

McGill Music Graduate Symposium 2026



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Schulich School of Music
École de musique Schulich



Program and Abstracts

20–22 March 2026

Schulich School of Music, McGill University
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Thank you very much also to our volunteers:

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Elaheh Khaki
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Jason Lee
Kalen Smith
Liam Pond
Teresa Deskur

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McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honours, recognizes and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

We hope you enjoy the Symposium!

Nicolás Medina and Juan Gabriel Wayar De la Quintana

Symposium VPs

Music Graduate Students' Society

Program

Friday, March 20

9:00 am: *Registration*

9:30 am: *Welcome Remarks*

9:45 am: *Music and Diasporic Identities* (Chair: Liam Pond)

Navigating Cultural Identity:

The Role of Nigerian Music in Diaspora Communities and Its Impact on Social Integration

Oluwaseun Soneye (University of Lethbridge)

(Re)jouer la Diaspora : Pratiques Musicales et Espaces en Mouvement*

Allia Guillot (Sorbonne Université - IReMus)

Diasporic Listening: Music and Emotion in the Syrian Montreal Diaspora

Gordon Cortney (Florida State University)

11:15 am: *Break*

11:30 am: *Film and Interactive Media* (Chair: Teresa Deskur)

Bridges, Fridges, and Female Heroes:

Gwen Stacy's Musical Development in *Spider-Man* Films

Avery Marcella (Dalhousie University)

Decluttering In-House Excess: Sonic Excess in Obayashi's *House*

Justin Maisonneuve (McGill University)

"Sors et Fuis, Je t'en Pris":

Music, Madness, and Feminine Melancholia in *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*

Bridget Foley (Northwestern University)

1:00 pm: *Lunch Break*

*: Virtual Presentation

Friday, March 20 (cont'd)

3:00 pm: *Timbre and Orchestration* (Chair: Jason Lee)

Verdi's *Aida*: A Case of Western Colonial Organology*

Ali Saniee Nia (University of California, Davis)

Analyzing Studio Orchestration through the Hybrid Sound of Michel Legrand

Mael Oudin (McGill University)

Timbre and Variations: A Recipe for Igorrr and Ruby My Dear's *Barbecue*

Kalen Smith (McGill University)

4:30 pm: *Break*

5:00 pm: *Keynote Presentation 1*

Seeing Music: The Past and Present of Aesthetically Significant Music Notation

Robert Komaniecki (University of British Columbia)

6:30 pm: *Reception with greetings from Prof. Lisa Barg (Associate Dean, Graduate Studies)*

*: Virtual Presentation

Saturday, March 21

9:00 am: *Historical Mediation in Compositional Practice* (Chair: Claire Weydt)

Mozart as Historian:

Renaissance Tonal Style as Viewed in the Eighteenth Century

Noah Shafner (McGill University)

Beyond the Dies Irae:

Omission and Substitution in the 20th-Century French Requiem

Jeffrey Chan (McGill University)

Mediated Recognition:

Play and Rigor in Internet-Informed Mixed-Media Composition

Nicholas Ma (McGill University)

10:30 am: *Break*

10:45 am: *Listening Strategies* (Chair: Claire Weydt)

The Well-Tempered Classifier: A Symbolic Approach to Performer Identification

Liam Pond (McGill University)

Pipe Dreaming and Hollow Reading:

The Grain of the Voice in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

Kit Thickett (Yale University)

Accent as Form in Sakanaction's *Kaijū*

Jason Mile (Western University)

12:15 pm: *Lunch break*

2:15 pm: *Perspectives on Performance Practice* (Chair: Aidan McGartland)

Mapping Ukulele Plucking-Hand Technique:

The Ukulele Technique Compendium

Elisabeth Pfeiffer (University of Surrey)

Loin du Piano: Stratégies de Pratique Mentale pour les Pianistes Collaborateurs

Amanda Soares (Université de Montréal)

Saturday, March 21 (cont'd)

**The Performer as Ethnomusicologist:
Incorporating Folk Interpretation into Classical Performance**
Luis Almeida (McGill University)

3:45 pm: *Break*

4:30 pm: *Keynote Presentation 2* (Redpath Hall, 3461 McTavish Street)

Innovation within Tradition: György Kurtág's Music in Context
Benjamin Hochman (Bard College Berlin)

6:00 pm: *Symposium Cocktail Party* (PGSS Thomson House, 3650 McTavish Street)

Sunday, March 22

9:00 am: *Identity, Tradition and Cultural Representation* (Chair: Aidan McGartland)

**The evocation of landscape as an element of identity
in the Galician compositions of Juan Montes**

Ilduara Vicente Franqueira (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela)

**Rhythmic Universals Revisited:
Conceptual Boundaries Between Konnakkol and Western Systems**

Ana Gutiérrez Ortúzar (University of Ottawa)

**Rhythmic, (Hyper)Metric, and Stylistic Dissonance
in the Danish String Quartet's *The Dromer***

Irén Hangen Vázquez (McGill University)

10:30 am: *Break*

10:45 am: *African American Musical Expression* (Chair: Liam Pond)

**The Jubilee Singers in Canada:
Race and Aesthetics in Post-Confederation Society**

Greame Lister (University of Ottawa)

**Lil Hardin Armstrong's Secret Ambition:
Unravelling the Mystery of Mrs. Louis Armstrong's All-Girl Orchestra**

Jonathan Lindhorst (McGill University)

**Melodic Segments in The Improvisations of Charlie Parker:
Toward a Functional Grammar in Jazz Improvisation**

John Sweeney (McGill University)

12:15 pm: *Lunch Break*

Sunday, March 22 (cont'd)

1:45 pm: *Sonic Spaces* (Chair: Gretchen Schwarz)

Auditing Experimentalism:

The New York State Council on the Arts and the Experimental Intermedia Foundation

Scott Chupp (Stony Brook University)

**“Please (Don’t) Turn Down the Noise”: An Examination of Conflicting Listening Publics
on Recorded Outdoor Musical Shows Played on Buses in Sri Lanka**

Uthpala Herath (University of Alberta)

Beyond Talent: Narrative, Identity, and the MwSIC Model of Musical Creativity

Jenny Jieun Park (McGill University)

Everyday Music Use in Long-Term Care:

Emotional Labour and Person-Centred Dementia Care

Sinéad Almeida (Carleton University)

3:45 pm: *Closing Remarks*

Abstracts

Keynote Presentation 1 (March 20):

Seeing Music: The Past and Present of Aesthetically Significant Music Notation

Robert Komaniecki (University of British Columbia)

For nearly as long as music has been notated, musical notation itself has played an important aesthetic and cultural role. In addition to the straightforward functions of communicating musical information and performance instructions, notated music has served as a visually significant object in numerous cultures across millennia.

This presentation begins with an overview of historical circumstances in which music notation was valued for its appearance. From ancient Chinese bells adorned with carefully carved notation to Renaissance paintings featuring players crowding around a music sheet, we will examine the roles notation has played in conveying ideas, symbols, and cultural connotations.

We will also discuss musical scores with important visual components—sometimes decorative or illustrative, sometimes instructive. We will review a number of works that blur the line between visual and musical art, elevating sheet music from a mere set of instructions to an object that is meaningful to behold, even apart from the associated sounds.

Finally, we will discuss the role that musical notation plays in the modern social media landscape. What associations do people make with different types of sheet music? What reactions does music notation garner from the public? And what can these questions tell us about the role that music notation plays in forming and supporting our artistic communities?

Speaker's bio:

Robert Komaniecki is a lecturer of music theory and music history at the University of British Columbia. Robert originally hails from the midwestern United States, where he received degrees in music theory from the University of Minnesota and Indiana University. Robert's published research includes works on popular music, hip hop, musical theater, and music theory pedagogy. Parallel to his career in academia, Robert also discusses music via public-facing channels, including Instagram and TikTok. Outside of work, Robert spends his time with his two daughters, who remain convinced that their father's taste in music is mediocre at best.

Keynote Presentation 2 (March 21):

Innovation within Tradition: György Kurtág's Music in Context

Benjamin Hochman (Bard College Berlin)

The Hungarian composer György Kurtág is one of the most renowned composers of our time. He celebrated his 100th birthday in Budapest on February 19, 2026, and was in the audience the following day to hear the premiere of his second opera, *Die Stechardin*.

His ongoing series of piano miniatures, *Játékok* (Games), has been growing steadily since the 1970s. Book 11 was published on the occasion of his 100th birthday, and Book 12 is currently in preparation. Initially intended as pedagogical pieces for students of all ages, modeled on Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*, the *Játékok* have evolved into a deeply personal diary: intense, highly concentrated miniatures. They are often tributes or gifts to fellow musicians, friends, writers, artists, and family members.

Yet Kurtág's innovative spirit is deeply rooted in tradition. His knowledge of the tradition he reveres is profound. In his own words: "My mother tongue is Bartók, and his mother tongue is Beethoven."

Programming Kurtág's music alongside Bach and Beethoven therefore makes perfect sense and sheds light on his works. For this session, I will perform a selection of *Játékok* (including very recent works) alongside Bach's *Partita No. 2* and Beethoven's *Sonata Op. 110*, reflecting my work on these pieces with Kurtág in recent years. Kurtág's many decades of teaching chamber music and piano have profoundly shaped generations of musicians, including luminaries such as Schiff, Kocsis, Isserlis, Kashkashian, Keller, and many others.

His teaching has likewise shaped my own musical perspective and worldview. I will speak about this, as well as my experiences serving as Artistic Director of the Bard Kurtág Festival.

Speaker's bio:

In all roles, from orchestral soloist, recitalist and chamber musician to conductor, **Benjamin Hochman** regards music as vital and essential. Composers, fellow musicians, orchestras and audiences recognize his deep commitment to insightful programming and performances of quality. An Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient, he has performed at the Wigmore Hall, Berlin Philharmonie, Vienna Konzerthaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, and Suntory Hall.

Hochman's recent and upcoming highlights include playing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Rheinische Staatsphilharmonie conducted by Benjamin Shwartz; conducting the Szeged Symphony and Orlando Philharmonic; solo recitals in Paris, Berlin, and Hitzacker; and chamber music at Tanglewood and Nymphenburger Sommer. He tours with the Curtis Institute of Music to Berlin, Bremen, Stockholm, and Vienna, and curates *Signs, Games, and Messages*, the Kurtág Festival at Bard College, New York, where he has served as Artistic Director since 2022.

Hochman's 2024 Avie Records release, *Resonance*, features Beethoven, George Benjamin, Josquin, and Dowland, praised by Gramophone for its "subtle timbral palette and keen ear for texture." Earlier albums include *Homage to Schubert* and *Variations*, a New York Times "Best Recording of the Year." A Steinway Artist, he lives in Berlin and teaches at Bard College Berlin.

Presentations on Friday, March 20:

9:45 am: *Music and Diasporic Identities* (Chair: Liam Pond)

Navigating Cultural Identity: The Role of Nigerian Music in Diaspora Communities and Its Impact on Social Integration

Oluwaseun Soneye (University of Lethbridge)

This study examines music among Nigerian immigrants in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. It addresses the challenges faced in Nigerian music-making within the community, explores how alternative solutions were used to overcome these challenges, and investigates the role of music in daily life. Furthermore, it considers how music fosters connections among individuals in the Nigerian Canadian community—including between people of distinct ethnic groups—and links this community with other local groups. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted for my master's thesis, I argue that Nigerian immigrants in Lethbridge utilize technology, DJing, and the participation of amateur musicians to cultivate a sense of home and community among all Nigerians. My thesis findings indicate that, in Lethbridge, technology has largely supplanted the traditional instruments used in live performances in Nigeria. Additionally, DJing has emerged as an alternative to live music, providing another means to imitate a live performance, given the challenges in replicating authentic musical expressions from Nigeria. These challenges include difficulties in obtaining traditional instruments and hiring professional musicians who represent Nigerian music. This is the first study to investigate the musical lives of Nigerian migrants in Alberta. It aims to bridge a gap in research by expanding on current literature related to migration issues while creating opportunities for further exploration of the relationship between music, culture, and migration in this currently underrepresented region.

Oluwaseun Soneye is a PhD student in Cultural, Social, and Political Thought at the University of Lethbridge. His ethnographic research examines African diaspora musical practices and AI literacy in ethnomusicology, building on work with Nigerian immigrants and Kulumbu music to preserve endangered musical heritage.

(Re)jouer la diaspora : pratiques musicales et espaces en mouvement

Allia Guillot (Sorbonne Université - IReMus)

Cette communication interroge le rôle du Royal Est – un restaurant- espace de concert parisien – en tant qu'espace mobile essentiel à la scène de la musique gnawa fusion au sein de la diaspora marocaine. Loin d'être un simple lieu de spectacle, le Royal Est devient un espace socialement investi (Lefebvre 1974), une scène diasporique vivante où se croisent mémoire, création et négociation identitaire. À partir d'un terrain ethnographique mené entre 2021 et 2025, cette étude montre comment la musique gnawa, dans ce contexte urbain parisien, se détache de son cadre rituel originel pour se recomposer dans de nouvelles formes hybrides, en interaction avec le jazz, le funk ou les musiques électroniques. Le Royal Est agit comme un espace de

reterritorialisation (Stokes 2004), où l'authenticité est rejouée et contestée selon les trajectoires des musiciens (Majdouli 2007 ; Secheyah 2020). Ce lieu permet aussi d'interroger la frontière floue entre espace privé et public, sacré et profane, comme en témoignent les formes de performances « intimes » mais ouvertes. Par sa centralité dans la communauté musicale gnawa à Paris, il participe à la fabrication d'une géographie sonore diasporique, dans laquelle les circulations musicales deviennent des outils de reconnaissance et d'ancrage identitaire. En analysant ce lieu comme espace en mouvement, cette proposition éclaire les dynamiques de création musicale dans la diaspora et la manière dont les lieux informels deviennent moteurs de transformations culturelles.

Allia Guillot est doctorante en troisième année en musicologie à l'université Paris-Sorbonne, où elle est titulaire d'un contrat doctoral, sous la direction de Sylvie Le Bomin. Ses recherches portent sur les musiques marocaines en contexte migratoire, et plus particulièrement sur les pratiques musicales des Marocain-e-s en France, envisagées sous l'angle des dynamiques identitaires, diasporiques et institutionnelles. Franco-marocaine, elle s'est intéressée à ces problématiques dès son mémoire de master. Elle est également altiste et chargée de travaux dirigés à l'université Paris-Sorbonne, où elle dispense des enseignements en analyse des musiques traditionnelles ainsi que des cours de spécialisation consacrés aux musiques du Maghreb.

Diasporic Listening: Music and Emotion in the Syrian Montreal Diaspora

Gordon Cortney (Florida State University)

On December 8th, 2024, the Islamist opposition group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham ousted President Bashar al-Assad, ending Syria's 13-year civil war. This political crisis sparked transformation within Syria and across its global diaspora—including in Montreal, home to one of North America's largest Syrian communities, where displacements, activism, and enduring transnational ties to homeland generate strong emotions expressed and mediated through music. In this paper, I examine how Syrians use music and emotions to navigate their diasporic and Syrian identities. The case study subject, Mona, is a vocalist, Arabic teacher, painter, and cultural advocate who has lived in Montreal since 2021 and who is the subject of my ongoing master's thesis. During nine weeks of fieldwork in summer of 2025, I lived with Mona, collecting data through daily conversation, shared music experiences, and interviews about her musical taste. This research's findings suggest that for Mona, and by extension potentially for other Syrians in diaspora, emotions are the primary shaping force in musical choice and reception. The music-emotion dialectic has been documented in Syrian and broader Arab contexts, but usually with an emphasis on performance, composition, or music theory (Racy 2004; Shannon 2006). Instead, this paper examines Mona's reception of music using a two-part theory of diasporic listening I developed through the synthesis of psychological and cultural theories of affect and emotion (Juslin 2019; Gregg & Seigworth 2010). I argue that emotional experiences shape and influence nostalgic and ecstatic listening modes, which in turn shape and influence musical choice and reception.

Gordon Cortney is a second-year master's student in musicology at Florida State University. His primary research interests include classical and contemporary Syrian music, diaspora studies, and affect theory. An

active percussionist well-versed in many instruments and styles, Cortney regularly performs throughout the Southeastern region of the United States.

11:30 am: *Film and Interactive Media* (Chair: Teresa Deskur)

**Bridges, Fridges, and Female Heroes:
Gwen Stacy's Musical Development in *Spider-Man* Films**
Avery Marcella (Dalhousie University)

Although the music of action films has previously been studied by scholars such as James Buhler, there exists a contemporary subgenre whose soundtracks have been largely understudied in the academic realm: the superhero film. Marvel has a plethora of box-office hits, with the various *Spider-Man* film series being standouts, and audiences are by now familiar with names like Peter Parker and Mary-Jane Watson. However, a character previously best-known for her death has also been making her way from the page and onto the big screen: Gwen Stacy.

By analyzing the music associated with Gwen Stacy in *Spider-Man 3* (Sam Raimi, 2007), *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* (Marc Webb, 2014), and *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* (Joaquim Dos Santos, Kemp Powers, Justin K. Thompson, 2023), I illustrate how Gwen's musical role in the larger *Spider-Man* soundscape has evolved over time. The absence of a distinct leitmotiv and the use of pre-existing music in *Spider-Man 3*, the mix of conformity and subversiveness in *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* through the piano and electric guitar, and finally the punk rock "Spider-Woman" theme in *Across the Spider-Verse* all indicate Gwen's development from 'the other woman' into a hero in her own right. The analysis of this musical trajectory fills in the research gap pertaining to the contemporary superhero genre, reflects the way societal views regarding women have shifted over the past twenty years, and explores how music reinforces or subverts cultural ideas.

Avery Marcella is a first-year Master of Arts in Musicology student at Dalhousie University, Halifax. In June 2025, they completed their Bachelor of Music degree at Queen's University, Kingston. Their current research focuses are the music of video games, films, and television.

Decluttering In-House Excess: Sonic Excess in Obayashi's *House*
Justin Maisonneuve (McGill University)

"Excess" is an ambiguous term in film theory, used to describe spectacle that exceeds narrative function. Studies on excess have largely centred on narrative (Thompson 1981; Altman 1989), visuals (Barthes 1977), aesthetics and spectatorship (Williams 1991; Sconce 1995), while sound and music remain largely absent. This omission obscures how excess operates sonically and reinforces visual-narrative bias. Furthermore, while

Thompson maintains that excess “forms no specific pattern” (1981, 515), I argue that excess can function as a patterned stylistic device via deliberate repetition. It’s time to declutter the theory of excess.

Through a case study of Nobuhiko Obayashi’s Japanese cult classic *House* (1977), I show that sonic excess forms a patterned stylistic configuration central to the film’s aesthetic. I simply define excess as patterned and repeated “too muchness” via recurrence, duration, and density (i.e., simultaneous sonic material), and use formal and close readings to track it across sound effects, ambient noise, and music. The findings show that its largely monothematic score creates repetitive consistency, main theme variations align with narrative beats, certain cues act as leitmotifs, and sound effects are deployed rhythmically.

House follows seven schoolgirls as they are consumed by a haunted house created by postwar trauma. Despite Criterion and cult acclaim, *House* and its soundtrack remain understudied. In today’s excess-saturated media ecology, examining excess is timely. Constant sensory overload requires methodologies in musicology, film studies, and media studies to describe this phenomenon. This article offers a replicable, cross-disciplinary method for analyzing audiovisual excess while clarifying previous theories.

Justin Maisonneuve is a PhD candidate in musicology at McGill University. French-Canadian musicologist, music and film instructor, and media composer researching SoundCloud and SOPHIE (funded by FRQ Doctoral Research Scholarship). Interests include queer theory, popular music, and film.

"Sors et Fuis, Je t'en Pris":

Music, Madness, and Feminine Melancholia in *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*

Bridget Foley (Northwestern University)

Music scholarship has critically examined the gendered dichotomies of hysteria and melancholia, particularly in relation to musical realizations of madness. For instance, McClary and Smart’s investigations of Lucia’s mad scene from Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* highlight coloratoric performance and chromatic excess as both constricted by and liberated from orchestral conventions. These essentialist hermeneutics perpetuate flattened notions of hysteria as a distinctly feminine malady removed from rationalism. By contrast, masculine-coded melancholia is understood as a self-actualizing force.

Lorien Testard’s award-winning score for the video game *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33* flaunts its operatic inspirations, constructed through Alice Duport-Percier’s soprano vocals and Neo-Romantic orchestration. Similarly to the mad scene, the central conflict of the game is enmeshed in female loss. While attempting to defeat the god-like Paintress, the player discovers that this primary antagonist is a grieving mother — Aline Dessendre. Impelled by the death of her son, Aline created a virtual universe to circumvent the work of mourning. Her principal themes — “Aline” and “Paintress” — lack the emancipatory vocalicity typically associated with mad scenes. However, I argue that Aline’s allegiance to diatonicism transforms her perceived hysteria into accredited melancholia. The subdued melody of “Aline” is juxtaposed with dramatic in-game violence, alerting the player to the irrationality of their quest. Conversely “Paintress” alludes to the sonic heroism of 19th-century choral symphonies, reshaping Aline into a valorous figure rather than a hysteric

mother. These two themes demonstrate that female expressions of grief can be realized within a heroicized framework that grants emotional agency rather than victimization.

Bridget Foley (they/them) is a PhD candidate in musicology at Northwestern University. A longtime lover of video games, their research concerns the intersection of ludomusicology and affect theory, specifically how musical depictions of grief, mourning, and melancholia in game soundtracks inform one's non-virtual experiences.

3:00 pm: *Timbre and Orchestration* (Chair: Jason Lee)

Verdi's *Aida*: A Case of Western Colonial Organology

Ali Saniee Nia (University of California, Davis)

While researching the cultural world of ancient Egypt for *Aida*, Verdi criticized Belgian musicologist François-Joseph Fétis for his misleading account of ancient Egyptian instruments after discovering that a so-called “Egyptian flute” in Florence was merely a simple pipe with four holes. However, was that flute truly pastoral, as Verdi assumed? Verdi did not realize that a simple form does not necessarily imply simplicity in performance or cultural meaning. Therefore, rather than investigating original Egyptian instruments, he replaced them with two specially commissioned modern ones, a flute and a trumpet, to construct *Aida*'s “local color” (Cruz 2002). Since its composition, *Aida*'s plot and music have been debated as examples of the East viewed through a Western lens (Robinson 1993, Kerman 1956, Said 1993). However, no scholar has yet traced signs of colonial ideology in Verdi's instrumental choices intended to evoke ancient Egypt sonically and visually. My paper demonstrates how *Aida* represents colonial exoticism through an organological lens, blending Verdi's understanding of Egyptian organology with modern instrument-making techniques. Drawing on later archaeological studies (Kirby 1947, Southgate 1915, Montagu 1976), it compares ancient Egyptian instruments with those commissioned by Verdi. It reveals that, despite Verdi's pursuit of authenticity, the opera's soundscape was shaped by modern, and even futuristic, Western technologies and aesthetic ideals rather than ancient models, aligning with the modernization ambitions of its commissioner, Isma'il Pasha, Khedive of Egypt. This cross-temporal analysis shows how *Aida* reflects broader nineteenth-century trends where historical accuracy is intertwined with the creation of “otherness” for European audiences.

Ali Saniee Nia is an American-Iranian opera scholar, classical violinist, pianist, bass-baritone singer, and Ph.D. candidate in Musicology at UC Davis, specializing in early nineteenth-century Italian and German opera. He holds a BA in Music from UC Berkeley and is active as a performer, teacher, and researcher.

Analyzing Studio Orchestration through the Hybrid Sound of Michel Legrand

Mael Oudin (McGill University)

Contemporary scholarship on orchestration often treats jazz arranging and classical traditions as distinct domains, overlooking the hybrid corpus of mid-20th-century commercial LPs and film scores. Composers such as Michel Legrand (1932–2019) played a central role in developing what can be termed *Studio Orchestration*: a practice that blends European symphonic techniques with American jazz and pop combo arranging, shaped by recording technologies and studio conventions.

Focusing on selected tracks from Legrand’s 1974 album *Songs of the Twentieth Century*, this study synthesizes timbre-centered scholarship with industry practice through two analytical stages. First, building on Zachary Wallmark’s (2019) work on the semantics of classical orchestration, it examines three influential arranging treatises aimed at commercial composers (Mancini 1967; Riddle 1985; Nestico 1993) in order to extract a lexicon of timbral tropes and arrangement conventions characteristic of the 1960s–90s recording industry. Second, this semantic framework is applied to a detailed analysis of selected songs—aurally transcribed—using the Taxonomy of Orchestral Grouping Effects (TOGE) (McAdams et al. 2022).

As this album consists exclusively of covers, this methodology allows the study to focus on orchestration as a primary creative process. The analysis highlights Legrand’s distinctive practice of continuously renewing instrumental combinations and his creativity in revisiting famous songs through original timbral combinations. More broadly, the study contributes to a re-evaluation of the theoretical role of the arranger within contemporary timbre studies.

Mael Oudin is a PhD candidate in music theory at McGill University, where his doctoral research focuses on the music of Michel Legrand. He is also a freelance composer for film and the performing arts, as well as an active arranger and orchestrator.

Timbre and Variations: A Recipe for Igorrr and Ruby My Dear’s *Barbecue*

Kalen Smith (McGill University)

The grill crackles and screams with increasing fervor as spices and meats strike its red-hot surface. Released in 2014, Igorrr and Ruby My Dear’s pop track *Barbecue* translates this frantic, absurd cooking image into musical form, unfolding as a set of theme and variations. Each variation evokes a distinct popular music genre, dubstep, heavy metal, folk rock, and breakcore, eschewing typical melodic or harmonic embellishments in favor of genre fusion. In this analysis, I explore how these variations develop via timbral blocks and transitions to forge a compelling structure, recontextualizing an established musical form.

In terms of timbral blocks, sections within *Barbecue* remain static, each defined by a distinct timbral flavour. For instance, one section champions vocal screaming, clarinet, drum samples, and glockenspiel, where the following endorses accordion, organ, choir, and acoustic drums. I parallel the timbral blocks in *Barbecue* with the concept of repeated fragments from Gretchen Horlacher’s dissection of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* through the lens of discontinuity versus continuity. Furthermore, transitions in *Barbecue* propel the piece

forwards, forging smooth links or abrupt collisions between sections. I draw from Karel Reisz's breakdown of film editing to describe transitions: continuity-link montages employ transitional scenes, where collision montages yank the viewer between hard-cuts. *Barbecue* employs both montage styles to recontextualize a previously heard passage against a new musical shift, continually upending the listener's perception of form. Ultimately, not only is this piece a theme and variations, but a timbre and variations, playfully shifting genre itself.

Kalen Smith is an award-winning Canadian composer and harpist, pursuing a PhD in music composition at McGill University. Inspired by contemporary art music, electronic music, and the harp, he explores how contrasting aesthetics can merge and collide, shaping expressive forms that draw power and meaning from the tension of extremes.

Presentations on Saturday, March 21:

9:00 am: *Historical Mediation in Compositional Practice* (Chair: Claire Weydt)

**Mozart as Historian:
Renaissance Tonal Style as Viewed in the Eighteenth Century**
Noah Shafner (McGill University)

While the eighteenth century is often associated with common-practice tonality, little scholarly attention has been paid to how eighteenth-century musicians viewed earlier tonal practices. This paper marshals compositional and theoretical evidence to show that eighteenth-century musicians had a keen awareness of Renaissance tonal style. The features of this style include triadic root-position harmonies, local accidental inflections, and avoidance of augmented and diminished intervals. Drawing on theorists, including Werckmeister (1702), Niedt (1717), and Mattheson (1739), as well as examples of stylistic pastiche by Telemann, Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven, this paper demonstrates that Renaissance tonal idioms constituted a well-established, albeit rarely used, stylistic topos in the eighteenth century.

As a case study, this paper focuses on the trio sections of two early Mozart minuets (from symphonies K. 130 and K. 132), which evoke Renaissance music through a deliberately archaic tonal style. Prior scholars, such as Zaslaw (1990) and Hertz (1995), have described these trios as “modal,” a term widely used by recent authors—but never by eighteenth-century theorists—to describe Renaissance tonal style. Mozart's use of this style in minuet trios suggests that he sought to satirize and “exoticize” Renaissance music by juxtaposing its antiquated tonal style with galant idioms. Such a chronocentric attitude reflects widely held eighteenth-century views of older music, such as those of Rameau (1722) and Burney (1776). Mozart's use of Renaissance tonal style thus sheds light on eighteenth-century attitudes toward past versus present styles, as well as notions of music-historical progress.

Noah Shafner is a first-year PhD student in music theory at McGill University. His research interests include historical counterpoint pedagogy, the history of modal theory, early music analysis, and Italian Baroque music. He holds a master's degree in musicology from Rice University, with a thesis on Baroque twelve-mode theory.

**Beyond the Dies Irae:
Omission and Substitution in the 20th-Century French Requiem**

Jeffrey Chan (McGill University)

This presentation examines a defining structural shift in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century French Requiem: the progressive reduction, fragmentation, or omission of the *Dies irae* Sequence and the corresponding elevation of *Pie Jesu*, *Libera me*, and *In paradisum* as principal expressive pillars. Focusing on Requiems by Hector Berlioz, Camille Saint-Saëns, Gabriel Fauré, and Maurice Duruflé, the presentation argues that this redesign reflects neither theological dilution nor mere stylistic preference, but a coherent French response to liturgical practice, institutional discipline, and civic commemorative culture.

Drawing on liturgical history, score analysis, institutional contexts, and sociocultural reception, it demonstrates how French composers redistributed textual and rhetorical weight away from apocalyptic judgment toward intercession, rest, and safe passage. Parish practice, chant restoration, and sanctioned flexibility around the Sequence made selective omission both practical and legitimate. At the same time, conservatory norms, Schola Cantorum pedagogy, and Third Republic commemorative expectations favoured clarity, restraint, and consolation over theatrical spectacle.

Comparative analysis shows a clear trajectory: Berlioz centers the *Dies irae* as a public spectacle of judgment; Saint-Saëns compresses and tempers its rhetoric; Fauré removes the Sequence entirely, rebuilding the Requiem around consolation and arrival; and Duruflé codifies this model through chant-based continuity. The result is a distinctly French Requiem paradigm in which judgment is acknowledged but subordinated, and the final vision is not terror but repose. This presentation clarifies the internal logic and enduring success of the modern French Requiem as both liturgically credible and publicly legible.

Jeffrey Chan is a Hong Kong-born conductor, scholar, and educator active across Europe, North America, and Asia. He is pursuing a Doctor of Music in Choral Conducting at McGill University, where he studies with Jean-Sébastien Vallée, teaches conducting, directs the University Chorus, and researches the French Requiem tradition and Asian choral music.

**Mediated Recognition:
Play and Rigor in Internet-Informed Mixed-Media Composition**

Nicholas Ma (McGill University)

As digital media environments reshape everyday patterns of attention, contemporary audiences increasingly arrive at concerts with existing perceptual habits shaped by algorithmically curated feeds, rapid shifts of focus,

and networked soundscapes. This presentation examines how composers can respond to these conditions by embedding recognition and play within rigorous structured musical processes. Culturally codified sounds, recognizable as familiar digital signifiers, function as compositional resources that structure expectation, direct attention, and articulate musical form.

Building on gesture theory and media studies, I situate these actions within a framework of mediated recognition, in which sonic events carry perceptible traces of technological shaping. For example, the sampling and transformation of familiar internet-culture sounds, temporally repeated or truncated fragments, and glitch-like disruptions. These moments function both sonically and semiotically, producing perceptually salient cues that invite recognition while simultaneously destabilizing conventional expectations of continuity and formal trajectory.

This framework is explored through selected mixed-media repertoire alongside my ongoing composition *For You (but not really for You)* for saxophone quartet and electronics. Internet-derived sonic artifacts serve as structural thresholds of recognition that momentarily stabilize the listening field before undergoing transformation. Recognition functions both as playful reference and as a rigorous mechanism for shaping or subverting expectation and projecting formal trajectory.

The presentation demonstrates that culturally saturated materials can serve both expressive and structural functions. Play and rigor operate in a dialectic: playful references gain impact from compositional discipline, while rigor is renewed through structure and perceptual disruption. Recognition thus emerges as a central compositional parameter for contemporary mixed-media practice.

Nicholas Ma is a pianist-composer whose music balances rhythmic vitality, playfulness, and contemplative rigor. He has received four SOCAN Young Composer Awards, commissions from Esprit Orchestra, and support from SSHRC and FRQ. He is completing a Master's in Composition at McGill and serves as President of the McGill Association of Student Composers.

10:45 am: *Listening Strategies* (Chair: Claire Weydt)

The Well-Tempered Classifier: A Symbolic Approach to Performer Identification

Liam Pond (McGill University)

Baroque keyboard repertoire is often characterized by a lack of explicitly defined indications for dynamics, articulation, and tempo. Consequently, the interpretive decisions made by the performer with respect to these attributes define a musical signature that makes them unique. While extensive research in computational musicology has been conducted on composer, genre, and emotion identification in music, performer identification remains underexplored. Furthermore, a major obstacle in this field is acoustic bias: does the computer recognize the performer's style, or simply the specific instrument, room acoustics, or recording quality of the input?

This study proposes a methodology to isolate performance style from these acoustic artifacts. Recordings of ten distinct pianists performing the complete Well-Tempered Clavier by Johann Sebastian Bach

are converted from audio to symbolic MIDI format using Sony's hFT-Transformer, an open-source audio-to-MIDI conversion tool. The resulting data are represented as visual spectrograms which train a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model to identify the performer. By converting the input data from audio to MIDI, pitch and timing data become the primary identifying features, minimizing the effects of timbre as a confounding factor.

Because CNNs are designed to recognize visual textures, they are well-suited to learning patterns in these spectrograms. This approach allows the model to detect micro-level timing variations such as how individual pianists play trills, break chords, or use rubato to highlight formal boundaries. This presentation outlines the data processing pipeline, discusses the challenges of quantifying artistic nuance, and presents the preliminary results of the system.

Liam Pond is a master's student in music technology. He holds a bachelor's degree in piano performance from the University of Toronto and has played as a soloist with orchestras in Canada and Italy. He has authored six peer-reviewed publications and attended conferences in South Korea, Denmark, Portugal, and Japan.

**Pipe Dreaming and Hollow Reading:
The Grain of the Voice in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience***
Kit Thickett (Yale University)

William Blake's poetry collection *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794) combines two sets of poems 'showing the two contrary states of the human soul', and situating that soul in relation to society, nature, and the divine. Employing the artist poet's 'infernal method' of relief etching, Blake's bespoke printed editions fully integrate the text and illustration, challenging the primacy of the former. The title, poetic metre, and visual imagery continually gesture towards the apprehension of the songs as such, and the concept of a childlike or amateurish musicality has recurred throughout their reception (Eliot, 1920, Fairchild, 1980, Glen 1983), despite the apparent extrinsicality of sound to a text which in many ways foregrounds its own material textuality. Yet this musicality remains understudied, typically figuring as a vague metonym of 'innocence'. The illuminated format of the Songs imbues them with several foundational frictions in the recalcitrance of the materials, their reconfiguration of emerging conventions of children's literature and standards of commercial printing, and the exclusivity of the encounter with a text otherwise concerned with an egalitarian social justice. This paper sets out to take seriously the collection's exhortation to 'Hear the Voice of the Bard!'. Reading the Songs against Roland Barthes' 'The Grain of the Voice', I think of the illuminated books as a frictive format which embeds and invites a proliferation of interpretive approaches in which the voice 'is finally writing', and thereby both proffers and problematises an erotics of listening as a basis for ethical action.

Kit Thickett is a first-year PhD candidate in Music History at Yale University. They hold a BA in Music from the University of Oxford and a master's in Musicology and Ethnomusicology from King's College London, and are also an active singer in the Anglican choral tradition.

Accent as Form in Sakanaction's *Kaijū*

Jason Mile (Western University)

I propose a method of analyzing recorded pop music which accounts for how the interactions between different parts of the musical texture, rather than any individual parameter, contribute to the perception of form. As argued by de Clercq (2017), many approaches to the study of form in popular music privilege one musical parameter over all others. Drawing on theories of entrainment (London 2012) and Dynamic Attending (Jones 2019), I argue for the salience of synchronization in accent to the perception of form.

As a case study, I analyse the song *Kaijū* by J-pop group Sakanaction using two different methods. I first present a conventional formal analysis, showing how the song has two competing formal interpretations based on the misalignment of different melodies from standard formal sections. I then measure the synchronization of accents to create “accent profiles” for each section. By grouping the accent profiles based on similarity, I create a new formal segmentation which illustrates how the song still conforms to a conventional large-scale AABA pattern despite its melodic idiosyncrasies. I propose that accent profiles provide a novel perspective by decentering individual parameters in favor of the larger context. By focusing on the resulting texture, rather than any individual component, the analyst can find novel interpretations which both conform and conflict with common approaches to form.

Jason Mile is a Ph.D. candidate in Music Theory at Western University, Canada, studying with John Cuciurean and Jonathan De Souza. His current research interests are exploring different models of rhythm and meter, music cognition, and Japanese popular music.

2:15 pm: *Perspectives on Performance Practice* (Chair: Aidan McGartland)

Mapping Ukulele Plucking-Hand Technique:

The Ukulele Technique Compendium

Elisabeth Pfeiffer (University of Surrey)

This paper presents the *Ukulele Technique Compendium*, an emerging website and catalogue that proposes the first systematic taxonomy of ukulele plucking-hand techniques. Although the ukulele is a relatively young instrument, it has generated a remarkable diversity of idiomatic playing styles and has spread across numerous musical cultures. Despite this expansion, scholarly attention to ukulele technique remains limited, leaving a gap in the organological and ethnomusicological literature. The Compendium aims to address this by documenting, classifying, and visually modelling plucking-hand techniques through video motion studies, descriptive analysis, 3D animations, and style-defining attribute charts.

Developed as part of my PhD research, the Compendium currently organises techniques into three overarching domains: *Hawaiian Styles*, *Anglo-American Styles*, and *Adapted Styles*. Each domain contains finer sub-styles that illuminate how the instrument is approached across regions and genres. While the present focus lies on North America, Hawai'i and Europe, future research plans include expanded studies into adapted

Balalaika, Flamenco, and Tarantella techniques, as well as potential investigations into emerging Asian ukulele styles.

The Compendium is grounded in a qualitative study conducted in North America, Hawai'i, Europe, and the UK. Sixteen expert ukulele practitioners contributed through in-depth interviews and video documentation of their *idiotechne*. The analytical process required the development of multiple interpretive frameworks to articulate both distinctions and interconnections among styles. This presentation will discuss the methodological considerations behind building a comprehensive taxonomy, demonstrate the interactive visualisation strategies employed, and outline the Compendium's potential as a dynamic research tool for musicologists, performers, and educators alike.

Elisabeth Pfeiffer majored in classical guitar, both at Lawrence University, Appleton, WI, USA and Hochschule für Musik, Würzburg, Germany. In 2013 she took up a ukulele and never looked back. Since, she has written three method books on strumming and picking techniques and fretting concepts. Since 2020 she has published various repertoire books for ukulele solo, including transcriptions of Renaissance guitar literature, as well as extensive collections of her own Ukulele etudes. On stage she performs solo arrangements of Pop & Rock Songs, Renaissance Music and Neue Musik. She is working to expand the solo repertoire for the ukulele with her own works and by commissioning compositions. Elisabeth is currently a PGR at the University of Surrey and has been teaching ukulele didactics and performance at the ZHdK Zurich between 2023 and 2025.

Loin du Piano: Stratégies de Pratique Mentale pour les Pianistes Collaborateurs

Amanda Soares (Université de Montréal)

Saturday, March 21 (cont'd)

Cet exposé porte sur les techniques de pratique mentale utilisées par les pianistes accompagnateurs lorsqu'ils n'ont pas accès à un instrument ou afin d'optimiser un temps de travail au piano souvent limité. Elle s'appuie sur une méthodologie mixte combinant des entretiens avec des pianistes collaborateurs professionnels, un questionnaire ciblé et une revue de la littérature scientifique existante sur la pratique mentale en musique.

L'étude visait trois objectifs principaux : identifier les différentes formes de pratique mentale employées par les pianistes collaborateurs, évaluer leur impact sur la performance et l'efficacité de l'apprentissage du répertoire, et mettre en relation ces techniques avec les compétences professionnelles essentielles au métier de collaborateur. Les résultats révèlent que la pratique mentale joue un rôle central dans le développement d'une compréhension approfondie des œuvres, tant sur le plan musical que émotionnel, condition indispensable à une collaboration artistique réussie.

Contrairement à une approche purement mécanique de la répétition, la pratique mentale permet d'anticiper les difficultés, d'orienter plus précisément le travail instrumental et de construire une vision interprétative partagée avant même les répétitions. Elle constitue également un outil majeur de gestion du temps, offrant la possibilité de poursuivre la préparation en dehors du piano, notamment dans des contextes de déplacements fréquents et de délais de préparation restreints.

L'étude met en lumière l'efficacité de techniques telles que l'imagerie auditive, l'analyse de la partition, la recherche du texte, la modélisation et la pratique mentale incarnée, plaidant pour une intégration plus systématique de la pratique mentale dans la pédagogie musicale, afin qu'elle soit reconnue comme un véritable domaine d'apprentissage au sein des formations musicales supérieures.

Amanda Soares est une pianiste brésilienne, titulaire d'un baccalauréat de l'Université fédérale de Rio de Janeiro et d'une maîtrise de l'Université de Montréal, où elle poursuit un doctorat en piano collaboratif. Afin de rendre la recherche académique plus accessible, elle partage ses recherches via le projet MusiTalk dans les réseaux sociaux suivi par plus de 40 000 abonnés.

The Performer as Ethnomusicologist: Incorporating Folk Interpretation into Classical Performance

Luis Almeida (McGill University)

This presentation explores the interpretative challenges and opportunities involved in adapting a vocal repertoire, which is heavily influenced by nationalist folk aesthetics, for the cello. It focuses on *Canções de Amor* (Love Songs) by the Brazilian composer Claudio Santoro (1919–1989), a piece which exemplifies his politically and artistically motivated shift towards a more accessible, popular musical language.

Although Santoro's music is structurally part of the classical art tradition, its expressive core is firmly grounded in Brazilian folk and popular vocal traditions. This creates a unique challenge for instrumentalists: moving beyond traditional idiomatic performance practice to embody an ethnomusicological mindset. I will argue that an "authentic" performance of this repertoire requires a systematic analytical framework to integrate non-idiomatic features, specifically vocal prosody and the interpretative freedom associated with folk performance.

The presentation will detail how three versions of my cello arrangements were created, progressively incorporating vocality, folk rhythmic flexibility, and the use of non-idiomatic elements, to translate the expressive intent of the source material. By exploring ways to emulate aspects of Brazilian Samba and Choro through specific bowing articulations and improvisatory rhythmic variation, this study proposes an approach for instrumentalists seeking to engage with and perform this repertoire and similar works.

Luis Almeida is a Brazilian cellist and doctoral candidate at McGill University. His artistic research received the Research Alive Prize and has been presented at academic symposia internationally. Member of the Duo Acalanto, signed to Século 30 Records, whose debut album emerges as a performative outcome of his research.

Presentations on Sunday, March 22:

9:00 am: *Identity, Tradition and Cultural Representation* (Chair: Aidan McGartland)

The evocation of landscape as an element of identity in the Galician compositions of Juan Montes

Ilduara Vicente Franqueira (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela)

Juan Montes Capón (1840–1899) was one of the most important composers in Galician and Spanish music history. This status stemmed from the high quality of his musical production and the myth-making efforts of music critics and close friends, who sought to establish him as a leading figure in the process of Galician national revival.

His compositions based on folklore have served as a perfect complement to the Galician nationalist discourse, exemplifying the idiosyncratic and atmospheric capture of the territory and its inhabitants. This connotation, given by external agents and not fully consciously by the composer himself, was due to the type of popular musical genre he used, a correct application of folklore in academic language, as well as his ability as a harmonist, rather than an “impressionist” practice.

Through Roland Barthes' concept of myth, this presentation examines the significance attributed to Juan Montes as a composer committed to the territory from which the popular melodies emanate, considering both the analysis of his works and the theoretical interpretations of his music derived from the romantic and nationalist discursive conventions of the period: two realities that turned him into a transformer of the heterogeneous and richly nuanced nature into an abstract language that managed to penetrate the deepest feelings of its inhabitants.

Ilduara Vicente Franqueira is a predoctoral researcher and member of the Organistrum Group (GI-2025) as well as the R&D Project ‘Galicia-America: música civil, ideología e identidades culturais a través del Atlántico (1800–1950)’ at the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. As a performer, she collaborates with the renowned folk music group Milladoiro.

Rhythmic Universals Revisited: Conceptual Boundaries Between Konnakkol and Western Systems

Ana Gutiérrez Ortúzar (University of Ottawa)

Konnakkol, the South Indian art of vocal percussion, has increasingly captivated Western musicians for its rhythmic sophistication, serving both as a pedagogical tool for rhythmic learning and teaching and as a gateway to rhythmic possibilities not easily accessed through Western rhythmic conceptual frameworks. Existing research and resources aimed at Western learners tend to emphasize those aspects of Konnakkol that appear “universal,” or rely on tools grounded in Western frameworks, to facilitate its adaptation or incorporation into other musical contexts. However, there remains a significant gap in explicitly examining points of divergence

between Western and South Indian systems, particularly where the conceptual assumptions of each rhythmic system fail to translate effectively into the other. This paper aims to address that gap.

By examining and contrasting a range of Western-based pedagogical and scholarly resources that introduce Konnakkol or draw on selected elements of its tradition, this paper seeks to open a critical discourse through which we may more pointedly discuss different, sometimes complementary and sometimes mutually exclusive, dimensions of rhythmic expression. The paper further proposes that respecting the internal pedagogical and conceptual logic of each rhythmic system, while fostering an understanding that both may represent different perspectives on a shared rhythmic whole, is essential for maximizing the benefits of studying each rhythmic language. Such an approach supports a more informed, respectful, and meaningful integration of South Indian rhythmic knowledge into global musical practice and contributes to a more holistic understanding of rhythmic universality.

Ana Gutiérrez Ortúzar is a doctoral student in Interdisciplinary Research in Music at the University of Ottawa, specializing in cross-cultural critical music pedagogy. She is a disciple of Konnakkol exponent Vidwan B. R. Somashekar Jois and co-founder of Pakinda Musik, a music education initiative based on storytelling and game-based learning.

**Rhythmic, (Hyper)Metric, and Stylistic Dissonance
in the Danish String Quartet's *The Dromer*
Irén Hangen Vázquez (McGill University)**

The Danish String Quartet (DSQ) is lauded for both their interpretations of Western canonical composers' works and their arrangements of Nordic folk tunes. In this presentation, I use rhythmic, metric, and contextual analyses to show how the DSQ's arrangement of the Danish folk tune "The Dromer" from their 2017 album *Last Leaf* subverts listeners' metric and stylistic expectations.

I discuss two rhythmically and (hyper)metrically complex moments that challenge listeners' perceptions of this piece as folk music. Firstly, I consider a hypermetric displacement at the beginning of "The Dromer" whose analysis is complicated by differences between the published score and official recording. Secondly, I examine how notational choices obscure a double hemiola during the transition to the A' section. I center the performer's perspective in my analysis, drawing on my own experience of learning this piece.

I place "The Dromer" in stylistic context by comparing the DSQ's arrangement with other modern versions and the eighteenth-century manuscript, which show that the (hyper)metric complexities of the DSQ's arrangement are not present in the original folk tune. I also discuss the DSQ's own writings and the critical reception of their non-classical albums. Through metric and contextual analyses, I show that "The Dromer" exists on a genre boundary between folk and classical and that a deeper consideration of genre and style in the DSQ's ventures into folk music is needed.

Irén Hangen Vázquez is currently pursuing a MMus in Cello Performance at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University. Irén’s primary music theory research focuses on participant interaction in live performances of salsa music. Outside of music, Irén enjoys reading, knitting, and playing with her cat!

10:45 am: *African American Musical Expression* (Chair: Liam Pond)

**The Jubilee Singers in Canada:
Race and Aesthetics in Post-Confederation Society**

Greame Lister (University of Ottawa)

In 1866, Fisk University was founded in Nashville, Tennessee, with the intent of providing a Christian revivalist education to recently freed slaves. As part of this mission, the university ran a small religious choir which, under the direction of George White, achieved international critical acclaim; the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Representing the first major group of African-American musicians to achieve this status in the post Civil War era, they formed an integral part of the spread of gospel music in the United States, Canada, and Europe. The measure of their success in Canada can be seen in the sheer number of imitators they had. Within a few years of the ensemble’s first arrival in Toronto, they had inspired several copycat groups, all bearing the “Jubilee Singers” name.

Wherever they went, one thing remained constant in their reception; their status as educated African-Americans made them a topic of discussion unique to the politics of race in each country. Significant scholarship has been devoted to the cultural legacy and often contentious reception of the Fisk Jubilee Singers in most of these places. However, there is a noticeable lack of study specific to the group’s reception in Canada in the late 19th century, despite their extensive history of touring in Ontario and Quebec. In this conference presentation, I will revisit the reception of the ensemble’s travels in Canada through the 1880’s and 90’s, and analyze what their reception reveals about the politics of race and its role in early Canadian identity.

Graeme completed a BMus in Trumpet Performance at the University of British Columbia in 2025, before recently moving to pursue a Masters of Music in Trumpet Performance at the University of Ottawa. They have a particular interest in the intersection of music, politics, and aesthetic philosophy in the 19th century.

**Lil Hardin Armstrong’s Secret Ambition:
Unravelling the Mystery of Mrs. Louis Armstrong’s All-Girl Orchestra**

Jonathan Lindhorst (McGill University)

In the rich and complex history of women in jazz, Lil Hardin Armstrong’s All-Girl Orchestra – sometimes billed as the Harlem Harlicans or as Mrs. Louis Armstrong and Her Chicago Creolians – stands out as particularly mysterious. Frequently referenced but rarely examined in detail, the ensemble’s story has been obscured by contradictions: sources disagree on when it was active, what it was called, and who played in it.

This paper reconstructs the orchestra's history through detailed archival research, drawing on African American newspapers, union records, and gossip columns of the day to piece together a fuller account.

The findings establish new specifics about personnel, tour dates, and business dealings, while also offering insight into Hardin's motivations for leading the group and the structural obstacles she encountered as a Black woman bandleader in Depression-era New York. Managed in close collaboration with bassist/cellist Olivia Shipp and violinist Mae Brady, the orchestra became a site of experimentation with modern swing arranging and a platform for women instrumentalists to claim professional space. It was not only an entrepreneurial venture but also a vehicle of intergenerational mentorship that shaped the early trajectory of the African American all-girl swing band movement of the 1930s and for 40s.

I argue that Lil Hardin Armstrong's All-Girl Orchestra marks a flashpoint in jazz history, one that complicates the boundary between "jazz" and "popular" entertainment, illuminates gendered dynamics of access and creativity, and highlights how archival reconstruction can recover silenced voices and broaden our understanding of jazz modernity.

Canadian saxophonist, composer, and researcher **Jonathan Lindhorst** is a D.Mus. candidate at McGill's Schulich School of Music where he researches Tone-Clock Theory and early women in jazz, regularly presents and teaches on these topics internationally, and has been published in the *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie*.

Melodic Segments in The Improvisations of Charlie Parker: Toward a Functional Grammar in Jazz Improvisation

John Sweenie (McGill University)

Researchers in jazz improvisation have attempted to formalize a working grammar for improvised music, yet these efforts have struggled to represent stylistic conventions with sufficient precision. Using custom software developed in Music21 alongside tools adapted from written-language syntax analysis, this study seeks to identify and codify the smallest meaningful melodic units in the improvised works of Charlie Parker as a first step toward such a grammar.

The corpus for this study, provided by Prof. Rémi Bolduc at McGill University, consists of over 500 transcribed Parker solos recorded between 1940 and 1947. Drawing on Thomas Owens's 1974 dissertation on Parker's melodic vocabulary, as well as research in music perception, accent points were used to determine points of melodic segmentation. Following the methodology of Martin Norgaard, a recursive Music21 script converted each solo into a sequence of integers representing intervallic motion, which were analyzed using n-gram tools.

Two segmentation strategies were developed to address the issue of overlapping patterns. The first enforced segmentation at beats 1 and 3, producing a reduced word list. The second method, informed by Lerdahl and Jackendoff's grouping preference rules and Owens's findings, used manually annotated performed accents to trigger segmentation. All methods excluded patterns crossing long rests.

Results suggest that most patterns correspond strongly to rhythmic placement. Future research will involve suggesting categorization for these musical cells, enabling concordance analysis and contributing to advances in jazz pedagogy and music research, with implications for analytical and pedagogical practice.

John Sweenie is a saxophonist and researcher currently completing his Doctor of Music degree in Jazz Performance at McGill University. His research areas include bebop, improvisation, jazz history, and music technology.

1:45 pm: *Sonic Spaces* (Chair: Gretchen Schwarz)

**Auditing Experimentalism:
The New York State Council on the Arts and the Experimental Intermedia Foundation**
Scott Chupp (Stony Brook University)

This paper constitutes an archival investigation of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) grant application files of the Experimental Intermedia Foundation (EIF), a long running non-profit experimental music space and consortium in New York City. NYSCA's audits and reviews of EIF concerts in the 1980s provide a colorful glimpse of a particular time and place in experimental music history, involving composers like George Lewis and Phill Niblock. Yet perhaps more intriguingly, the audits document the relationship between avant-garde aesthetics, cultural policy, and public arts agencies. NYSCA's critiques of EIF performances are often puzzling for the ways that they contradict common understandings of experimental music, but they also reveal crises in experimental musical aesthetics amid rising neoliberalism and ideological conflicts around public arts funding.

This paper engages these histories, as well as questions about the ways that the founding philosophies of public arts agencies in the 1960s informed experimental music's trajectory and the emergence of alternative spaces in New York City. By closely reading the critiques and rhetorics found in the audits, I argue that 1980s "downtown" experimentalism constituted a coalition of experimental artists and public arts funding officials which, while sharing the mission of establishing an artistic community outside the demands of commercial industry, found contradictions and confusion in the process of realizing the project of NYC experimental music.

Scott Chupp is an MA student in Critical Music Studies at Stony Brook University. He received his B.A. from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. His research considers the history and theory of experimental and electronic music in both institutional and vernacular contexts.

***“Please (Don’t) Turn Down the Noise”*: An Examination of Conflicting Listening Publics on Recorded Outdoor Musical Shows Played on Buses in Sri Lanka**

Uthpala Herath (University of Alberta)

In Sri Lanka, playing recorded music on buses has been a common practice for decades. Most of these recordings are live audio-video recordings of outdoor musical shows that primarily perform the *mal sindu* songs—a popular music sub-genre—enticing many listeners from lower social classes. Immediately after every musical show, their recordings are available in regional markets; therefore, many bus drivers and conductors from lower social backgrounds own large quantities of these recordings and play them non-stop. Since around 2020, a public discourse emerged criticizing this “loud” and “noisy” music, leading to the imposition of legal restrictions on playing this music on buses. These criticisms pose an interesting question—why is listening to the music of outdoor musical shows considered bad?

In this paper, I focus on the perceptions of musical listening on buses that create contradictory listening publics. I examine how the act of “listening-in” to these recordings creates an alternative public space, challenging the local notions of “cultivated” musical taste. To analyze this, I draw on my ethnographic fieldwork in Sri Lanka and on scholarly frameworks on “bad music”, noise, and listening publics. Treating outdoor musical show recordings as platforms for musical engagement among lower social classes, I show the ways in which the act of listening-in to recorded music on buses reflect the conflicting social power relations in Sri Lankan society.

Uthpala Herath is a PhD Student in Ethnomusicology at the University of Alberta and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Her research examines Sri Lankan popular music and music iconography. Her current work explores ideological foundations and social class representations of Sri Lankan *mal sindu* songs.

Beyond Talent: Narrative, Identity, and the MwSIC Model of Musical Creativity

Jenny Jieun Park (McGill University)

This study investigates the shifting and often contested definitions of creativity within the realm of musical giftedness and long-term artistic development. Using a collaborative autoethnographic methodology, we examine the life histories, formative experiences, and creative trajectories of two musicians whose narratives illuminate how creative potential is cultivated, constrained, or transformed over time. Building on Sternberg’s WICS model of Wisdom, Intelligence, and Creativity, we propose the MwSIC Model of Creativity, which places an individual’s lived story at its core. This model emphasizes that creativity emerges not merely from cognitive capacities or isolated talents, but from the dynamic interactions among personal meaning-making, social context, and evolving artistic identity.

Our findings question the dominant educational structures in music learning, which frequently prioritize measurable outcomes, technical proficiency, and standardized conceptions of achievement. Such product-oriented approaches risk narrowing students’ creative possibilities

and may overlook the nuanced, often nonlinear pathways through which musicians actually grow. In contrast, the MwsIC model advocates for a process-oriented philosophy that embraces uncertainty, experimentation, and reflective practice as essential components of creative development.

By highlighting the role of ambiguity, curiosity, and wisdom-in-action, this study argues for a broader and more humanistic understanding of what it means to be musically gifted. The insights derived from our narratives contribute to ongoing discussions about creativity as a developmental process rather than a fixed trait. Ultimately, our work offers educators, researchers, and practitioners a framework for nurturing more adaptable, innovative, and resilient musicians across diverse learning contexts.

Jenny Jieun Park is currently a postgraduate Artist Diploma student at the Schulich. She holds a degree in music Education from Columbia University, where her research focused on flow states, creativity, and motivation in music learning. Alongside her performing career, she remains actively engaged in research, exploring interdisciplinary intersections among performance, performance science, and music education.

Everyday Music Use in Long-Term Care: Emotional Labour and Person-Centred Dementia Care

Sinéad Almeida (Carleton University)

Experiencing music spontaneously in daily routines shapes everyday life in a long-term care home in Ottawa, Ontario. This musical exposure may include a care worker singing a familiar tune during morning routines or a spiritual care worker using personal piano skills to lead spiritual music-based sessions. While person-centred models like the Butterfly approach encourage everyday music use as part of “exceptional” caregiving, music use does not appear in formal job descriptions for care workers. Instead, caregivers draw on existing musical knowledge and emotional labour to enact ideals of person-centred care.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted at The Glebe Centre, including interviews with care staff and participant observation, this paper explores how everyday uses of music by care staff constitute a form of emotional labour that remains largely underacknowledged despite being essential to relational and individualized care for residents living with dementia. Engaging with feminist ethics of care (Tronto 1994; Held 2005), and research on emotional labour and music in everyday life (DeNora 2000), this paper examines how care workers might navigate the gap between institutional prescription, such as formal music therapy, and limited resourcing.

Through examples of musical interaction between staff and residents, as well as my own observations, I show how music creates meaningful connections, supports more individualized care environments, and promotes well-being without reliance on prescriptive or clinical interventions. This paper argues that everyday music use is inherent to person-centred care models, yet the labour involved remains largely invisible. By making this work visible, this research shows the politics of everyday music use in care settings and argues for recognizing care workers’ musical expertise as skilled labour worthy of training, support, and institutional acknowledgement, particularly as person-centred care models expand into settings with limited resources for music-based programming.

Sinéad is a second year student in the thesis stream of the Music and Culture program at Carleton University. She holds a Bachelor of Music (Hons.) in classical piano with a minor in psychology, also from Carleton. Her research explores the role of everyday music use in long-term care by non-specialist care staff, with a particular focus on how music inherently supports person-centred care and, more broadly, well-being.