts evoke queer bodies as symbols of perfection and renewal: the androgynous Adam and hermaphroditic “REBIS” achieve resurrected perfection in the alchemical flask through dismemberment—a trope (re-)applied to images of Jesus’s body parts in Cramer’s 1624 *Emblemata sacra*.

Scholars have not elucidated these rhetorical features of Buxtehude’s craft; by reconnecting *Membra Jesu nostri* with its philosophical antecedents, one re-encounters Buxtehude’s dying Jesus not only as victorious savior but as a body *in extremis*—whose pooling fluids he invites us to “taste” with our ears, in music dripping with esoteric subtext.

### **“The Theatrical and the Theodramatic: A ‘Performance Interpretation’ of Liszt’s *Psalm XIII*”**

**Kaitlyn Bennett, Grove City College**

Franz Liszt (1811–1886) is known primarily as a virtuoso, and his piano repertoire remains a rite of passage for pianists. However, his numerous sacred compositions do not appear in standard repertoire cycles, a reality that does not reflect Liszt’s own perception of their significance. Liszt’s passion to rejuvenate sacred music was driven by his own conversion experience, the influence of multiple religious mentors, and his concern that Catholic church music was in decline.

In this paper, I consider *Psalm 13*, a majestically scaled interpretation of the paradigmatic psalm of lament composed near the end of Liszt’s Weimar era. The paper begins by examining Liszt’s purported vision for sacred music, acknowledging his documented critics and inconsistencies (Papanikolaou 2022). I highlight two aspects of Liszt’s vision—what might be termed its musical “theatricality,” and what Erika Quinn (2014) calls its possible function as “public liturgy.”

The paper’s discussion of *Psalm 13* claims that the theatricality of Liszt’s work neither obscures nor prohibits the listener from active, liturgical engagement with the scriptural text it sets. Rather, I suggest that *Psalm 13* may be viewed as a form of theodrama (Vanhoozer 2016) where the listener is invited to participate in the transformational “act” of lamentation. On such a view, Liszt’s sacred music represents both the theatrical and the theodramatic. *Psalm 13* allows the hearer to engage in a dual sense of “performance interpretation,” an interpretation of the experience of the musical performance itself and a participation in the drama of biblical lament.

#### **4:45–6:30 p.m. Session 3: Concurrent**

##### **A: Popular and Folk Genres**

###### **“J. Cole’s *Born Sinner* (2013) and the Paradox of the Secular-Christian Rap Subgenre” Aaron D’Zurilla, Independent Scholar**

In the identification of popular music genres, it is often assumed that a genre is secular unless the prefix “Christian” is added. For example: Rock and Christian Rock. This assumption is even more prominent within rap music, with the stereotyped expectations of secular rap being money, relationships, violence, etc. Within rap, however, there is often a subtext of religiosity and, more specifically, Christianity. As Tricia Rose details in *Black Noise* (1994), rap is a fundamental pillar of hip-hop culture and, therefore, inseparable from the Black Diaspora in America. Equally as important to the Black Diaspora is the role of the Black Church. Sandra L. Branes explained in her article *Religion and Rap Music* (2008) that this connection has led the Black Church to being a fundamental influence on rap music. Further corroborated by Lakeyta M. Bonnette in *Pulse of the People* (2015), while there is specifically denoted Christian Rap, much of secular rap can rise to similar levels of Christian identity, themes, and references.

In this paper, I propose the existence of the Secular-Christian Rap subgenre and explore its thematic paradoxes. To illustrate this, I offer rapper J. Cole’s 2013 album *Born Sinner* as a representative of this subgenre. In *Born Sinner* there exist three proposed criteria for the Secular-Christian Rap subgenre: Artistic Self-Identification, Thematic Cohesion, and Aural Reference. The Artistic Self-Identification criterion describes that the artist should not only self-identify as Christian, but also live according to their belief. The Thematic Cohesion criterion mandates that the work must abstractly adhere to the fundamentals of Christianity, such as faith in Christ, sanctity of scripture, repentance, etc. This Thematic Cohesion must, however, reach beyond lyrical aesthetics and translate into a larger Christian-centric message. The Aural Reference criterion includes the use of traditional aural elements of the Black Church in either performance, timbre, or orchestration. Each of these criteria creates the opportunity to discuss the intersection of anticipated secular rap aesthetics and the Christian faith. This results in, through an

exploration of cultural history in the Black Church and Black Diaspora in America, the codification of the Secular-Christian Rap subgenre.

**“Paul’s Letter to the American Folk Revivalists: The Influence and Impact of American Hymnody on Paul Simon’s Songwriting”**

**Gabrielle Sanchez, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

Protestant Christian music (specifically shape-note, southern gospel, and black gospel music) played a direct role in the folk music revival of the mid-twentieth century and therefore laid the foundation for artists like Paul Simon (b. 1941) to write culturally significant hits like, “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” “Song for the Asking,” and “Bleecker Street.”

While the folk music revival of the mid-twentieth century had a deep impact on popular music—as explored by John Bealle (1997) and Carl I. Belz (1967)—what specific influences from Southern American hymnody can be seen in the composition of both Simon’s music and lyrics? How did Simon and Garfunkel’s music for the duration of their tenure reflect the tenets of shape-note singing, and what direct connections can be made between *The Sacred Harp* and Simon’s artistry?

Without Southern American hymnody, there would be no folk revival, and without the folk revival, there would be no Simon and Garfunkel. This paper will argue that a clear and irrevocable connection can be found between Simon’s songwriting and the history of Protestant North American hymnody. A close examination of the text, melodic content, and harmonic texture of Simon’s music reveals that he was influenced by Protestant North American hymnody—specifically the shape-note and gospel traditions of the South. These influences can be seen in Simon’s use of religious themes in the lyrics of songs like “Bleecker Street,” “Blessed,” and “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” as well as the direct resemblance to shape-note hymns borne by songs such as “Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.,” and “Song for the Asking.” Drawing connections between Simon’s songwriting and Protestant Christian American hymnody of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—particularly within southern music traditions—this paper will contribute to Christian scholarship in music by demonstrating the significant impact of Christian hymnody on Paul Simon’s discography.

**B: Musical Communication**

**“More Spacious than the Heavens: Employing artificial echo to create a musical space in John Tavener: *Hymn to the Mother of God*”**

**William Gomes, Independent Scholar**

John Tavener describes his own work as *musical icons*, pieces rife with imagery fueling contemplation of the divine. The musical imagery in *Hymn to the Mother of God* not only creates an ethereal atmosphere, but acts as iconographic signs of the almost cosmic power attributed to the Mother of God. In the piece, two choirs sing the same musical material, but offset by three pulses. This creates an artificial echo which dynamically affects the texture, harmony, and word painting of Tavener’s composition.

For example, the first non-diatonic cluster of pitches occurs at the piece’s halfway point. The choirs sing the words “mystical” and “paradise” simultaneously on this chord. There is an accordance between the sonority’s transcendence beyond the diatonic realm and the transcendence alluded by the very meaning of the word “mystical.” Something similar can be said about the brilliance of this sonority and the hopeful wonder in the meaning of the word “paradise.”

Additionally, Marian devotions are typically Christ-oriented: their purpose is to grow closer to Jesus through His mother. Although Tavener avoided references to Jesus in the text, he borrowed from the

Megalynarion, there is a compelling way that Christians can read Him back into the picture through analysis. For one, the form is ternary—symmetrical, like the icon of the *platytera* in which Jesus is positioned in the center in front of Mary. Likewise, in the heart of this intimate B section is the only C triad in the whole piece. For a number of additional reasons, the pitch C becomes a covert sign of the Christ-child when related to the *platytera*.

Studies in Tavener's choral repertoire are slim, but the research of Sally Imrie provided key observations about his vocal music. I believe her musical observations have a rich connection with Christian belief, tradition, and the philosophy by which the musical icon references. With and without regard to the composer's intentions, this paper seeks to examine *Hymn to the Mother of God* to understand its distinctive musical features and to associate them with the divine Source from which the text is inspired.

**“‘Just Your Speech / And My Beloved’: The Rhythmic and Metrical Impact of Text in David Lang’s *just (after song of songs)*”**  
**Micah Mooney, University of Michigan**

The minimalist subgenre of “holy minimalism” leans into the meditative, contemplative, and hypnotic aspects of minimalist techniques to explore spiritual subject matter. In this paper, I analyze aspects of David Lang’s postminimalist style in *just (after song of songs)* (2014) for SSA voices, viola, cello, and percussion. I show how Lang’s music uses features of holy minimalism to express the *sentiment* of his source material, even if not the semantic meaning the text.

*Just* sets text devised systematically from *Song of Songs* (each line is either “just your [noun],” “and my [noun],” or “our [noun]”). To maintain natural sounding speech, Lang provides musical accents for linguistically stressed syllables, yet these stresses do not consistently occur in the same place of the measure. The resulting accents destabilize the audience’s perception of meter. As the piece progresses, the instrumental parts contribute different rhythmic loops, destabilizing the meter further.

I argue that expression in *just* is more about creating the right mood than about communicating ideas from the text fragments. I show that the minimalist techniques and systems Lang employs create an appropriate sound world to express the source text. Through a unique and extended chain of events, Lang expresses the source material in his music: first, the source material directly results in Lang’s text (through a fixed system); second, Lang’s text directly influences the post-minimalist sound world of the piece (repetition and metrical shifts); and finally, the sound world expresses the spiritual sentiment of the source material (hypnotic infatuation and contemplative love).

**“More Than Words?: Non-Textual Communication in Trotta’s *Seven Last Words*”**  
**Kyle Berry, Baylor University**

Christian music has a special relationship with text, emphasizing that the message is solely contained in the lyrics. Musical settings of the passion narratives and of the sayings of Jesus Christ on the cross are likewise text-focused and -driven. In these and others, the texts are centralized over against instrumental accompaniment.

Yet sacred music also pushes back and productively problematizes the centrality of word-based communication and creativity. Scholars of classical music, such as Kofi Agawu, have long acknowledged the communicatory potential of instrumental music. This paper probes Michael John Trotta’s *Seven Last Words* (premiered 2017), which features minimal text and a stylized orchestral score in a symphonic-like setting. In contrast to historical antecedents like Schutz’s or Haydn’s *Seven Last Words*, which often rely on non-canonical additions to the Gospels to comment and expand the text, Trotta’s treatment places voice and instrument on an even communicative footing, adding an unspoken narrative to accompany Christ’s final words. This presentation examines portions of Trotta’s *Seven Last Words* using the methods

of structural and narrative analysis, combined with observations based on interviews with the composer, which shed new light on the work's original motivations and purposes. Focusing on the first movement of Trotta's work, various facets of music, including its form and function, will be discussed regarding their participation with text in relating sacred Christian themes.

## **Friday, February 27**

### **8:30–10:15 a.m. Session 4: Plenary Panel Honoring Timothy Steele**

Tim Steele ended his earthly journey on June 14, 2025, at the age of 66. In a career that carried him from Palm Beach Atlantic University (1990-97) to Covenant College (1997-2007) to Calvin University (2007-25), Steele touched the lives of generations of students. He was also among those gathered at a 2002 Study Day in Philadelphia that represented the inaugural meeting of what would become the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music, going on to serve the organization in the roles of President and Secretary. Steele's impact on the SCSM is incalculable.

This panel honors Steele's memory through three brief papers. In the first of these, former SCSM president **Mark Peters** (Trinity Christian College) will offer meditations on Steele's legacy and the lessons of his work. That legacy lives on in the two scholarly papers that follow, presentations by Steele's former students **Jeannette D. Jones** (Boston, MA) and **Joanna Smolko** (University of Georgia). Ample time will remain at this panel's conclusion for others present to offer such meditations and recollections as they are moved to.

#### **“Musical Networks, Genealogy, and the Tree of Jesse in Fifteenth-Century France” Jeannette D. Jones, Boston, MA**

A key cultural shift in fifteenth-century French poetry signals the rise of artists as respected figures of artistic nobility. This transformation is evident in the emergence of lists celebrating poets and musicians, which emulate the genealogies of the ruling class. These lists serve a discursive function, establishing a dynastic system that underscores the legitimacy of artistic lineage and ensures a lasting legacy for their work.

Sound imagery is prevalent in these poems, often reflecting visual representations of sound and genealogy, particularly through the Tree of Jesse motifs. These images typically depict a tree growing from the supine figure of Jesse, featuring small portraits of his ancestors, with King David prominently holding his harp. A notable cluster of miniatures from fifteenth-century northern French sources presents all ancestors with instruments, symbolizing the soundscape of coronations and regal processions.

I argue that this tree imagery invites us to consider an ecological framework of artistic networks in France, enhancing our understanding of the lives and institutions of musicians within these circles. Together, sound, visual representation, and poetic lineage illuminate the evolving perception of artists during this pivotal period. That this paper takes root at the intersection of sound, image, and text is no accident — it grows from an intellectual lineage shaped by Tim Steele, whose own interdisciplinary vision and curiosity continues to bear fruit in the work of those he mentored.

**“Faithless or Faithful?: Springsteen’s Spiritual Soundtrack to *St. Agnes’ Stand*”**  
**Joanna Smolko, University of Georgia and University of North Georgia**

In his teaching and writing, Tim Steele broke through perceptions sometimes held unconsciously: the musicologist’s domain is Western classical music, the divide between sacred and secular music is clear and easily parsed. For his students and mentees, he opened fresh vistas of research through approaching ideas like these with openness and curiosity. In this paper, I honor this facet of his legacy by examining sacred threads within Bruce Springsteen’s music, especially in his album *Faithless* (ca. 2005-06), intended as a soundtrack to a never made “spiritual western.”

Growing up “in the shadow of a steeple,” Springsteen’s music reflects a complex relationship with Christianity, especially Catholicism. Early in his career, his use of sacred referents often reflected a personal crisis-of-faith. In the 1980s and 1990s, his role as a singer and public figure shifted as he participated in musical advocacy, turning to sacred metaphors to frame these issues. His albums *The Rising* (2002) and *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions* (2006) reflect these transformations in his musical and poetic language. In these and following albums such as *Wrecking Ball* (2012) and *High Hopes* (2014), Springsteen turns to music across Christian traditions, including hymns, gospel music, and spirituals. In my research, I categorize Springsteen’s kaleidoscopic use of Christian referents: topographical, corporeal, Marian, sacramental, personal, communal, political, and redemptive.

In 2025, Springsteen released *Tracks II: The Lost Albums*; these seven albums from across his career demonstrate his evolution as a songwriter. In particular, *Faithless* reveals his continued engagement with issues of faith, redemption, and recovery. Though he has not publicly identified the film for which the soundtrack was written, I unearthed connections between the album and an unrealized film adaption of Thomas Eidson’s novel *St. Agnes’ Stand* (1994). In this novel, Nat Watson, weary, remorseful, and agnostic, stumbles across an unrelenting desertscape and discovers a caravan of nuns protecting orphaned children. Staying with them, Nat observes suffering, death, mystical events, and miraculous intervention. Overlaying Springsteen’s soundtrack (songs and instrumentals) onto the novel’s plot brings out their shared themes of a bloody and often torturous path to redemption and a life of faith.

**“The Whole Story: A Perspective on Christian Scholarship in Music”**  
**Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College**

Tim Steele faithfully lived out a vocation of Christian scholarship in music in service of God and neighbor. And he encouraged many others to do the same, not only through his example and words, but also as a founding member of the Forum on Music and Christian Scholarship, which was later renamed the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music.

In this paper, I seek to honor Tim’s legacy while presenting a perspective on Christian scholarship from a Reformed Christian worldview, the perspective from which Tim lived out his Christian faith and through which I have the privilege of teaching at Trinity Christian College. In considering Christian scholarship in music through this lens, I seek to offer ways of engaging music, the arts, and human persons that consider the goodness of God’s creation, the brokenness that affects the whole creation, the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, and the hope for the future kingdom of God.

The paper will engage the Introduction to Volume 4, Communities, in the *Oxford Handbook of Music and Christian Theology*, written by volume editors Emmett G. Price III and Timothy H. Steele. It will also reflect on the stained glass windows in the building in which we are meeting and conclude with an invitation to live out our scholarship and teaching in light Martin Buber’s attestation, “Alles wirkliche Leben ist Begegnung.”

## 10:30–11:45 a.m. Session 5: Concurrent

### A. Poster Session

#### **“The State of Church Music in Europe: Lowell Mason’s Sabbatarian View on His European Tours of 1837 and 1852”**

**Kim Arnold, Oklahoma Baptist University**

Church musician Lowell Mason (1792-1872) is remembered for many roles, including as a prolific composer of hymn tunes, but also for his efforts in pioneering music education in the public school classroom. Mason’s name has gone into the annals of church music with the composition of the tunes such as HAMBURG (commonly used with “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”), OLIVET (“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”), AZMON (“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”), and ANTIOCH (“Joy to the World”), to name a few. Mason advocated for an elevation of taste in church music and often spoke on this topic. Two publications record speeches that he gave at the beginning and end of his career, serving as bookends to a life committed to church music: *Address on Church Music* (1826) and *Song in Worship* (1878—published posthumously).

Mason traveled to Europe twice, in 1837 and 1852, to examine the state of church music in Europe and survey the landscape of music in society. While traveling he maintained journals for each trip. The 1837 journal was primarily for his personal use, while the 1852 journal was kept for the purpose of publication upon his return. Throughout both journeys, he records visits to musical festivals, concerts, and churches throughout England, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and France. In these journals, almost every Sunday records his visits to three or four churches where Mason critiques the state of church music in his current region.

This poster will examine Mason’s Sabbatarian view on his European tours, focusing on his duty as a Christian, but also on his role as American church music pioneer. Mason visited Catholic and Protestant churches, revealing an honest and brutal assessment of European church music. This information provided the necessary research for the development of better American church music, Mason’s greatest aim. Just as the church reformers called for “semper reformanda” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so Mason advocated for “reformatio musicae ecclesiasticae” in the nineteenth century.

#### **“The Salience of Silence: Hearing Divinity in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* (BWV 244)”**

**Jessica Hua, Claremont Graduate University**

This presentation explores the profound function of musical silence—specifically Rests, Fermatas, and General Pauses—in Johann Sebastian Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* (BWV 244). Despite the fact that silence is frequently treated as structural absence or a “negative sound effect,” this study argues that Bach employs pauses as active, charged events that operate as indispensable moral, temporal, and rational catalysts for the listener.

The central thesis is that musical silence in the *St. Matthew Passion* transcends mere suspend musical continuity but “Positive Absence” and structured event that fosters spiritual introspection, temporal anticipation, and rational order, thereby serving as a moral and dramatic catalyst.

Using score-based examples, the argument is presented through the following interrelated lenses:

- Temporal Tension (Augustinian Theory): Augustine's *distentio animi* (extension of the mind), in which silence becomes the site of maximal psychological tension, filled with memory of the past

and expectation of the future, is embodied by pauses at dramatic moments, particularly at Christ's last moments.

- Structural Rationality (Leibnizian Thought): Leibniz's concept of music as "unconscious arithmetic" is in line with shorter rests, especially in the *Turba* choruses, which affirm divine and mathematical perfection while demonstrating silence as a logically required structural element.
- Enlightenment Freedom: this research views silence as a defense of inner freedom, drawing on *John Locke's A Letter Concerning Toleration*. In order to ensure freedom of conscience and genuine religious experience, this inner conviction requires a space of seclusion and introspection—a sort of spiritual silence. Therefore, it is possible to interpret Bach's fermatas and contemplative pauses as sonic spaces that offer listeners spiritual and intellectual freedom, echoing the Enlightenment values of individual liberty and tolerance.

By combining theology, philosophy, and musical analysis, this research demonstrates that Bach's silences are not voids to be overlooked at but rather purposeful structures necessary for the Passion's historical resonance, dramatic force, and theological depth.

### **“Motives and Structural Levels: Where Biblical Typology and Schenkerian Analysis Rendezvous” Ryan Krell, College Conservatory of Music—University of Cincinnati**

The subfield of biblical theology known as typology and the music theory of Heinrich Schenker's *Der Freie Satz* (1935) may seem like unlikely bedfellows. Yet both fields rely on foundational claims of organic unity and structural coherence, both have fostered vigorous debates regarding authorial intent, and—most significantly—both methodologies require the analyst to look *below* or *beyond* the musical/textual surface, discerning deeper motivic structures and narrative patterns (Schenker 1935, Goppelt 1982). However, this final point reveals their shared analytical malady: promiscuous motivic connection-making. For Schenkerian analysis, the result is motives that cut across structural levels (critiqued in Cohn 1992), and for typology, the result is historical similarities disconnected from typology's central figure: Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:14; e.g., Marian typology and some Patristic typology, Woollcombe 1957). By no means a settled issue, typology's invocation is worth re-examining in this interdisciplinary context. Specifically, when and how should types in biblical theology and motives in Schenkerian analysis be invoked at deeper levels, and how might each field enhance the other with their rich, overlapping conceptual frameworks?

In this presentation I examine two concepts in which Schenkerian analysis and biblical typology interact. First, I contend that Schenker's concept of *structural levels* (Schenker 1935) gives the biblical scholar freedom to posit types (essentially middleground or background events) without rejecting authorial intent (the textual foreground). Thus structural levels *deepen* authorial intent and parry overly restrictive typological criteria—for example, that types must be specifically designated in the New Testament (Zuck 1991). Second, the typological criteria of *escalation in significance* (Hamilton 2022) resonates with Schenker's composing-out of the *Urfinie*, as both processes require the analyst to *progressively* (i.e., in time) perceive recurring patterns to fully grasp their teleological significance. Thus while some motives might resemble *Ur*-structures, a case exhibited in Schenker's graph of a Chopin mazurka, experiencing pieces as temporal wholes progressively reveals their structural levels. Similarly, biblical types and historical similarities may initially overlap, but types specifically and progressively reveal Scripture's overarching teleology, culminating in its fundamental structure: Jesus Christ (Col. 1:17).

## **B. Music-Text Relationships**

### **“Philip the Chancellor: Music and Poetry on Virtue and Humanity”**

**Micah Torcellini, Indiana University**

While Léonin and Pérotin’s contributions to music are common knowledge, the intellectual environment that nurtured them in Paris deserves deeper examination. One figure within this philosophical and musical milieu, Philip the Chancellor of the Cathedral, is pivotal for understanding the sounds, ideas, and struggles of thirteenth-century Paris, as has been highlighted by Thomas Payne (1991 and 2011). This paper examines the relationship between the intellectual environment of the time, Philip’s own philosophy, and the music associated with his circle, focusing on Philip’s expression of virtue ethics in his poetry, with special consideration of the context of the university culture of disputation and Philip’s own treatise *De Bono*. In addition, this paper seeks to resolve some difficult translation problems through an understanding of Philip’s doctrine of humanity, particularly considering his idea of the interaction between Soul, Flesh, and Reason. Philip’s study of virtue extends beyond theological and philosophical speculation to a practical pursuit of truth and justice. A close reading of Philip’s poetry and analysis of the associated musical settings reveal that he views the pursuit of virtue and truth as a moral necessity. He criticizes corrupt clergy in *In Veritate Comperi / Veritatem*, while the tenor and other musical aspects emphasize that his ultimate concern is for truth. Philip also tells where truth comes from—it is learned from Reason in *Anima, Iuge Lacrima* and from “Christ the truth” in *Doce nos hodie / Docebit*. In addition to textual meaning, musical aspects of these pieces also parallel the intellectual environment of the time and show how Philip thought of moral action within that context. In *Anima, Iuge Lacrima*, for example, the musical portrayal of academic disputation (as discussed in Novikoff 2013) corresponds to the spiritual struggle against worldly temptation. This paper also considers issues of authorship in a medieval context, examining what poetry can explain about someone’s environment considering both philosophical and aesthetic factors, even when exact attribution may be impossible.

### **“The approach to religious texts among the pioneers of Holy Minimalism: An Analytical Study of a Contemporary Musical Style”**

**Mario Soliman, International School of Choueifat-Al Ain\***

In the second half of the twentieth century, minimalist music was founded in the United States through composers such as Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and Terry Riley. Their works in minimalism were characterized by simplicity, repetition, and the gradual development of musical ideas, departing from the harmonic complexity of earlier music.

Soon after, a new style emerged in Europe, presented in Sacred Minimalism or Holy Minimalism. This style is associated with contemporary composers such as John Tavener (Britain), Arvo Pärt (Estonia), Henryk Górecki (Poland), and later Richards Dobra (Latvia). These four composers used the same compositional techniques used by the aforementioned composers in another artistic and ideological point of view. Despite their different nationalities and diverse Christian traditions—Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran—their music shares striking common features. They all employ simplicity, slow tempo, and repetition, but they direct these techniques toward creating a deeply spiritual and meditative atmosphere.

Although their works are modern in style, Holy Minimalism spread quickly and gained international recognition, resonating with both liturgical and concert audiences. Its appeal lies in combining a contemporary musical language with a deep sense of devotion. The use of sacred texts—whether biblical, liturgical, or poetic—gives the music a meditative quality that reaches listeners across cultural and religious boundaries.

This paper will analyze selected works that represent the variety and richness of Sacred Minimalism: Arvo Pärt's *Magnificat* and *Cantate Domino*, John Tavener's *Song of Athene* and *As One Who Has Slept*, Henryk Górecki's *Totus Tuus*, and Rihards Dubra's *O Crux Ave* and *Panis Angelicus*. Through close examination of their harmonic language, melodic treatment, texture, and use of silence, the study will show how these composers transform minimalist means into music of profound spiritual depth.

By tracing the connections among these figures, this paper argues that Sacred Minimalism demonstrates a shared musical composition technique, uniting diverse traditions under a common sound world. It highlights how minimalist techniques, when combined with sacred texts, produce works that are both musically innovative and spiritually powerful, offering a new perspective on the role of contemporary music in expressing faith and contemplation.

## **1:00–2:45 p.m. Session 6: Concurrent**

### **A. Personal Expressions on Theology and Worship**

#### **“The Pastor-Poet: E. A. Hoffman’s Legacy of Pastoral Hymnody”**

**Matthew Naizer, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, a handful of pastor-poets sought not only to shepherd their congregations through preaching, but also through hymns and music composition. Such pastors include Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892), Charles Price Jones (1865–1949), and Elisha Albright Hoffman (1839–1929). Of the aforementioned trio, Spurgeon and Jones have received more recognition as dynamic leaders who had a profound impact on their respective societies. However, Hoffman’s pastoral ministry and coinciding musical endeavors remain relatively unknown in comparison to Spurgeon and Jones. This is a great tragedy as Hoffman has his own claims of fame. Throughout his adult years, he held numerous pastorates simultaneously and he was the first music editor of Hope Publishing Company (Wilhoit, 1982).

What do E. A. Hoffman’s hymns teach us about his theology, specifically his view of pastoral ministry? How can studying E. A. Hoffman’s hymnody influence pastor-poets today to write hymns that can directly minister to a local church body?

Building on the research of Wilhoit (1982) and Eskew (1992), this paper will explore Hoffman’s output of hymns and argue that Hoffman’s compositions demonstrate his faithful pastoral sensibilities. By examining his most popular hymn texts (e.g. “Glory to his name,” “I must tell Jesus,” “Leaning on the everlasting arms”), the church Hoffman pastored when composing many of his hymns, and Hoffman’s editorial and compiling work, Hoffman will be examined as a case study for the “pastor-poet” model. This study will aid pastors and worship leaders as they approach ministry today in addition to broadening Christian scholarship and music by exploring an oft overlooked musical titan of late-nineteenth century hymnody.

#### **“Grouping, Meter, and Meaning in *His Mercy Is More*: The Hymns of Matt Boswell and Matt Papa”**

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

Matt Boswell and Matt Papa’s first joint album, *His Mercy Is More* (2019), employs a wide range of rhythmic devices across its thirteen tracks. As with much contemporary worship music (CWM), some passages on this album are rhythmically unremarkable, featuring four-bar phrases, familiar meters, and quadruple hypermeter. However, other passages depart from this baseline in what Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff (1983, 25) term grouping (“units organized hierarchically”), meter (“beats organized

hierarchically”), or both. The present project draws on work by William Rothstein, Gretchen Horlacher, Nancy Murphy, and Samuel Ng, including the latter’s argument that phrase rhythm can depict the theology of a song’s text.

Specifically, this study demonstrates how Boswell and Papa artistically employ five rhythmic techniques in varying combinations across this album. *Phrase overlap* and *phrase expansion* both pertain to grouping, while *reinterpreted hypermeter*, *reinterpreted meter*, and using *meter to articulate form* each pertain to meter. The number of songs in which a given technique appears ranges from three to twelve. Similarly, the number of devices present in a single song ranges from one to all five. Close analysis of individual songs uncovers how these devices align with the message of the text. Overall, this presentation demonstrates the expressive impact of grouping and meter in songs by Boswell and Papa, analyzing one album by two prominent artists and documenting strategies available in CWM more broadly.

### **“What We Want Older People to Know’: Youth Agency as Intergenerational Witness in Christian Worship”**

**Emily Andrews, Samford University**

This paper explores how teenagers and emerging adults exercise agency in Christian worship by addressing older adult worshipers directly. Drawing on qualitative data from the Young People and Christian Worship (YPCW) project—a binational, multi-site study across Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, evangelical, and charismatic contexts—I analyze responses to the question, “What do you want older people to know about how younger people experience worship services?” Rather than prescribing reforms, this study maps how agency appears in young people’s own words when they address older worshipers directly.

Data come from 20 focus groups (185+ teenagers) and 69 semi-structured interviews with emerging adults (ages 19-29) across six North American summer worship-and-arts programs—sites that explicitly engage worship and the arts, especially music, and often include active church musicians. Analysis centers on segments where participants respond to the key question, speaking to “older people” about their musical-liturgical experiences. While the paper’s aims are modest, its empirically grounded method and unique dataset make generative contributions to conversations at the intersection of adolescent spirituality and liturgical studies, offering:

1. a conceptual clarification of youth agency as intergenerational witness, listening to youth speak across generations about experiences, stories, and values in Christian worship;
2. a data-derived set of terms—pulled directly from transcripts—for that witness; and
3. implications for our own learning framed as questions and hypotheses rather than prescriptions.

The YPCW qualitative sample foregrounds already-engaged, highly religious youth in liturgical/ecclesial settings. Findings describe reported experience and meaning, not outcomes or causality. Even so, treating youth statements as agency illuminates how younger worshipers invite older ones—including clergy and worship professionals, in some cases—into clearer mutual understanding of the church’s musical-liturgical life. Despite its modest scope, the contribution is generative, offering a disciplined method of listening-as-analysis that surfaces youth speech as a site of theological and liturgical insight. For church musicians, it reframes expertise as hospitable attention. Methodologically, it shows how careful qualitative description can examine theoretical claims without prescribing outcomes, opening space for future study’s evaluation, experimentation, and cross-tradition comparison.

## **B. Christian Music in Asia**

### **“The Sound of Naga Hills: Indigenous Musical Expressions in Naga Christian Worship”**

**Sen Kikon, Baylor University**

Historically, Naga Christian worship in northeastern India was strongly shaped by Western hymnody introduced by American Baptist missionaries in the nineteenth century, resulting in the marginalization of indigenous musical traditions. In recent years, however, a growing movement to reclaim indigenous musical expressions has emerged across Naga churches. Against this historical backdrop, this paper explores how indigenous musical forms and expressions have been recontextualized within contemporary Christian worship among the Naga people, focusing particularly on the congregational singing practices of the Lotha Naga tribe. The research employs an ethnomusicological framework to examine the interaction between traditional Naga soundscapes and global Christian musical influences within three major denominations in Nagaland—the Baptist, Catholic, and Nagaland Christian Revival churches.

Using a mixed-methods approach that combines historical documentation, participant observation, musical analysis, and comparative study, this paper investigates how different Naga churches selectively appropriate indigenous vocal styles, rhythms, and harmonies in worship. These practices not only reflect theological and denominational diversity but also articulate a shared cultural identity and sense of belonging among Naga Christians. Situating the study within broader discourses of World Christianity and ethnomusicology, it applies the concept of musical localization to illustrate how global Christian musical trends are indigenized within local cultural frameworks (Ingalls, Reigersberg, and Sherinian 2018). Ultimately, this research highlights the dynamic interplay between faith, culture, and sound, revealing how Naga Christian communities negotiate global and local identities through music.

### **“Ragas for Christ: A study on the practice of Carnatic music among the Syrian Christians in India”**

**George Pioustin, University of California, Los Angeles**

The Syrian Christians of Kerala, one of India’s most ancient Christian communities, trace their origins to the evangelization of Thomas the Apostle. During the colonial period, European missionaries who accompanied the colonizers sought to reform this community by vernacularizing the Syriac liturgy and introducing Western musical forms. Through printed hymnals and church instruction, Carnatic music, the classical tradition of South India, was gradually integrated into Christian worship. In post-independence India, the Church institutionalized this practice through music competitions that promoted Carnatic compositions and trained generations of Christian musicians. This paper traces the historical trajectory of Carnatic music among Kerala’s Christian communities, examining how religious practice, pedagogy, and performance intersected over time. It explores both continuity and change in the Christian adaptation of Carnatic music and considers how this musical form has shaped communal identity, devotional aesthetics, and cultural belonging. In contemporary India, this tradition faces renewed tension as hate campaigns and online harassment target performers of non-Hindu Carnatic compositions. These incidents reflect the exclusionary impulses of Hindutva ideology that seek to define classical music within a narrowly Hindu framework. The paper, therefore, also examines how Christian composers and musicians navigate the cultural and political pressures of a right-wing environment while continuing to create and perform. By historicizing the Christian encounter with Carnatic music, from colonial translation to contemporary resistance, this study reflects on the enduring power of sound as both a space of devotion and a site of contestation in modern India.

## **“Charming and Renouncing A Locality’s Context: A Case of Christianizing Traditional Cantonese Opera for Hong Kong Protestant Worship”**

**Joshua Ching Yuet Kan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

Cantonese opera music, once shunned by Chinese Christians, has recently become a vehicle for worship in Hong Kong Protestant churches. “*Fukjamjyutkuk* (福音粵曲),” translated as Gospel-themed Cantonese opera songs, feature Christian lyrics set to traditional Cantonese opera music. With well-known tunes that evoke childhood memories of its elderly audience and Christian lyrics to express a new faith, these songs enable older believers to worship God in their heart language. Despite the centuries-long coexistence of traditional Cantonese opera and Protestant Christianity in Hong Kong, their integration as *Fukjamjyutkuk* has only gained limited traction in recent years.

My study employs multiple approaches—historical, ethnographical, musical, and theological—to examining the churches’ delayed adoption of *Fukjamjyutkuk*, uncovering tensions between culturally embedded musical practices, Protestant worship doctrines, and evangelistic strategy. My research echoes that of Chinese hymnologists, showing how nineteenth-century missionary efforts to adapt operatic tunes for hymns were rejected by Chinese converts who associated the genre with their ungodly past. After mainland Chinese churches relocated to Hong Kong in the 1940s, translated Euro-American hymns became the local norm despite their distortion of the pronunciation of Cantonese—the local language. My interviews with evangelism teams, worship leaders, and composers indicate that churches turned to *Fukjamjyutkuk* to reach elderly populations, using its familiar melodies to convey Christian messages. Meanwhile, participant observation at *Fukjamjyutkuk* singing events in 2025 and subsequent musical analysis reveal how churches preserved song tunes while downplaying elements like melismatic “*qiang* (腔)” and improvisation, emphasizing clear diction and unison singing instead. Combining theological research and interviews, I identify the obstacles in using *Fukjamjyutkuk* for worship, revealing a core tension: while Christian missiology encourages cultural adaptation for evangelism, worship theology prioritizes creating and preserving cultural purity. *Fukjamjyutkuk*’s gradual inclusion demonstrates how missionary imperatives can reshape worship practices, blurring the line between “outsider” and “insider” practices.

My study demonstrates that cultural negotiations continually occur between traditional local cultures and transnational proselytizing religions like Protestant Christianity. Ethnomusicological discussions on the intersection between religion and culture can be bolstered through analyzing local theology and spiritual experiences in addition to cultural practices.

### **3:00–4:45 p.m. Session 7: Concurrent**

#### **A. Historical Hymnody**

##### **“God as Divine Tuner in Puritan Literature”**

**Keri Hui, Hong Kong Baptist University**

In one of the most historically known hymns, “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” one reads a famous hymn line: “Tune my heart to sing thy grace.” Robert Robinson wrote this hymn in 1757 shortly after his conversion to Methodism. The idea of God acting as the divine tuner of the human heart or soul, however, was already robustly propagated in the seventeenth century by many Puritan preachers and writers. Richard Sibbes in *The Soules Conflict* (1635) describes the soul of a believer as one that needs to be “set in tune” and “an instrument in tune fit to be moved to any duty.” In *Pneumatologia: Or A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit* (1674), John Owen likens those who have received divine revelations to “*Musical Instruments* variously tuned.” Richard Baxter in *Poetical Fragments* (1681) speaks of God as

the tuner who “tune[s] up our dull and drooping Souls to such joyful praises” and, in “A Psalm of Praise,” he refers to his soul singing to God “with a well-tuned heart.”

This paper examines a range of such Puritan examples that interpret God as the divine tuner, situating them within the context of seventeenth-century Puritan theology of sympathy, rooted in a Calvinist understanding of fellow-feeling, and its connection to eighteenth-century culture of sensibility and sentimentalism which remains vastly overlooked. Although historians have argued Methodism was a religious parallel to the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility, scholars have increasingly recognized such a reading can seem simplistic and overgeneralized. On the other hand, recent scholarship, with the work of Abram C. Van Engen being a notable example, has demonstrated that Puritan sympathy served as a precursor to eighteenth-century sentimentalism, thereby destabilizing the tradition to locate the history of sentimentalism and sympathy to seventeenth-century Latitudinarian preaching. In light of these observations, God as the divine tuner who tunes human souls and hearts emerges as a musical and didactic picture that helped elucidate the sympathetic relationship between God and humans from theological perspectives.

**“Hymns to Parents and the Genderless Aesthetic of Eighteenth-Century Plainsong”**  
**Emily Travaline, The Graduate Center, City University of New York\***

This paper examines how eighteenth-century opera and plainsong construct parenthood through contrasting gendered aesthetics. In operas such as Handel’s *Agrippina* (1710) and Campra’s *Idoménée* (1712), maternal figures are depicted through ambition, seduction, and emotional excess, while paternal figures embody suffering, agency, and noble grief (McClary 1991; Feldman 2007). These works dramatize parenthood through sharply gendered musical and textual expressions, revealing how operatic repertoire relies on cultural distinctions between masculinity and femininity. By contrast, plainsong, as exemplified in Marian antiphons such as *Alma Redemptoris Mater* and hymns to Saint Dominic (*O Spem Miram*), expresses sacred parenthood through what I argue to be a genderless aesthetic (Hiley 1993; Bynum 1982; Fassler 2014). This discussion does not engage debates over authorship nor theological interpretation but rather focuses on how sonic and textual features in chant avoid gendered binaries altogether. Plainsong emphasizes devotion, beauty, and communal participation, producing a musical space in which gendered tropes are largely absent, even when the topic is of sacred parenthood, and therefore presumably gendered subjects. In contrast, operatic excerpts foreground dramatic, highly gendered expressions that reinforce familiar societal stereotypes. By juxtaposing the secular expression of parenthood against the sacred musical practices which are absent of any gendered tropes, this comparison illuminates the gendered nature of opera and the genderless expression of plainchant.

## **B. African-American Music**

**“Before Dorsey: The Unrecognized Influence of Charles Albert Tindley on the Theological Grammar of Early Gospel”**  
**Hugo Encorrada, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

The narrative of Thomas Dorsey’s (1899–1993) “conversion” of blues into black gospel in 1930s Chicago is a foundational story in African American music history. However, this narrative often overshadows the earlier theological and musical innovations that preceded and enabled his work. Rather than a sudden rupture, the development from spirituals to gospel was a gradual transformation nurtured in the African American urban church at the turn of the twentieth century. To understand this transition, we must look beyond Dorsey to the earlier pioneering work of composer-pastors, specifically the ministry of the Rev. Charles Albert Tindley (1851–1933) of Philadelphia, whose compositions laid crucial groundwork for what would later be identified as gospel music.

This research employs an interdisciplinary methodology, integrating historical musicology and theological analysis. Building on the scholarship of Bernice Johnson Reagon (2001) on pioneering gospel composers, Melva Costen (2004) on worship in the Black church, and James Abbington (2009) on the evolution of spirituals, hymns, and gospel music, this study analyzes selected Tindley hymns from *New Songs of Paradise* (1916)—including “We’ll understand it better by and by” and “Stand by me”—with attention to lyrical content, musical form, and theological themes. Ultimately, this study will illuminate the ways Tindley’s compositions negotiated the shift from communal lament to personal testimony.

This paper contends that Tindley’s hymns provided the theological grammar that bridged spirituals and gospel. By synthesizing the thematic depth and communal ethos of the spirituals with the personal, testimonial language of early gospel, Tindley crafted a new sacred music idiom that was both culturally resonant and theologically robust. His work provided a necessary liturgical precedent, effectively preparing the theological imagination of the African American church for the later incorporation of blues-infused styles. Tindley demonstrated that music rooted in the everyday experience of a struggling people was not only acceptable but was a powerful vehicle for articulating a faith grounded in hope, resilience, and ultimate triumph.

**“Sacred Strength: Empowerment Through African American Worship”**  
**Christopher Young, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**

The African American worship tradition is more than a cultural practice. This tradition provides a sustaining force for identity and hope in the face of systemic oppression. Birthed out of clandestine worship in colonial America, this tradition thrives in the expressions of modern Black churches. This tradition carries themes of resilience, liberation, and empowerment. While many studies explore African American music, theology, or history separately, this paper integrates these perspectives to demonstrate how empowerment functions as a defining theme within the tradition.

The empowerment theme is not incidental but central to African American worship as it develops historically through resistance, theologically through eschatological hope and divine presence, practically through corporate worship, and musically through spirituals and gospel songs that sustain a congregation’s identity and community.

This paper’s purpose is to explore how empowerment functions as a unifying theme in African American worship. This purpose is achieved through four objectives:

1. To trace the historical context and inception of the empowerment theme in worship.
2. To examine the theological foundation of empowerment in the Black church tradition.
3. To analyze worship practices and their role in shaping one’s empowered identity.
4. To evaluate music’s role in solidifying this theme among African American communities.

The study employs a multidisciplinary approach by combining historical surveys, theological analysis, and ethnomusicological reflections. The sources for this paper include theological writings, hymnals, worship studies, and historical accounts. Key figures like James Cone, Melva Costen, and William McClain provide theological grounding while hymnals and collections of spirituals supply musical context.

This paper contributes to the emerging field of ethnodoxology by demonstrating how African American worship shapes empowerment in marginalized communities. This research spotlights the enduring role of this worship tradition as a theological witness and a cultural testimony. Research in this area shows the topic’s relevance for contemporary church life, current worship studies, and the broader understanding of faith in oppressed contexts.

**“The Path to ‘Hymn in Honor of St Martin de Porres’: Mary Lou Williams’s Conceptualization of Jazz as a Sacred Language**  
**Ellen Shaw, Michigan State University**

Over the course of her 60-year career, Mary Lou Williams composed more than one hundred compositions and arrangements, recorded over a hundred records, and was a world-renowned jazz pianist. In this paper, I take an analytical approach to evaluate how Williams’s conversion to Catholicism in 1957 at the age of 47—which aligned with significant reforms in the Catholic Church as a result of Vatican II—allowed for a marked shift in her stylistic evolution. I analyze Mary Lou Williams’s work titled “Black Christ of the Andes (Hymn in Honor of St. Martin de Porres)” (1962), the first of her pieces emblematic of the then emergent genre of “sacred jazz,” in order to dissect how Williams envisioned jazz as a sacred language.

In composing “Black Christ”, Williams built upon compositional techniques she had developed throughout her life, allowing the work to emerge as a natural extension (and ultimately, an amalgamation) of her compositional output to this point as shaped by the circumstances of her religious conversion (Kernodle 2001, Murchison 2002). In this light, I first detail Williams’s earlier compositional voice through two brief analyses of “Messa-Stomp” composed during her stint with the Clouds of Joy in Kansas City, and “Cancer” from *The Zodiac Suite* (1945) written following her deep engagement with the subgenre of bebop. With the foregoing established, I explore how “Black Christ” embodies an interconnected collage of Williams’s musical influences and oeuvre up to this point, interlacing her intimate knowledge of the spiritual, blues, ragtime, Kansas City swing, bop, and the Western hymnal.

**5:00–6:15 p.m. Keynote Address**

**“Musica Hermeneutics: Lessons from the African Diaspora”**  
**Emmett G. Price III, Berklee College of Music & Boston Conservatory at Berklee**

In Lawrence Kramer’s treatise on musical hermeneutics published in *The Oxford Handbook of Western Music and Philosophy*, he posits that there is an imbedded mistake within traditional practice of assuming that meaning in musical works, genres, and performances are solely derived from form, technique, and structure. This mistake in many ways was guided by a narrow lens that avoided what we now know as intersectional identities. Rather than focus on the mistake, I aim to offer a different engagement with musical hermeneutics to inspire a broader lens with a wider and more vivid view. Grounded in the theory and method of interpretation, musical hermeneutics offer a great opportunity to explore the content, context, and codes through which musical expression can avail a deeper cultural connection between creative(s) and audience(s). This keynote will build off of years of observations, reflections and study to proffer a few lessons from the African Diaspora to inspire forward progress relative to Christian Scholarship in music.

**7:30–8:30 p.m. Session 8: Plenary Lecture-Recital**

**“Olivier Messiaen: Glory and Dazzlement in the *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*”**  
**Micaela Lum, University of Southern California**

Olivier Messiaen invites the listener not to understand, but to behold—in essence, to be overwhelmed by the divine. Although he did not profess to be a theologian, Messiaen followed a theology of glory. The music he loved, namely that of Dazzlement, or *éblouissement*, became a lifelong pursuit in response to the wonder he found in the Christian faith and its tenets. This lecture-recital introduces three selections that

demonstrate the composer's use of dazzlement from one of his most famous works, the *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*, or "Twenty Contemplations on the Infant Jesus."

The *Vingt Regards* is unique in the piano repertoire for its subject matter, massive scale, and musical language. While much has been written already about the theological symbolism and musical techniques in the piano cycle, I hope to offer further reflection upon how this music may deepen a Christian experience of glory as it responds to what Messiaen calls the "excess of truth." The final three regards, which will be the main focus of this presentation, are a fitting illustration of Messiaen's penchant for expansiveness and wonder as he synthesizes and concludes his series of musical reflections. Through techniques embodying timelessness and abundance, Messiaen likewise expands the listener's contemplation of the Incarnation by exploring musically the figure of Christ as High Priest, as Bridegroom, and as perfecter of the Church for the glorification of God.

For many listeners, this music will be like another language. And while this is not the only language for conveying the divine, Messiaen employs intricacies in time, color, birdsong, and form in meaningful ways that has much to offer a world tending towards utilitarian efficiency.

## **Saturday, February 28**

### **8:30–10:15 a.m. Session 9: Concurrent**

#### **A. Music, Worship, and Experience**

##### **"Musicking as a Catalyst for Reconciliation"**

**Benjamin Ray, Yale University**

In my paper I analyze the musical and liturgical practices of Taizé, drawing on research in both musicology and theology to argue that through experiences of attunement, embodiment, and communion, musicking can serve as a powerful catalyst for reconciliation in contexts of diversity and division. While previous scholarship shows musicking's rich intersections with several parallel areas including peacebuilding, justice, and spirituality, none has adequately addressed its implications for the distinct work of reconciliation.

Beginning with a consideration of the meaning of reconciliation within and beyond theological discourse, the paper continues with a focus on three steps toward reconciliation: (1) recognizing that the being of individuals is not separate and distinct, but intimately interwoven and enmeshed with all others in creation, (2) seeking and practicing harmonious ways of being that honor the sanctity and dignity of all beings, and (3) embracing the other through self-giving love. Building on this framework, my paper explores intersections with musicking by showing how the form, style, texts, values, and cultivation of space that undergird Taizé's distinct tradition of musical gathering allow it to be uniquely effective toward each of these ends. Ultimately, the paper argues that through similarly intentional approaches, the experience of musicking and the embodied knowledge it communicates can subvert divisive epistemologies and open new possibilities for healing, belonging, and embrace across seemingly insurmountable barriers.

My paper draws on insights from recent scholarship in the aforementioned areas as well as music and empathy, phenomenology of music, and ethnomusicology. Key scholars referenced include Miroslav Volf, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Christopher Small. This paper contributes to Christian scholarship in music by taking an innovative and broadly applicable approach to considering how practices musicking can

serve to directly accomplish, rather than only support and glorify, the central mission of the Church. In a time with many churches searching for more accessible and welcoming ways to meet the spiritual needs of their increasingly polarized, lonely, diverse, and secularizing communities, this paper suggests promising possibilities for seeking a deeper solidarity and belonging.

### **“The Sacred Spectrum Project: Enhancing Worship for Neurodivergent Children Through Music and the Arts”**

**Nathan Myrick and Eric Amouzou, Mercer University**

As awareness of the needs of neurodivergent children grows (ND), congregations across denominational spectrums are beginning to ask themselves how they can serve the worshipping needs of those who may be unintentionally excluded from full participation in the life of faith. This concern is further pronounced when we realize that sensory processing is a primary means of dysregulation among ND children (van Ommen 2024, for instance). Orders of service, with their sometimes-rigorous decorum and adherence to sonic and visual stimuli, are often unwelcoming places for ND children.

But how does congregational music affect this experience? Could music be a key to unlocking a more caring, nurturing, and edifying formational practice of worship? Perhaps, as some psychologists have suggested (Kim et al 2024, for example), music may generally help ND individuals regulate emotions and process sensory information more pleasantly. Could congregational music play a similar role in the life of Christian communities?

This paper suggests that it does, and argues that pursuing forms and patterns of musical worship that better include ND children and adults is both a matter of justice, in the sense that inclusion of ND individuals is a moral imperative, and flourishing, in that composing and performing music that welcomes and includes all members of the community is necessary for living well (Leidenhag and King 2023; Reynolds 2023; Waldinger and Schultz 2023). Drawing from scholarship in psychology and neuroscience, together with congregational music and music therapy, it further argues that doing so requires more than just desire and intention, but rather careful shifts in liturgical structure and assumptions are necessary to invite all members of the community to embody congregational songs.

### **“Threshold Music: Liminal Sound and Formation in Congregational Worship”**

**Eunice Kim, Kennesaw State University**

This paper explores threshold songs, musical passages that help sanctuary worshippers cross from the ordinary into encounter with the divine. These are songs that do not rush to resolution but hold a community inside transition long enough for transformation to happen. From the slow resonance of Gregorian chant to the collective confession of “Amazing Grace,” the surrendered breath of “It Is Well,” and the unfolding exhortation of Kristene DiMarco’s “Take Courage,” each creates a different doorway through which worshippers learn how to wait, release, and trust.

Drawing on Victor Turner’s writing on liminality, Jeremy Begbie’s theology of sound, and Monique Ingalls’s studies of congregational participation, I argue that such songs function as sonic thresholds—spaces where theology is not only sung but enacted. They mark the crossings between lament and praise, solitude and communion, fear and courage.

Musically, these works share certain traits: sustained tones, delayed cadences, and phrases built for collective breathing. In chant, the unison line gathers scattered minds into stillness. In “Amazing Grace,” a single melody becomes a vessel for countless personal testimonies. “It Is Well” allows grief to linger before harmony restores peace. “Take Courage” expands time itself; its repeated invitation, “He’s in the waiting,” teaches a congregation to remain open-hearted amid uncertainty.

The research combines close listening, score analysis, and observation of live worship in both traditional and contemporary settings. Notes from field recordings, acoustic mapping of worship spaces, and interviews with music leaders form the study's experiential core.

Recognizing these songs as thresholds reframes congregational music from ornament to formation, from what accompanies worship to what builds it. In them, sound itself becomes ecclesial architecture, shaping attention, breath, and belonging. Such music reveals how the church, in every age, is formed not only by what it believes but by what it dares to sing on the way to hope.

## **B. Bach and Handel**

### **“Bach’s *Musical Offering*: A Biblical Exegesis of the Chamber Music Repertoire”**

**Vijay Ratiney, Bordeaux Montaigne University\***

In 1747, Bach decided to visit his son in Potsdam, harpsichordist of the King of Prussia. The King asked Bach to improvise a fugue on a given theme. Thus began the story of the *Musical Offering*. Back to Leipzig, Bach composed a monumental work on this generative theme. As a gift, he dedicated this work to Frederick II, giving it the name *Musical Offering*, a symbolic term referring to the sacred. Moreover, at the beginning of one of the canons, Bach included the Latin riddle *Quaerendo invenietis* taken directly from the Gospels. A work of high speculative value, the *Musical Offering* carries many symbols, hidden in the original print. This sacred symbolism can be found in the title of the work, through the addition of a reference to the Gospels as a clue to an enigmatic canon, or through his prayer habits visible in its intertextual relationship, which are new discoveries. By adding sacred references to a secular work, Bach redefines the perception of his work by bringing a transcendental character to the corpus. The title of the work establishes a close link with the biblical offering in that it represents the purest and most perfect music that Bach could write in honor of God. With the *Musical Offering*, Bach invites the King to a spiritual experience by offering him a dialogue between earth and heaven. This reflection takes place within a theological, analytical, historical, socio-cultural, and political context, and will question the conception and reception of the work.

### **“Between Suffering and Love: The Aesthetic Duality of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*”**

**Sindy Yang, Yale University**

The musical character of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* has been described as “dark, intense, and in an arcane musical language” (Lederer 2008). Despite its successful reception since its “rediscovery” in the early nineteenth century, the *Passion* can nonetheless be seen as daunting for its musical and theological obscurity. As a result, the *Passion* has been accused of being difficult to understand.

Recent scholarship has sought to refute this accusation. Markus Rathey argues that Bach and his librettist, Picander, understood the story of Christ’s suffering as essentially “an intimate love story” (Rathey 2016). In particular, “the emphasis on the cruel suffering of Christ” and “love poetry” are “intrinsically intertwined,” respectively represented in two pivotal movements of the *Passion*: the opening chorus, “Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen” (“Come, you daughters, help me lament”), and a bass aria found in the latter half of the *Passion*, “Mache dich, mein Herze, rein” (“Make yourself pure, my heart”) (Rathey 2016). These contrasting arias can be construed as diametrically opposed, even paradoxical, aesthetic sentiments present in the *Passion*: one of suffering, the other love. That said, I raise the question of why there is this apparent duality.

In my paper, I argue that this dualistic tension embodies and expresses the central concept of freedom in Lutheran theology. I first examine traces of late medieval mysticism pivotal to seventeenth and eighteenth century Lutheran theology, subsequently noting how they are present in the aesthetic duality of the *Passion* from the standpoint of the believer in a liturgical setting. Fundamentally, the act of listening to this aesthetic duality in these movements demonstrates the embodied act of unity between the believer and Christ. After, I examine the idea of theological freedom arising from this aesthetic duality, the result of which the believer, by virtue of listening to the Passion as part of a liturgical act, comes to embrace and inhabit. Present especially in movements of the Passion's latter half, I show the accumulative degrees of freedom found in successive movements from which the believer listens to and therefore experiences. In this way, the Passion can be rendered as understandable.

**“Handel’s Anthems as ‘Temple Musick’: The Fulfillment of Arthur Bedford’s Biblical Ideal for Anglican Cathedral Anthems”**

**Joshua Waggener, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

In 1706, the English polemicist, linguist, and music lover Arthur Bedford (1668–1745) published *The Temple Musick* [sic] in which he conjectured that, based on evidence from the Old Testament and other ancient sources, the music of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem had “a very great Resemblance with our [Anglican] Cathedral Worship.” The similarities included the use of both instrumental and vocal music, the roles of a “praecentor” (or two) along with men and boy singers, singing in alternation, and even very similar approaches to chanting the Psalms. Beyond these corresponding details, Bedford celebrated that “we have an Anthem to be sung, where the Composer is at liberty to use the utmost Strains which either Art or Fancy can invent . . .; that as the Temple Musick was the best in the land of Canaan, so our Cathedral might not be inferior to what may be heard in other Places . . .”

Building on work of James Pruett (1982), Ruth Smith (1995), and research on music in the Bible (e.g., John Arthur Smith, 2011), this paper will consider the choral music of George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) according to Bedford’s standards. Through an examination of select works by Handel, Bedford’s musical speculations will be used to determine whether Handel’s music may represent exemplary models for Anglican anthems seeking to emulate (and improve upon) Old Testament temple music.

After an introduction to the life and work of Bedford, specific attention will be given to Handel’s psalm-based choruses in select anthems and oratorios. Through comparative analysis with Bedford’s conjectural reconstructions of temple music practice (in conversation with more recent research), Handel’s music will be seen to fulfill (more or less) Bedford’s desire that English cathedral music would “[gather] up the Fragments of Antiquity” while leaving “a skilful Artist wholly at liberty to make the utmost improvement which the Age is capable of.” This paper contributes to Christian scholarship in music by comparing historical understandings of biblical musical practices with church music from the same period, while pursuing an informed hermeneutic for understanding the relationship between the music of the Bible and church music today.

**10:45–11:45 a.m. Session 10: Plenary Lecture-Recital**

**“Margaret Bonds’s 1959 Compositional Pivot to African-American Spirituals”**

**Toni Esker, Trinity Christian College**

The oeuvre of Margaret Bonds (1913-1972), Chicago-based composer, arranger, and concert pianist, consists of over two hundred instrumental and vocal works, including solo and ensemble pieces for piano, chorus, orchestra, and voice. Bonds composed in a broad range of vocal solo genres including art songs, jazz songs, musical theater, and African-American spiritual arrangements.

Her compositions are written in a distinctive style that interlaces idioms from Black music into nearly every element of composition musically and textually. Bonds's compositional style was shaped by lifelong study and relationships with African-American artists fostered by her mother, Estella Bonds, and often included dedications to African-American performers. As an advocate for her community, she maintained a close relationship with the poet Langston Hughes and collaborated with him and other African-American artists in her musical endeavors.

Bonds began her musical studies at an early age and continued studying composition well into her career until 1959 when she began to compose independently without the guidance of a teacher, and her compositional output shifted to mostly arrangements of African-American spirituals. Through her arrangements of African-American spirituals, we see the influence of Bonds's teachers and relationships on her compositional voice as she embraced the demand for her distinct style.

This lecture-recital will focus on Bonds's arrangements of African-American spirituals from 1946-1967, including explanation of the context of these works in Bonds's compositional output, their significance for her work, and the performance of several of her arrangements for solo voice and piano.

### **12:00–1:00 p.m. Session 11: Plenary Graduate Student Panel**

#### **“Choosing Collaboration”**

**Effie Papanikolaou (Bowling Green State University), Adam Perez (Belmont University),  
Kaitlyn G. Bennett (Grove City College), Fernando Berwig Silva (Southern Methodist  
University)**

What is the role of collaboration for those working in the humanities? One can make an entire career writing single-author papers and books, conducting independent fieldwork, or making solo trips to archives. But how can we imagine, or perhaps reimagine, what it means to pursue collaborative efforts in humanities disciplines? Are we at a point where pursuing projects in collaborative ways is beneficial not only to us as colleagues but also to the outcomes and reach of our research, especially in light of the social, political, and technological innovations of our times? In discussion with current students and faculty, this panel explores how we might understand and challenge collaborative efforts within the humanities during an ever-changing landscape of modern universities and academic life.