

# 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Students in Music Conference

Hosted by the Students of the Ph.D./D.M.A. Program  
of The Graduate Center, CUNY

## **“Music and Normativity”** Conference Program

Friday and Saturday  
March 14-15, 2014

The Graduate Center, CUNY  
365 Fifth Avenue,  
New York, NY 10016



Sponsored by the Doctoral Students Council

# Conference Schedule: Friday

*All events take place in Room 5409 unless stated otherwise*

- 1:30–2:00pm      Welcome and Registration
- 2:00–3:00pm      Panel 1 - Disability Studies  
Session Chair: Joseph Straus
- Michael Weinstein-Reiman (University of Oregon): “The Mind Leading the Blind: Blindness and the Alterity of Musical Improvisation in the Late Middle Ages”
  - He Xian (The Chinese University of Hong Kong): “Another Version of Madwoman—Chian Ch’ing in John Adams’s Nixon in China”
- 3:00–3:30pm      Coffee Break
- 3:30–5:30pm      Panel 2 - “Compositional Identity”  
Session Chair: Norman Carey
- Rosa Abrahams (Northwestern University): “Mahler’s Veil: Todtenmarsch, Topoi, and the Jewish Question”
  - Trevor Nelson (Michigan State University): “Feminism as Nationalism? A Critical Perspective on Dame Ethel Smyth”
  - Imani Mosley (Duke University): “‘I shall mutilate and silence the body where you dwell...’ Voice, Gender and Sexuality in Billy Budd”
  - Garrett Schumann (University of Michigan): Gender, Privilege, Aesthetics, and Social Order in the Art World of Living American Composers”
- 5:30–6:30pm      Meet and Greet (Music Lounge–Room 3102)

# Conference Schedule: Saturday

- 10:00–10:30am Breakfast for Workshop Participants
- 10:30am–1:00pm “Scoring Disability Narratives,” Kendra Preston Leonard
- 1:00–2:00pm Lunch
- 2:00–3:30pm Panel 3 - Theory and Analysis  
Session Chair: L. Poundie Burstein
- Andrew Wilson (The Graduate Center, CUNY): “Metrical Normativity and the Sarabande: A Call for Contextual Analysis”
  - Alexander Martin (The Graduate Center, CUNY): “The Rising Fog: Zemlinsky’s ‘Stimme des Abends’ Fantasy Op. 9, No. 1”
  - Andrew Chung (Yale University): “Comrade Roslavets and his Third Piano Trio: Form, Norms, and Disabling Music Analysis”
- 3:30–4:00pm Coffee Break
- 4:00–5:30pm Panel 4 - Contemporary Music(s)  
Session Chair: Kendra Preston Leonard
- Tobin Chodos (University of California, San Diego): “Talking in Tongues”
  - Ryan Mack (Carleton University, Ottawa): “From Falsetto to Scream: Synergistic Masculinity and Vocality in Emo Music”
  - Scott Interrante (Hunter College, CUNY): “*Midnight Memories* / Musical Masculinities: Reading Genre and Gender in the Music of One Direction
- 5:30–6:30pm Farewells

# “Scoring Disability Narratives”

## Workshop Description

In this workshop, we will discuss the ways in which the idea of normativity is constructed, applied, employed, and deconstructed in our various scholarly musical disciplines, and how it can (or cannot) serve as a tool for meaningful analysis in terms of music and disability in screen works. The concept and perceptions of normate and non-normate representations in music have been widely debated in recent years. While many scholars find these frameworks useful, others have resisted, suggesting that codifying something as normate is to continue to apply hierarchies of compulsory able-bodiedness, race, class, gender, sexuality, and other markers of identity. The musical signification of normativity and otherness seems to play an especially large role in film, television, and internet shows, particularly those that feature disability narratives. This extends from fiction film to documentaries and works based on actual persons or events; often the disability narrative is tied to the sobriquet of “inspirational” in screen works, and music contributes heavily to these presentations and interpretations. Our readings will include studies of music and scoring in regard to the non-normate body in the horror genre; the correlation of disability and femininity; and narratives of self-identification and normativity. We will also discuss participants’ work and projects; the workshop is open to anyone with interests in this or related areas.

**Kendra Preston Leonard** is the author of *The Conservatoire Américain: a History and Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations*. Recent and forthcoming publications include “Rosalind’s Musical Identities in Branagh’s and Doyle’s *As You Like It*,” *Upstart Crow*, January 2013; “Music for Richard III: Cinematic Scoring for the Early Modern Monstrous,” *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies* (2014); “From “Angel of Music” to “that Monster”: Music for Phantoms and Villains,” *Studies in Gothic Fiction* (2014); and *Louise Talma: A Life in Composition* (Ashgate, 2014).

# Presentation Abstracts

*Panel 1: Disability Studies*

*Chair: Joseph Straus*

**Michael Weinstein-Reiman, University of Oregon**

**“The Mind Leading the Blind: Blindness and the Alterity of Musical Improvisation in the Late Middle Ages”**

This paper explores the relationship between blindness, its conceptualization in the late Middle Ages, and its connection to the development of printed notation. Reflecting on Johannes Tinctoris’s encounter with two blind viol players from Bruges in *De inventione et usu musicae* (1483), I posit that the advent of printed music coincides with the sociopolitical “othering” of musical improvisation. Using Ernest Ferand’s 1957 close reading of an earlier treatise by Tinctoris, the *Liber de arte contrapuncti* (1477), as a starting point, I examine Tinctoris’s terms *res facta* [made thing] and *cantare super librum* [singing upon the book]. Ferand associated singing upon the book with improvisation and florid counterpoint, linked the fifteenth-century notions of “imperfect” music and extemporaneity, and questioned whether counterpoints generated in the mind could be considered “made things.” Recently, Margaret Bent, Bonnie J. Blackburn, Rob C. Wegman, Peter Schubert, and others have expanded the discourse on late-medieval, improvised composition to consider the epistemological reconfiguration and fraught historiography of notation in the Middle Ages. However, these scholars have not considered how this historiography is connected to the changing sociopolitical understanding of blindness, a similarly abstruse constellation of ideas, at the end of the fifteenth century.

Blindness in the Middle Ages—frequently inflicted as a juridical punishment thought more merciful than execution—may be considered a metaphysical “dying without death” and connoted a preternatural conduit between inspiration and music. Thus the Aristotelian notion of “dead music,” implicit in musical notation prior to the Renaissance, emerges from the Middle Ages reified by a Neo-Platonist reconceptualization of memory and mnemonics, and a

simultaneous othering of a robust legacy of music making by the blind. With Tinctoris's final treatise, then, we might imagine a nascent fetishizing of extemporaneity, its association with blindness already well established by the end of the fifteenth century.

**He Xian, The Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
**"Another Version of Madwoman—Chian Ch'ing in John Adams's *Nixon in China*"**

Madwomen have existed in operatic history for long. Susan McClary in her *Feminine Endings* describes the main sign that defines operatic madwomen as excesses "the verbal component of dramatic music" and transgresses "conventions of 'normal' procedure." According to this, a large number of female operatic characters can be deemed as eligible madwomen, even though they are not literally announced as ones.

Chiang Ch'ing is one of the most dazzling 20th century female operatic characters. Although her part in John Adams's *Nixon in China* is largely imaginative, the composer has successfully transformed her real life into a highly symbolic drama in the opera. Her aria "I am the wife of Mao Tse-tung" in act 2 is a thrilling moment, which has been extensively interpreted as a representation of her authority and manipulating power. But I argue in my paper that this is a typical "mad scene," and that Chiang is an operatic madwoman, though not announced literally.

Not only can the traces of feminized madness be found in the "I am the wife..." aria, such as the excess of communicative language, but also can the causes of her madness be found in act 3. By examining her part combined with other characters in act 3, a process in her marital life with Mao Tse-tung can be discovered in her reminiscence as started with erotogenic satisfactory, changed into sexual ignoring and unfulfillment, and finally ended up with repressed sexual yearning that is represented in "I can keep still." The "mad scene" with strong implications of active sexual behavior, therefore, can be deemed as the volcanic outcome of the transformed repression.

*Panel 2: Compositional Identity*  
*Chair: Norman Carey*

**Rosa Abrahams, Northwestern University**

**“Mahler’s Veil: Todtenmarsch, Topoi, and the Jewish Question”**

While Gustav Mahler’s music is not always interpreted as Jewish, doing so brings out social themes and commentary particular to Vienna at the end of the nineteenth century that relate to musical exoticism. I propose that Mahler’s music expresses a particular double-consciousness—specifically, his experience as an insider and outsider in Austro-Germanic musical society. To read this duality I focus on the Todtenmarsch of the first symphony, employing topic theory methodologies of Robert Hatten (1994) and Raymond Monelle (2000).

Mahler’s interweaving of certain topoi in the Todtenmarsch suggests a narrative rife with irony and double-voicedness: these include topoi from Western art music such as the pastoral and oriental, and what I term a “Jewish” or “Klezmer” topic. While the Todtenmarsch has been extensively analyzed for heroic narratives in conjunction with Mahler’s detailed program, it has not been widely understood as an example of Jewish Modernism (Bohlman 2008). I relate Mahler’s use of topoi to his experiences of racially-based anti-Semitism, thus examining the historical discourse and resistance of Jewishness in readings of the first symphony. In reading the Todtenmarsch as an expression of Jewish double-consciousness, I also engage with W.E.B. DuBois’ conceptualization of “the Veil,” demonstrating through analogy the complex, subtextual, and often painful experience of the minority. Drawing on Sianne Ngai’s (2005) affect theory I show how topoi are distinctly positioned as double-voiced communicators of affect and racial stereotyping in Mahler’s music. As such, my reading strives to deepen both our understanding of Mahler’s music and the interpretive use of topic theory. It is my aim that by situating Mahler within DuBois’ veil and identifying evocative topical importations, I will more deeply understand Mahler’s hybridism within a context of his Jewish contemporaries and fin-de-siècle musical society.

**Trevor Nelson, Michigan State University**

**“Feminism as Nationalism? A Critical Perspective on Dame Ethel Smyth”**

While there is plentiful scholarship on nationalism and feminism in music, little attention has been paid to the combination of these two forces upon musical composition. Broadly speaking, this presentation poses the question: Can resisting the institutional subjugation of women become a nationalist project? Emerging political research in feminist nationalism has already shown that these campaigns have much in common; they both work towards liberating its citizens from oppression. I show that first-wave feminist goals have much in common with nation-building practices. In particular, my paper examines this phenomenon through the music of composer Ethel Smyth. She was an ardent feminist, who, I argue, composed and campaigned for a “feminist nation.” Smyth constructed this “feminist nation” in a number of ways. She combined her political activism with the composition of protest music, particularly the vocal work *The March of the Women*, which served as a call-to-arms for feminists worldwide. Through an examination of Smyth’s memoirs, it is clear that her position as an outsider in the musical sphere, as well as the perhaps surprising difficulty she had with cultivating strong bonds within the suffragette community, only strengthened her resolve to crusade for the absorption of the “feminist nation” into male-oriented society.

**Imani Mosley, Duke University**

**“‘I shall mutilate and silence the body where you dwell...’ Voice, Gender, and Sexuality in *Billy Budd*”**

The prospect of writing an opera with an all-male cast may seem like a daunting one. Britten, never one to shy away from a challenge, embraced it in a way that would support and feature the variety of men’s voices in his fifth opera, *Billy Budd*. As the only all-male opera of the twentieth century and possibly one of two to ever reach the stage, questions about the conventional (and gendered) roles of opera emerge. Melville’s story, on which the opera is based, is not without the usual story-lines of love, lust and corruption. Claggart’s struggle to destroy Billy is driven by something within but whatever that is, whether it be his awareness of his depravity or his terror at what that depravity might mean, it



is *homosexual*. For Britten, E.M. Forster, and Eric Crozier (the librettists), there is a love between Billy and Captain Vere that is strong enough to save and redeem Vere. And though the fostering of that love was an invention on the part of the librettists and composer to rehabilitate Melville's Vere, that love, specifically for Forster, was also *homosexual*. Is it important or necessary to represent these themes that have become gendered constructs and constants in opera in heteronormative ways or should they be approached and treated differently? This paper will address how conventional and heteronormative operatic themes are approached in *Billy Budd*, through voice, performance, and music and how the absence of women and the focus on homosociality and homosexuality shapes this work.

**Garrett Schumann, University of Michigan**  
**"Gender, Privilege, Aesthetics and Social Order in the Art World of Living American Composers"**

In March 2013, American composer Jeffrey Harrington went to Twitter to complain about the results of a composition competition. In September 2013, American composer John Adams used an interview in *The New York Times* to make a pointed aesthetic argument. These contemporary examples of composers' social behavior lend credence to the presence of what Howard S. Becker dubs, "art worlds," which are socio-artistic networks wherein art is made through a series of collective actions.

Art worlds not only contain artists and art works, but also include everything and everyone required to make, present, and evaluate artists and the art they produce (1983/2008, p. 23-34). Thus, art worlds are webs of interaction, which means the social activity of an artist is as important to their place in this network as their artistic activity.

The interconnection Becker identifies between artistic and social behavior may also provide us access to the social arrangements, such as those pertaining to gender, that predominate a specific art world. After all, sociologists argue gender is an, "interactive process," (Kessler and McKenna, 1978, p. 6), and that gendered social arrangements emerge from, "individual action," (Connell, 2012, p. 11).

Therefore, Jeffrey Harrington's tweet and John Adams' interview may be studied as subsets of the very process that defines gender's place in their social order.

To this end, Harrington and Adams' remarks suggest a hierarchy among living American composers dominated by male privilege that is clearly reinforced in individual action, but is also reproduced through this art worlds' institutions and ideologies. While I will only produce an overview of these dynamics, I aim to demonstrate how the relatively limited evidence of Harrington's tweet and Adams' interview can reveal a detailed sketch of the gender arrangements present in the art world of living American composers.

*Panel 3: Theory and Analysis*

*Chair: L. Poundie Burstein*

**Andrew Wilson, The Graduate Center, CUNY**

**"Metrical Normativity and the Sarabande: A Call for Contextual Analysis"**

Meter has long been recognized as a central purveyor of music's temporal normativity. In fact, the very label *meter* explicitly invokes measurement, which presumes a consistent, normative unit to do the measuring. Most modern approaches to musical meter have fundamentally considered it to be an issue of boundaries, of locating accented beat beginnings on various levels (Yeston 1976; Lerdahl and Jackendoff 1983; Benjamin 1984; Lester 1986; Schachter 1987/1999; Krebs 1987, 1999). These theories turn meter into a nested hierarchy of what Christopher Hasty (1997) has called "empty containers," each level internally differentiated only by the simple distinction between boundary and non-boundary, on and off the beat.

Metrical boundaries are obviously of extreme importance—they are undeniably the most basic element of meter; however, the obsession with boundaries has impoverished our analyses, desensitizing us to the richness of meter in some musics and even leading to significant misinterpretations. In this paper I focus on meter in Baroque sarabandes. While the stereotypical sarabande's consistent emphasis on beat 2 has been theorized abstractly as a metrical displacement dissonance (Krebs 1997), a proper analysis must address the pattern in context,

considering whether the pattern represents a conflict of two independent meters as well as the effects of deviations from the pattern and the appropriateness of an imagined “resolution.”

I maintain that rhythmically consistent music may establish metrical levels that are internally differentiated, involving distinct shapes of weight throughout a beat. I call these mutually dependent phenomena *dual-aspect meter* and *complex metrical consonance*, respectively. In contrast to theorists' habitual conceptualization outward from the late eighteenth century as well as the universalist attitude of cognitive and well-formedness constraints (London 2004), dual-aspect meter highlights the individual work's power to define its own contextual norms and deviations.

**Alexander Martin, The Graduate Center, CUNY**

**“The Rising Fog: Zemlinsky’s ‘Stimme des Abends’ Fantasy Op. 9, No. 1”**

This paper will explore how Alexander Zemlinsky’s “Stimme des Abends” fantasy inverts three different norms. First, the piece runs counter to traditional text-music relationships as exemplified in Lieder, where the accompaniment is typically subordinate to the voice. By the mid-nineteenth century, Lied composers sought to elevate the role of the piano accompaniment to rival that of the singer. Zemlinsky pushes this trend to its extreme, obviating the need for a singer entirely and relying solely on the piano to evoke the meaning of Dehmel’s text. My analysis will demonstrate how the latter is achieved primarily in the interaction of three recurring musical images that have their counterparts in the text.

Second, Zemlinsky’s setting reverses the text’s narrative perspective. Written from a second-person perspective, the poem describes an encounter between man and nature that turns from tranquility to terror. However, incongruity between the ABA’ structure of the music and the two-strophe structure of the text invites a reading in which the music narrates from *nature’s* perspective.

Finally, my analysis will highlight Zemlinsky's unusual method for composing-out conspicuous "promissory notes" (Cone 1982). E ♭ major tonic harmony is saturated with non-chord tones F#, D, and A ♮. Clustering to create an apparent V/iii, we are led to expect that G minor will be developed later as a secondary key area. Instead, Zemlinsky crafts each note as a locally dissonant goal-post in the contrasting B section, culminating in an unorthodox re-transition that hinges on the dual identity of F# qua G ♭. The resultant ambiguity of form, modality, and pitch identity speaks to the primary image of fog in the text.

**Andrew Chung, Yale University**

**"Comrade Roslavets and his Third Piano Trio: Form, Norms and Disabling Music Analysis"**

The music of Nikolai Roslavets has, until fairly recently, suffered neglect from the scholarly community. And while the past three decades have witnessed a small blossoming of interest in his fascinating post-tonal idiom, scholars have tended to focus on his smaller works for piano solo; the English-language explorations of Roslavets' large scale works can literally be counted on one hand. In a recent issue of *Music Theory Spectrum*, Inessa Bazayev has called for further detailed study of a number of his works including the one this essay is devoted to: the single-movement Piano Trio no. 3 (1921). Given the intense scholarly attention that has recently been devoted to what scholars have dubbed the "new *Formenlehre*," this essay aims to subject Roslavets' third Piano Trio to sonata-theoretical scrutiny à la Hepokoski & Darcy.

I will demonstrate how this piece can be shown to be in dialogue with 18th-century sonata procedures. However, it occasions an interrogation of formal normativity, since the very fact of Roslavets' post-tonal idiom means that the normativity of Roslavets' sonata architecture can be secured only *analogically* with respect to tonal practice. The difficulty of making certain sonata-theoretical determinations in a non-tonal idiom, such as deciding between Type 1 and Type 2 formal planning, inspires a Derridean meta-critique of sonata theory and its relationship to disability studies as described by Joseph Straus. Moments of

undecidability inspire a deconstructive reading of the problematic norm-deformation bipole that sonata-theory is associated with, proposing that a *supplemental* space in which reveling in undecidability displaces as primary the impulse to assign sonata procedures to *categories* (such as Type 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; normative, deformational, etc.). Moreover, other questions of normativity arise. For one thing, studies of Roslavets (and his contemporaries) challenge pedagogical norms in dealing with early European musical modernism, a topic that often orbits Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Furthermore, as early as 1962, George Perle has noted that Roslavets freely inserts and deletes notes from pitch-collections. This mounts a deep challenge to our practices of normalizing musical spans or entire pieces to single, generative pc-sets. In this vein, I conclude with some thoughts on how set-theoretical toolkits might steer away from normalizing impulses into more inclusive, yet rigorous, characterizations of pc-set content.

*Panel 4: Contemporary Music(s)*

*Chair: Kendra Preston Leonard*

**Tobin Chodos, University of California, San Diego**

**“Talking in Tongues”**

Deconstructivism argues that any claim language may lay to semiotic stability is necessarily predicated on a theological postulate. To believe that words can be reliable mappings of concept to sound is essentially a leap of faith. According to George Steiner, we have for a hundred or so years been living in the aftermath of this “broken contract” between word and world, an epoch he terms the “after-word.” In everyday life we rely upon language to signify, even if deep down we may know better; in the after-word, our Judeo-Christian inheritance continues to shape our use of language in ways we do not always acknowledge and cannot always critique.

Western art music shares this inheritance, and in many ways the contemporary music elite depends upon the same religious postulates as language itself. This paper first traces the history of the notions of art-religion and absolute music in the European musical tradition, and argues that these religious attitudes remain

latent in the contemporary music departments of the American university. These legacies are difficult to see clearly for being so deeply entrenched in contemporary music culture, a fact that makes them difficult to critique from within. To do that work, I rely on the virtuoso tradition of the African-American gospel church. Here we see a highly developed musical style in which God is named explicitly (in contrast with the Jewish liturgical tradition, where such nomination is strictly forbidden, and with Euro-American music culture, which has thoroughly exnominated itself in the cultural landscape). Ironically, gospel music, relieved of Euro-American art-religious gravity, may be more “secular” than its elite cousin in the university. Thinking about the differences between these two treatments of religion in music, moreover, might be the best way for contemporary music to learn the lessons of deconstructivism.

**Ryan Mack, Carleton University, Ottawa**

**“From Falsetto to Scream: Synergistic Masculinity and Vocality in Emo Music”**

Emo music develops from a genealogy that includes punk and hardcore. It differs significantly from its predecessors in its focus on individual rather than collective identity politics. A largely white, middle-class music scene, emo originated during the mid-1980s in Washington DC. Since emo’s origin, its vocality has ranged from soft, delicate falsetto and head tones, to low, corporeal tones developed in the resonating chambers of the chest, to screams produced toward the back of the throat. Each of these sites, combined with their variability in timbre and pitch, result in drastically expressive masculine voice.

The male voice represents a politics of gender in popular music. How does one sing and sound like a man in rock musics? Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie attempted to answer this question in 1978, as did John Shepherd in 1991. The male voice in rock has been dichotomized in popular and academic discourses, manifesting itself as polar opposites: dominant-hegemonic and subordinate-effeminate. This does not suggest that male rock performers are bound to these categories; Ken McLoed (2001), Susan Fast (2001), and Sheila Whiteley (1997 and 2007) have all discussed how the male voice in popular music can be heard at both poles. However, their views do suggest a point of departure for exploring a masculine voice that operates outside of normative interpretations. I expand the

hegemonic/effeminate dyad by surveying R.W. Connell's social organization of hegemonic, complicit, marginalized, and subordinate masculinities.

In discussing the sites of vocal production, timbre, and pitch of emo performers, I argue that emo performers simultaneously interact with multiple masculinities to develop a synergistic masculine vocality. I draw upon a number of examples to illustrate this synergy as a cohesive and expressive characteristic that emo performers use to develop subjective masculine identities. I posit that performances of synergistic masculinity in emo that are personally motivated affect our conception of what is considered a *normal* masculine voice.

**Scott Interrante, Hunter College, CUNY**

***"Midnight Memories/Musical Masculinities: Reading Genre and Gender in the Music of One Direction"***

From the beginning of their career, British boy band One Direction, have challenged many of the traditional characteristics of boy bands such as matching outfits and choreographed dance routines. Increasingly, their music has also subverted expectations of boy bands, and on their most recent LP, *Midnight Memories*, One Direction embraces stadium rock and contemporary folk styles as opposed to the "teenybopper" pop of most boy bands. These challenges to boy band traditions can be seen as the manifestation of masculine anxiety over the perception of pop music, and boy bands in particular, as feminine and inauthentic. While many interesting points can be discussed in regards to the band's presentation in music videos, live performance, fashion, and social interaction, this paper focuses specifically on the ways One Direction employs genre signifiers as coding for normative masculinity. Throughout *Midnight Memories*, the band evokes and invokes (or rips-off, one may claim) the stadium rock of bands like Def Leppard and The Who as well as the contemporary folk-pop of bands like Mumford and Sons and Of Monsters and Men. This paper examines the specific musical cues used to evoke these genres and the ways the band tries to counter perceptions of femininity and inauthenticity by relying on assumptions and perceptions of the evoked genres.

## 2014 GSIM Committee

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The Planning Committee would like to thank the Doctoral Students' Council for their generous support of this event. A special thank you goes to Dr. Kendra Preston Leonard for accepting our invitation to lead our workshop and to our presenters for all their hard work. In addition, we would like to thank Dr. Norman Carey (Music Department Executive Officer and session chair), Dr. Joseph Straus (GSIM Faculty Sponsor and session chair), and Dr. Poundie Burstein (session chair). And last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank Tonisha Alexander and Jaqueline Martelle (Music Department APOs) for their assistance in making sure all events go according to plans.

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