PERIODS AND WAVES:
A CONFERENCE ON SOUND AND HISTORY

APRIL 29-30, 2016
STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY
PROGRAM & ABSTRACTS

Friday AM (April 29)
8:00AM–9:00AM registration, Humanities Institute Lobby
9:00–noon (coffee break 10:15–10:30), Humanities Institute 1006 & 1008

Session A: The Natural and the Technical
Chair: Stephen Decatur-Smith (Stony Brook University, Music Department)

"Scotland's 'Sonic Enlightenment'"
Andrew Greenwood (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville)

This paper proposes a sonic geography of Enlightenment–provisionally entitled the "Sonic Enlightenment"–with particular reference to the acoustic and philosophical culture of eighteenth-century Lowland Scotland. Traditionally the Enlightenment is conceived in ways that privilege notions of reason, rationality, and political revolution over its sonic histories, thus downplaying approaches from humanistic sound studies that might shed new light on its development. In the case of Scotland, circulations of sonic media–particularly involving networks of Scots song culture in the Lowlands–played a vital role in the emergence of new ideas about sociability, social cohesion, and community that helped define the Enlightenment in Scotland following the tremendous challenges and social fragmentations following the 1707 *Treaty of Union* with England. These ideas were often infused with sonic metaphors in treatises by *literati* such as Francis Hutcheson, James Beattie, and Adam Smith (the latter was working on a book devoted to music just prior to his death in 1790). Moreover, within these circulations of sonic media, beginning with the ballad opera of Allan Ramsay (1686-1758) *The Gentle Shepherd* (Edinburgh, 1725/29) and his songster the *Tea-Table Miscellany* (1723-37), one finds visual and paratextual inscriptions that index past sounds giving substance to notion of a "Sonic Enlightenment." I argue this sonic geography was initially bounded by the Scottish Lowlands but eventually extended beyond into other enlightenment movements globally. Rethinking the Enlightenment sonically has implications not only for musicology, ethnomusicology, music theory, and studies of history and literature, but also sheds new light on relationships between sonic and social phenomena more generally, providing new insights into how sound does and might transform our own fragmented communities today.

“Curating Past Soundscapes and Sonic Memories through Radio:
Field Recording, Exploratory Soundwork, and the Historical Evidence of Hearing Cultures”
Kate Galloway (Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada)

In 1975 Vancouver Co-op Radio launched, broadcasting challenging sounds and ideas to local listeners’ ears. Radio operated as an important medium for composer, radio artist, sound ecologist, and Vancouver Co-op Radio co-founder Hildegard Westerkamp to broadcast soundscape programing on her program *Soundwalking*. Westerkamp, a member of the World Soundscape Project, participated in the collective’s documentation of historical soundscapes and radiowork in *Soundscapes of Canada* for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in a series of ten one-hour programs broadcast from October 21 to November 1, 1974. The members of the World Soundscape Project employed experimental radio techniques and documentary sound to interrogate ways of thinking sound historically and the social and sonic life of intimately known locales, fostering greater awareness of the relationships among environmental sound, hearing cultures, sensory experience, and cultural intimacy through soundwork. Soundscape radiowork highlights the process of sonic witnessing, where the political potential of remediated field recordings is explored. The “ethnographic ear” (Erlmann 2004) of experimental soundscape radio provokes audiences to listen to sonic materiality and sonic histories of environmental change through ethnographic soundwork. Westerkamp’s *Under the Flightpath* (1981), for instance, comments on the social and sonic impact of, and environmental protests surrounding, the 1970s expansion of the Vancouver International Airport. I argue that the soundscape radiowork produced by members of the World Soundscape Project created unique publically circulating sonic keepsakes of past soundscapes that educated the general public, developing their auditory acuity, and curated and remediated the soundscape during a period of robust urban development, dynamic soundscape shifts, and sociogeographic change across Canada. Contributing to scholarship that rethinks radio’s function in the propagation of soundwork that curates the everyday, I suggest that ethnographic soundscape radio programming cultivated opportunities for soundscape curation, hearing the past, and pedagogical contexts for experimental sound to communicate social and environmental politics.

“The Noise of the Desert: Recording Aboriginal Australia in the 1920s”
Henry Peter Reese (University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia)

This paper articulates a convergence between sound, history and race in popular anthropological thought in interwar Australia. From the 1920s, as Australia’s domestic sound recording industry was growing, scientists explored the possibilities of the phonograph as a collector of field data. The city of Adelaide was particularly influential as the terminus of numerous research expeditions into Central Australia, a site of national rhetoric whose

peoples and landscapes were rendered both increasingly accessible and romantically distant in this period.

As a case study from this politically charged context, this paper listens in on the life and work of E. Harold Davies, Professor of Music at the University of Adelaide. As a sound recordist, Davies accompanied a number of expeditions under the auspices of the University's Board of Anthropological Research in the late 1920s. He also wrote and broadcasted on the topic of the imagined primitive origins of Aboriginal auditory cultures. Davies was pivotal in both evoking Central Australia as a soundscape to a wide audience, and aurally situating its inhabitants within a longer timescale of race and evolution. Davies' troping of sonic cultural difference as temporal disjunct opens a space in which the normative potential of sound in a settler colony is particularly potent.

My account of the wider career of E. H. Davies' sonic research brings popular cultures of phonography into conversation with 'scientific' uses of recording technology, in a period of Western auditory cultures in transition. To Davies and his listeners, the phonograph animated a wider world of sound. Teasing out the imagined connections between the phonograph and the wider soundscapes through which it moved – listening for the soundscapes beyond the cylinder – this paper offers a thicker reading of the cultural spaces made possible by sound recording, in a hitherto under-explored site of Empire and settler colonialism.

"Elusive Noise:
Techniques of Arbitration and the Hearing Subject in Environmental Noise Control"
Jennifer Hsieh (Stanford University)

In an effort to curb the rise in noise complaints in Taiwan during the early 2000s, the Taiwan Environmental Protection Agency began implementing and enforcing low frequency noise standards (20-200 Hz), the first-ever in the world. Rather than reducing the number of noise complaints, however, the number of complaints continues to grow. More and more urban households in Taiwan report the low hum of air conditioning units and the intermittent thud of upstairs neighbors' footsteps as noise that needs to be eliminated. As a result, environmental inspectors in the capital city of Taipei are dispatched 24/7 to determine whether such sounds warrant fines and abatement.

At the same time, the physical quality of low frequency sounds eludes traditional, acoustic methods for control. The decibel meter, long held as the indisputable symbol of noise control, cannot adequately measure low frequency sounds. And because such sounds travel through walls more easily than those in the higher frequency spectrum, the original sound

source is difficult to trace. Given these conditions, those who hear and complain about low frequency noise oftentimes cannot resolve the issue and, in many cases, are labeled trouble-makers by neighbors and officials.

In this paper, I examine how the personal hearing of noise is tied to a network of technological verification, cultural values, and government policy in Taiwan. Drawing from specific cases of noise complaints, as well as ethnographic fieldwork with environmental inspectors and noise complainants over a period of sixteen months in Taipei, Taiwan, I argue that the creation of low frequency noise standards shapes a particular, urban hearing subject that contends with the technological and administrative limits of environmental noise control. I contribute in this paper to literature on the history of environmental noise control, the history of sound technologies, and the hearing subject.

Session B: Animating Inscriptions

Chair: Catherine Bradley (Stony Brook University, Music Department)

"Singing Joy, Singing Pain: Vocalizing Emotion in the Medieval Conductus"

Mary Caldwell (University of Pennsylvania)

Recent explorations of song and sound have revealed vibrant musical tapestries in towns, cities, courts, and churches throughout medieval Europe. Interventions by Emma Dillon, Elizabeth Eva Leach, Carol Symes, Philip Weller, and Ardis Butterfield, in particular, have laid a much-needed foundation in the intertwining of medieval studies and sound studies, with examinations ranging from the evocative noise of city streets to the sound of subjectivity in trouvère song. Surprisingly absent in these rich discussions, however, is the medieval conductus, an extensive repertory of Latin-texted songs that stands as a rich and relatively unstudied repository of sonic meaning. A genre inherently shrouded in ambiguity in terms of its function and significance, the conductus nevertheless demands attention as a sonic, as well as musical and poetic, object, with its possible performance spaces–as well as performers–connecting clerical, lay, and courtly realms. In this paper I bring the conductus into dialogue with the interrelated studies of medieval sound and song by identifying the manifold uses of vocables and vocalic phrases throughout the Latin repertory. Specifically, I consider how vocables define and demarcate the bounds of emotional states in the conductus, focusing on two contrasting emotions: joy and pain. Drawing on medieval and contemporary theories of the voice, or vox, as well as Barbara Rosenwein's concept of emotional communities, I argue that the deliberate play with vocables in the conductus constructs emotional communities that span the sounding space of individual works and, further, creates inter-sonic meanings between works. By highlighting the relationship between vocables and emotions, I offer an initial foray into how the conductus might be

approached as meaningful sound as well as song.

"The Manuscript is an Instrument and We Must Play"
Andrew Albin (Fordham University at Lincoln Center)

In this theoretical meditation that draws on critical musicology, game theory, sound studies, and material philology, I aim to reconceive our modern scholarly relationship to the medieval manuscript in performative and affective terms by reimagining that manuscript as a sounding instrument designed for interactive play. I describe a musicking process that folds us into playful fellowship with the historical makers, performers, and audiences proliferating around the sonorous manuscript. I then aim to participate in that musicking process through multimedia investigations into two early fifteenth-century English manuscripts: Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 61, a presentation copy of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* containing a famous author-portrait frontispiece, and Lincoln College MS Latin 89, a workaday composite manuscript containing mystical theology and music notation. Each manuscript reveals itself to be a carefully crafted instrument requiring our active, embodied handling to activate its embedded sounding technology.

While scholarly attitudes towards the medieval codex customarily pay greatest mind to its textual, spatial, and visual invitations to interpretation, the manuscript historically prompted and stood at the heart of numerous resoundings, public and private, murmured and clarion, accumulating in a series over time. In this light, my talk seeks to play with the idea of playing manuscripts: of handling them as instruments that demand specialized performance techniques to play them into full-throated sound; of treating them as sound technologies on which we may yet "press play"; and of approaching them more playfully, acknowledging them as actors that can elbow their vociferous way onto the scholarly stage, as objects that can invite us to learn the rules of a game we may yet learn to play. Reconceiving our relationship to medieval manuscripts in this way revives historical medieval sounds such that they might bear their own, properly signifying and significant power, encountered in the materially present moment of a performance in which we ourselves participate.

"Archive Traces: Petrucci's Frottole and the Process of Replication"
Mark Rodgers (Yale University)

The eleven books of *frottole* that Ottaviano Petrucci printed in the first decades of the sixteenth century supplied unprecedented material support for performances of that repertory. Even by the most conservative estimates, more copies of a single Petrucci edition circulated than the total number of surviving manuscript sources containing notated *frottole*. Literary sources for the *poesia per musica* sung as *frottole* were plentiful, but they transmitted texts without musical notation. Encoding this body of sung poetry in elegantly typeset

musical notation, Petrucci's books forcefully annexed to the written archive information that, until then, had mostly been transmitted orally. They participated in altering the conditions of musical culture, I propose, by accelerating the flow of musical information through the process of replication, or what art historian Whitney Davis has defined as "the sequential production of similar material forms."

My paper models this process of replication. I begin by considering the distribution of formal similarities among Petrucci's *frottole*, taking global pitch structures employed in settings of the repetitive, relatively formulaic *strambotto* as a case study. Such similarities are suggestive of countless negotiations between production and reproduction in Petrucci's repertory: between a circumscribed musical repertory and the abstract formalisms that shaped it and were reshaped by it. Musical information passed between material form and abstraction in this process, which is now discernible only through its notational traces. But as the material traces of a rich cultural archive of musical practices, Petrucci's printed *strambotti* were not exterior to that archive: as storage mechanisms, they were constitutive of it.

"A Listening Guide to No Man's Land:
Capturing the Aural Culture of the First World War in Text and Music"
Kassandra Hartford (Muehlenberg College)

In his 1929 novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Erich Maria Remarque makes a grim case for the importance of listening to the din of the battlefield during the First World War. "Modern trench warfare," he explains, "demands knowledge and experience. A man must have…an ear for the sound and character of the shells…young recruits…are mown down because they are listening anxiously to the roar of the big coal-boxes falling in the rear, and miss the light, piping whistle of the low spreading daisy-cutters." For Remarque, attending to the complex soundscapes of the battlefield is a matter of survival. His focus on *listening* to battle noise of the Great War is not unusual. Novels, memoirs, poems, and articles in contemporaneous music journals all attest both to the importance of battle-listening and to the ways it shaped the imagining of the music of both the past and the present after the Great War.

In this talk, I begin by documenting this aural culture, drawing upon a wide array of primary sources to show the extraordinary attentiveness to noise that navigation in the complex sonic space of the World War I battlefield required. Further, I consider the importance of this changing culture on the ways "modern" music was heard and understood. Using James Reese Europe's "On Patrol in No Man's Land" as a case study, I show the ways that an attention to the relationship between listening to noise in battle and listening to "noisy" twentieth century music can help us read the relationship between urban industrial noise

and noisy music more thoughtfully through the prism of listening and complicate narratives that pair an interest in "noisy" music with the jingoistic impulses of Futurism.

Friday PM

1:30PM–4:30PM (coffee break 2:45–3:00), Humanities Institute 1006 & 1008

Session A: Intersensoriality

Chair: Stephanie Jensen-Moulton (Brooklyn College of CUNY)

"'With ravished fingers': Unseeing and Unhearing the Musical Encounters of Helen Keller"
Stefan Honisch (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada)

In 1916, the tenor Enrico Caruso sang *Vois ma misère hélas! Vois ma détresse* from Camille Saint Saens' *Samson et Dalila* for the deaf-blind activist, writer, and educator, Helen Keller, an encounter later described by Keller herself: "with ravished fingers I felt Caruso's voice in passages from Samson….it was unforgettable, the animation of Caruso's face and his rapt response to the sphere-born harmonious sisters, voice and verse'' (Drobnick, 2004). Caruso's performance for Keller constitutes the entry point to my paper's exploration of deaf-blindness as a mode of musical experience through a series of case studies delving into Keller's encounter with Caruso, as well as her experiences with several other musicians, including, among others, the deaf-blind pianist Helen May Martin (*Times Daily*, 1937, p. 8).

The paper draws on newspaper and magazine reports of these meetings, on photographs of Keller with these musicians, and on Keller's own writings to argue that the expressive power of music is not lost, or even attenuated in the absence of sight and sound. In contrast to the presumption that music is a purely sonic medium (Cumming, 2000), and that musical performance is primarily a sonic and visual communicative practice (Leppert, 1991; Tsay, 2013), my paper shows that music can function as a tactile form of expression in ways that do not merely accommodate blind, deaf, and blind-deaf participants, whether musicians or audiences. Instead, a willingness to "unsee" and to "unhear" music pushes musicians, scholars, and educators to question the primacy of the normative sensorium in music, and in so doing, to enrich present-day scholarly debates about the relationship between music, the senses, and the body. (Howe, 2010 & 2015; Straus, 2011).

"Taking 'Listening Seriously' Seriously:
Standpoint Acoustemology and Ethnographic Methods in Gibraltar's British Botanical Garden"
Bryce Peake (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)

Amidst the sensory turn in the humanities, ethnography has become a buzzing method/ology for scholars of sound and listening. Yet, its proliferation across sound studies scholars in the humanities and humanistic social science has resulted in confusion: is ethnography just a genre? A method? How do we make sense of ethnography as it is deployed by history, anthropology, cultural studies, media studies, STS, ethno/musicology, and digital humanities?

Making sense here signals the two paths of this paper. The first argues that ethnography across disciplines is united by a methodology of 'taking seriously' – indeed, many ethnographies make this gesture in the phrase "… I take seriously…" Yet, in anthropology and other fields engaged in an ontological turn, 'taking seriously' has come under fire for not in fact taking seriously the worlds and experiences of ethnographic Others, whose actions and practices are reduced to rationalizing systems of Western continental philosophy and theory. I argue that this problem, the second section of this paper, is a sensorial problem: Ethnographers are often trained to look and talk, not to listen. Supported by an analysis of ethnographic methods texts, I capture this problem through my own concept of standpoint acoustemology, a concept for how sonic ways of knowing the world are product and productive of colonial gender, race, class, dis/abled, and sexual relations of force. The intervention in this conference paper is to argue that 'taking seriously' means to 'listening seriously,' conscious of our own standpoint acoustemology(s) as researchers.

To make these points, my paper weaves together standpoint acoustemology and taking seriously throughout a historical ethnography of masculinity and media sciences in Gibraltar's British Botanical Gardens. Gibraltar, a post- World War II British Colony challenges much of what we know about the relationship between colonialism and the somatic terrain of listening, particularly as it was formed by the most unlikely of scientists. And, in doing so, it challenges us to think critically about how ethnography and ethnographers are implicated in standpoint acoustemologies not of our own making. By listening about listening (ethnography) and historicizing listeners listening historically (history), this ethnographic work forces us to think about what serious listening is in the ethnographic methodology of taking seriously, and how to take listening seriously seriously.

"Listening with Vocal Chords:
An Embodied Approach to Recorded Voices in Twentieth Century Music"

Katherine Kaiser (Independent Scholar)

In the early 1920s, a published vocal method promised its readers that they could "sing like Caruso," or learn to sing *exactly* as Caruso did by listening to his voice on a phonograph record. Ruth Crawford's introduction to the folk song transcriptions in *Our Singing Country*

(1941) suggested that her transcriptions could not capture the "flesh, blood, and nerve fibre" of the original singer, but that by listening to the original recordings so that readers could shed their city ways and find that singing these tunes would "come more natural." Such claims had basis, in part, in 19th century studies of the vocal apparatus: histologist Salomon Stricker, for example, asserted that listening to voices did not simply a result in a passive hearing through the ear. Rather, he observed that listeners vocal chords' automatically vibrated in resonance with the singer/speaker. This theory, cited by composer and theorist Pierre Schaeffer in the 1950s, forms some of his earliest thinking into the physical perception of sound.

These sources document a long history of embodied listening to recorded voices, often ignored by contemporary critical theory. These studies have often focused on the *disembodied* voice and its "uncanny" nature, and its distance from the physical reality of its source. Yet by tracing historical understandings of sound and physical listening beyond the ear, this opens up new possibilities for conceiving of the role of listener and the nature of recorded voices in 20th century music beyond the acousmatic.

"Sound-Amplifying Instruments for the Deaf:
between Assistive and Emancipatory Technologies"
Magdalena Zdrodowska (Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland)

In the 19th century, the ear trumpet became a ubiquitous attribute of deaf people. This large clumsy device was synonymous with deaf issues such as misinterpretation and other communication difficulties, leading to deafness being seen as a funny impairment, in contrast to blindness. Deaf users wanted to hide these stigmatizing devices, therefore producers invented sophisticated ways of disguising them as hats, fans or even chairs. Similarly, producers of the new electric hearing aids of the time followed this trend by designing them in the form of bags, jewelry, and glasses (it was still better to be shortsighted than hard-of-hearing). The miniaturization afforded by transistors consequently served the same aim.

Electrical hearing aids, being far more commercial products than ear trumpets, depended heavily on legislation (e.g. state refund policies, especially after the Great War when large numbers of deafened veterans came back home), and advertising. Producers tried to convince as many people as possible that they needed hearing aids, for example due to the oncoming deafness epidemic which was hysterically predicted at the turn of the 20th century. The emergence of audiometry professionals who assisted the hard of hearing with proper aids sealed the evolution of the hearing aid user from client to medicalized patient.

However, trumpets and especially hearing aids reflect the social and cultural emancipation of deaf communities that took place over the course of the 20th century; from aids bashfully hidden to instruments available in vivid colors and styles (e.g. with animal patterns or in punk styles) and decorated with specially designed jewelry used by the "proud Deaf".

This presentation is based on twofold empirical research: object-oriented analysis of the ear trumpet and hearing aid collection at Thackray's Medical Museum (Leeds, Great Britain), and discourse analysis of hearing aid advertisements published in "Volta Review" since 1910.

Session B: Immersion

Chair: Robert Crease (Stony Brook University, Department of Philosophy)

"'A Physical Possibility':
Sound, Vibration, and the Fourth Dimension in George Antheil's *Ballet Mécanique*"

Angharad Davis (Yale University)

"Vibration," in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was a word to conjure with. The discovery in the 1880s and 1890s of mysterious forces such as radiation, radio waves, and X-rays (each of which was conceptualized – at least by some – as a form of etheric vibration) seemed to indicate the power of vibratory energies to transcend distance, to render the invisible visible, and even to hint at the fundamental make-up of the universe. Scientific discoveries were matched by pseudoscientific applications: in the 1910s and 1920s, advertisements for various vibrational technologies trumpeted the ability of the latest wonder remedy to cure anything from dandruff to heart disease. At the same time, philosophers of a spiritualist bent promoted the idea that vibrations in the supposed "universal ether" could transmit communications between human minds or from beyond the grave, or even act as a point of contact between the perceptible world and a hidden hyperdimensional reality.

Artists were not immune from the excitement stirred up by these ideas. In this paper I will examine the vibratory philosophy formulated by American composer George Antheil in the early 1920s and brought to fruition in his most notorious work, the *Ballet Mécanique* (1924-1926). Central to Antheil's philosophy was a belief in the physical and spiritual power of sonic vibration, and it is my contention that this principle underpins many of *Ballet Mécanique*'s most characteristic features. Moreover, Antheil's philosophy, which incorporated elements of scientific and pseudoscientific thought, hyperdimensional philosophy, and the newly popularized Theory of Relativity, and refracted them all through a lens of "machine age" futuristic technophilia, can itself be understood as a form of sympathetic vibration, echoing the manifold ways in which sound and vibration were conceptualized in the early twentieth century.

“Acousmatic Voices in the Brazilian Backlands”
Daniel Sharp (Tulane University)

This presentation traces three authoritative, extraordinary voices projected throughout Arcoverde, Pernambuco, a small city in the northeastern Brazilian backlands. It is an account of acousmêtres, or disembodied voices that are heard while the visual presence of their bodies remains obscured. I will engage with composer and film scholar Michel Chion's theorization of the acousmêtre, testing the extent to which the term can be applied beyond film into an ethnographic setting.

Based on a decade of in-depth ethnography in the region, and engaging with sound studies and the growing literature on vocality, I examine the contrasting sonorities and means of technological projection of the voices of Lima, Lira and João. Lima is a death notice announcer inspired by Charleton Heston’s cinematic voice of god who drives through the city in a loudspeaker truck; João da Informação (John of the Information) is a man celebrated for memorizing the city’s telephone numbers who operates a community-supported directory assistance service; and Lira is a brooding, iconoclastic pop singer who circulates his recordings to represent Arcoverde throughout Brazil.

Chion describes the acousmatic voice as associated with being everywhere; knowing everything, and seeing everything: omnipresence, omniscience, and panopticism. Arcoverdenses attribute varying degrees of these forms of extraordinary knowledge and authority to these spokesvoices.

Lima, Lira, and João are remaking the city through their utterances, registering different aspects of contemporary Arcoverde as they speak, sing and scream. And by doing so, they index important shifts in the trajectory of the city. I argue that both the cosmopolitan and the nativist desires of the inhabitants of this heritage tourism destination can be heard in the sonorities of these voices. I explore how each has become entangled in discussions regarding Arcoverde’s identity, as it is understood internally and projected externally.

“Dawn Chorus: Institutional Sound Use, Identity and Ideology”
Scott Wilson (Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand)

Soundscapes and audio supplements are an increasingly important part of highly designed audience experiences within museums, art galleries, zoos, airports, and other institutional

spaces. From the guided audio tour, which isolates individual participants within a particular promenade, to the deliberately immersive sensorium that appears to offer a greater participatory freedom, sound use is a now established part of the practices associated with designed visitor experiences.

The presence, in these soundscapes, of iconographic environmental sounds, birds, insects and animals, indigenous songs and other recordings in association with the experience of these institutions, do more than supplement and anchor the audience's participation in these events; they surreptitiously guide the individual towards a particular conclusion in relation to the institution within which they occur and in line with larger discourses of national belonging. Such sound design practices can therefore be aligned with broader and historically located conceptions of identity, particularly national identity.

This paper seeks to explore a variety of situations where institutional sound use and sound design serve both narrative and ideological purposes. By examining both commercial and educational situations - the Auckland International Airport; the Auckland War Museum; the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and others – this paper will closely examine the relationship between sound design, institutional sound use and national discourses of identity, ethnicity, history and belonging.

"Breaking Waves and Aurality"
John Melillo (University of Arizona)

In this paper, I would like to trace an aural history of breaking waves–surf, breakers–in order to attend to the changing relationship between the continuum of noise and the uses of indexes–signs without referential so much as traced or causal links to phenomena. In my paper, would like to listen back to the ways in which writers, sailors, composers, field recorders and even painters make sense of the sound of the waves. The presentation of multiplicity within waves makes them an important (anti-)phenomenon for philosophical inquiry: they remain exemplary sites for Liebniz's calculus of "little phenomena and for the philosopher Michel Serres, they perfectly allegorize the "disturbance of being" that is noise. However, I would like to hear these multiplicities–a multiplicity stemming from friction, bubbles, the medium of water, physical geography, and planetary energy flows not in a metaphysical but a historical register: what did listeners listen to (or even read or see) when they listened to the waves? What did waves indicate? How did waves speak? And after listening, indexing, and speaking, what remains? Answering these historical questions, I argue, will allow us not only to describe different relationships between human agents and the site of the sea but also to reimagine the relationship between the continuum of noise, techniques of listening, and aesthetic contemplation. My constellation of examples will draw

together a wide network of wave-indices in order to focus this triangulated relationship between noise, art, and science. They include: late medieval and early modern rutters, or sailing directions, poems by anonymous Anglo- Saxon bards, Walt Whitman, and Caroline Bergvall, essays by Henry David Thoreau and the French historian Jules Michelet, mid-20th century and contemporary meditation recordings, scientific and archival field recordings, and the sound artist Toshiya Tsunoda's *Wave of Undulation*.

Friday Plenary Session

5:00PM–7:00PM, Humanities Institute 1006

–reception to follow–

Chair: Erika Honisch (Stony Brook University, Music Department)

Plenary Speakers:

Stefan Helmreich (MIT)
Emma Dillon (King's College London)

Saturday AM (April 30)

9:00AM-noon (coffee break, 10:15–10:30), Student Activities Center 302 & 303

Session A: Soundstates
Chair: Judith Lochhead (Stony Brook University, Music Department)

"Noisy Bodies: Gender, Physicality, and the Nineteenth-Century Silent Piano"
Sara Ballance (University of California, Santa Barbara)

In 1883, American piano teacher Almon Virgil received his first patent on a device that looked and operated just like a piano, with one critical difference: it made no sound beyond soft clicks as each key was depressed and released. Virgil was not the first to design a silent

keyboard, but his was by far the most sophisticated and enjoyed unusual popularity on both sides of the Atlantic. By 1900 he had opened schools in New York, Chicago, Boston, London and Berlin, and his method was endorsed by numerous famous pianists. Examining contemporary discourse surrounding the silent piano–including advertising, testimonials, and critical commentary–I show that this success arose from the instrument's unique ability to negotiate a gendered nexus of beliefs about physicality, noise, and music. Moreover, it reflects a broader urge to separate musical sound conceptually from the physicality of its performance.

Nineteenth-century papers are filled with essays about the noise pollution of piano practice, and discussion of the Virgil Clavier clarifies that these complaints stemmed not only from the sound itself, but from the awareness that it resulted from the physical exertion of a (usually female) body. This physical noise was thought to be damaging to the nerves of both the pianist herself and her reluctant listeners. In response, proponents of the Clavier claimed that silent practice would protect the nerves from the damaging sounds of scales and études, saving the ears for truly musical performances. While women were considered most susceptible to sound-induced nervous ailments, the instrument also answered male desires for quiet in the face of audible feminine physicality. By silencing technical practice, the Clavier reinforced a belief that the physical work of practicing produced noise, while music itself–no less physical in the act of performance–proceeded from a separate, immaterial source.

“Debussy's ‘Consonant’ Sevenths and the Challenge of Reception History”
Alexandra Kieffer (Rice University)

In the maelstrom of criticism following the premiere of *Pelléas et Mélisande* in late April 1902, a recurring topic of contention was Debussy's “affront” to traditional harmony and voice-leading, particularly his unresolved seventh and ninth chords. These novel sonorities mark an intensely documented music-historical moment of auditory uncertainty. Over the next several years, these chords would be variously construed in the Parisian musical press as impudent transgressions of convention, as depictive of altered mental states like dreams and hallucinations, and, in a claim first made by critic Jean Marnold in early May 1902, as epistemological constructs that arise from a heightened sensorial discernment of the objective nature of the *corps sonore*. As Marnold's account grew in influence and importance through the decade, the meanings of “consonant” seventh chords in the musical press shifted in significant ways, away from their relationship to musical tradition and conventions and towards a conception of music as sonic materiality outside of all tradition and all convention.

A micro-level reception history of this musical-critical conversation offers an alternative to familiar music-analytical accounts of Debussy's historical importance. Responses to Debussy's consonant seventh chords make conspicuous the varied hermeneutic frames

through which unfamiliar musical sounds are made intelligible–and the complex interconnections between such hermeneutic frames and the action of musical sound itself on historically situated listeners. That is (borrowing a term from the methodology of Bruno Latour), Debussy criticism of this period encapsulates the extent to which musical sound is an agent that *acts* upon its listeners, as well as a sensory object continually subject to reinterpretation by human agents. The changeable "meanings" of Debussy's seventh chords from 1902 to 1910, and the variable modes of listening that gave rise to them, invite a reconsideration of traditional (ahistorical) music-analytical tools as arbiters of musical meaning.

"Echoes of Helmholtz: Sonic Materiality and Psychoanalytic Technique"
Clara Latham (Dartmouth College)

> "To put it in a formula: he must turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient. He must adjust himself to the patient as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting microphone."
>
> Sigmund Freud, "Recommendations for Physicians Practicing Psychoanalysis," 1912.

In this quotation, Freud compares the technique of psychoanalysis to that of a telephone, drawing an analogy between the translation of sound into electricity and the adjustment of unconscious into conscious thought. In this paper, I discuss the limits of this analogy by staging a comparison between the metaphor of the telephone as the instrument of psychoanalysis and the metaphor of Helmholtz's resonator as an instrument of hearing. In the year of Freud's birth, Hermann von Helmholtz presented his famous resonator experiments, demonstrating that the ear was split into a bodily ear that perceived *Ton*, and a mental ear that perceived *Klang*. *Ton* corresponded to the mathematical resonance of objects in the world, while *Klang* is the corresponding mental understanding of that acoustic phenomenon, something more like a sign that the mind hears.

The collapse of the measuring instrument into the body of the measurer is a trope of modernism: in both the arts and the sciences at the turn of the twentieth century, the subject of analysis coincides with the analytic subject. Freud's "talking cure" method expands Helmholtz's split ear beyond object and subject to an aural interaction between two people – analyst and analysand. In the psychoanalytic encounter the bodily ear is mechanically and materially tied not to a tone, but to the voice of another. Staging the unlikely encounter between Helmholtz and Freud, this paper argues that the belief in the physicality of tone is as metaphysical as the unconscious mind, excavating the implications of argument for contemporary sound studies.

“Sound, Sovereignty, and “the Battle for the Mind” in the Early Cold War, c. 1945-1960”

Nicholas Tochka (University of Maryland)

“No man, however highly civilized,” wrote Aldous Huxley in 1952, “can listen for very long to African drumming, or Indian chanting, or Welsh hymn-singing, and retain intact his critical and self-conscious personality.” Prompted by the recent horrors of Nazism and cold-war perceptions of the threats posed by Communism, commentators in the United States and Great Britain began generating new forms of knowledge about human psychology between 1945 and 1960. Huxley's statement emerged from this remarkably productive fifteen-year period, as a broad coalition of literary, scientific, and political figures became concerned with understanding and safeguarding the mental integrity of the sovereign individual’s mind, personality, or identity. In their analyses, sound’s political possibilities occupied a prominent, albeit previously unexamined, position.

This paper examines how music-making came to be implicated in postwar analyses of what psychologist William Sargant called “the battle for the mind.” In turning an ear toward the aural culture of the early cold war, I interpret how psychologists like Sargant and Joost Meerlos and writers like George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, and Arthur Koestler generated and then incorporated musical evidence into an early cold-war psychology of the “free” individual. I argue that an emergent conception of personal sovereignty in the West motivated the invention of a radically new biopolitics of sound, a politics in which the psychological possibilities for musical expression to liberate the sovereign individual had to be carefully balanced with its potentials to enslave. By listening in on these emergent biopolitical truths, I conclude, we begin to hear a novel sonic mapping in which the undifferentiated, pure space of the globe acquired its cold-war division into free First, unfree Second, and traditional Third Worlds.

Session B: Histories of Hardware

Chair: Ryan Minor (Stony Brook University, Music Department)

“The Genealogy and Efficacy of the Decibel”

Felix Gerloff (Academy of Art and Design Basel, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Northwestern Switzerland, Basel, Switzerland)
Sebastian Schwesinger (Humboldt-University Berlin, Berlin, Germany)

“The noise in Times Square deprives us of 42% of our hearing”, said Rogers Galt, telephone engineer from AT&T, during an official city noise test in 1929. (Thompson 2013) He and his colleagues used adapted hearing test equipment, the ›audiometer‹, to measure the buzz of the modern industrialised city. How did this strange constellation emerge: Telephone engineers measuring city noise with equipment from mass hearing tests and explaining the

results as percentage of hearing loss? This scene illustrates the genealogy of the measurement of loudness beyond noise and the development of the *decibel* as corresponding unit. How were the affected subjects, the cultural contexts, and the very notions of noise and sound shaped by the media dispositive (apparatuses, units, practices, discourses) at work here?

The fixation of human hearing capabilities became a crucial question to physicians in the early 20th century. Intertwined with telephone research laboratories, hearing test equipment was developed. This *'Apparatwerdung'* can be understood as an on-going materialisation of an interdisciplinary will to knowledge about hearing and the ear. In the course of the ensuing research programme, attention was drawn to the masking effect for comparing two sounds. (Fletcher 1923a, Lane/Wegel 1924) This physiological property of hearing was immediately operationalised as main testing practice in the measurement of noise within the telephone system and, from 1923 on, in urban spaces. (Fletcher 1923b) Formalized in the framework of speech transmission the corresponding unit TU, later renamed *decibel*, co-evolved with a quantified perception of noise as loudness.

In its different contexts of use, this assembly of apparatus, unit, and measuring practice conveyed its conceptual genealogies. Describing a deviation from 'normal' hearing as deafening (Mills 2011) and gauging auditory experience in terms of communication efficiency predisposed the experience of public space itself under the condition of speech transmission. Consequently, the early noise tests, and even our understanding of city noise today cannot be grasped without this prefiguration. This includes the normalisation of hearing as well as accepted forms of public behaviour (Radovac 2014), urban planning, and urban identities.

"Rewind: or, Rethinking the Phonographic Regime"

Andrea Bohlman (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)
Peter McMurray (Harvard University)

Across the recent, now-iconic histories of sound recording the phonograph and its legacy are central, an accident that we contend shapes a powerful narrative trope: what we call "the phonographic regime." That regime is grounded in a cluster of common assumptions: that all sound media are part of the same lineage (beginning with the phonograph); that sound media record everything indiscriminately; that sound recording is an indexical process by which time and sound are co-constituted; and that sound recording is a kind of inscription. The primacy granted phonography by scholars from Friedrich Kittler to Jonathan Sterne not only sets in place an unwitting techno-determinism, it also generates false equivalencies between media objects with major ontological and cultural differences.

In this paper, we explore the phonographic regime as history and rhetoric, considering ways in which magnetic tape offers a counternarrative to the creeping intellectual hegemony of the phonograph. Tape challenges many of the assumptions of this regime, and in doing so, raises questions of media operations, time, interface, and the capture and playback of sound. Information can be spliced and repositioned, copied and erased, and circulated in a variety of ways. Brief reflection on the language of tape suggests that tape has deeply informed the common understanding not only of media but of time itself. Recording–and time–can be *paused*, held still. Play is real-time (and iconically still flows to the left-to-right). Time runs on a spool: to travel back in time, one need not reverse, but *re-wind*. As a button-interface, a respooling, and temporal gesture, "rewind" itself lies at the intersection of interface and history, as a reminder of both tape's materiality and of its central role in the history of the past century. "Rewind" thus serves as a point of departure for thinking through a media archaeology of tape, not merely as a metaphor, anecdote, or archive, but as a central actor.

"The Buchla Box and the Cultural Technique of Electronic Music"
Ted Gordon (University of Chicago)

In 1963, engineer Donald Buchla, along with composers Morton Subotnick and Ramon Sender, developed a new electronic instrument, calling it (ignoring Pandora) the "Buchla Box." Unlike most previous electronic musical instruments, the Buchla Box had no keyboard, could not play in equal temperament, and did not obey the by-then-established cultural technique of "electronic music," which switched out acoustic instruments for electronic equivalents. Instead, it promised the excesses that those instruments could not provide: expression, abstraction, ineffability. By overcoming the perceived limitation of the keyboard, according to its inventors, it promised a direct route–parameterized, electrified, modular–from the composer's brain to musical sound. To achieve this claim, the Buchla Box hid its circuitry behind front panels with tactile controls, multi-colored cables, and seductive blinking lights, much like its contemporaries in aeronautics and radio control systems. At its core were electronic oscillators whose signals were routed through an improbable series of complicatedly-named, voltage-controlled modules. Through this architecture, it presented itself as both computer and instrument: a new way to command electricity to make sound, and ultimately, to call it music.

But there was a catch: this short-circuiting of musical rules relied on an unspoken scientific rule, which held that "music" could be always be defined as the oscillation of a series of waves. By sublimating its own oscillators underneath a modular command-and-control interface, the Box transgressed against certain paradigms while simultaneously upholding others, asking its operators (and auditors) to rethink the relation between electricity, sound, and music in a rigged revelation. This paper positions the Box within a network of post-war

American engineers, composers, and performers, conceptualizing it as a political actor affecting the larger cultural technique of electronic music in mid-century America.

"Outside the Box: Segregating Sound in 1970s New York"
Lilian Radovac (New York University)

When is a boombox not a boombox? Or, to rephrase the question, what historical forces transformed the portable radio-cassette player from a "white box" associated with suburban teenagers and their families into the "black box" of street technology that became a global symbol of hip hop culture (Delany, in Dery 1994)? In this paper, I examine the racialization and subsequent criminalization of portable sound devices in 1970s New York City and reveal how this process was shaped by postliberal political ideologies, urban crisis panics and early experiments with broken windows policing in the city's transit system. By unearthing a narrative that links the 1972 noise code, which banned the use of loudspeakers on public transit, to the murder of a Bronx teenager by the first child to be charged as an adult in New York State history, and to forgotten sound device crackdowns directed by Mayor Ed Koch, I show that the boombox became a distinct technological object that was differentiated from its precursors not on the basis of audio specifications but on the social and spatial contexts of its uses, and on attendant fears of urban crime, juvenile delinquency, and the desegregation of public spaces. Further, I argue that these same fears clouded both journalistic accounts and some of the foundational works of soundscape studies. By the time the term "boombox" was coined in 1981, I conclude, it described a consumer audio product that had been reconstituted by a racially polarized struggle over the right to public audibility in the postliberal city.

Saturday PM

1:30PM–4:30PM (coffee break, 2:45–3), Student Activities Center 302 & 303

Session A: Empires and Regimes
Chair: Margarethe Adams (Stony Brook University, Music Department)

"The Limits of Sound: Critical Music *After Sound*"
G. Douglas Barrett (Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany)

Sound and music: sound studies and sound art theorists often see the relationship between these two fields as inclusive. Music, they contend, is a special case of sound formalized through an essentially autonomous, even hermetic syntax. Meanwhile, musicologists and other scholars criticize sound's epistemological construction as disciplinarily biased (e.g. Brian

Kane's "musicophobia") or ahistorical (e.g. Georgina Born's "year zero" phenomenon). But is there a more fundamental distinction to be made between the sonic and the musical? Can music exceed its alleged formal adherence to sound to engage with a broader social and political universe?

Responding to the proliferation of activity following the recently announced "sonic turn" in the arts and humanities (Drobnick, 2011), this paper proposes a novel aesthetic category for socially engaged musical art practices. Coining the term "critical music," I discuss contemporary artists (Ultra-red, Pussy Riot, Hong-Kai Wang, and others) who intervene into political conflicts by exploiting music's unique historical forms. Beyond sound, these artists incorporate conceptualism, social practice, and activism in work that interrogates gender, sexuality, politics, and labor. In short, they use musical forms–not limited to sound–to do cultural work.

Consider, for example, John Cage's silent composition, *4′ 33″*, performed alongside statements made on the AIDS crisis. Witness a group of artists staging a punk prayer in central Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Or see a video documenting listening exercises performed by retired sugar factory workers in present-day Taiwan. Common to these scenes is not only a sense of political urgency, but also a musical field requisitely expanded beyond the limits of sound. So what, if not sound, unites the work of these artists? What makes it music? Ultimately, through practices of mobilizing bodies and staging participation, they deploy forms of *composition*: they construct and compose radical forms of commonality and collectivity.

"The Militarization of Sound: Power, the State, and the Acoustics of Modern Warfare"

David Suisman (University of Delaware)

In *Speed and Politics* (1977) the French theorist Paul Virilio posited a crucial link between war making and optics, contending that visuality has stood at the center of modern technologies and strategies of warfare. For Virilio, scopic power has been inseparable from military power, and speed (a key concept of war making for him) grows out the capacity to comprehend and render the world visually. This paper both builds on and challenges Virilio's work, drawing on valuable tools he offers for a critical history of modern warfare while redirecting attention to a dimension of warfare about which Virilio is all but silent: sound. Not only has sound been important to modern war making, the auditory register of war has had profound consequences for the constitution of the modern soundscape. With only a few (important) exceptions, however, sound scholars have been slow to recognize and explore the interconnections between sound and war making. Notwithstanding the pathbreaking work of scholars such as Suzanne Cusick, Steve Goodman, and J. Martin Daughtry, the militarization of sound is a subject about which sound studies generally has had little to say. This paper urges sound scholars to reconsider the aural regime of the present in light of the militarization of sound over the last one hundred and fifty years and its implications for state

power in the twenty-first century. Bringing together within one frame military music, auditory detection technologies (e.g., sonar), infrasound experiments, the acoustics of psyops (i.e., psychological operations), weaponized sound (e.g., long-range acoustic devices), and the use of music in military interrogations, it will present an analytical taxonomy of militarized sounding practices. Such a taxonomy, the paper argues, will enhance our understanding of the acoustic modalities of the state, through which we may better grasp the functioning of modern state power at the granular level.

"Religious Buildings in Transition:
The Meanings of Sacred Sound in Early 20th-Century Thessaloniki"
Eleni Kallimopolou (University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece),

The passage of the city of Thessaloniki from the Ottoman Empire to the Greek Kingdom (1912) was marked by a series of transformations in its public space, including changes in the usage of its mosques and churches. In terms of sound, this transition entailed the gradual silencing of the soundmarks of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic (Jewish, Muslim, Christian) community in favour of an increasingly sonorous Greek Orthodox soundscape. In parallel, the implementation of a new city- plan was aimed at and to a degree effected the spatial and social makeover of the city of Thessaloniki. The city's soundscapes were more than a soundtrack to the bumpy ride towards its hellenisation and modernisation, as they themselves played a formative role in the process.

This paper focuses on one church of Thessaloniki and traces its changing soundscape with the help of extant textual and visual sources. A major mosque of Ottoman Salonica (Ayasofya Camii), the church of Aghia Sophia returned to Christian worship following the incorporation of the city to the Greek state. The restoration works that accompanied its conversion included the removal of a series of structural features in the building's interior related with the Islamic liturgy, and the demolition of its minaret. The newly implemented sonic regime of the Christian liturgy incorporated increasingly the sounds of the Greek nation and of modernity, conceived largely in European terms.

Following Bruce Smith, the paper approaches the church of Aghia Sophia as a sound-device, as an instrument for producing and propagating sound. It asks what type of sounds it contained and what these sounds signified to its users. Further, how its changing soundscape articulated with the broader cultural and social transformation of Thessaloniki.

"Parisian Soundstates of Emergency"
Naomi Waltham-Smith (University of Pennsylvania)

While the terrorist attacks were still unfolding in Paris on 13 November 2015, François Hollande declared a nationwide state of emergency for the first time since 1961. The law,

which was developed in its modern form during the Algerian war of independence in the 1950s and 1960s, has only once been put into effect on the French mainland since then: on 27 October 2005 the electrocution of two French youths of Malian and Tunisian descent fleeing arrest in the suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois provoked the eruption of three weeks of rioting in Paris's most impoverished *banlieues* which quickly spread throughout France. Like the more recent instances, the 1961 declaration, which was used to impose a curfew upon French Muslims, represents France's struggle to control an internal other in what Giorgio Agamben, tracing the state of exception back to the French Revolution, analyzes as an inclusive exclusive of bare life. Beyond Islam, these three historical moments present an often combustible mixture of economic disadvantage and social exclusion with the arguably excessive display and exercise of state power via heavy police presence on the city's streets.

This paper explores the distinctive sonic signature of the state of emergency in Paris, using field recordings and historical footage and reports to (re)construct the soundscapes of each of the three moments. In a comparative study of 1961, 2005, and 2015, I ask whether it is possible to hear in the urban soundscape the states of insecurity (Isabell Lorey) which both precipitated and emerged as an effect of the exercise of the extraordinary powers. Generalizing the sonic logic of these moments to the general conditions of exclusion in the Parisian *banlieues*, I argue that the war over inclusion- exclusion is played out within the materiality and economy of the city's sonic composition.

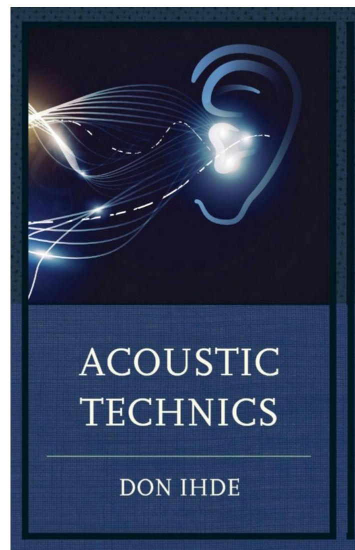
Session B: Special Session with Discussants Don Ihde and Jennifer Stoever

Discussants:

Don Ihde (Stony Brook University, Department of Philosophy)

Jennifer Stoever (Binghamton University, Department of English)

NOTE



As part of this session of five shorter (20-minute) papers, Professor Ihde will situate the themes animating his new book, Acoustic Technics (Lexington, 2015)*, in the long arc of sound studies*.

"Telecommunications in Cuba and Theories of Sound, Media, and Infrastructure"
Andres Garcia Molina (Columbia University)

The central characteristic of the Cuban telecommunications industry is its monopolistic nature, which highly restricts citizens' use of telephony and the internet. Cubans have found ways to navigate such constraints through a series of legal and illegal circumventions that supplement or outright transform, through everyday use, the way such infrastructure works. Focusing on community phones, cell phones, state-run and unofficial internet access points, and media circulation through external hard drives, I argue that media in Cuba operates at the disjuncture between state regulation, infrastructural capability, and popular demand. I examine how Cuba's thriving informal media economy generates new modes of employment, leisure, consumption, and production. In this paper, I link studies of sound in relation to the development of the modern telecommunications industry (Mills 2010, 2011, Sterne 2003, 2012, Feaster 2015) with studies that examine ways in which sound has been a central, contested field in the conformation of modernity (Thompson 2002, Erlmann 2010, Ochoa Gautier 2014), engaging anthropological theories of infrastructure (Larkin 2013) and media (Mazzarella 2004). Through ethnographic fieldwork, I ultimately ask how a theory of media and infrastructure looks like through the affordances and constraints of everyday life in Cuba, at this critical historical juncture prior to the impending closure of the US-sanctioned trade embargo.

"'Asakusa Meibutsu': A Geisha in a Tokyo Soundscape Montage"

Megan Hill (University of Michigan)

Scholars have employed the concept of *soundscape* to explore the ways that people inflect and perceive meaning through sound in the places they inhabit. The term has generally been used to refer to the entire mosaic of sounds heard in a usually pastoral environment. In the urban neighborhood of Asakusa in Tokyo, however, strongly contrasting sounding environments merge; sounds drift far from their sources, overlap, and complicate the perception of meaningful senses of place. A district with a strong and unique atmosphere, Asakusa is defined by notions of traditional Japan, religion, working-class culture, entertainment, and tourism, with sound and music fundamental to its myriad happenings. Treating the soundscape of Asakusa not as vast and all-inclusive, but as heterogeneous, compounded, and juxtaposed, this paper presents the experience of sound and meaningful sense of place in the neighborhood of one individual, Seiko, a geisha in Asakusa's *hanamachi* (geisha district).

I analyze Seiko's performance of one piece of song and dance from her *hanamachi*'s repertoire, "*Asakusa Meibutsu* (Famous Things of Asakusa)," to demonstrate how she negotiates the diverse cultural meanings that sonically flow through her everyday surroundings in the neighborhood. By exploring the ways that soundscape overlap affords Seiko the agency to interact with, manipulate, perceive, and contribute to her social environment, I ultimately propose that urban soundscapes act in montage, allowing Asakusa to be understood both as a conglomeration of its variety of parts, and as a cohesive whole within larger Tokyo.

"On the Bottling of Souls: The Metaphysics of Sound Reproduction, 1878-1929"

Jacques Vest (University of Michigan)

A well-dressed man paces the stage, lecturing and occasionally gesturing toward a diagram on the board behind him. His audience sits in polite amusement as he unwinds the skein of the universe's secrets, but fans are stilled and whispered conversations wrung off mid-sentence when the lecturer's assistant wheels out a table topped by a strange mechanical contrivance. The exhibitor turns the machine's crank and it whirs to life, sputtering for several seconds before shattering the funerary silence of the theater: "Halloa! I'm the amazing Edison phonograph! What do you think of me?"

When the first phonographs were exhibited in 1878 neither exhibitors nor their audiences believed that the device was mediating earlier sonic events. Rather, they understood the device to be listening to sounds and then "mimicking" them. No part of the original sonic event (save the text) was understood as existing within playback. By the first decade of the 20th century audiences had embraced a conception of the phonograph as effecting sound "reproduction." Now, consumers placed a platter on their home phonograph and "heard"

Enrico Caruso, the U.S. Marine Band, or William Howard Taft, and spoke of the recordings as if they were suffused with the voices, the breath, or even the souls of human beings.

This paper traces the ancient and early modern precursors of these two sonic epistemologies and examines how they were rooted in starkly different metaphysics with deep implications for perceptions of subject and object. It argues that the phonograph itself precipitated the change in sonic perception observed between 1878-1929 and that this shift contributed in turn to the evolution of a modern subjectivity bound up with the market and with notions of universally commensurable value.

"Sound to Point and Line: Visualizing Music at the Bauhaus"
Stephanie Probst (Harvard University)

In his 1926 Bauhaus-treatise *Point and Line to Plane*, Wassily Kandinsky includes artistic visualizations of select passages from Ludwig van Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. By repurposing the point and the line–basic graphical elements–Kandinsky's images highlight the shortcomings of staff notation while introducing their own constraints as a notational system. A comparative analysis can shed light on some of the challenges of representing music visually, and opens up an intriguing perspective on Kandinsky's pedagogical agenda for guiding the viewer's aural experience. By analyzing the details of these graphs and juxtaposing them against historical recordings, I show how they capture one particular way of hearing the Fifth Symphony that is shaped by performance aesthetics of the time.

Moreover, I argue that Kandinsky's intention of representing music-as-heard responds to the psycho-acoustic impetus of contemporaneous research in music cognition, such as Christian von Ehrenfels's studies "On Gestalt-qualities" (1890 and 1922). Most significantly, Ehrenfels's theories support the conception of melody as a linear Gestalt––the very notion that also lies at the heart of Ernst Kurth's 1917 treatise *Foundations of Linear Counterpoint: Bach's Linear Polyphony*. While art historian Régine Bonnefoit has speculated that Kurth's theories served as inspiration to the artists at the Bauhaus, I examine how the musical and artistic theories around the point and line as notational devices share an investment in cognitive concerns.[1] I illustrate these issues through artistic renditions of polyphonic pieces by Johann Sebastian Bach, provided by fellow Bauhaus-artists Paul Klee and Henrik Neugeboren. These visualizations do not only enrich the array of connotations that the line assumes in music, but they also present traces of the conservative and modernist appropriation of Bach's compositional style respectively.

[1] Régine Bonnefoit, *Die Linientheorien von Paul Klee* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2009).

"Music on the Body, Music in the Ears: Gendered Hollywood Film"
Alexander Newton (University of Texas-Austin)

In *The Audible Past*, Jonathan Sterne argues that over the span of the nineteenth century headsets and, later, headphones become a symbol for the formation and development of dominant constructions of listening. By as late as the 1920s, headphones and the techniques of listening they represent proliferated visual mediums in texts like photographs, advertisements, and cartoons of the time. However, given the popularity of film throughout the twentieth century and the success of sound film a mere decade later, how might representations of headphone listening sound? What role does the audiovisual image of headphone listening play in how characters in films listen and what sort of conventions emerge? How might the cinematic institution use headphone sound to construct and regulate the identities of those who listen? In this paper, I consider a relatively recent Hollywood trope of using headphone sound to represent men caught in states of arrested development in films like *High Fidelity* (2000), *500 Days of Summer* (2009), and *Her* (2013). I argue that Hollywood film predominantly genders headphone listening, which it accomplishes through binary oppositions of static/active images and interior/exterior sound attached to men/women. While headphone listening (unsurprisingly) works to sexually saturate the bodies of the women who wear them (e.g. *Pretty Woman*), for men headphones emasculate their wearers who must seek social reformation over the course of the film. I historically connect the emasculated, headphone-wearing man image with two popular identities in mid-twentieth century: the consumption-driven playboy bachelor of the 1950s and representations of emotional women in 1940s melodrama.

Saturday Plenary Session

5:00–7:00PM, Student Activities Center 302

–reception to Follow–

Chair: Benjamin Tausig (Stony Brook University, Music Department)

Plenary Speakers:
Alexander Rehding (Harvard University)
Emily Thompson (Princeton University)