Social Engagement Through Music
New Course Connects Students, Local Artists of Color

“Social Engagement Through Music: Histories, Economies, Communities” is a new, team-based, immersive course in which students collaborate with and provide professional support to musicians from Boston’s immigrant communities. The course also provides an intellectual framework for understanding the historical circumstances, economic and political realities, and community needs of these artists.

The course is the first of its kind, a collaboration with the Massachusetts Cultural Council (Maggie Holzberg, MCC folklorist, helped recommend the artists through MCC’s 2018 Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program), the Bok Center Learning Lab, the Mindich Program in Engaged Scholarship, the Music Department’s faculty—Carol Oja, Kay Kaufman Shelemay, and Michael Uy—graduate students Matthew Leslie Santana and Caitlin Schmid, and the four brilliant musicians who have made Boston their home.

Fourteen Harvard undergraduates spent the spring semester working with Bethlehem (Betty) Melaku (Ethiopia), Sixto (Tito) Ayala (Puerto Rico), Lin Zhantao (China), and Shyam Nepali (Nepal). Each artist was assigned a team of three or four students and a faculty advisor.

Student teams executed ethnographic interviews, assessed the needs of the artist, and collaborated with them to come up with concrete methods of support. One team created business cards, another helped teach their artist how to build a kickstarter page, others searched out performing and teaching venues, drafted letters, and helped write grants. All the teams produced materials that their artists can use for promotion in the future.

“At our last class, some students commented on how close they got to the musician,” says Uy. “They’re struggling with what to do next; they want to do more. One, for example, will be exchanging English lessons for lessons on the erhu.”

“The students were amazing,” Matt Leslie Santana agrees. “I was surprised at how happy they were to do extra work. We asked a lot of them, but they were willing to do more; they wanted to help. And although we can’t fix the bigger issue of ‘this course ends,’ these students did the best they could to find ways to support their artist long-term. They were immediately thinking of sustainability.”

Websites, for example, were built on free platforms, and where there was a language or technology issue, social media access was given to the artist’s adult children.
so that updates would be easier.

The technical pieces of the course—video and photo shoots—were bolstered by the Bok Center Learning Lab and coordinated by Schmid. "Students learned to record and edit video of their artist teaching, shoot and produce good head shots, and conduct ethnographic interviews, all skills that are useful going forward," she says.

"I would say that our students may have benefited more from this collaboration than the musicians," says Uy. "This was a great cohort. They put their hearts and souls into this class and they wanted to do more, learn more, engage more, which speaks to their level of commitment."

Andrew Perez is one of those students. "I had the privilege to work with Tito Ayala, a percussionist from Puerto Rico," says Perez. "Our team worked tirelessly to make a digital presence for our artist and bolster his marketing toolkit. This was the first class that gave me skills which directly translate to my future job. This summer I will be working at a record label back home in Los Angeles, and my responsibilities entail doing exactly what we did for Tito—helping artists establish their presence and strategize their careers. Prior to this class, I would have felt extremely unprepared to throw my hat in the ring for a job like that, but this class gave me the confidence and passion to say, 'I want to do that.'

"Most importantly, Tito reminded me of my family back in Los Angeles, and he helped me reground myself as to why I am at Harvard. While he was amazed and excited to be at Harvard, I felt the same honor working with him. His presence reminded me of the world that exists outside these walls and how the privileges we, as students, are afforded at this university can be used to help the greater community."

Sixto (Tito) Ayala is a percussionist and dancer from the famous Ayala Family in Puerto Rico, known for their musicianship and preservation of traditional Afro-Puerto Rican bomba music. During his 52-year tenure as a percussionist, Tito has played with renowned artists across the Caribbean and in the once-famous Latin clubs in New York City. He’s been living in Boston for the past 34 years.

Zhanto Lin is an erhu player and Tai Chi teacher. He was an erhu professor at Guangxi Arts Institution before moving to Boston in 1999. He has performed at the Museum of Fine Arts and Lincoln Center among other institutions, and teaches the erhu at the Huaxin School of Arts and the Dana Hall School of Music. He is the founder of the Boston Youth Erhu Ensemble.

Hailing from the centuries-old Gandharba musical tradition of Nepal, Shyam Nepali has been performing around the world for 30 years. Born into a family of legendary Sarangi players, Shyam is a teacher and mentor to new generations of players. He works with Project Sarangi in Nepal, the Imagine Rainbow Project (Switzerland/Nepal), and founded the Himalayan Heritage Cultural Academy in Boston. Shyam has received awards from the government of Nepal, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and was appointed honorary consulate of Italy by the Italian Embassy in Kathmandu.

Bethelehem (Betty) Melaku is an Ethiopian-American who emigrated from Ethiopia with her family in 1997 and toured the United States performing her music. Taught to play the kbr by her father, musician Melaku Gelaw, Betty also studied maseqo, piano, and violin at the Yared School of Music in Ethiopia. Betty combines Western and popular influences with traditional Ethiopian sounds to create her music, and hopes to share her tradition with students in the Boston area.
Du Yun Nominated for Grammy in Best Contemporary Classical Composition

Du Yun (PhD 2006) is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, performance artist, curator and activist for new music. In 2017, she won the Pulitzer Prize in Music for her opera, Angel’s Bone. She was nominated for a Grammy in Best Contemporary Classical Composition for “Air Glow” this past February. Her outfit was one of the most photographed at the Grammys.

On her Facebook page, Du Yun wrote, “…the pompom cloth was handmade by Maureen Clay, an artist who is part of the Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland. They serve artists with developmental, mental and physical disabilities. The mask was as a nod to fending off the pollution that many Chinese wear.

“I believe the look of a person and the look of a stage could be a statement, just like I care about how my operas, some of my multimedia works look on stage, from every hat down to every button. So I worked with the brilliant Kate Fry, the costume designer for Angel’s Bone for the entire look, who also handmade the crazy mask and the hair stick.

“Who said we ‘classical musicians’ don’t care about the look? Don’t work with the stage presence? Don’t work with the social cause? Can’t be as relevant? I am never a believer in any of that. No one tells me what not to do.”

Du Yun is currently on the composition faculty of Peabody Institute of John Hopkins University. Since 2014, she is Artistic Director of MATA Festival, a pioneering organization dedicated to commissioning and presenting young composers from around the world. In 2017, she launched a new initiative, Pan-Asia Sounding Festival. You can hear her music at http://channelduyun.com/sounds/

McLoskey’s Zealot Canticles Receives Grammy for Best Choral Performance

LANSING McLOSKEY’s (PhD 2002) composition Zealot Canticles received a 2019 Grammy for Best Choral Performance. The Grammy statue went to the artists of the choral group, The Crossing.

Commissioned by The Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, the oratorio is 20 movements and 80 minutes long, scored for SATB choir, soprano, mezzo, and baritone soloists, clarinet, and string quartet. The libretto (composed/constructed by McLoskey) is comprised of writings by Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize-winning playwright, poet, author, and humanitarian, who spent years imprisoned in Nigeria for speaking out against genocide and human rights violations. Soyinka published a set of poems titled “Twelve Canticles for the Zealot” in 2002; seven of these poems form the core of the libretto of Zealot Canticles.

In his program notes for the piece, McLoskey writes: “I was composing this piece during what was the most distressing U.S. presidential campaign in modern history, when every day we were faced with words of divisiveness, demeaning, mocking, and degrading ‘the other,’ and images of our fellow citizens, red-faced with both rage and glee, shouting for the removal—even killing—of those of a different faith or ethnicity, while waving racist banners. And just as I was about to start composing the final movement, the election took place. Hate crimes in our own country immediately surged in the aftermath. I was shaken to the core. The words of Wole Soyinka were not just generalizations or universal in nature, but specifically about us. Right here, right now.”

Lansing McLoskey is a professor at the University of Miami Frost School of Music.
Faculty News

The Curtis Institute of Music awarded Professor of the Practice Claire Chase an honorary doctorate at their graduation ceremony in May.

Franklin D. and Florence Rosenblatt Professor Vijay Iyer now has a joint appointment with the African and African American Studies department.

Morton Knafel Research Professor Thomas F. Kelly was inducted as a Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America at their 2019 meeting in Philadelphia.

In October 2018 Fanny Peabody Research Professor Lewis Lockwood was elected an Honorary Member of the “Beethoven-Haus Verein,” which is the membership organization that founded the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn in the 1890s. He is also the inaugural recipient, together with Margaret Bent, of the International Musicological Society’s new award, the Guido Adler Prize. The prize honors distinguished scholars who have made an outstanding contribution to musicology and will be awarded at the annual meeting in Lucerne in July, 2019.

Preceptor Osnat Netzer has accepted a tenure-track position at DuPaul University in Chicago. G. Gordon Watts Professor Kay Kaufman Shelemay gave the Bruno and Wanda Nettl Lecture at the University of Illinois and spoke at the University of Notre Dame. In May, she delivered the keynote at the national meeting of the Brazilian Society for Ethnomusicology in Campinas, Brazil.

Fanny P. Mason Professor Hans Tutschku is this year’s featured composer at the international festival Klang! in Montpellier, France, presenting both a portrait with three of his large-scale electronic compositions and a program of Harvard student works. He will also play five concerts with his Ensemble in Germany, spend a two-week residency at the Freiburg Experimental Studio, and teach at the Académie d’été de composition electroacoustique in Belgium. His music will be presented at the ICMC music conference in New York City in June.

Carol J. Oja Inducted Into Academy of Arts & Sciences

In April, the American Academy of Arts and Science announced the election of its new members for 2019. William Powell Mason Professor Carol J. Oja was one of the more than 200 members recognized for the outstanding achievements in academia, the arts, business, government, and public affairs. Professor Oja’s 2019 fellow inductees include such wide-ranging scholars, artists, and leaders as First Lady Michelle Obama, gender theorist Judith Butler, and actress Anna Deavere Smith.

“This music has a lot of humor in it,” she said. “One can really learn a lot about the ideals of chivalry and courtly, monastic, and even student life from the composers’ musical pranks. The recent devastating fire of Notre-Dame has made the prospect of working on this project all the more poignant for me.”

Carol J. Oja Inducted Into Academy of Arts & Sciences

Suzannah Clark named Harvard College Professor


“I found out just as I was about to draft my proposal for a new Gen Ed course, which seemed very apropos,” said Music Department Chair Suzannah Clark. “Being an educator is a great privilege, and I feel truly honored to be recognized in this way.”

Clark specializes in the history of music theory, with particular focus on the music of Franz Schubert and medieval vernacular music.

“My fascination with medieval motets was sparked by a class I took in my first semester as an undergraduate, and I’ve been hooked ever since. It’s a genre that has its roots in both liturgical music and the lyric tradition of the trouvères [epic poets in Medieval France]. Its hybridity makes it ideal for studying the development of new compositional techniques, and the pieces are filled with social commentary.”

Clark is looking forward to offering a General Education course that explores the intersection of music and poetry. “I plan for the course to explore the rich layers of meaning and interpretation available in the interplay between the music and poetry,” she said, “and most likely we’ll cover some 800 years of the art of songwriting.”

Clark also plans to use the professorship as an opportunity to write a book on 13th-century vernacular music and its development around the Notre-Dame Cathedral during the first hundred years of the church’s construction.

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Alumni News

Ann Cleare (PhD 2016) won the 2019 Ernst von Siemens Composition prize, awarded by the Siemans Foundation to up to three promising composers each year. This is the third Siemens prize awarded to Music Department alumni.

Kurt Cacioppo (PhD 1980) had the New York premiere of his Armed and Dangerous (variations on l’homme armé), Emanuele Arciuli, pianist, at the Italian Academy, Columbia University, as well as the world premiere of Red Jacket/Yonnondio, an integrated setting of two poems by Walt Whitman about Native American concerns in Philadelphia.

William O’Hara (PhD 2016) and Kathleen announced the birth of their second daughter, Juliana Catherine O’Hara, in March.

Evan Macarthy (PhD 2011) has been selected as a Rome Prize fellow by the American Academy in Rome.

Leonard J. Lehrman (AB, 1971) has conducted six concerts of his Metropolitan Philharmonic Chorus in January and May, including four with Helene Williams of his 12th opera, A Loveletter from Rosa Luxemburg. Further performances of it took place in Hamburg and will be be presented in Lüneburg. His 12-tone melodic setting (harmonized by Joel Mandelbaum, AB 1953) of Emily Dickinson’s “Why Do They Shut Me Out of Heaven?” premiered at Community Church of New York in January. Williams & Lehrman made their London debut at Schott’s Music Shop in February, launching their Toccata Classics CD, the first devoted entirely to Marc Blitzstein’s solo piano works. June 27 and 28 they will perform in Ann Arbor, Michigan and Madison, Wisconsin.

Lei Liang’s (PhD 2006) opera Inheritance was premiered in October, 2018 at UCSD. Based on the story of Sarah Winchester, the heiress of the Winchester Rifle fortune, the opera addresses America’s complex relationship with guns and violence. The opera was sponsored by grants from the Creative Capital and National Endowments for the Arts. Liang’s seventh solo album, and first orchestral disc, A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams, was released on BMOP/sound. In addition, he was named the inaugural Research Artist in Residence at Qualcomm Institute, where he collaborates with scientists from the Scripps Institute and Engineering Department on projects exploring the coral reefs.

Derek Wang’s (AB ’06) opera Scalia/Ginsburg was performed at OperaDelaware in Wilmington in May. The updated version of the show, accompanied by orchestra in a new production, set a box office record for the company.

Anna Zayaruznaya (PhD 2011) received the Outstanding Publications Award from SMT for her article “Intelligibility Redux: Motets and the Modern Medieval Sound,” published in Music Theory Online 17.23.2. The Outstanding Publication Award is given for a distinguished article by an author of any age or career stage.

New Faculty Positions
The following recent graduates have taken new tenure-track positions and post-doc appointments.

John Gabriel (PhD 2016): University of Melbourne, Australia
Paddy League (PhD 2017): Florida State University in Tallahassee
Sam Parler (PhD 2017): Baylor University
Sarah Politz (PhD 2017): University of Florida in Gainesville
Frederick Reece, (PhD 18): post-doc fellow, Indiana University
Glee Club concert pays homage to W.E.B. Du Bois

—Excerpted from the Harvard Gazette, “Choral concert will pay homage to the scholar, author, and Civil Rights leader who as a student was denied entry to the group,” by Manisha Aggarwal-Schifellite, 2.27.19

W.E.B. Du Bois was the first African American scholar to earn a doctorate from Harvard, in 1895. The future sociologist and author broke barriers on campus, but was excluded from participating in the all-white Glee Club. Now, more than 100 years later, the Club performed a tribute concert, “The Legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois,” a celebration of African-American spiritual music and Du Bois’ writings on race and inequality.

Director of Choral Activities and Music Department Senior Lecturer Andrew Clark conceived the project in 2015, after auditing courses on race and modernity and Du Bois’ writing with Cornel West.

“Music is such a big part of Du Bois’ work,” Clark told the Harvard Gazette, “and he considers music as a vehicle for transformation, reconciliation, defiance, and resistance.”


“We’re trying to put Western European music in conversation with African American [spirituals] in a way that Du Bois would appreciate — as two rich cultural resources of equal value that have a lot to say to each other,” said Clark.

Clark collaborated with singer, conductor, and activist Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, who also co-founded the Justice Choir movement and teaches a Music and Social Justice course at St. Olaf College.

“We’ve had some amazing dialogue,” Wondemagegnehu says of his time with the Glee Club students. “The issues that Du Bois was talking about in the early 20th and late 19th centuries are still issues in 2019. So, how can we be part of the change?”

Spring has finally come to Cambridge and the term finished with the annual Music Department picnic. Clockwise from top: Natalie and Eloise Hodges; Loeb Music Library, Paine Hall side entrance, Manager of Administration and Finance Karen Rynne at the grill.

Around Campus

Hewitt Performs Bach Odyssey

There is no greater music than the Well-Tempered Clavier, than the three sets of suites, the Goldberg, the Toccatas, even the “easy” Inventions and Sinfonias. To develop in his company one’s musical intelligence, technique, beauty of sound, and spirit is a great gift and a lifelong adventure. The offer from Hyperion Records, back in 1994, to record all his major keyboard works gave my career a purpose and direction that has been enormously fulfilling. —Angela Hewitt

In her Bach Odyssey, Christoph Wolff Distinguished Visiting Scholar Angela Hewitt set out to perform the entirety of Bach’s solo piano works. The idea was suggested by John Gilhooly of London’s Wigmore Hall, and Hewitt was booked to play the entire works of Bach in twelve recitals over four years, ending in 2020, after which, she told an audience at Paine Hall in April, “I’ll take a vacation.”

Hewitt has recorded all these works and is touring the project world-wide, including performances at New York’s 92nd St. Y, Wigmore Hall, and Kioi Hall in Tokyo, and individual programs of highlights in Washington, Montreal, San Francisco, Vancouver, Vienna, and Amsterdam. She gave a public concert at Harvard April 30, and spoke with the audience in a pre-concert talk that also featured Bach scholar Christoph Wolff and was moderated by Professor Suzannah Clark.

Asked if she experimented with instruments other than the piano, Hewitt said, “I’m delighted to try things on forte piano or harpsichord, but in concert I always play the piano. You can imitate the rise and fall of the human voice; you can get more color. It makes the music more intelligible.”

Her Bach project, Hewitt concluded, “is a chance to marvel anew at Bach’s genius.”
Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine

Presented by The Fromm Players at Harvard, curated by Professor of the Practice Claire Chase, May 3 at Oberon.


The performance spotlights Joséphine Baker’s iconic songs re-composed by Sorey and sung by world renown soprano and activist Bullock, who sees her work on the show not as an impersonation of Baker, but as a tribute. Sorey’s music, which includes composed as well as improvised pieces, is melancholic and mournful, and alludes to the racial struggles of both Baker’s time and our own.

Says Sorey in a New York Times interview in August, 2016 “I identified more with Baker as a figure of the civil rights movement, with the lyrical and emotional content. I wanted to re-compose the music so that it would match that.” Adds Bullock, “These issues, they’re always on my mind. When Michael Brown was killed, that happened 20 minutes from my home in St. Louis. All these issues are things I live with and think about daily. Yes, I understood the timeliness of what we were writing. Hearing her [Baker] sing “Si J’Étais Blanche” [“If I Were White”] in 1925 is just as relevant as singing it now.”

Julia Bullock On Performing Perle Noire

I first programmed songs that Joséphine was known for on a 2014 debut recital program. I shared songs that touched on themes that seemed to pervade her life—exploitation and objectification, issues of identity, and the difficulties in maintaining intimate relationships—and the roles that she played—an exotic entity in a foreign place, a charmer, activist, and nurturer. The director Peter Sellars encouraged me then to broaden my musical exploration of her and her impact on me as a performer. Peter invited the poet Claudia Rankine to contribute text. I felt it pertinent to consider Baker’s body through dance, so Peter asked the choreographer Michael Schumacher to develop a deconstructed Charleston; then the International Contemporary Ensemble introduced me to the composer Tyshawn Sorey. Together we compiled words, movement, and music that examined and highlighted various undercurrents of Joséphine Baker’s life in an effort to share an in-depth portrait of a dynamic being.

After performing the source material in a relatively raw form, Tyshawn and I retitled the work Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine, because this project was not so much about her, but for her. I have never intended to impersonate Joséphine Baker. I am not interested in perpetuating the image of Black popular singers as exoticized, eroticized, and as extraordinary exceptions to most Black people. I do not know how to play into the trappings of a brilliant Black operatic soprano who represents absolute dignity and power, impenetrable in her strength, and ever grateful for opportunities. I do not wish to participate in those characterizations because they do not reflect the complexities of human existence. What I do know is that Joséphine laid a path forward for me and I will not perpetuate the tropes or stereotypes of Black American performers.

As I perform Perle Noire, I am performing as myself—a more fully-incorporated self, who continues to increase her capacity to embrace where she has come from, and aims to share a reality that is direct, clear, immediate, and speaks to you, right now.
Giulia Accornero’s article “Un’Organologia Critica per una Nuova Liuteria” was published in the edited volume Fare Strumento, as part of the series Quaderni del Conservatorio «Giuseppe Verdi» di Milano. She also gave the talk “The Craft of an Affective Space: ASMR Vernacular Theories and Neuropsychology” at the Università Statale di Milano as part of the course in Anthropology of Music and at the “Mapping Spaces, Sounding Places: Geographies of Sound in AV Media” conference, both in March. Accornero received the I Tatti graduate fellowship for spring 2020.

Rujing Huang was awarded this year’s Ruby Chao Yeh Award for Student Travel, which promotes student research on Chinese music by supporting paper presentations at the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology. She was named a 2019 Commencement Marshall.

Krystal Klingenberg has accepted a tenure track position at the University of Hartford.

Felipe Ledesma Núñez was awarded the Robert Walser and Susan McClary Fellowship from the Society for American Music.

Alana Mailes received the Paul and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Rome Prize in Renaissance and Early Modern Studies. She will be a fellow in residence at the American Academy in Rome for 2019–20. Her work explores issues of diaspora and migration in early modern music of Italy, Britain, and Ireland.

Caitlin Schmid was the recipient of the Pisk Prize, awarded to a graduate student with the most outstanding scholarly paper read at AMS.

Manuela Meier has accepted the position of Assistant Professor in Music Composition and Theory at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Rajna Swaminathan released her first album as a bandleader, Of Agency and Abstraction, on Biophilia Records on April 26. The album also features Ganavya Doraiswamy (also a Harvard graduate student), Anjna Swaminathan, María Grand, Miles Okazaki, Stephan Crump, and Amir ElSaffar. It’s available on iTunes and also at https://rajin swaminathan.bandcamp.com/

Daniel Walden received a three-year post-doctoral fellowship at Queens College, Oxford University. He also presented a talk, “Inventing a Musical Esperanto,” as part of the Harvard Horizons Symposium, finishing a semester of workshops and coachings as a Harvard Horizons Scholar.

Jingyi Zhang was awarded the West Virginia University Press Award for Best Student Paper at the AMS Allegheny chapter meeting for “Fred Ho’s The Warrior Sisters (1998): A Performance of Transformative Interracialism.”

SoundLab Launches Website, Workshop Series

Technical manager Chris Danforth organized and produced a series of Sound Lab workshops this spring. The events, open to all students, ranged from Audio Production Basics to Photo Editing, Analog Synthesizers to a discussion on creativity and neuroaesthetics. Faculty from Berklee, Emerson, and Harvard, as well as guest artists like Steve Albini, led the workshops. In addition, the Sound Lab launched a new website that includes playlists, resources, the Lab’s workshop schedule and more. It can be found at: https://soundlab.
“Sung to the Tune of”: Reconstructing the Soundtrack to Haitian Independence

With the end of the Haitian Revolution in 1804, Haiti’s people expelled their French oppressors in the largest slave insurrection in nearly two thousand years. Its first leaders built palaces, schools, fortresses, theaters, and printing presses, and, as PhD candidate Henry Stoll has discovered, commissioned music for the glorification of their newly emancipated country.

In conducting research for his dissertation, Stoll visited libraries and archives in Haiti, the United Kingdom, the United States, and France. But his interest in Haiti’s revolution and its repercussions in the Atlantic world began while he was pursuing a degree in violin performance and French at Rutgers University.

“I had the wonderful fortune to take a seminar on Francophone Caribbean literature with Professor Renée Larrier,” says Stoll. “It was there that I was introduced to the history of Haiti. How, I wondered, had I been unaware of Haiti’s Revolution, the second such revolution in the Americas and the first to result in the abolition of slavery? It had a profound effect on me.”

It was a two-hundred-fifty-year-old newspaper that ultimately united Stoll’s interests in French and music. The colonial-era *Affiches américaines* ran a weekly column advertising performances at the local opera house, the Comédie du Cap. There, French colonists could attend performances of the latest and most popular operas from 18th-century Paris.

“But it was at Harvard that I discovered that the performance of Western art music, far from ending with the expulsion of the French, continued into Haiti’s period of independence,” Stoll says. “Early Haitians wrote lyrics to songs, hymns, motets, cantatas, and operas—all performed by local talent.”

One of these operas—an unassuming, sixty-page volume—is fortuitously housed in Harvard’s Houghton Library. Entitled *L’Entrée du Roi, en sa capitale* (“The Entrance of the King in His Capital”), the opera was written to celebrate the King of Haiti, Henry Christophe, at his palace, Sans-Souci. Along with newspapers, almanacs, edicts, and manifestos, this opera is one example of the Haitian publications fashioned for both local and international consumption.

“These Haitian operas and songs were written with two communities in mind—a local, often aristocratic audience and a transatlantic, often white readership. As such, the operas make references that would have escaped the recognition of non-Haitian readers.” Stoll, who speaks Haitian Creole and French, says, “Whole scenes are written in early, transliterated Haitian Creole, dating among the earliest writings in the language.

Most of the music Stoll studies was written as parody, an effective means to produce music without the need for notation. Song parodies (‘sung to the tune of ____’) allowed Haitian musicians to author and publish songs and even operas at a time before printed music was produced in Haiti. A reader familiar with the tunes of the late 18th century could make music out of what, to others, might be seen as poetry or orphaned lyrics. “Most of the melodies with which Haitians were familiar,” Stoll notes, “are now obscure, being derived from French songbooks and the operatic canon. Reuniting these melodies with their Haitian lyrics has enabled Stoll to ‘reconstruct’ these songs so they may be heard anew.”

“The music of early Haiti was ever concerned with the political goings-on of the time,” Stoll explains. “There are songs praising the Haitian royal family, songs honoring the anniversary of independence, and songs celebrating the military victories of [revolutionary leader] Toussaint Louverture. Often nationalistic and commemorative, these songs were written to recognize Haiti’s successes, notwithstanding the strife of these early years.”

As part of his dissertation work, Stoll plans to create an edition of post-revolutionary Haitian art music to be made available to musicians, schools, and theaters. In 2020, he hopes to mount performances of this music in remembrance of the tenth anniversary of the 2010 earthquake, a disaster from which Haiti is still recovering.
Joyce Mekeel: Composer, Teacher, Anthropologist, Sculptor

The Loeb Music Library houses the manuscript scores and personal memorabilia of the American composer, teacher, anthropologist, and sculptor Joyce Mekeel (1931-1997).

Mekeel wrote music for many musicians and musical ensembles, among them Fenwick Smith (principal flute of the Boston Symphony Orchestra) and the Empire Brass Quintet. She collaborated, researched and experimented, and left traces of all of these activities in the collection. She also had a long career as a composition teacher, with appointments at the New England Conservatory and Boston University. In her short life, Mekeel explored several disciplines. Her forays into anthropology took her to West Africa twice, and she created an enormous number of abstract sculptures.

On March 8th, the Music Library celebrated International Women’s Day by launching “Toward the Source: Joyce Mekeel,” an exhibition of materials created and collected by Mekeel and curated by Keeper of the Isham Library Christina Linklater. This two-hour afternoon event began with a performance of Mekeel’s The Shape of Silence, a 1983 work for solo flute, which was rendered by music concentrator Jessica Shand. Next, Judith Tick facilitated a discussion of how women composers are documented, particularly in reference sources. Led by Tick and Professor Anne Shreffler, the assembled group read through the finding aid for the Music Library’s Mekeel collection and the Grove article on Mekeel, coming up with several proposed edits and additions of the article based on the archival materials held at the library. Grove editorial staff have agreed to consider these changes to the article, demonstrating how information uncovered in archival sources can directly influence a composer’s image.

“Toward the Source: Joyce Mekeel” will be on view until June 11th.

Harvard Jazz Band’s First-Ever South American Tour

The Harvard Jazz Band will tour Brazil from June 3–12, led by Director of Jazz Ensembles and Senior Lecturer on Music, Yosvany Terry. The tour will involve workshops with local jazz groups and musicians, visits to musical conservatories, and three concerts in world class venues in around around São Paulo, Rio de Janerio, and Salvador da Bahia. Not only will this be the first time the Jazz Band has visited South America, it will also mark the first time a major Harvard music group has toured Brazil in twenty years. The tour is supported by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies and Harvard’s Provostial Committee for the Dean of Arts and Humanities, and features a partnership with Harvard’s Brazil Studies Program.
Nineeen Hertz was born about six months ago, but the sentiments that motivated its creation have been around much longer—at least since I arrived at Harvard in 2017. It was at this time that I first began to truly question my place as a classically trained musician: what was the nature of the platform that I had as an artist, and how was I to use it?—Jessica Shand

Five Receive Hoopes Prizes

We are proud to announce that five music students received Hoopes prizes for their theses!

EMILY BROTHER for “From the Page to Performance: A Lecture-Recital Exploring the Interpretive Possibilities in Frédéric Chopin’s Preludes, Op. 28,” supervised and nominated by Professor Suzannah Clark.

NATALIE HODGES for “The Still Point of the Turning World,” supervised and nominated by Professor Michael Pollan. Natalie isn’t a concentrator but has been a part of the department and library since she arrived here.

YOO KYUNG EUNICE LEE for her composition, “Cold,” nominated by Professor Chaya Czernowin

HAYDEN SMILEY for “Weekend Cowboy: Pop-Up Imperialism and American Country Music in Italy,” supervised and nominated by Professor Kay K. Shelemay

AUSTIN WEBER for “Love Songs for No One”—supervised and nominated by Professor Nora Schultz.

Claire Dickson, Brian Zhao Win 2019 Robert Levin Prize

Concentrating in Psychology with a secondary in Music, CLAIRE DICKSON is a vocalist and composer who has performed regularly on campus including with the Harvard University Choir, Harvard Jazz Bands, and independent projects. She has also taken performance-oriented courses with Vijay Iyer, Yosvany Terry, and Esperanza Spalding. In 2018, she received an Artist Development Fellowship to study vocal performance under Grammy Award-nominated vocalist and composer Theo Bleckmann in New York City. She is working as a co-leader of the band Myrtle.

A student in the Harvard/NEC joint five-year AB/MM program, BRIAN ZHAO is also the 2019 Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra Concerto Competition winner and performed Elgar’s Cello Concerto with the HRO in March. Zhao performs with the Brattle Street Chamber Players. He has attended the Heifetz International Music Institute and the IU Jacobs School of Music Summer String Academy. In 2015, he toured China with the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra and has performed with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. Zhao studies under Laurence Lesser.

The Levin Prize honors outstanding student musical performers in each graduating year.
Is musicology limited to human culture?

In 1977 NASA shot a mixtape into outer space. The “Golden Record” is aboard the Voyager spacecraft, which is now outside the solar system on its way into the unknown. It contains environmental sounds, images, greetings in 55 human languages, and a selection of music from all over the world—from Australian Aboriginal songs to Louis Armstrong, Chuck Berry to Chinese guqin, Mexican mariachi to Mozart. The hope was that somehow, many thousand years from now, extraterrestrials might pick it up and experience a slice of human culture. Forty years ago the idea that there might be nonhuman life “out there” was a pipedream, but by now the tables are turned: it is statistically more likely than not that there is intelligent life on other planets.

In fall of 2019, Professor Alex Rehding will offer a Freshman Seminar, “Music from Earth,” which uses the Golden Record to initiate queries about technology, communication, music theory, listening, representation of human culture, and universal language.

The course material is drawn in part from Rehding’s recent research project (with Daniel Chua) that uses the Golden Record as a starting point for a multi-media exploration of how we might use music to communicate across cultures, species, even planets. Their co-authored book, *Music from Earth: Alien Listening and Voyager’s Golden Record* will be published by Zone Books in 2020.