
The Thai musical instrument collection at UCLA, assembled by Dr. David Morton, has a prominent place in the collective memory of the Thai musical community. My project to restore these instruments, carried out over 2014-2015, provoked a resurgence of interest among Thai musicians around the world as well as at the Thai royal palace. Their symbolic value, which had remained dormant for decades, was suddenly felt by musicians who desired to play these instruments themselves. I examine the layered notions of ownership that musicians ascribe to these instruments, ranging from desires for their repatriation to expressions of the necessity of their "proper" use. The instruments, having come from a prominent musical family central to the Thai classical tradition, become a material manifestation of musicians' beliefs about their tradition, regardless of the present realities of their context and ownership. I explore this international discourse through fieldwork in Thailand and ongoing electronic communications to reveal the emerging mythologies that surround this particular set of instruments, and juxtapose this discourse with the evidence from archival materials in the U.S. and Thailand.

Kathryn Alexander (Sonoma State University). “Cape Breton Girl: Performing Whiteness with Natalie MacMaster.”

Normative gendered and ethnic Scottish Cape Bretoner identity is constructed through traditional music and dance performance and practice. I examine how Natalie MacMaster, a star performer and international ambassador of Cape Breton’s traditional Scottish music and dance, constructs her gendered and ethnic identities as normative and quintessentially Cape Breton through her stage performances on the island and internationally. The vision of Scottish Cape Bretonness she crafts shapes the perceptions and expectations of Cape Breton held by non-islander consumers of the island’s Scottish culture and Scottish residents. As an unofficial cultural ambassador, MacMaster’s every performance, at home and away, becomes a tourism encounter tying Cape Bretonness to ethnic whiteness, traditionalism, and heteronormativity. Celtic Studies is beginning to examine how Scottish intellectuals in North American used the popular press to construct themselves as white people to escape ties to other ethnically marginalized Celtic groups (Newton 2013). Ethnomusicology is also developing a body of scholarship examining the intersection of critical race theory with musical cultures (Hayes 2010, Wong 2011). My examination of heteronormativity in the context of a Celtic community-based music culture, and my application of an intersectional critical race and queer theoretical lens to the social rules and roles behind and implicit in musical praxis is unprecedented in Celtic Studies or ethnomusicology. This research expands both fields by interrogating formerly unmarked identity categories that are implicit in community practice, tourist and audience expectations, and promotions of the music by tourism organizations, concert and festival promoters, and practitioners themselves.

This paper examines the creation of the Argentine ‘Indian’ portrayed primarily through Andean music and dance, and dissects the competing ways in which this depiction simultaneously contributes to and detracts from the struggle for indigenous recognition. Historically, in Argentina, the gaucho, the White archetype of folkloric music and dance, has been propagated, and autochthonous, non-European art forms have been repudiated. Today, proponents of the Argentine indigenous movement have engendered a revitalization of Andean culture through establishing ties between the Argentine indigene and a mythologized Incan heritage: a trend of Latin American indigenismo. Concurrently, opponents of Bolivian immigration maintain that the proliferation of Andean music and dance is evidence of an invading culture threatening to subsume a “pure” Argentine identity. I examine this paradox through the lens of the comparsas de los indios (Indian parade groups), which take place annually during Carnaval; participants perform Argentine genres, wearing costumes based on a range of sources including extant Argentine native communities, images of Sioux and Apache from Hollywood Westerns, and a mythologized Incan. Ultimately, I argue that the comparsas de los indios urge a re-telling of Argentine history and the visibilization of native peoples mapped onto a White imaginary. However, I also contend that the comparsas’ essentialized Argentine “Indian” undermines indigenous identity aspirations and reinscribes an exclusionary rhetoric in which indigenous and Andean culture and people are viewed as encroaching on a purely Argentine way of life. My paper contributes to ethnomusicological research on displaced people confronting the mainstream through music and dance.


Present in Panama since the 19th century, the Chinese diaspora in Panama City, Panama represents an empowered community of hybrid individuals who identify as both Chinese and Panamanian. These hybrid Chinese Panamanian identities emerge through an engagement with transnational media and digital technologies. Specifically, music surfaces as especially important as a sonic marker of this Chinese Panamanian hybridity. Within the Panamanian Chinatown of El Dorado, an interesting mixture of both Chinese and Latin American popular music genres sound throughout the various stores. This mixture of music genres demonstrates Chinese Panamanian agency in asserting and reaffirming the diasporic community’s status as both Chinese and Panamanian. In this paper, I argue that the Chinese diaspora within Panama City, Panama shapes and asserts to the rest of Panamanian society its hybrid identity through its technocultural use of global, mass-mediated musical genres. Further, the Chinese Panamanian community are consumers of globally available music genres, a phenomenon explored in detail by Timothy Taylor. As a community that has historically been marginalized, my research demonstrates the social implications for Chinese Panamanian engagement with digital musical technologies. Through a careful examination of the transnational relationships between music technologies and the communities that use them, this study offers a better understanding of how people in transnational and diasporic groups use and experience music to form hybrid identities. Additionally, the data from this project opens the door for further research in Chinese and East Asian studies within a Latin American context, with specific regard for music and technology.

George Blake (UCSB). “Minstrelsy is to Slavery as Rap is to the Prison Industrial Complex: Gangsters, White Jokers and The New Jim Crow.”

When commentaries on rap invoke blackface minstrelsy, the contours of these arguments necessarily depend on implicit understandings of the meaning of race, reality and power in post-Civil Rights
America. This paper engages commentaries on rap music that rhetorically invoke minstrelsy as part of their arguments. What work does minstrelsy do for these commentaries? What do comparisons to minstrelsy illuminate about rap? What do they obscure? A range of writers, filmmakers and musicians have drawn parallels between contemporary rap music and blackface minstrelsy. However, these voices emphasize different aspects of minstrelsy to make points about different aspects of rap. They also bring in assumptions about what has been transformed about race in society. For example, in her 2012 book The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, Michelle Alexander describes gangsta rap as a form of neo-minstrelsy that traffics in stereotypes and exalts in the criminalization of people of color. She asserts that gangsta rap serves to legitimate a system of mass oppression that links to earlier systems of racial control. In his 2010 documentary Blacking Up: Hip-Hop's Remix of Race and Identity, Robert Cliff draws a parallel between white youth interest in hip-hop and whites in the minstrel show. For Cliff, white hip-hop is largely a problem of white inauthenticity against an unproblematic black authenticity. By juxtaposing debates within the scholarship of minstrelsy studies that contest inflexibly determinate meanings of the minstrel show, I explicate what is at stake in commentaries connecting rap to minstrelsy.

Alex Blue V. (UCSB) “Hear What You Want? Sonic Politics, Black Male Athleticism, and Racism-Canceling Headphones”

In 2013, Beats By Dre began a partnership with creative think-tank Prettybird to launch commercials promoting their new product, Beats Studio Headphones with Adaptive Noise Canceling. Spots showing prominent athletes Kevin Garnett and Richard Sherman withstanding and silencing a barrage of racially-charged questions and insults displayed the agency bestowed upon the user: the ability to “cancel out the haters” and form a personal, musical zone while in a bellicose public space. Given their content, it is hard to hear these commercials and claim an objective colordeafness. They force viewers, regardless of race, to identify with—or, at the very least, to recognize—the black male athletes facing racial scrutiny. Promising the power to “Hear What You Want,” the ads are not just selling headphones—they are monetizing black identity and the power to ignore racism for an audience that has not necessarily lived these experiences. In the years that have followed these initial commercials, even more ads have been released under the “Hear What You Want” tagline, each constructing an image of blackness via technology. A primary rival company, Bose, has begun to follow suit, airing their own athlete and celebrity-studded advertisements in an effort to gain back market share. What complications arise from the sale of a musical technology that is assumed to be neutral, but actually carries multiple social, cultural, and racial implications? In recent years, scholars across the musicologies, in sound studies, science and technology studies, et al, have written at length about cultural and racial uses of technology. In this paper, I extend and nuance this discourse to include not only the use of technology, but the racialization and masculinization of sound, space, and music technology as objects.


In 2012, the renowned rapper Snoop Dogg briefly reinvented himself as a reggae singer known as Snoop Lion. This metamorphosis was based on a pilgrimage to Jamaica that culminated in a religious conversion to Rastafarianism. While the resulting album Reincarnation was well received among critics and listeners at home in the United States, Bunny Wailer and the Rastafari Millennium Council both denounced Snoop’s actions as “fraudulent.” As an African-American man hailing from a low-income district in Long Beach, California, Snoop Dogg aligned himself symbolically with shantytown dwellers in Jamaica. During this time, Snoop adopted Rastafarian attire, imagery and performance practices, even feigning a Jamaican patois in several songs from the album. My research on this subject has led me to the following questions: How do accepted social movements (in this case,
Rastafarianism) provide musical artists with new resources for cultural capital? For example, in what ways do these links, however tenuous, provide a veneer of insight and emotional depth? Moreover, in what ways do associations with movement cultures imbue popular musical artists with populist sensibilities and compassionate reputations? In this study, I will demonstrate how Snoop’s forays into reggae allowed him to advocate for gun control and celebrate marital fidelity–positions that would likely be attacked and ridiculed within gangsta rap culture. Surveying the quick rise and demise of Snoop Lion, I will attend to issues regarding market appeal and appropriative practice as well as both the rigidity and utility of genre constructions.


The Shiraz Arts Festival was a weeklong annual summer festival that ran from 1967 to 1977 in the city of Shiraz, Iran. Subsidized by the Iranian government and spearheaded by Queen Farah Pahlavi, it created an intercultural space by showcasing modern, classical, and avant-garde arts from the “East” and “West,” as well as collaborations between foreign and domestic artists. According to the queen, the festival’s aim was to stimulate democracy in-country. During a decade when the king, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, was facing criticism nationally and internationally for being a tyrant responsible for countless human rights violations, many Iranians viewed the festival as a symbol of western decadence and modernism. In retrospect, it may be seen as a motivator in the slide towards the Islamic Revolution of 1979. This paper focuses on two specific pieces of the festival. The first is "Polytope de Persepolis" (1971) by Greek composer Iannis Xenakis, an hour long tape piece that many locals felt celebrated the gluttonous and debauched regime, while ignoring Iran’s Islamic history. The second piece is a performance of the traditional Islamic Iranian opera known as Ta’ziyeh. This well-received operatic passion play, which was attended by tens of thousands of spectators, operated as a theater of protest, symbolically comparing the Shah to the ruthless Arab caliph, Yazid I. This paper shows how these two musical spectacles referenced two different facets and periods of Iranian history and ultimately, within its intercultural context, fanned the flames of revolution.


The ukulele has gained global popularity in this millennium as evidenced by continuously rising instrument sales, print and Internet communications devoted to it, and ukulele festivals worldwide. Equally indicative is the proliferation of uke classes and clubs on every continent. In the Los Angeles–area South Bay, home to thousands of first and second generation Hawaiian–born migrants, ukulele instructor Lincoln Kaio has attracted to his three ukulele groups, collectively known as ULU (Uncle Lincoln’s Ukuleles) roughly 80 older adults reflecting the diversity of Hawai‘i itself: Native Hawaiians, mixed–race Hawaiians self–identifying as Hawaiian, Asian–Americans not self–identifying as Hawaiian, and small numbers of Hawaiian–born and mainland–born Caucasians. Kaio insists ULU is neither class nor club, but “a gathering.” Steeped in traditional cultural practices since his childhood on Oahu’s North Shore, the 65–year old retired machinist has created over the past 10 to15 years (no one agrees on an exact number) what I would call an imagined Hawaiian diaspora community. The proposed paper explores dimensions of this extended ohana, including musical repertoire, Kaio’s teaching style, the connection with wife Sissy Kaio’s hula Halau o Lilinoe, foodways, invented traditions, and special events. Based on over two years of participant observation, interviews with Kaio and ULU participants, and analysis informed by writings of Anderson, Clifford, Halualani, Hobsbawn, Solomon, Seeger, Spickard, Stillman, and others, the paper also reveals contradictions within the imagined community and it contrasts ULU with two other South Bay ukulele groups led by Hawaiian–born instructors.
Andrea Decker (UCR). "If I Am Your Rib, I Must Be Your Property": Gender, Sexuality, Consumerism, and Nation in Dangdut Music Videos."

Dangdut, a popular dance music of Indonesia, has held contradictory associations in its forty-year history: secular eroticism and Islam morality, urban rock and rural sensibility, music of the masses and music of the modernizing nation-state. Much of scholarship on dangdut has focused on the "king" and inventor of dangdut, Rhoma Irama, or on Inul Daratista, the singer and dancer whose body famously became the center of national and international debates over pornography, censorship, and Indonesia's position in the age of mass media. Though scholarship on dangdut tends to focus on historical figures and controversy, dangdut continues to be a highly consumed and controversial form of popular music in Indonesia. Nagaswara, the third-largest record label in Indonesia and the record label boasting the most dangdut artists, produces dangdut music and videos that continue to demonstrate some of the historical contradictions of dangdut. Through analysis of Nagaswara's recent dangdut music videos with the most views on Youtube, I will analyze expressions of gender and sexuality in the lyrics and visuals of the videos, many of which center on the clothed and unclothed bodies of women and on narratives surrounding morality and gender expression. In addition, I will evaluate the narratives about consumerism, modernity, and Indonesia as a nation displayed in lyrics, costumes, and locations. Finally, I will show how these narratives of consumption, modernity, and nation intersect with the eroticism of women's bodies.


When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, it tore up the social fabric of a city whose economy depended almost entirely upon the producers of its rich culture. The largely African American neighborhoods where many of these culture bearers lived were among the worst afflicted, with families forced to flee after their homes were destroyed and unable to return due to the closure of several public housing projects. Those who were left responded just as black New Orleanians always have to the often-traumatic changes in their political, economic and social situation: not just with direct political action, but with music and dance, often in the form of a Sunday parade. ¶ A brass-band procession with origins in West African funeral traditions, the parade is known as a second line, and its form and function have remained basically unchanged for over 50 years. Ten years after Katrina, the neighborhoods that sustain the parades are plagued on one side by underfunded schools and internecine violence, and on the other by gentrification and the redlining-in-disguise of neoliberal urban policy. At the same time, second lines are attracting broader crowds and media attention than ever before. Based on two years of field research and interviews with local musicians, dancers, and educators, I explore herein how the key players in New Orleans second line culture utilize the parade and its rhythms to negotiate these contradictions, to reenact neighborhood histories, and to forge a counter-narrative of resistance and pride in the face of cultural erasure.


The newly formed Trans Chorus of Los Angeles is creating a safe and encouraging space for expression, personal development, and leadership for trans, intersex, queer, questioning and gender expansive individuals and their allies. In my ongoing fieldwork with trans identified musicians in LA and San Francisco, I have learned that this choir is determined to represent a community that has little public exposure. The choir’s artistic director, Lindsey Deaton, has commented to me that the choir’s steering committee discussed whether or not to keep performances of the choir private in order to protect its members. Deaton told the Beverly Press, “No. In Los Angeles, our community is trying to create social change so trans people don’t feel like they have to extinguish their lives. Somewhere, in a small city, there could be a kid that needs to see trans folks living their truth and expressing
themselves.” The choir is an intimate space where gender expansive individuals are welcome, and a place where voices can be explored and expressed through music. The voices are not those of a traditional choir and are imagined and realized differently. But this is a challenge for some individuals in the choir when their voices and bodies do not appear to go together, and a challenge for the group as a whole as they seek openness and visibility. In this paper, I use Foucault’s concept of heterotopia to argue that feelings of isolation fade when connections are made in both imagined and real spaces of music.


The “Misa popular nicaragüense” (Nicaraguan Folk Mass) was a vernacular musical creation of the working-class parish of San Pablo Apóstol in Managua. Founded in 1966, the community was part of an alternative socio-theological movement that flourished independently of the Second Vatican Council’s reforms. Although its history has remained obscure, the “Misa popular” played an important role within the Nicaraguan Catholic Church as it took its first tentative steps towards modernization in the late 1960s. New evidence shows that its dissemination through early commercial recording and publication of its text contributed to its status as the only Nicaraguan vernacular mass to have been accepted at the popular level and approved for celebration by the Catholic hierarchy. In addition, the original LP recording reveals the mass to be much more stylistically diverse and politically charged than has been recognized. San Pablo’s alternative pastoral and organizational model was borrowed from a radical approach developed in Chicago during the 1950s by Father Leo Mahon, whose work with marginalized Puerto Rican immigrants provided the basis for a new catechism—“Familia de Dios” (Family of God). At each point where the progressive model was embraced, traditional culture was an essential component in the religious expression of the community, culminating in the adaptation of the liturgy and music of the mass. Initial success in Chicago subsequently inspired the creation of emblematic vernacular masses in a traceable connection of communities where “Familia de Dios” thrived—San Miguelito (“Misa típica”), San Pablo Apóstol (“Misa popular”), and Solentiname (“Misa campesina”).

Jonathon B Grasse (CSU, Dominguez Hills). “(T)here is a Place . . . (W)here(?)”

Recent ethnomusicological research focuses on performance of place (e.g., Magowan and Wrazen, 2013). This paper outlines two considerations for “deep” regionalism, developed from studies in the interior highland state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. “Deep” is used in two senses. The first acknowledges the breadth of socially and historically varied music genres celebrating identities of place within regionalist sentiments. Relationships among genres and their social spaces/contexts reveal Minas Gerais as a heterogeneous cultural territory. Four such genres include: locally composed, colonial-era liturgical music; regionalist-tinged popular songs from the globally-influenced Corner Club collective (Clube da Esquina); the country music (música caipira) of the ten-string folk viola; and the popular Catholicism of Afro-Brazil’s sacred congado processions. This paper summarily references each via interviews with practitioners completed between 2013 and 2016. A second sense of depth stems from an individual’s musical experience and behavior, where neurophenomenological theories of music cognition (Schiavio, 2014) theorize place in our imagining and interpreting of the world. Theories of embodiment and enactment illustrate this sense-making where emotions and memories form experiential identities of place. This paper very succinctly surveys the term “embodiment” as used by contributors to the journal Ethnomusicology (2006-2014). Hermeneutic identity of place conjures more than just regional resistance to nationalism and globalism, offering important meanings to social spaces beyond mere ethnographic location. With the goal of celebrating social space and understanding cultural territory, “deep” regionalism considers a breadth of genres while locating in our musical experiences the flash of identity of place.
Andrew Green (Royal Holloway, University of London). “Sounding the “Right to the City”: Music, Activism, and Public Space in Mexico City.”

Abstract: How can music be used to claim the right to urban space? In Mexico City, pro-Zapatista activist groups often gather in public spaces to put on politico-cultural events whose stated goal is to "spread the word" about the Zapatista movement's aims, ideals, and histories. Live performances of music of a variety of genres (trova, rap, ska, reggae soundsystem, rock) are the centrepieces of such events. During fieldwork in late 2012 and early 2013, I observed the ways that, in these events, activists employed musical performance for strategic ends, exploiting legal loopholes associated with "culture" to claim public spaces off-limits to openly political events. As I witnessed on a number of occasions, these activists were engaged in an ongoing cat-and-mouse game with local authorities over their "right to the city" (cf. Harvey, Lefebvre) that they often won.

In this paper, I will argue that such events served a double purpose: a one-way dynamic of musical dissemination aimed at a change in public consciousness was simultaneously being used to normatively establish these groups' presence in public spaces, both implicitly and explicitly. However, these aims also affected the music performed at such events. Conceived of as a "vehicle" through which political messages could be transported, musical performance became a passive affair with which physical interaction on the part of audiences was often discouraged. As a one-way performance of communication, then, music asserted control: over listeners' consciousness, and over the social space they created and inhabited.

David Harnish (University of San Diego). “Cecil Taylor and the Kyoto Prize.”

Cecil Taylor, an uncompromising jazz avant-gardist who began his career in the 1950s, was awarded the Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy (Music subcategory) in 2013. The fact that he won signaled a change in the way that Kyoto Prizes – one of the major international human achievement awards – are bestowed. He was the first African American, the second recipient of African descent, and the first jazz artist ever recognized in the 29 previous years of three annual Kyoto Prizes (other annual categories are Advanced Technologies and Basic Sciences) up to 2013. As academic liaison from San Diego, I attend the Kyoto Prize ceremonies each year and work with the Arts and Philosophy laureate to prepare for a 90-minute symposium in San Diego, which attracts 500-1200 attendees, four months after the ceremonies in Kyoto. In reflecting the phenomenology of experience and ethnomusicologies of the individual, this paper will explore Taylor’s career, the various reasons why Taylor fit the Prize criteria and was awarded, the positions and histories of the Kyoto Prizes and the ceremonies, the receptions of Taylor’s music in Japan and the US, the wildly differing responses to his performances and artistry in Kyoto during the ceremonies, and the challenges of preparing the Symposium four months later in San Diego. Embedded within the presentation are considerations of aesthetics and awards, politics, racism and neocolonialism, changing preferences within jazz history, and Taylor’s personal story in interaction with the Kyoto Prize and its ceremonies.

Deonte Harris (UCLA). “Revelry or Revolution?: Masquerading the “Black Radical Tradition” at London’s Notting Hill Carnival.”

Since the 1980s, there has been a marked shift in black studies from nationalist-centered investigations to explorations of the cultural and socio-political linkages/exchanges between black communities worldwide. This groundbreaking literature (“black Atlantic”/”black internationalism”) merges the modern economic, social, political, and cultural histories of Africa, Europe, and the Americas, proposing that they be considered in relation to each other, to move beyond white and Eurocentric notions of modernity, freedom, humanity, and culture. From this orientation, this paper advances an “Afrocentric” investigation of a Europe-based carnival, London’s Notting Hill Carnival (NHC),
illustrating the ways the NHC serves as an important conduit of black international politics and cultural production, and facilitates the circulation of resources, ideas, information, people, and music from Africa and the Americas to Britain, and back into the diaspora. ¶

In this paper, I provide ethnographic data of the NHC and its musical and performance arenas, as well as an examination of the lives of community activists Claudia Jones, Darcus Howe, and John La Rose and their contributions to the development of London’s postwar carnival culture. In my analysis, I illustrate how, in the vestiges of slavery, colonialism, and empire, NHC is not only a cultural celebration of freedom, love, and artistic creativity, but also a performance of black resistance that challenges the “status quo” through dreams of changing British society and the wider world. I argue that the music-art-culture of London’s black carnivalists is the artistic manifestation of what historians Cedric Robinson and Robin Kelley call the “Black Radical Tradition.”


The 1980s in Africa have been frequently described as “the lost decade.” The neoliberal reforms implemented by international institutions during that period, mostly in the form of structural adjustment, had pernicious economic and social effects in many African countries. In this paper, I analyze the ways in which these neoliberal reforms transformed the popular music scene in Equatorial Guinea during the late-1980s and early-1990s. The structural adjustment programs were a series of loans granted to developing countries by financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. They were intended, according to their proponents, to reduce poverty and promote economic growth and democracy. Yet, attached to tight conditionalities, what they caused was precisely the opposite: wealth inequality, further indebtedness, and political corruption. In Equatorial Guinea, these neoliberal reforms arrived in an already delicate situation: by the 1980s the country’s economy was on the ropes because of Francisco Macías’s bloody dictatorship (1968-1979). Drawing on four weeks of fieldwork in Malabo and Bata, I argue that structural adjustment programs caused deep changes in the Equatoguinean popular music scene. Firstly, they triggered a dependency on foreign aid, and specifically on the French and Spanish cultural centers, which began to fund most of the musical production in the country. Secondly, they motivated the individualization of music: due to difficult accessibility to musical instruments, big rock bands disappeared and individual singers emerged. Thirdly, they caused a dispersion of musicians, who migrated to nearby countries and Spain to improve their labor conditions and career opportunities.

Sunaina Keonaona Kale (UCSB). “Is This Land Your Land?: Cultural Ownership and Belonging in Hawai’i.”

Who owns culture? Who belongs to a culture? These questions inevitably follow one after another, haunting academic and in public discourse. In the case of this paper, I ask who owns Hawaiian music and who is Hawaiian? These questions hung over my preliminary fieldwork in Hawai’i this summer; as someone who is at once indisputably Hawaiian (I can trace my Hawaiian genealogy) and barely Hawaiian at all (I am less than a quarter Hawaiian and was born and raised outside of Hawai’i), they complicate my position as a researcher. This fraught feeling of belonging and not belonging is the product of ongoing colonialism, struggles for political recognition, "traditional" genealogies and conceptions of culture, efforts to decolonize the academy, multiculturalism, appropriation, and western academic discourses of social constructivism, cosmopolitanism, globalization, and diaspora. Rather than endorse a particular line of argument, I argue that these conceptualizations of Hawaiian and indigenous racializations more generally are mutually constitutive and relational, following Ana María Ochoa Gautier’s similar theorizations. I also draw from her idea that race is embedded in a host of other concepts, such as nature vs. culture, colonialism, modernity, and personhood. I demonstrate how the various discourses surrounding Hawaiian racializations and cultural ownership are intimately
related, mutually constituted, and extraordinarily fluid. In particular, I focus on the many iterations and deployments of what I call "race as identity," the idea that racialized others have an essential quality that defines them as such, in regards to discourse surrounding the ownership of musics of Hawai‘i.

Yi-Chieh Lai (University of Hawai‘i at Manoa). “Performing the Cultural Revolution and Chineseness in Today’s Taiwanese Guzheng Music.”

Ethnomusicologists have explored how politics impacts the development of music by tracing the ways that politics and culture become powerfully conflated. In this paper, I examine a case in which musicians have actively resisted this conflation. In the 1960s and 1970s, responding to mainland China’s Cultural Revolution that aimed to eradicate traditional Chinese culture, the Nationalist government in Taiwan launched the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement to restore and assert Chinese traditional culture and values. Despite the political tension between the PRC and ROC governments and the complete ban on movement across the border before 1987, guzheng music composed in mainland China during the Cultural Revolution became highly popular in Taiwan. Taiwanese guzheng performers incorporated Cultural Revolution music into their repertoires in Taiwan and in overseas performances billed as representing Taiwan. Through an analysis of performances, scores, and performer interviews, I will show how the tension presented in politics is mediated by the guzheng performers’ representation of cultural practice; how “Chineseness” is presented and represented in guzheng music of the Cultural Revolution; and how the guzheng has played a key role in constructing a cultural identity—as distinct from political identity—that transcends the borders of nations and ideologies.


Discourse in ethnomusicology surrounding globalization, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism often considers western powers (i.e., former European colonial powers and the United States) as the main catalysts or centers for such phenomena. Since the 1980s, scholars in many disciplines have begun to explore the Indian Ocean as a cultural continuum, a network of complex cultural exchange that has operated outside a European-centric framework for centuries. In this paper, I contribute an ethnomusicological perspective to the literature on the Indian Ocean continuum by focusing on the development of fen al-sawt, a musical genre common in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula today. Fen al-sawt traces its roots back to nineteenth-century Bombay, where a diverse population including Yemenis, Kuwaitis, and Indians lived. Currently throughout the Arabian Peninsula, the genre contains many instrumental, musical, and lyrical elements that point to its diverse origins from Yemeni poetry styles to Indian (Hindi) linguistic and melodic elements. I situate fen al-sawt’s history in the context of political and economic exchange in the Indian Ocean world during the nineteenth century and discuss the development of the genre in the Arabian Peninsula throughout the twentieth century. I show how fen al-sawt is a byproduct of a historical cosmopolitanism with musical elements reflecting the Arabian Peninsula’s history within the Indian Ocean cultural continuum. I thus suggest an expanded historical and geographical scope of cosmopolitanism and globalization and call for a more diversified view of music as a cultural practice within the Arab world.


In October 2014 Filipino American dancers and musicians premiered the “Sulu Suite” in Grand Park, downtown Los Angeles. Based on nine years of fieldwork conducted in the Sulu archipelago in
southern Philippines by an ethnomusicologist and an ethnochoreologist, the 20-minute piece introduced traditional music and movement repertoires heretofore unheard and unseen by audiences outside of the Philippines. This roundtable draws upon first-hand perspectives of the suite’s choreographer, musical director, a performer, and an audience member. The Co-Directors discuss their personal struggles to embody their informants’ lineage and translate music and movement techniques, training non-native bodies through the rehearsal process. Aware of issues of representation, they developed careful protocols for donning attire and handling material culture. In seeking a metaphorical stamp of approval from master tradition bearers, where is there space for personal creativity and interpretation? How do their personal artistic choices reflect what they value as knowledge, when conceptions of what constitutes knowledge is different across social/community groups? Considering the history and contemporary state of Filipino-American performance, the roundtable explores the tension between staging an accessible, educational public performance without losing meaning to spectacle. More broadly, how can artist scholars hone methodologies and evaluative rubrics for performance that addresses the issues and challenges specific to any one ethnic group in diaspora? Roundtable participants use self-examination and critique to inform the production and rehearsal process. They seek a new methodology of grassroots performance as part of a larger movement towards applied ethnomusicology in the public sector.

Alyssa Mathias (UCLA). Panel abstract: Music, Trauma, and Commemoration. [see also paper abstracts submitted by Doleac, Mathias, and Pitic]

In the aftermath of collective trauma, music and other artistic practices can play an important role in processes of commemoration and healing. When viewed socially, culturally, and historically, these practices raise a number of questions: Who decides what it means to heal? Whose stories get memorialized? What futures can be imagined through commemoration? Drawing attention to individualized and/or counter-hegemonic narratives, this panel contributes to ethnomusicological studies of music and memory by investigating how music and other sonic practices of remembrance relate to the complex political and emotional legacies of particular traumas. We consider ethnographic examples from Europe and the Americas: commissioned izvorna songs commemorating individuals killed in the Srebrenica genocide (1995), emotionally-charged listening experiences among Armenian-American visitors to Turkey for Armenian genocide centennial commemorations, and second line parades in the black neighborhoods of New Orleans as an expressive response to continued socioeconomic marginalization and post-Hurricane Katrina gentrification.

Alyssa Mathias (UCLA). “We Are Here”: A Study of Sound, Listening, and Emotion among American-Armenian Participants at the Armenian Genocide Centennial Commemoration in Istanbul.”

Ethnomusicological research has drawn attention to the varied roles of music in practices of commemoration after traumatic events. Less studied are the broader sonic contexts of commemorative rituals. Incorporating recent research in sound studies, this paper examines recorded music, shouted political slogans, police radio static, and the opening and closing of metal barricades—that is, the dense sonic environment of the Armenian genocide centennial commemoration on Istanbul’s Istiklal Avenue on April 24, 2015. International coverage of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide focused on the Turkish government’s insistence that the massacres and deportations of Armenians at the fall of the Ottoman Empire should not be labeled as genocide. Nonetheless, a diverse crowd of Armenian and non-Armenian citizens of Turkey gathered in Istanbul to commemorate the genocide and protest the government’s stance. Also in attendance was a small group of American-Armenian heritage tourists, many of whom were the first in their families to set foot in Turkey since 1915. Drawing on participant observation and ethnographic interviews in Turkish, Armenian, and English, I explore the relationship between sound and emotion at the Istanbul commemoration. In particular, I consider the listening experiences of American-Armenian participants
who, their vision obscured by the crowd, relied on sound when evaluating their personal safety and commemorative practice in an unfamiliar environment. Foregrounding their descriptions of intense feelings of fear and hope, I inquire into the multi-generational legacies of trauma, as well as possibilities for empathy and dialogue in a politically-fraught context.

Lenka Moravkova (UCR). “From favelas to top charts: Commodification of Brazilian Genre Favela Funk Through One Sample Story.”

Rio de Janeiro’s bailes funk, or funk dance parties, are often described as intensely violent, aggressively sexualized in nature, and tremendously significant for the enormous crowds of poor, young people who attend them. They are considered one of the most polemical music practices in the world and congruently seen by academic researchers, local artists, and music journalists as a fundamental expressions of the culture of the city’s favelas, or squatter towns. In this conference paper, I present how sampling and style appropriation have participated in the process of commodification of favela funk and turned it into a marketed item of the national and world industry of electronic and hip hop music. Through a case study of one sample from favela funk artist MC Deize Tigrona, appropriated by famous producer Diplo, I focus on multiple perspectives of legal and ethical issues and subsequent after-effects and how favela funk was recognized as a strategy of authenticity and financial revenue, not only for white producers who appropriated the genre in their music production, but also by funkers and the Brazilian government.


Today in Morocco there are many opportunities for Sufi vocalists to engage in private rituals and public staged performances. While private rituals have been an important part of Sufi practice in Morocco for hundreds of years, public staged performances have only emerged in the last twenty-five years. A recent increase in performance is linked to the Moroccan monarchy’s 2004 decision to make Sunni Sufism a key element of official Moroccan Islam. This top-down promotion of Sufism in Morocco has contributed to opportunities for many singers, musicians, and listeners to creatively engage Sufism and Sufi music. However, the recent official elevation of Sufism also presents new problems. Despite the many festivals, public staged events, private rituals, radio and TV spots available to Sufis, there is fierce competition and ongoing debates regarding the qualities and abilities of a professional Sufi singer. Sufi performers must negotiate many roles such as ritual master and master performer as they operate in different contexts and become, as one Sufi singer told me, “birds who sing in many tress.” While some Sufis consider aspects of professionalization to have a deleterious effect on Sufi rituals and Sufism in Morocco, others believe that it helps preserve Sufism and contributes to more efficacious rituals. In this paper I present some prominent Sufi performers from Fez, Morocco and analyze the ways that they negotiate the different roles of a Sufi, the many contexts of Sufi ritual and performance, and different ideas of what it means to be a professional Sufi singer.

Priwan Nanongkham (Kent State University). “Musical and Cultural Adjustments of Thai Music in American Academia.”

Although David Morton is the pioneer who studied and introduced Thai music to American academia as early as the 1960s, unlike gamelan music of Indonesia, Thai music has never been that popular. Only few campuses own some instruments and for some reasons they had their ensembles active only for certain periods of time. In the end, the instruments are stored and left covered with dust. Kent State University; however, is the only campus that Thai ensemble has been continually active since it was
established. Founded by Terry Miller in 1978, the KSU Thai Ensemble is one of world music ensembles in our ethnomusicology program that has been continually offered to students for almost four decades. Among the total of four Thai music directors, I am the current one, who has held the longest position since 1998. Within almost two decades of teaching and directing Thai music at Kent State, I have learned how Thai music adjusts itself to fit into the new culture. In this presentation, I discuss the adaptation of Thai classical music both in its musical and cultural aspects through its musical transmission in American Academia. The analysis addresses the issues of what is most challenging in teaching Thai music outside Thailand, and how much of its musical culture has changed with this newborn Thai music in the United States.

Anant Narkkong (Luang Pradithphairoh Music Foundation, Thailand). “Sounding Treasures: David Morton's 1960s Thailand Field Recordings of Significant Compositions by Luang Pradithphairoh (Sorn Silpabanleng).”

Before the advent of recording technology, Thai music was transmitted and preserved through performance practices and human memory. Much has likely been lost as master musicians have selectively withheld knowledge from younger generations. Luang Pradithphairoh (1881-1954) was one of the most important teachers, composers, and musicians of the Thai classical music tradition, who left a substantial body of repertoire to his students through oral transmission. These complicated and advanced compositions are now regarded as being the pinnacle of Thai artistic values. However, his school did not survive long after his passing. Luckily, before the school closed in 1967 a recording session was conducted at the master's house with the collaboration of his descendants and his students who became the leading musicians of the late twentieth century. At the time, American ethnomusicologist David Morton was in Thailand conducting his research at the school for his Ph.D. dissertation at UCLA, and he was invited to join the recording project. Dr. Morton had worked with all of the top Thai musicians from Luang Pradithphairoh's school and recorded hundreds of compositions onto tapes, all of which are now kept at the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive. Today, the Luang Pradithphairoh Music Foundation and the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive are cooperating to repatriate these recordings and make them available to the public. This paper surveys our efforts to make the master's knowledge accessible to a new generation of Thai musicians.


Afro-diasporic musics have long been rooted in powerful intercultural alliances that defy liberal democratic models of multiculturalism and the logic of racial essentialism. Emerging from and responding to post-9/11 Islamophobia and increased fears of the brown Other, many musicians of color have similarly formed new interethnic collectives that resist exoticism and a black/white racial discourse endemic to jazz historiography. In this paper, I will examine these networks of brown musicians through the lens of Jason Stanyek’s (2004) notion of “intercorporeality,” or face-to-face contact. First, I explore pianist Vijay Iyer’s work with the South Asian diasporic ensemble Tirtha, which builds on a history of Indo/American interchanges in jazz while challenging narrow hybrid binaries. Next, I examine Iraqi American trumpeter Amir ElSaffar’s recent album Crisis (2015), which addresses the recent Middle Eastern conflict through a synthesis of pan-Arab styles and diverse improvisational practices. Drawing on Graham Locke’s (2000) notion of “bluetopia,” or jazz’s dual impulse of utopian imagining and remembering, and (auto)ethnographic reflections as a scholar/musician of color, I argue that these diverse collaborations enact a browntopia, or an alternative vision of brownness that resists narrow essentialism and imagines an increasingly interracial future. In addition, I posit a new form of intercorporeality that takes into account both listening bodies and technologies–human/non-human relata that resonate with the collective spirit of Afro-diasporic musics and recent developments in posthumanism. Ultimately, I hope to highlight the ways in which artists of color negotiate difference in
an era of increasing transnational mobility and virtual interconnectivity.

Badema Pitic (UCLA). “Commemorative Izvorna Songs as Sound Memorials of the Srebrenica Genocide.”

In the past decade, the izvorna music tradition has become a medium employed to commemorate the Srebrenica genocide. Specific to the eastern and northeastern parts of Bosnia and intrinsically linked with a sense of local identity, izvorna songs have been documenting everyday life since their inception in the late 1960s. Accordingly, izvorna singers have naturally assumed the role of commentators and recorders of war atrocities in Srebrenica during the war in Bosnia (1992-1995). In particular, izvorna songs commemorate the death of prominent soldiers and innocent civilians, and, starting in the 2000s, many izvorna songs became dedicated to the memory of the Srebrenica genocide victims. The majority of izvorna songs about the genocide are written and performed by lyricists and musicians who are genocide survivors themselves; however, what makes this commemorative musical repertoire unique is the practice of commissioned songs, through which genocide survivors living in Bosnia and abroad order izvorna songs dedicated to their relatives killed in the genocide. My paper focuses on this practice of commissioned songs, asking the following questions: How do these songs foster remembrance, and for whom are they intended? What are the reasons behind their creation, performance, and consumption? What does the existence of this practice suggest about the ways people choose and evaluate particular modes of remembrance as socially, culturally and politically appropriate or inappropriate? I approach these songs as examples of individual narratives about the genocide, positioning them as sound memorials that intend to evoke, preserve and document the memory of the victims.

Paula Propst (UCR). “Raising Cyborgs: Cultural Codes and Popular Music Instruction for Youth.”

Drawing on participant observation research within a community of rock camps for girls and queer youth as well as key feminist works (Grosz, 2005; Haraway, 1991), this paper explores negotiations of gender through technology, human bodies, and musical performance. While previous music scholarship examines gendered codes of musical instruments through a binary lens, with focus on femininity or masculinity of these objects, and provides a foundational look at gendered musical performance, specific questions need to be addressed further (Koskoff, 1987; Koskoff, 1995; Waksman, 1999; Walser, 1993). To expand on this scholarship, I examine the idea of gendered technological bodies through popular music performance and how cultural codes associated with musical instruments influence the education and performance practices of young girls and marginalized youth. For organizers, volunteers, and instructors at summer programs such as girls’ rock camps, this is an essential part of popular music instruction. The incorporation of technology relies heavily on adult volunteers’ established knowledge or adaptability of various forms of technology and musical “gear,” which brings into question Donna Haraway’s (1991) notion of cyborg and its connection to contemporary feminist social movements. The adult musicians, typically but not always identifying as feminist, who instruct youth on these instruments negotiate their own experience in musical performance and encourage a resistance of continual codification of instruments and gendered roles in music. Through popular music performance instruction, these older musicians challenge and simultaneously impose gendered binary dynamics in technology and musical performance to empower a younger generation through feminist ideologies.

Dr. Lara Diane Rann (Claremont Graduate University). “Student Experiences of Soul Healing in Music and Dance Performance Courses at The University of California, Los Angeles.”
This paper illuminates students’ experiences of “soul healing” through the cultivation of spirituality, self-love/ self-knowledge, mentorship, and community in the context of two UCLA courses: the Music and Dance of Ghana World Music Performance Ensemble, taught by master drummer Kobla Ladzekpo of the Anlo-Ewe ethnic group in Ghana, West Africa, and “Advanced Hip Hop,” taught by “street dance” pioneer and choreographer Rennie Harris, of Philadelphia, PA. My definition of soul healing is inspired by historian Bernice Johnson Reagon’s conviction that many African American music traditions were conceived and carried out for the purpose of treating the wounds left by “soul murder,” a phenomenon that historian Nell Irvin Painter characterizes as the collective trauma that resulted from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its aftermath. Drawing upon philosopher Arnold Van Gennep’s theory of rites of passage and anthropologist Victor Turner’s ensuing concept of liminality, I conclude that the courses explored in this paper create the circumstance for a transitioning into adulthood that empowers students to healthfully matriculate through the university while they heal mentally and physically from challenges faced before and during college. My qualitative research, based upon five years of participant observation, advances our understanding of the significance of ethnomusicology pioneer Mantle Hood’s theory of bi-musicality and the role of performance ensembles in current world music pedagogy, while also prompting a renewed appreciation for the presence of African and “African descended” music and dance instruction in higher education.


In 1958, Mantle Hood, the Indonesia specialist who established the renowned ethnomusicology program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), obtained a $39,000 Rockefeller Foundation grant to buy musical instruments from Thailand, Indonesia and Japan in pursuit of his ideal of "bi-musicality." As documented in UCLA’s Ethnomusicology Archive, the university’s fine collection of Thai classical instruments came in three batches (1960, 1965, 1969) through a collaboration between famed Thai musician Prasidh Silapabanleng and UCLA professor David Morton. Morton also lodged his Thai field recordings and photographs in the Archive. Morton taught UCLA’s Thai music ensemble for many years before retiring in 1985; thereafter, except for one performance in 1986 by Cambodian musicians, the instruments fell silent for thirty years, an apparent footnote to institutional and ethnomuscological history. Morton's recordings and photographs, too, were little used. Over academic year 2014-2015, however, a major project was undertaken to restore most of the instruments and have them played and taught again, and to repatriate Morton's now historic recordings to the Luang Praditphairoh Music Foundation in Bangkok. The previous repatriation of Morton's microfilms of historic Thai musical manuscripts provided a precedent for this. This panel addresses the ways in which the 2015 project and its 1993 predecessor have revived the decades-old connections between Thai and American institutions and individuals, and the benefits it is bringing to both sides.

Helen Rees (UCLA). “Music of Thailand at UCLA, 1960s to the Present: Instruments as Cultural Archives and Social Actors.”

I became the first faculty director of UCLA’s World Musical Instrument Collection in 2013, and soon decided to make our Thai instruments the pioneers in my push to return our magnificent but long neglected instrument collection to the forefront of our ethnomusicology program. With a budget of U.S. $8,000, I recruited Dr. Supeena Insee Adler from San Diego to assess and restore most of the Thai collection. The approximately sixty hours of restoration work took place over February-March of 2015, and I documented the process via still photography and interactive note-taking. To celebrate the completion of the restoration, Supeena and I organized a public event in May 2015 at which the instruments’ voices were heard for the first time in three decades. Community reaction, both in
California and Thailand, was overwhelming, as described in Supeena’s paper, and generous donations will support her teaching of two Thai music courses at UCLA in 2016. Drawing on articles in the journal *Ethnomusicology* by Eliot Bates (2012) and Megan Rancier (2014), this paper not only documents the history of our Thai collection, but also aims at what Bates terms a "lived organology," taking account of the "vibrant life of the material world," the capacity of musical instruments to act on social networks, and their ability to archive the cultural and institutional processes that shape their biographies. Information is derived from my observation of the restoration process, the May 2015 performance and subsequent community interactions, and from the wealth of documentary and audio-visual material preserved in the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive.

Juan David Rubio Restrepo (UCSD). “Stretching time: Transnationalism, soundscapes and technological agency in Cumbia Rebajada.”

The potential sound has as a tool for dominance (Ochoa Gautier 2014), negotiation and disruption (Moten 2003) has been at the forefront of recent sound studies literature. The encounter between the aural and the technological problematizes such processes and begs for particular theoretical frameworks (Stern 2003). For over 50 years, Colombian cumbia has been adopted in Monterrey, México, eventually becoming an aural signifier of the lower-marginal classes of the city. One particular practice made use of technological means to advance this process: cumbia rebajada. Rebajadas are slowed-down, lowered pitch renditions of cumbia songs – mostly by Colombian performers – made by decreasing the speed of the vinyl. While the establishment of Colombian music in Monterrey has been studied under the rubric of “la colombia de Monterrey” (Blanco Arboleda 2014; Olvera Gudiño 2005), rebajadas have been kept as part of a larger narrative. Focusing on issues of technological agency and the relation among identity, aurality and race-class, this presentation explores cumbia rebajada as a locus where issues of marginalization are exposed and actuality is resisted. The aurality rebajada indexes and their performative potential create poly-temporal spaces that disturb the present, allow re-imaging (re-performing) the past and hint towards alternative (utopian) futures, or what C.L.R. James (cited by Muñoz 2009) calls “a future in the present.”

Larry Robinson (UCLA). “Genre Circulation as Musical Multiculturalism and The Struggle for Recognition in Southern China.”

Yangshuo, a mostly agricultural county located in the Guangxi Zhuang (minority) Autonomous Region of southern China, has boasted a major international travel industry since the late 1970s, and has had over seven million annual visitors since 2000. The central narratives of cultural heritage tourism industry in Yangshuo town, an urbanized area of 76.5 square kilometers, include the region’s natural scenery (karst mountains and bending rivers), historic West Street, and folklore-based performances. Through discussions on music and everyday life in Yangshuo, my paper explores how the travel industry has redefined the sense of place for contemporary locals. I explore (1) the staged musical tourist performance Impressions Liu Sanjie (2004-present), (2) club culture on West Street, and (3) indie-pop music performed by street musicians. Taking Paul Ricoeur’s concept of recognition from his work *The Course of Recognition* (2005), I argue that musicians and audience members, on their quest for recognition, negotiate and strategically express local, regional, and national identities through musical performance and lifestyle. My paper first discusses the types of recognition presented by Ricoeur (recognition as identification, recognizing oneself, and mutual recognition); second, it highlights the cultural geographic and historical economic unfolding of the area; and third, it considers the impact of geography and history on the contemporary course of recognition of social groups formed through musical activities. My discussions will provide an example for ethnomusicologists and philosophical anthropologists exploring the impact of cultural geography and history the struggle for recognition.
Thai music is typically transmitted by oral tradition, i.e. musicians learning by rote without music notation. When modernization and Western culture affected Thailand in the late 19th century, many Thai scholars were concerned that Thai music was being destroyed. The idea of preserving Thai music in written form was initiated by the Thai Music Manuscript Project's founder, Prince Damrong-rajanuphap. Pra-Jenduriyang was a transcription director, and Thai musicians performed each composition for the Western-trained musicians to transcribe. The original manuscripts, which were kept at the National Theatre, were destroyed by fire in 1960. Fortunately David Morton, a doctoral student from UCLA who had come to Thailand to study Thai classical music, was allowed to microfilm all of the original scores in 1958-59 and brought five rolls of microfilm back to the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Copies of these microfilms were deposited at other institutions, including the Center for the Study of World Music at Kent State University. The author found these microfilms and established "The Lost Thai Music Restoration Project" in 1993, to reproduce the notation in updated form. A set of five books has been published and distributed to academic institutions around the world as an ongoing record of Thai musical heritage.

As has well been established, identity is something that is constantly in a process of construction and re-construction. The Okinawans identity construction happens in both the homeland and the diasporic communities, and from within their communities as well as from without. Okinawans in Hawaii are simultaneously diasporic and colonized, as well as colonizers. Despite racism and over a century of inter-marriage Okinawan-Hawaiian communities have developed a strong since of cultural identity that, although still in flux, has outwardly become standardized through organizations such as the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, whose initial mission was to help support Okinawans living in Hawaii in the face of language barriers and discrimination. Over time the HUOA and other Okinawan-Hawaiian organizations, through the process of community building, developed a notion of Okinawan identity through the celebration of music, dance, language, and culture. This celebration culminates annually in the Okinawan Festival at Kapiolani Park in Honolulu. Through the processes of transnational movements set up by the Okinawan governments and the HUOA and its sister organizations in Hawaii, the romanticized Okinawan-Hawaiian notion of Okinawan identity has been imported back to Okinawa and, to an extent, informs Okinawans of their Okinawan-ness. This is manifested through the creation of traditional culture displays designed for homeland tourism. This paper examines the processes of identity construction in diasporic communities and the ways in which those identities are exported back to the homeland, through the Okinawan and Okinawan-Hawaiian experiences.

Despite passing away in 2006, hip hop producer James Yancey - better known as “Jay Dee” or “J Dilla” – has become an increasingly important influence for contemporary jazz and hip hop artists. J Dilla initially gained recognition for his work with the Detroit-based group Slum Village in the 1990s, which led to his participation with the musical collective, the Soulquarians. With the Soulquarians, Dilla helped produce a number of albums that formed the basis of the “neo-soul” movement in the early 2000s. Shortly after this creative period, J Dilla was diagnosed with a rare blood disease that severely
limited his ability to travel and produce. Although he went through several musical phases in his career and experimented with many sounds, his down tempo, minimalist, atmospheric beats in particular, have taken on a second life among modern jazz and hip hop artists. This paper seeks to understand why J Dilla’s minimalist beat style has remained a core influence for so many artists, and draws primarily from J Dilla’s music, interviews with his peers, and articles addressing his career. In addition to his death, this paper argues that J Dilla’s musical and drum style, production techniques, contributions to music sampling, and knowledge of recorded music are all factors that have generated increased and continued enthusiasm for his music. By focusing on the interest in J Dilla’s music, this work also addresses themes of identity, music sampling, and live instrumentation in hip hop music culture.

Chamni Sripraram (Thai Cultural and Fine Arts Institute of Chicago). Workshop abstract: “Thai Klawng Yao Parade—The Thai Long Drum.”

The Thai Central Long Drum ensemble is mostly found in the central of Thailand. Because of most of the instrument is percussion type, it will enhance the Thai rhythmic fundamental for participants. A complete ensemble includes several Klawng Yao, a Ching, a Chap, a pair of Krap and one Mong. By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. follow the main time beating of Thai music by playing Thai Long Drums, Ching, Chap, Krap and Mong; 2. know the structure of the Thai Long Drum would be; 3. create the clean sound of open and close sounds on the drum; and 4 know the relationship among Thai music percussion instruments.

Elizabeth Stela (UCR). “The Brazilian Taiko Association and Nikkei Youth: Contesting and Inculcating ‘Tradition.’”

The Brazilian Taiko Association (ABT) was founded in 2002 to “work for the diffusion of the Japanese drum in Brazil,” and to preserve and “recover traditional Japanese taiko.” Of the approximately 130 taiko ensembles in Brazil today, around 80 belong to the organization. Besides providing instruction for its associated taiko groups, the ABT’s activities center on the Brazilian Taiko Festival, an annual competition where youth ensembles from around the country compete for the chance to attend an international festival in Japan. This paper explores the notions of “tradition” and “Japanese” as they play out at the Brazilian Taiko Festival and ways these ideas are promoted and contested through taiko choreography and the selection of winners and losers. After reviewing the history of Japanese immigration and taiko in Brazil, I examine how the ABT articulates “tradition,” and ways that the pursuit of traditional Japanese taiko contests nationalist racial discourses in Brazil. I argue that “tradition” is phantasmagoric, or half-existing, and always in the process of disappearing. I then discuss taiko training as a way that the ABT disciplines Brazilian Nikkei youth and inculcates Japanese values and memory into their bodies. I base these discussions on visits to associated taiko groups’ practices, a losing performance by the Londrina group Isshin Daiko, who employed modern dance choreography in a piece at the 2011 festival, a winning group’s performance the same year, and formal interviews with an ABT administrator and judge.

Timothy D. Taylor (UCLA). “Musical Performance as a Medium of Value.”

We are by now familiar with the idea that music can be a commodity, and as a commodity, it possesses an economic form of value. But there can be non–economic forms of value for music (and other goods). Theories of value hold that value needs to be concretized, made tangible, but some forms of value can only be realized in ritual or performance or other sorts of public acts, which renders them available to potentially all members of society. This paper is an attempt to theorize musical performances as media of value. Drawing on anthropological theories of value, mainly from David
Graeber, this paper argues that musical performances, and those that are caught up in broader contexts such as festivals, rituals, or ceremonies, play important roles in enacting, establishing, or reinforcing values held by those communities that engage in such performances. A case study for this paper is the isicathamiya contest from apartheid-era South Africa, which was a way for urban Zulus to devise and display, in music and dance, a conception of excellence that was unavailable to them any other way in that period. A community-defined idea of excellent, of achievement, was enacted not just through the performances themselves in these competitions, but in the extreme lengths taken to ensure that they were impartially judged by a community outsider. Such public displays, as Graeber reminds us, can come to be seen as embodiments of value in and of themselves, even as the origins of the value they represent.

José R. Torres-Ramos (University of North Texas). “Más Bonita Calladita’: Silencing the Female Voice in Mariachi.”

Drawing from current work examining how masculinity is socially constructed and musically performed, ethnographic research reveals that among traditional modern mariachi ensembles, perceptions of authentic mariachi musicality are sonically and performatively materialized as a simultaneous icon of Mexican machismo, which I theorize as “mariachismo.” In this paper, I analyze a phenomenology of the voice within a soundscape mariachismo constructed through a metaphoric suppression of the female facade. Although the voice bears language and constructs perceptions, it also serves as a perspective or a metaphor for constructing meaning. Constituted to imply an active politics of domination and nonparticipation, Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier discusses a notion of “silence” as the opposite of “having a voice,” rendered as a sign of identity and presence of the subject (2014:183). Gender subjectivity is often construed through a reflexive dichotomy of discursive ‘voices.’


The music video for rock band Nickelback’s 2006 power rock ballad, “Far Away,” places the viewer behind the shoulder of a firefighter who must leave his lover to combat a menacing blaze rampaging through a forest. With over 80 million views on YouTube and its status as the third best music video of 2006 given by VH1, this music video remains one of Nickelback’s most successful audiovisual compilations to date. While there are many inaccuracies in the portrayals of actions and even dress in this video that are easily noticed by wildfire fighters; the 98/100 ratio of likes to dislikes indicates that these fabrications are of very little concern to the intended viewers of the music video. Similarly, recruiting videos by agencies that suppress wildland fires and videos posted to online sharing sites by firefighting crews across the United States also rely heavily on music and song lyrics in constructing impressions of their own identities. These impressions, like Nickelback’s, are also more focused on their target audiences than fully documenting the process of putting out fires, reflecting what Jane Sugarman calls a “mythic mode of representation” (2010). In this essay, I examine the ways that the creation and propagation of myths through combining music and lyrics with videos contribute...
to identity maintenance and social commentary surrounding wildland firefighting. As many of the questions found in these issues are addressed in literature focusing on music and conflict, I will also engage with writings by Jonathan Ritter, Martin Daughtry, and John Pieslak.

Dave Wilson (UCLA). Panel abstract: Beyond Cultural Imperialism. [see also paper abstracts submitted by Harris, Lavin, and Wilson]

For the last two decades, ethnomusicologists have given increasing attention to processes and theories of globalization in a number of ways, drawing on concepts such as global flows of culture (Appadurai 1996), global economic and sociopolitical frameworks as interrelated with formations such as the nation-state (Hardt and Negri 2001), and the power of local-level ethnography in analyzing and critiquing the global expansion of capital (Crawford 2008). In this panel we contribute to this discourse, suggesting that ethnomusicological research can provide insight into flows of culture that are outside of (or even challenge) mechanisms of Eurocentric, American, and/or colonial cultural imperialism. The panel includes an analysis of black Atlantic cultural production in the UK, a discussion of a local-to-local flow of electronic dance music culture between Detroit and Skopje, Macedonia, and a musical exploration of exchange on the Indian Ocean cultural continuum between the Arabian Gulf and India.

Dave Wilson (UCLA). “This is the Most Future Music”: Techno between Detroit and Skopje, Macedonia.”

Studies of popular music, broadly speaking, have proven fruitful for the analysis of global flows of culture in terms of political, economic, social, and cultural implications of cultural production and consumption. Over the last decade or so, electronic dance music (EDM) has followed the common pathways of commercial music distribution around the world in becoming one of the world’s most popular commercial genres and amassing great profits for EDM DJs such as Calvin Harris, David Guetta, and Skrillex. Beyond EDM that has enjoyed widespread international popularity, many EDM genres and local scenes that have proliferated since the 1980s provide insight into ways that culture flows along other pathways facilitated not only by mechanisms of commercial music distribution, but also by ideologies held by participants in EDM culture that are sonically deployed into particular times and places.

I examine in this paper the way one EDM genre—Detroit techno—has followed a “local-to-local” pathway from Detroit to Skopje, Macedonia since the 1990s. I discuss the history of Detroit techno and the ways that Macedonian DJs, club owners, and scenesters have joined themselves to that history and forged personal, musical, and business relationships with the pioneers of Detroit techno, most prominently Derrick May. By aligning themselves with the sound, history, and ideologies of Detroit techno and its practitioners, Macedonians in this scene sonically make space for what I call “alternative belonging,” adapting Detroit-inspired ideologies of Afro-futurism and dystopia to survive and thrive in postsocialist Macedonia amidst increasing economic precarity and political corruption.

Tyler Yamin (UCLA). Music in the (Literal) Margins: Reviving Extinct Gamelan Instruments from the Notes and Scribbles of Early Ethnomusicologists.”

During his many years of fieldwork in Bali, Colin McPhee was present for an era experiencing a tremendous outburst of creative artistic energy. Despite the attention of an entire early generation of ethnomusicologists, much of the music they studied—an important contextualization of modern genres—is considered to be lost for good. Occasionally, however, a new piece of information surfaces to offer additional insight into this era. The scholars of the early twentieth century, as pioneers in their field, recorded and photographed far more material than they were able to address in their published
work. Lurking in archived field notes, or hiding in unassuming footnotes, unique observations recorded by these scholars still have the potential to completely re-contextualize our understanding of the time period they studied. This presentation is an exploration of the possibilities afforded by re-discovery of such records. Photographs and prescriptive notation of a wholly extinct Balinese instrument called the "lupita," found in the McPhee collection at the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive, have provided enough information to facilitate the instrument’s reconstruction and re-introduction into the "gambuh" genre which has forgotten it. Jaap Kunst’s casual description of the now-defunct "tabuh jeruk" (a gong mallet utilizing a grapefruit as the striking medium) has likewise led to a reconstruction of the device and the discovery that its timbre is preferred by connoisseurs of Javanese music. By presenting these cases I argue for the continued examination of archived materials, demonstrating that the data of even the earliest ethnomusicologists has yet to be exhausted.