

MUSIC

NEWSLETTER



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Vol. 24, No. 2 Winter 2024

Jessie Cox is dreaming new futures through sound



Credit: Adrien H. Tillmann

JESSIE COX has been a musician for most of his life. “I started out as a drummer-composer, learning drums from the Afro diaspora specifically ... I was always very interested in composition from the beginning, especially because composition meant making music with others.” Cox, who describes himself as an artist-scholar, grew up in Switzerland before moving to the United States to attend Berklee College of Music. “[Berklee] was great specifically because the space allowed me to engage in all kinds of genres, and work with people from across the globe. It was a very international space where I could foster a practice of working across different methods and communities and interacting with different approaches to music making. This has become the core of my practice: I work with different ways of thinking about how we approach making music.”

“I’m interested in making audiences who encounter my music ask new questions about what life may mean and be. I am exploring the idea of reimagining the world through music and dreaming new futures through sound.”

“I think about music making as a practice that asks questions about the world or affords us to approach the world with new questions.” Cox explains, “Sometimes, this is seen as scholarship and [it] involves analyzing artists and their practices; but artists also decide on what to do and what to make. As an artist-scholar, it becomes a circular experience of creation and analysis.” It was the search for the future of sound that led Cox to join the Creative Practice and Critical Inquiry faculty as Assistant Professor of Music in 2024. “Being [at Harvard] as an artist-scholar is a unique opportunity to think about what it means to integrate art making as a creative practice with scholarly research and knowledge production ... [In the past], I taught courses that were more focused on the general history of music, but we made very little actual music. It’s a different experience to try and make a sound that is also a history, which is something that I do when I create music.”

In his own work, Cox focuses on the intersection of Black studies, sound studies, and critical theory, driven by a listening-first attitude. “I believe that as a musician, my job is to listen and to practice listening. It

is something that teaches us to embrace the world in new ways.” Cox finds inspiration at every turn; even the COVID-19 pandemic didn’t slow him down. “On Zoom we have no [background] sound and I find that boring. I’m a musician, I like to have some acoustics around my words so I added some reverb. That leads to the question of what kind of reverb to add and this is fundamentally what composing music is – thinking about which space a sound is in.” His 2022 piece, *Black Blackness*, explores what it means to create the sound of a space. “*Black Blackness* engages a history of thinking about the sound of space, specifically through white noise. Everyone has heard of white noise, it’s the idea of the sound of a space and in the piece I was thematizing how we make the sound of a space and what constitutes that sound.”

“[Learning to listen] is something that teaches us to embrace the world in new ways all the time.”

When Cox began the work that would eventually become his monograph, *Sounds of Black Switzerland* (2025, Duke University Press), he quickly realized it was uncharted

continued

territory. "I decided to write a piece thematizing, in the sound world, the role of race and specifically Blackness." Cox explains, "This is a space where the concepts of Blackness and Swissness are rarely mentioned together in media. There's no archives or existing language, but artists are thinking about these questions all the same."



Credit Adrien H. Tillmann

"Black Switzerland is a term that I don't even know if I can say properly exists because I have sort of made it up. Switzerland has no national conversation

about race, which means that people who speak about the Black experience in Switzerland use their own terms or language every time." The lack of sources was initially a roadblock for Cox, who quickly realized there were very few existing scholarly works on the topic. "I didn't think I would be able to write a book." He says, "What ultimately happened was I encountered works by Nigerian-Swiss composer Charles Uzor, written for George Floyd. In listening to and thinking about the works, I realized just how deep the knowledge was within them. As an artist-scholar, I realized I can write a book about this, and I can do so through music because there is music that speaks to these themes."

"There is a lot of knowledge that I bring through looking at music as a scholar and practitioner of music."

Sounds of Black Switzerland examines Charles Uzor's works for George Floyd, as well as works by other Black Swiss composers,



Credit Adrien H. Tillmann

including Cox's own collaborations with the Lucerne Festival. "When I listen to musical works it is very clear to me from a deeper knowledge of Black studies how there are articulated ways of thinking about racism and the Black experience and what it might mean for the world to think about these things."

Jessie Cox is an Assistant Professor of Music at the Harvard University Department of Music. His monograph, *Sounds of Black Switzerland*, is available now through Duke University Press.

Upcoming Events



BLODGETT ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE: PARKER QUARTET

Sunday April 6, 2025 | 3PM | Paine Concert Hall

Photo Credit: Beowulf Sheehan

CHRISTOPH WOLFF DISTINGUISHED VISITING SCHOLAR RESIDENCY: TEMBEMBE

Saturday, March 8, 2025 | 7:00PM
Paine Concert Hall



DISTINGUISHED FROMM SCHOLAR CONCERT: RAND STEIGER

Friday, April 4, 2025 | 7:00PM
Paine Concert Hall

Photo Credit: Erik Jepsen

Some events require free ticket reservations. For more information visit music.fas.harvard.edu

Micah Huang on technology, building community, & *Sounding Psychodelia*



Micah Huang for *LA Hungry Ghost Festival*.
Credit: Olivia Moon

When Harvard Music Graduate Student MICAH HUANG moved to the East Coast to pursue a Master's Degree at Tufts University, they were ready for a change. After growing up in Los Angeles, Huang spent their post-undergrad years touring the West Coast, but they wanted more. "As time went along, I found myself wanting and attempting to do things creatively that didn't fit into a bar band." Huang explains, "I was getting fatigued by the lifestyle and I was ready to branch out." After graduating from Tufts in 2019, Huang taught music classes that went virtual during the COVID-19 pandemic. "I used to be super anti-technology," they admit, "I didn't have a smartphone until 2016, I wasn't even on the internet until around 2006." The pandemic forced Huang to embrace technology, and allowed them to view it through a new lens. "I had started to get involved in the activist art world and other waves of techno activism. I realized [technology] was a tool that could be used to build community and mutual understanding across difference."

"I was working with my family and advocating for understanding; that's part of what set me on the path to opening up my horizons in terms of working with and connecting to people. It didn't feel easy to get across what I was trying to get across to people who didn't have the lived experiences. This led me to focus more on family, culture, and community and I reconnected with some things buried deep in my past that have a very culturally East Asian influence." Huang became especially interested in the concept of life energy, or *chi*, which continues to inform their work. "I went down a rabbit hole looking into life

energy and technology and how the two interface. I started to become interested in neuroscience and I knew that I wanted to engage with people who are working with energy, health, and community in these new and fascinating ways. I wanted to be part of that conversation." Ultimately, Huang knew they wanted to re-enter the world of Academia, joining the Creative Practice and Critical Inquiry program in 2023.



Huang performing at *LA Hungry Ghost Festival* in Los Angeles, CA. Credit: Tizoc Zamora

Now halfway through their second year, Huang is ready to make their voice heard. "I feel like I can finally articulate what my research is focused on." They say, "I'm interested in the relationship between energy theories and practices that are grounded in the world of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and the more empiricist, reductionist approach taken by academia as a whole. There's an idea that those two things are irreconcilable, and I disagree with that. I think it's a question of finding the path that leads from one to the other, it's a sort of translation."

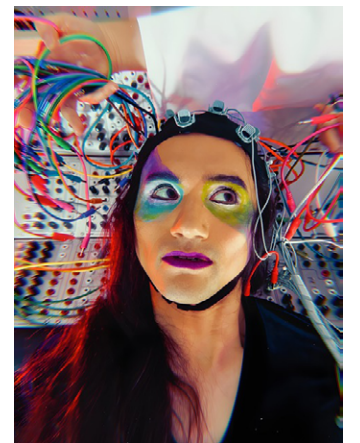
"We can use art and science collaborations as ways to explore the space between data points."

In November 2024, Huang produced *Sounding Psychodelia*, their first major event at Harvard. The immersive concert experience was created in collaboration with Dr. Ying Wu and the UC San Diego Swartz Center for Computational Neuroscience. "The show is tied to an investigation being undertaken by Dr. Wu and her lab about the potential of neuroscience-informed approaches to aesthetic interventions." Using EEG Brainwave recordings from psychedelic therapy sessions, they mapped data to musical parameters, creating electronic music and accompanying visuals.

"Think of data as the shadow of energy." They explain, "Energy is a thing with many dimensions and when it's recorded or transduced into data it's reduced in dimensionality but you can still engage with what's happening on the energy level through the biometric data. At its core that's a lot of what neuroscience does; my work extends this process into the realm of art, exploring the relationship between sensory inputs and cognitive processes through an aesthetic lens."

"I really want to connect with the wonderfully diverse range of people who are working with and touching the world of psychedelics research."

Reflecting on *Sounding Psychodelia*, Huang is excited to let the process lead them. "I think that doing it under the umbrella of arts makes it so that the focus isn't so much on results as it is on sparking conversations and making connections." After *Sounding Psychodelia*, Huang says they received some unexpected responses. "Someone who works in psychedelics research was saying that there's a struggle for informed consent in [psychedelic] trials, especially if people haven't taken them before. If we could show a similar effect to people experiencing something like this versus a low dose of psychedelics, it could be used as a way to give people some idea of what to expect, which would make informed consent easier to achieve."



Sounding Psychodelia promotional image.
Credit: Emma Gies

Undergraduate Spotlight: Dacha Thurber



DACHA THURBER is a Senior and Double Concentrator in Music and Computer Science. "I've played the violin almost my whole life and here at Harvard I play in the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra and study with Professor Daniel Chong. I try to play as much as possible." Dacha says computer science is an entirely different world. "Some people are interested in where the two worlds overlap, but my interest in music is more on the analog side of things." He explains, "Computational methods have been a big part of my research, so it felt like a logical thing to continue working on. Although I like to keep music and computer science separate, they actually require a very similar kind of thinking."

Q: Describe how you chose your path of musical study at Harvard. What influenced your decisions?

"Music has always been a big part of my life, that was never in question. I have always enjoyed playing, playing with other people, and the academic side of music. These were all things I had experience with before I got to Harvard. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to [my] professors here.

I connected with Professor Daniel Chong before Harvard was ever a part of my plan. When I got here my freshman year, continuing to study in the department was largely thanks to him. And to Federico Cortese with whom I had worked at the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra where I now work as a mentor and coach. His mentorship has been invaluable

to me, and it is especially thanks to the two of them that I continued studying music. Since arriving at Harvard, I have become interested in conducting and have been learning to conduct. It's very different from playing in an orchestra, it requires a different kind of connection. In some ways, I suppose your instrument is the orchestra itself when conducting."

Q: Which music courses have you found the most rewarding, and why?

"I really look forward to meeting and working with professors across the board in the Music Department. I think one of my most memorable and impactful courses was Federico Cortese's conducting course, which I took in the spring of my sophomore year. It was the first time I was conducting, and it introduced me to a whole new approach to music and musical thinking. When conducting, you must think not just about how you will communicate the music outwards to an audience, but how you are going to communicate it to the other people that are playing the music. It forced my own thinking to become a little bit more critical and intentional."

Q: How have you explored music performance at Harvard? What avenues have been most rewarding?

"I play in the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, and I've performed in the Music 189 (Chamber Music Performance) concerts every semester, but I've also put together and given a recital every year. That's been my own initiative but it's very rewarding to hold myself to that goal. The department has all these wonderful opportunities to perform frequently, and I have taken advantage of as many of them as possible.

I was also very fortunate to receive a Davison Fellowship for Travel in Music my sophomore year. I traveled that summer to Serbia to study at the University of Novi Sad with Professors Stefan Milenković and Nikola Aleksić. I had the opportunity to learn a different sort of music making and experience a different style of teaching and playing. I am connected to Serbia through

my family, and this is also influencing my thesis. I will be focusing on Slavik folk music, especially the composer Aleksandra Vujić. My final thesis will include the American premiere of a lot of his music. The Davison Fellowship paved the way for me to explore Serbian Slavik folk music."

Q: Tell us about an experience in the Harvard Department of Music that helped to shape your artistic identity, and how you hope to carry that experience with you after graduation.

"The first thing I would point to is the summer I spent in Serbia; there were a lot of things I was able to do while I was there that have been incredibly impactful. I spent a weekend in Budapest listening to master classes from composer György Kurtág. Parker Quartet just so happened to be in Budapest that weekend and Professor Chong reached out and asked if I was available. It was incredible to listen to Kurtág coach Beethoven's Quartet Op. 130. That whole summer was made possible by the Davison Fellowship and the Music Department.

The other thing I would point to is working with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra. Through Federico [Cortese], I have been coaching and teaching some of the younger orchestras. I think teaching is one of the best ways to learn because, especially with younger kids, I must be extremely clear with what I am trying to get across. In order to do that, I have to really understand the pieces. It's been challenging and incredibly rewarding to think in that way about music, phrasing, and even the mechanics of playing in an orchestra. It's wonderful to see how quickly these kids are learning, they're all so incredibly talented and the organization is one that I'm proud to work with."

Dacha will present his thesis in Spring 2025, including a recital of Slavik folk music focusing on violin compositions. Visit music.fas.harvard.edu for more information as it becomes available.

Photo Credit: Christopher Thurber

Undergraduate Spotlight: Veronica Li



VERONICA LI is a Junior at Harvard and a Double Concentrator in Music and Psychology. "I'm a clarinetist and the former Creative Director and current President of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra. I'm also part of the Harvard College Opera Orchestra, Harvard Pops Orchestra, and the PBHA Harmony Mentorship program." Veronica is also part of the Harvard-New England Conservatory Dual Degree Program, "I actually auditioned for the Harvard-NEC program while I was in my freshman year here." She says, "It's a highly selective program, which means there weren't a lot of people within the program that I could talk with about it before applying. I didn't apply in high school because I knew that applying during my freshman year was an option. It just so happened that the chamber group I was part of during my fall semester had two upperclassmen that were part of the Harvard-NEC program." She explains, "I got to ask them all the questions I had about the program, and getting to do that, combined with my experiences with the faculty both here and at NEC, solidified my decision to apply to the dual degree program."

Q: Describe how you chose your path of musical study at Harvard. What influenced your decisions?

"Music has been at the forefront of my life for as long as I can remember; the thought of leaving that part of me behind never even crossed my mind. In high school I had a pretty typical classical music upbringing, I had clarinet lessons and orchestra rehearsals,

along with taking Western music theory and ear training classes.

I feel like concentrating in music at Harvard wasn't even really a choice that I made. Pursuing music academically was basically a foregone conclusion because music is so central to who I am as a person. ... In high school, I interned at the Nordoff Robbins Center for Music Therapy at NYU. It was the first time that I saw music function outside of a listening or performance context and I was amazed to see this whole other side to music. My interest in the intersection of music and psychology influenced my decision to concentrate in psychology as well as music. When I chose Harvard, I knew I was on the right path."

Q: Which music courses have you found the most rewarding, and why?

"The Music Department offers a diverse range of music offerings, both academic and performance based. I've taken Music 189 (Chamber Music Performance) every semester that I've been here. This course has been particularly rewarding, as it has allowed me to gain strong grasps of multiple core clarinet chamber works through specific and insightful comments during coachings.

Another class that I really enjoy is one that I am taking right now called Music 220 Global History of Music Theory with Professor Alex Rehding. We have only had a few classes so far, but the content is very different from that of any music class I have taken in the past. We are beginning with the origins of Greek music theory and the conflicting Pythagorean conception of music intervals as reflections of divine cosmic order and the Aristoxenian view of music as a purely music phenomenon. When he speaks in class, it is clear that Professor Rehding is extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the topic, and I know I will continue to learn a lot from his class."

Q: How have you explored music performance at Harvard? What avenues have been most rewarding?

"My main performance activity on campus has been the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra

(HRO) with the wonderful Music Director Federico Cortese. I knew I wanted to be a part of it before I got to Harvard and I joined at the start of freshman year. I absolutely love being part of HRO, we play a repertoire that I think typical youth and college orchestras don't usually play. Last year for our final concert we played parts of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* which is something I don't think you see a lot of college orchestras playing. Often they focus more on the typical classical repertoire pieces like Brahms or Beethoven. Getting that experience is so cool, especially getting to play with the singers like the Wagner piece. I don't often get the opportunity to perform with singers, but when I do it's incredible to hear the blending between the natural voice and my instrument's voice. The human voice is so special, there's an inherent natural way of phrasing that instrumentalists try to emulate, and getting more exposure to it is great."

Q: Tell us about an experience in the Harvard Department of Music that helped to shape your artistic identity, and how you hope to carry that experience with you after .

"The Music Department provides so many opportunities and I've been so grateful that I've gotten to take advantage of so many of them. If I had to choose one, getting to play the E-flat clarinet last year with the HRO for 2 pieces, Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé Suite 2*. I discovered a love for playing E-flat clarinet from these two cycles; while I love the lyrical solos written for B-flat clarinet, the E-flat has a distinct quality that works well when playing very extroverted solos. For a long time growing up, I was scared of playing out in an orchestra, but playing the E-flat clarinet has brought out a different side of my playing and I'm not afraid of having a large sound when it's warranted anymore. Playing the E-flat required that I conquer any timidity and play with confidence. I think that this newfound boldness in my instrumental voice has influenced my speaking voice to be more confident as well."

Photo Credit: Catie Thai

Faculty News

Assistant Professor of Music **JESSIE COX**'s first monograph *Sounds of Black Switzerland: Blackness, Music, and Unthought Voices* was released on February 11, 2025 by Duke University Press. It is available now. The International Contemporary Ensemble premiered a new work by Cox for two voices and ensemble at the *Always, Already There* symposium on Afrodiasporic contemporary composers at the House of Cultures in Berlin, Germany. Cox's essay "Composing While Black and Abstraction: Or, Music and the Question of Representation" was published as part of the proceedings. Cox was commissioned by Maarten Stragier and Pierre Bibault for the *Ear to the Ground Festival* in Ghent, Brussels, with a premiere on December 7. Their collaboratively developed work *Planetary System(ic Extractions)* engages various materials involved in resource extraction and social injustices (cotton, rubber, and plastic), and its score is based on AstriaGraph, which documents space pollution and tracks objects around Earth. Cox also performed at the *Melbourne Women's International Jazz Festival* in Australia with Lucy Clifford on December 13, 2024.

Last June the Boston Modern Orchestra Project released *Trouble*, Franklin D. and Florence Rosenblatt Professor of the Arts **VIJAY IYER**'s album of orchestral works conducted by Gil Rose, including the titular violin concerto performed by Jennifer Koh. Over the summer, he premiered two new works: *Variations on a Theme by Ornette Coleman*, a 20-minute piece for Pierrat sextet based on Coleman's piece "War Orphans," at Norfolk Chamber Music festival; and *Misterioso: Meditations on Monk*, an evening-length work for cornet, piano, electronics, and video, collaboratively composed by Iyer and Graham Haynes,



commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts and premiered at The 222 in Healdsburg, CA. Summer also saw the New England premieres of Iyer's works *Handmade Universe* (2023) at Portland Chamber Music Festival and Salt Bay Chamberfest, and *The Law of Returns* (2017) at Tanglewood. In July Iyer delivered the keynote at the Royal Music Association's Music and Philosophy conference at Kings College, London, titled "Musicalities: Scenes of Sonic Relation."

Iyer presented a concert of his chamber works at Wigmore Hall in London on September 30 with Manchester Collective, including four overseas premieres, followed by a 12-city European tour with his trio in October and several more concerts on the west coast. He delivered the keynote address at the annual meeting for the Society for Music Theory in Jacksonville, FL on November 9, titled "What's Left of Music Theory?" His new work *Scenes of Living and Dying: Part 1*, for violin, piano, and video, performed by Iyer and Jennifer Koh with visuals by Carrie Mae Weems, premiered at the Kennedy Center on November 16. His trio recording *Compassion* with Linda May Han Oh and Tyshawn Sorey was named one of the best albums of 2024 by NPR Music and several other outlets. Iyer's new duo recording with Wadada Leo Smith, titled *Defiant Life*, will be released in March on ECM Records.



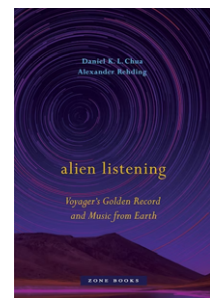
Professor Madrid's class welcomed Grammy Award-winning musician Christian Nodal (center).

Walter W. Naumburg Professor of Music **ALEJANDRO L. MADRID** was invited to present keynote lectures at the Coloquio Internacional de Musicología Casa de las Américas, in Havana, Cuba, and at Universidade Federal de Goiás's Simpósio Internacional de Musicologia, in Goiânia, Brazil. He also presented lectures at the Eastman School of

Music's Musicology Symposium Series, and at the Academia Mexicana de la Historia. In the Fall semester, Professor Madrid hosted Regional Mexican Music star and four-time Grammy Award winner Christian Nodal, who had a conversation with students in his class Music of Mexico and the Mexican Diaspora; and presented a concert of music by the Mexican microtonal maverick Julián Carrillo.

During the fall semester, William Powell Mason Professor of Music **CAROL OJA** was a Mellon Fellow in the Democracy and Landscape Initiative at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC. She gave a talk there: "Marian Anderson's Concert at the Lincoln Memorial (1939): Outdoor Venues and Incremental Social Justice." She also gave a presentation at Armstrong Friendship Academy, a D.C. middle school whose auditorium was a safe space for Black performers in the 1930s, and she participated in a panel discussion at the Hill Center in DC: "Our City, Our Music, Our Writers." She spoke in a pre-concert panel at the New York Philharmonic for a concert of Afro-Modernism, and she was inducted into membership of the American Philosophical Society.

Fanny Peabody Professor of Music **ALEX REHDING**'s recent book *Alien Listening* was featured at the 2024 SMT meeting in Jacksonville in three ways: in a professional workshop he gave (jointly with co-author Daniel Chua), as the topic of this year's Music and Philosophy Interest Group, and as an awardee of the Wallace Berry Prize. He gave talks at the AMS meeting in Chicago, the Music and AI conference at Stockholm, at Eastman, Princeton, and he fulfilled a lifelong dream (or very nearly so) by serving on the jury of the 2024 AI "Eurovision" Song Contest.



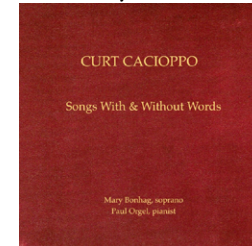
Alumni News

KARIM AL-ZAND (Ph.D. 2000) was recently awarded the 2024 Barlow Prize to compose and premiere a major new work for organ. His work for soprano and orchestra "Al Hakawati" (The Storyteller), a co-commission of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln and Orchestre National de France, premiered this fall. In the spring, the Houston Symphony will perform a newly commissioned work, "Al Jazari's Ingenious Clocks" and Minnesota Orchestra will perform "Luctus Profugis." His string quartet "Strange Machines," commissioned by Chamber Music America, has been touring with the Balourdet Quartet, including performances at Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, and more.

CURTIS CACIOPPO (Ph.D. 1980) released his cycle for soprano and pianist, *Songs With & Without Words*, which is now available on all digital platforms. The work, a threnody of "overwhelming outpourings," was recorded in December 2023 by soprano Mary Bonhag and pianist Paul Orgel. Texts are by psychologist Dr. Sharon Lamb, Chekhov, and Cacioppo himself. Dr. Lamb is also a Harvard alumna (Ed.D. Human Development, 1988).

DOUG DAVIS (Ph.D. 1979) recent activities included six performances of his song cycle *Family Portraits*, three performances of jazz ensemble work *B & Me*, a performance of orchestral work *Dust Swirls, then Speaks* by the Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra, and the premiere of his solo clarinet/narration of John Berryman's Dream Song #67, "Now there is a further difficulty." The Doug Davis Composition and Performance Endowment gave 23 performance awards and two composer awards, including a Grand Prize to soprano Juliet Papadopoulos, whose additional discretionary award went to Alexey Gorokholinsky. The largest award went to support Ty Kim's documentary film *Earl*, a tribute to the life and work of former Harvard professor Earl Kim.

HANNAH LEWIS (Ph.D. 2014) book



Songs With & Without Words

La La Land, about the 2016 film by the same name, was published in September 2024 as part of the new Oxford's Guides to Film Musicals with Oxford University Press.

OLIVIA LUCAS (Ph.D. 2016) volume *Teaching Difficult Topics: Reflections from the Undergraduate Music Classroom*, co-edited with Laura Moore Pruett (Merrimack College), was published by the University of Michigan Press in October 2024. In November, she received the Emerging Scholar Award (Article) from the Society for Music Theory (SMT) for "Performing Analysis, Performing Metal: Meshuggah, Edvard Handsson, and the Analytical Light Show," published in *Music Theory Online* in 2021.

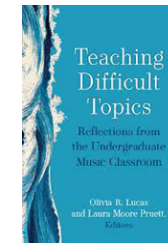
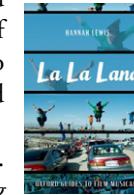
KATE MANCEY (Ph.D. 2024) accepted a position as Assistant Professor at Utrecht University in Utrecht, Netherlands.

TIMOTHY McCORMACK (Ph.D. 2019) accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Composition at the University of California, San Diego.

SAMUEL PARLER (Ph.D. 2017) published the article "Garth Brooks Soundalikes, YouTube Misinformation, and Authenticity Politics" in the Fall 2024 issue of the *Journal of Musicology*.

ANDREW SHENTON (Ph.D. 1998) gave a recital of works by Arvo Pärt on the organ in Busch Hall at Harvard University, with soprano Carolyn Hao ('26) on November 21, 2024. Dr. Shenton is exploring how this music aids personal transcendence as a Visiting Scholar at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University this year.

BETTINA VARWIG's (Ph.D. 2007) book, *Music in the Flesh: An Early Modern Musical Physiology* (Chicago University Press, 2023) won the 2024 Otto Kinkeldey Award from the American Musicological Society.



NEW FACULTY



The Department of Music is thrilled to announce **DEVON JIMÉNEZ BOROWSKI** will join the faculty as Assistant Professor of Music starting in the 2025–2026 Academic Year!

Graduate Student News

In October VICTOR ARUL, NINA BARATTI, JORDAN BROWN, CHRISTINA NIKITIN, SHIVA RAMKUMAR, and DAVINDAR SINGH presented at the 2024 Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting which took place virtually.

STEPHEN AI, CHRISTINA NIKITIN, LEE CANNON-BROWN, and JUAN SAENZ presented at the Society for Music Theory Annual Meeting in November 2024. The meeting took place in Jacksonville, Florida.

ALYSSA COTTLE, LEO SARBANES, JINGYI ZHANG, FELIPE LEDESMA NUÑEZ, SHIVA RAMKUMAR, URI SCHRETER, and SHARRI HALL presented at the American Musicological Society Annual Meeting in November 2024. The meeting took place in Chicago, Illinois.

LEE CANNON-BROWN received the SMT Dissertation 40 Award from the Society for Music Theory for his dissertation "Ultramodernism in Global Music Thought, 1900–1950."



Huang performing at *LA Hungry Ghost Festival*.
Credit: Tizoc Zamora

MICAH HUANG received funding from the Department of Music for a Summer Fellowship, which they used to explore the relationship between healing and music in diasporic Chinese communities in Southern California. They also worked in collaboration with The East Wind Foundation for Youth to produce *The LA Hungry Ghost Festival* in August 2024. The festival honors the past and celebrates present day Los Angeles Chinatown, presenting traditional arts performances with a contemporary spin.

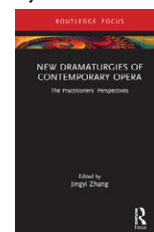
CHRISTINA NIKITIN received the 2024 Charles Seeger Prize from the Society for Ethnomusicology for her paper "Fkzoku Queens: Trans* Migrant Sex Performers in Tokyo," awarded to the most distinguished student paper presented at the previous year's SEM Annual Meeting, as well as the 2024 Wong Tolbert Student Paper Prize. The Tolbert prize is issued by the Section on the Status of Women to the most distinguished paper presented at the Annual Meeting on women and music. She also received an Honorable Mention for the Martin Hatch Prize from the Society for Asian Music, awarded to the most distinguished student paper at the SEM Annual Meeting on an Asian music topic or performance.



Samora Pinderhughes. Credit: Ray Neutron

SAMORA PINDERHUGHES was named the Adobe Creative Resident at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The initiative seeks to support equity, learning, and creativity by providing vital resources for an artist to work with Museum experts and an artist mentor on a community-based project. Pinderhughes will create sonic healing rooms in collaboration with NYC communities to support grief, healing, and participatory action, envisioning a world centered on care rather than punishment.

RACHEL ROSENMANN recently gave an invited talk at the Hartt School Music Theory Colloquium at the University of Hartford on November 19, 2024. She presented "Meta-Musical Critiques in Twentieth-Century French Song: Examples by Erik Satie and Mel Bonis."



JINGYI ZHENG's edited volume *New Dramaturgies of Opera: The Practitioners' Perspective* was published in September 2024. The volume approaches the dramaturgy of contemporary

opera from the unique perspectives of living practitioners who provide valuable first-hand insight into the coming into being of an opera today.

SOPHIA ZERVAS' paper "Woman of Sorrows: Violent Masculinity, Female Bodies, and Turkish *Arabesk*" was accepted for inclusion in an upcoming book on Music, Protest, and Politics in Turkey. The book will be published by Routledge in 2025.

Choral News

THE HARVARD CHORUSES started off the Fall 2024 semester strong. 165 singers auditioned for the ensembles resulting in 113 new acceptances. We also offered 38 of those singers a spot in Skills for Singing, a non-credit cost-free course that dives deep into the art of singing in a group setting, taught by Dr. Christopher Sierra.



HCNMI Ensemble Veritas.
Credit: Jake Belcher

HCNMI is a comprehensive mentorship program led by Dr. Robert Kyr, Ph.D. '89 and Dr. Andrew Clark, Director of Choral Activities.

This semester was one filled with collaborations. The Harvard Glee Club hosted the Zedashe Ensemble, a vocal choir and dance group from the Country of Georgia. The Radcliffe Choral Society performed Mahler's Symphony #3 with the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra and Holst's *The Planets* with the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra. The Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum, Harvard University Choir, and



Cambridge Common Voices perform.
Credit: James Gutierrez

In late September, Harvard Choruses New Music Initiative (HCNMI) hosted Ensemble Veritas, a professional vocal ensemble, to workshop and perform premieres by Harvard student composers.

Library News

The Music Library is delighted to announce the acquisition of *The Chris Felver Archive of Cecil Taylor: All the Notes*. Cecil Taylor was an American free jazz pioneer and leading innovator of experimental jazz since the 1950s. The Felver Archive consists of recordings of Taylor's musical performances, including many not previously released, as well as poetry readings and recordings of autobiographical interviews conducted between 1990 to 2005. Also included is a handwritten original score, several calligraphic poems by Taylor, and countless notes taken on tapes, as well as many photographs of Taylor and his colleagues taken between 1984 to 2008.

Music Library collections came to life earlier this fall when local ensemble Castle of Our Skins performed Julia Perry's *Three Cradle Songs* at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum using a publication-quality score derived from the manuscript score found in the Loeb Music Library's Nadia Boulanger Collection. George Steel, Abrams Curator of Music at the

Gardner, worked with Music Library staff to prepare the score for this performance.

Elizabeth Batiuk, Curator for the Archive of World Music, has published "Calling the Ancestors to Dance: Affect, Meaning, and Agency in Abakua Performance," in the *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 7, no. 2 (2023).

Erin Conor, Richard F. French Librarian, has published (with Angela Pratesi et al.) "The Music Companion to the Framework for Information Literacy: Background, Process, and a New Guiding Document," in *Notes: the Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 81, no. 2 (Dec. 2024): 245-66.



Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum

Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra performed a concert of Bach Cantatas at Memorial Church and welcomed Collegium alum, Professor Daniel R. Melamed AB '82, PhD '89, for a pre-concert lecture.

The semester ended with two final concerts. The Harvard-Radcliffe Chorus, conducted by Edward Elwyn Jones, performed a concert of Italian Opera Choruses with soloists Sarah Joyce Cooper, soprano, and Jonas Budris '06, tenor. Cambridge Common Voices hosted a holiday sing-along in Sanders Theatre complete with the classics and original compositions.

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WE'D LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT IT!

WE WELCOME NEWS AT ANY TIME, AS WELL AS PHOTOS AND LINKS OF INTEREST TO OUR COMMUNITY OF MUSICIANS AND SCHOLARS.

SEND TO:
MUSICDPT@FAS.HARVARD.EDU

Picture Show



Holden Voice Program Director Hana Cai (right) poses with conductor Ben Zander (left).
Credit: Hilary Scott



Local Celebrity Sighting: Remy the Harvard Cat spent the semester searching for the best spot to nap in the Music Building.



Boo: The Department staff brought the Halloween spirit, continuing a long tradition of dressing up for the holiday!



Beth & Peter dressed up as Fanny Peabody Mason and John Knowles Paine, the namesakes of the Music Building and Paine Concert Hall.

HARVARD MUSIC ALUMNI DINNER AT AMS CHICAGO:



(left to right) Suhne Ahn, Kathryn Welter, Alexandra Amati, Naomi André, David Kidger, Carl Leafstedt, and Charles McGuire.



(left to right) Dan Beller-McKenna, Alexandra Amati, Beth Abbate, and David Kidger at the 2015 AMS Annual Meeting.

"Ever since we graduated, at the end of the last millennium, I have been organizing a dinner for my PhD cohort and the adjacent ones at the AMS meeting. In fact, we start with a string of emails a couple of months prior to the meeting, catching each other up through career milestones, marriages and births, graduations and other family news, and then those of us who attend the meeting share fellowship and a meal. We usually also take a photo and cherish it. This year's group at AMS-Chicago was larger than most years, and here it is, over a fantastic conversation and food. Pictured around the table, left to right, Suhne Ahn, Kathryn Welter, Alexandra Amati, Naomi André, David Kidger, Carl Leafstedt, and Charles McGuire. In the photo to the left, the one time my entire cohort (entered 1988) was there, in Louisville in 2015—Dan Beller-McKenna, Alexandra Amati, Beth Abbate, and David Kidger."

—ALEXANDRA AMATI (Ph.D. 1995)

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Students in Music 161: Advanced Composition perform in the Harvard Art Museum.
Credit: Peter Charig