



Music, Knowledge, and Global Migration

The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life | 2121 Allston Way

Monday, April 15th

9 – 9:30

Introductions

FRANCESCO SPAGNOLO

TINA FRÜHAUF

SIMONE LÄSSIG

9:30 – 11

Panel 1

Chair: SIMONE LÄSSIG

9:30 – 10:15

- SILVIO DOS SANTOS, *Pervasive Stereotypes: Imagined Migrations of Indigenous Brazilians and Settler Colonialism from Spix and Martius to Heitor Villa-Lobos*

10:15 – 11:00

- CHRISTIAN BRETERNITZ, *Musical Transfer Processes from Berlin to Central and South America around 1900*

11 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 – 1

Panel 2

Chair: ISABEL RICHTER

11:30 – 12:15

- NANCY Y RAO, *Chinese Opera Theater and the 19th-Century Transpacific Migration*

12:15 – 1:00

- SAMUEL CHENEY, *Composing the Concessions: Musical Responses of British Migration to China, ca. 1860–ca. 1920*

1 – 2

Lunch

2:00 – 3:30

Panel 3

Chair: NICHOLAS MATHEW

2:00 – 2:45

- DEVON BOROWSKI, *Voices from the East and the South: Isaac Nathan's Global-Historical Pedagogy in Regency Britain*

2:45 – 3:30

- ELIZABETH ROUGET, *Paris of the American South: 18th Century French Opéra-Comique in New Orleans*

3:30 – 4:00

Break

4:00 – 5:00

Panel 4

Chair: JAMES DAVIES

4:00 – 4:45

- JANIE COLE, *Music, Migration, and Religion in 18th-Century West Central Africa: Knowledge Production from the Kingdom of Kongo*

7-9

Conference Dinner



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9 – 10:30

Panel 5

Chair: VIOLA ALIANOV-RAUTENBERG

9 – 9:45

- MOLLY BARNES, *"Universal" Music, Foreign Musicians: The Ambivalent American Encounter with German Immigrant Musicians before the Civil War*

9:45 – 10:30

- GIUSEPPE GERBINO, *Failure or Success? Opera, Migration, and Historical Knowledge*

11 - 12

Keynote

KATE VAN ORDEN, *Mapping Music and Migration: Questions of Scale*

12 - 1

Roundtable with Selected Participants

Chair: TINA FRÜHAUF

- NANCY RAO
- ELIZABETH ROUGET
- JANIE COLE

1 - 2

Lunch Reception

KEYNOTE

KATE VAN ORDEN, *Mapping Music and Migration: Questions of Scale*

Musicology's embrace of what is being called global music history is proving extremely useful as a place from which to contest Eurocentric histories of music and develop new working methods equipped to address the meaningfulness of music in places where cultures, languages, and people were in constant contact. In this talk, 1.) I begin by outlining the analytic categories employed in migration studies and underscoring their usefulness to music historians. 2.) I go on to ask some larger questions designed to incite discussions concerning matters of scale. What is the relationship between micro and macro history in musicological research? How can musicology best operate at the scale of seas and oceans? 3.) I wrap up by setting musicological research in perspective by comparing it to hard forms of world history designed to discover global unities created by economic, colonial, and—eventually—industrial processes. Case studies drawn from recent scholarship are threaded throughout.



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ABSTRACTS

SILVIO DOS SANTOS, *Pervasive Stereotypes: Imagined Migrations of Indigenous Brazilians and Settler Colonialism from Spix and Martius to Heitor Villa-Lobos*

When the Bavarian zoologist Johann Baptist Ritter von Spix and botanist Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius traveled through Brazil between 1817 and 1820 and later published seminal books about Brazil, including the three-volume *Reise in Brasilien* (1823–31), they inadvertently provided building blocks for the notion of a Brazilian culture based on a *raça brasileira* (Brazilian race) that would play a central role in nationalist and cultural movements at the end of the century and beyond. While they sought to document botanical and animal specimens, they also “collected” actual Indigenous peoples to become part of their cabinet of curiosity at the Maximilian court—two children who survived the transatlantic trip died within months of their arrival in Germany. Given the scientists’ limited knowledge of Indigenous languages, it is remarkable that the lyrics of two songs they published in the footnotes of *Reise in Brasilien* would become the “earliest” samples of Brazilian poetry in Sylvio Romero’s influential *História da Literatura Brasileira* (1902). The same lyrics appear in Heitor Villa-Lobos’s *Symphony no. 10* (1952–54) as a representation of an imagined migration of the Tupi Guarany to Pindorama, a path that eventually leads to their assimilation by the Jesuits. While the songs appear as signifiers for the birth of a Brazilian nation, they propagate stereotypes of Indigenous peoples and the erroneous notion that they were in constant migration and without a history of their own (Martius 1843). This misconception was instrumental in justifying settler-colonialism as it denied land rights to the people who had been caretakers for millennia. It also justified the settlers’ imprisonment of entire communities into *aldeias* (what we would probably call concentration camps), as a means of “civilizing” Indigenous peoples and using them in slave labor. Using those lyrics, Villa-Lobos’s *Symphony* overtly glorifies what we now understand as forced assimilation while justifying settler colonialism.

CHRISTIAN BRETERNITZ, *Musical Transfer Processes from Berlin to Central and South America around 1900*

Musical instruments play an important, though often unnoticed, role in musical transfer processes, i.e., manufacturers of musical instruments also sell their products abroad, and musicians travel with their instruments. In both cases, not only the typical design but also the specific sound associated with it migrates. The comparatively little attention paid to these transfer processes is all the more surprising in light of the fact that it is only since the 1920s at the earliest that we can speak of a largely standardized set of instruments in the modern sense. Before that, local building traditions and concepts played a much more important role, with corresponding effects on the sound results. Brass bands were of particular importance in this context, as they ensured that pieces of music were made known to a broad section of the population by means of public concerts, especially in the second half of the 19th century. Particularly in their form as military bands, they were major agents through which specific musical customs were exported or introduced to many other countries. Some records of exports to Central and South America have survived from the Berlin company C. W. Moritz, one of the largest instrument makers in Prussia at the end of the 19th century, which allow for a deeper understanding of these processes. This paper provides a brief overview of the importance of brass instruments and their different sound concepts; on the basis of selected documents from C. W. Moritz, it then continues to unravel how the transatlantic trade took place, which people were involved, and what musical instruments and musical scores were shipped from Berlin to Central and South America.



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NANCY Y RAO, *Chinese Opera Theater and the 19th-Century Transpacific Migration*

Attracted by the gold-rushes, more than 300,000 Chinese emigrants went to the United States and British colonies in the mid-19th century. They were primarily residents of the Guangdong area, which had a long history of openness to the outside world. The transpacific circulation was a conduit not only for commerce but also for cultural production. As California's Chinese population grew from 4,018 in 1850 to 75,412 in 1890, Cantonese opera troupes and players from Guangdong arrived continuously. In the 1870s, San Francisco had three Chinese theaters running concurrently. Chinese migrants, who, as historian Elizabeth Sinn noted, were "active agents, making decisions about their movements on many levels and strategizing their economic futures." Ships continued to carry Chinese opera troupes, as well as trunks of costumes, to American shores and Australia; today, traces of the 19th-century migration of Chinese troupes can be found in California, British Columbia, Lima, and Victoria and Sydney. In California, the circulation and establishment of Chinese theaters were deeply intertwined with the social and economic developments of the state, as San Francisco was transformed from a frontier town to a burgeoning metropolis in the second half of the 19th century. In 1852, Californians happily flaunted an unequalled distinction: San Francisco was the first metropolis outside of Asia to have a Chinese opera theater. These opera performances were important community affairs, and they held significant meaning for the individuals. This paper explores Cantonese opera troupes' multiple roles in the Chinese migration of the 19th century: (1) they brought knowledge of ritual practice and performed offerings to deities for kinship associations, (2) they constituted part of migrants' everyday life, serving as surrogate family and improving literacy for many, and (3) they inevitably became the public face for the Chinese community, smoothing relationships with mainstream society.

SAMUEL CHENEY, *Composing the Concessions: Musical Responses of British Migration to China, ca. 1860–ca. 1920*

Britain and China drew ever closer over the 19th century, primarily due to British imperial expansion. One dimension of this increased interaction between the British and Qing Empires was that thousands of Britons found themselves, for the first time, visiting and living in China (a country historically imagined as "Far Cathay," a quasi-fantastical Oriental despotism, closed to European interaction and intervention). Upon arrival, these travelers, diplomats, merchants, and missionaries were all confronted by a country that did not match pre-existing expectations. Previously ascendant impressions of China (founded on the material objects of the "China Trade" and its domestic chinoiserie imitations) were quickly eroded in the minds of Britons encountering the "real" China for the first time. This paper will look at the role played by music for Britons in late 19th-century China. By examining Britons in China, it will consider how migrants across the British Empire used music to negotiate their new surroundings. It will explore how music was used to conceptually connect British people with home, as well as how these individuals used musical composition as a means to understand and represent the unfamiliar country that surrounded them. By considering composers like Marquis Chisholm, Norman Peterkin, Gwen Howell, and Harry Ore—all of whom spent extended periods of time in China in the late-19th and early-20th centuries—the paper will explore whether increased exposure to China actually changed British listening ears. Could these composers move beyond aural impressions of the Chinese soundscape fostered at home when representing Chinese sounds to a British musical audience? In so doing, this paper will argue that by "musicalizing" the Sino-British encounter, the historian can garner significant new insights about how Britons negotiated home and away, as well as self and other, in their migrations through the 19th-century British imperial world.



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DEVON BOROWSKI, *Voices from the East and the South: Isaac Nathan's Global-Historical Pedagogy in Regency Britain*

Shortly after completing his Hebrew studies, Isaac Nathan (1790–1864) began an apprenticeship under the Anglo-Italian voice teacher Domenico Corri. Though Nathan never converted or abandoned the cultural ethos of Judaism, transitioning from meshorer (cantor's assistant) training to the Italian (bel canto) school meant altering his ancestral and embodied practice of song. In so doing, he acquired a second foreign lineage—a patrimony not of birth but study, not of the East but the South. This paper explores Nathan's multilocal legacy of voice amid Britain's expanding intra-European dominance and increased liberalism during the Regency era. It reimagines the decolonial notion of "border thought," as theorized by Walter Mignolo and Ramón Grosfoguel, as "border song" to offer a more nuanced understanding of Nathan's circumstances as an Anglo-Jewish musician with Italian training in post-Enlightenment England. Nathan's vocal treatise cum global history, *Musurgia Vocalis* (1836), weaves a mosaic of vocal practices across time and space, the foundations of which can be gleaned in Corri's ballad opera, *The Travellers*, or *Music's Fascination* (1806), which traces the supposed birth and evolution of music from East to West. This paper contributes to a genealogy of early "global" musicology in the British imperial context, highlighting the narrative trajectories of histories aiming at completeness in historical or geographical scope. In response to the marginalization of Jewish vocal practices as anti-modern and anti-Western—the coloniality of song—Nathan assumed a praxis of border singing. Navigating those borderlands required of Nathan an aesthetic and physiological triangulation of voice and ear between England, Italy, and the Jewish Diaspora. In so doing, he disrupted the same colonial categories of space and time that first shaped his earliest praxis of voice.

ELIZABETH ROUGET, *Paris of the American South: 18th Century French Opéra-Comique in New Orleans*

New Orleans in the 18th century was a city in which a complicated mixture of European powers and influences affected societal and artistic traditions. This was a tumultuous century for colonial and national control between the French, Spanish, and eventually the newly minted Americans. Originally envisioned as a miniature France, or mini-Versailles, the dominant entertainments in New Orleans necessarily mirrored the pastimes of the homeland. French opéra-comique flourished in the American south between 1780 and 1810 thanks to the influx of French performers from Saint-Domingue who had sought refuge in North America after the French and Haitian revolutions. Among those who fled were a troupe of actors, dancers, and musicians who were originally trained in Paris, but found great success at the theatres in Saint-Domingue. Hailing from either the Paris Opéra or popular boulevard theatres, these performers were in high demand all over the Western world, and commanded huge sums of money as remuneration for their emigration. Some of the dancers and actors included Alexandre Placide from the Paris Opéra, Louis Fournier, Louis Tabary, Suzanne Douvillier, and Jean-Baptiste Francisqui. The migration of these French music and dance practitioners and their repertoire established an operatic tradition in the New World and influenced tastes in entertainment in an emerging American nation. This paper examines the movement of these key players in North America and their establishment of several opera theatre companies in New Orleans at the end of the 18th century. Using the extant records of their performances, this paper traces the popularity of the opéra-comique genre in its new context and highlight the works in the canon which were met with particular success. Performances of these works reinforced the sense of French identity the people of New Orleans held on shifting sands.



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JANIE COLE, *Music, Migration, and Religion in 18th-Century West Central Africa: Knowledge Production from the Kingdom of Kongo*

The migration of Italian Capuchin Franciscan missionaries to West Central Africa in the 17th century resulted in the proliferation of a significant body of new knowledge produced between 1650 and 1750 about the kingdom of Kongo and other African polities, such as Matamba, Ndongo, and Angola. Intended as guides for future missionaries, the visual and textual components of the missionaries' compendia provide new information about the region's political systems, flora and fauna, religious practices, as well as Indigenous musicmaking, spectacle, and musical instruments woven into the fabric of sub-Saharan African society. This paper focuses on a set of little-known 18th-century Capuchin images and descriptions, which form part of this unique and exceptionally rich corpus, to explore the global migration of musical knowledge about West Central Africa through the visual and textual cultures of the Capuchin mission. It explores how migration affected knowledge about and understanding of musical practices in Central Africa and in turn how this musical knowledge in migration, intended for far-flung European audiences, transforms current understanding of musical practices in the region before 1800 and of global interactions between Africans and Europeans unfolding outside of a colonial context. It shows how representations of music, both in visual and textual forms, can function as a vehicle to carry and develop knowledge in migration about 18th-century African kingdoms, where music, instruments and rite served as articulations of local political power, identity, symbolism, and ritual.



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MOLLY BARNES, *"Universal" Music, Foreign Musicians: The Ambivalent American Encounter with German Immigrant Musicians before the Civil War*

Following the 1848 revolutions, German immigrants flooded into the United States, bringing formidable musical knowledge and a host of musical attitudes, pedagogies, and material culture. These newcomers helped to establish orchestras and other ensembles that formed a growing infrastructure for instrumental music, and continued to cultivate the deeply social musical practices of their homeland. Native-born Americans generally regarded German musicians with admiration; commentators participated in an affirmative discourse that commended the sociability, civic engagement, democratic virtue, and moral uplift that they saw as inherent in German musical life. Many writers argued that because the U.S. lacked the vibrant musical culture of Europe, and because the German musical tradition was socially and morally uplifting, Americans should embrace this foreign influx. The argument went further: while the greatest music came from the German lands, its language and meanings were universal, and thus valuable for the promotion of the universal democratic ideals assumed to be at the heart of the American experiment. This paper explores the antebellum U.S.-American response to German immigrants and especially to their music, which was among the most notable features of their presence. This work draws on public commentaries in newspapers, magazines, and periodicals of the antebellum era. Such sources reveal both a profound American respect for the German musical tradition and an instinctive distrust of the newcomers' foreignness. While Douglas Shadle, Katherine Preston, and others have demonstrated antebellum American composers' resentment of German musical domination, this paper reaches further to understand how Americans at large regarded German music and musicians. Music historians have too often generalized about antebellum American reactions to perceived foreign musical threats. Responses to German immigrants and their music proved diverse, multifaceted, and often contradictory. Indeed, these anxieties over immigration and the accompanying cultural changes resonate with similarly ambivalent American attitudes today.

GIUSEPPE GERBINO, *Failure or Success? Opera, Migration, and Historical Knowledge*

With the arrival of Italian opera in New York in 1825–26, and the subsequent attempts to establish Italian opera as a permanent feature of American theater, a new generation of European musicians started to cross the ocean. Some of them relocated in the United States. The musical tradition they brought with them sounded both exotic and familiar, ennobling and decadent. In 1833, a polemic fought on the pages of the *North American Magazine* turned the beguiling sound of foreign singers into a crisis of cultural identity. The question of the financial success or failure of the first season of Italian opera became the testing ground for competing narratives about the English foundation of American musical culture. This paper investigates the deeper roots of this musical controversy in order to explore the relationship between artistic migration and the construction of historical identity. Why did it become so important to establish what really happened in 1825–26? What was at stake in adjudicating the financial sustainability of Italian opera? Answering these questions will shed light on the link between musical migration and the need to develop a new sense of cultural legitimacy in the battlefield of historical memory.