

**9:00am-10:30am Session I: in Pitzer Center**

Panel chair: Lisa Beebe UC Santa Cruz

**Processing South Asian American Politics at the Final Basement Bhangra.***Arathi Govind, University of California, Berkeley*

A pioneer of the American *bhangra* music scene, Rekha Malhotra, better known as DJ Rekha, created Basement Bhangra in 1997 as a safe and inclusive club night for South Asians in New York City to dance to *bhangra* music once a month in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. DJ Rekha consciously constructed the event as a place where politics and partying are inescapably intertwined. In fact, Basement Bhangra was known for being the most politically progressive and queer-friendly *desi* party in New York City throughout its twenty-year run. On August 6, 2017, DJ Rekha permanently ended Basement Bhangra with a massive send-off show at Central Park's Summerstage. Guest artists included well-known *bhangra*, reggae, and hip hop musicians of South Asian heritage from around the world, such as Panjabi MC, Apache Indian, Horsepower, and Madame Gandhi. This paper evaluates the racial and sexual politics of the final Basement Bhangra through a dissection of DJ Rekha's choices in programming, wardrobe, and video projections. Based upon fieldwork conducted in New York City from 2016-2017, I discuss how popular media and audiences might have interpreted her choices, particularly in the context of the Trump Era. This is an era in which South Asian American bodies are routinely policed, which has resulted in both more inter- and intra-racial solidarity as well as division. I argue that the final Basement Bhangra highlighted the contradictory ways South Asian Americans are processing their complex standing and responsibilities in contemporary US American society.

**Queering Straight Lines: Non-Teleology and Amateur Sounds in Queer Open Mics.***Ryan Lambe, University of California, Santa Cruz*

The line between amateur and professional music runs parallel to the line between queer and straight. Recent studies in ethnomusicology of open mics read amateurism as a point on a line directed toward a professional field. The psychoanalytic tradition reads queer desire as immature, a stage, or an arrested point on a line toward a more developed heterosexuality. In this talk, I explore how queer open mics bend the straight lines between amateur and professional by inhabiting an arrested point between the two. Employing the sense of a 'line' as both teleology and threshold, I investigate how queer open mics undermine notions of the inferior amateur and the superior professional to underscore queer forms of relation. Drawing on preliminary fieldwork in queer open mics in the New York metropolitan and the San Francisco Bay areas, I illustrate how musical practices in queer open mics centralize queerly erotic social relations. I use close readings of recordings to demonstrate the sounds of these queer amateur social relations in dialogue with larger queer cultural practices. Performers and audiences at queer open mics occupy positions that see the world as dangerous or harmful. Attending queer open mics allows participants to use sound texts to cultivate a sense of hope and safety in the face of such harm. By delimiting a safe space with a permeable dotted line, regulars garner the nourishment needed to remain resilient in a hostile American political climate which threatens queer lives.

**The Sperm Donor's Voice: Speculative Listening in a Biosocial Assemblage.***John Walsh, University of California, Berkeley*

This paper focuses on the listening strategies of cryobank clients in order to understand the work voices do in engendering attachment (or detachment) to an anonymous sperm donor. Cryobanks, more commonly known as "sperm banks", are faced with a fundamental paradox in the marketing of biogenetic material: how can an anonymous donor be made knowable, and therefore desirable, without being made identifiable? Current scholarship on cryobanks focuses on the creation of online donor profiles (similar to social media profiles) as a marketing tool that mediates this paradox. Donor profiles are understood as the means by which cryobank clients become attached to a particular donor, a process essential to the successful sale of donor samples. However, the

widespread practice of attaching voice recordings to donor profiles has gone unexamined in this literature. What are voices doing here? Informed by ethnographic inquiry into the listening practices of cryobank clients, I argue that listening to a donor's voice has a singular capacity to confirm or subvert the choice of a donor. I understand listening to a voice as a strategy employed to mediate the presence of a donor's body. More than this, by adapting elements of Paul Rabinow's biosociality and the recent Speculative Turn in continental philosophy, I argue that listeners make claims about both what is genetically inheritable and what is knowable about a person by listening to their voice.

**10:45am-12:15pm Session IIa: in Pitzer Center**

Panel chair: Hong-June Park UC Berkeley

**Hammond B3 Organ Trios and Soul Jazz: 1955-1965.**

*Nelsen Hutchison, University of California, Santa Cruz*

In this paper I argue that the history of Hammond B3 organ trios (comprised of organ, guitar, and drum set) and soul jazz in the 1950s and 1960s complicates three narrative frames that have limited critical discourses on jazz: the binary of jazz as high art or low entertainment, jazz as a sacred or secular practice, and jazz as a musical form that teleologically "matured" into art music. The jazz periodical *Downbeat's* predominantly white critics routinely refused to accept the organ as a "serious" jazz instrument, arguing that it belonged in roller rinks, funeral homes, and radio soaps. However, for many in the African American community that constituted the majority of organ jazz's listenership, hearing the organ in jazz was intricately linked to the organ in gospel church music. Drawing on archival sources and musical examples, I examine this racial divide in the discourse of musicians and the jazz press. I then turn my attention to the wider phenomenon of soul jazz to explore the ways critics, musicians, and record labels viewed the music: as a return to jazz's "roots," as a marker of ethnic exclusivity with connotations of black nationalism, or as a populist response to the elite cultural capital jazz had begun to accrue. To demonstrate how Hammond organ trios musically subverted these critical impositions, I employ Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s theory of signifyin(g) and analyze some of these group's destabilizing musical characteristics. I conclude by discussing the place the Hammond organ occupies in jazz history today.

**Hindustani Music, the 1960s, and the American Imagination.**

*Samuel Cushman, University of California, Santa Cruz*

This paper examines interviews, sound recordings, personal writings, periodicals, and other literature to explore the space Hindustani music (North Indian classical music) came to occupy in American imaginations in the 1960s. In the decades following Indian Independence in 1947, Hindustani musicians emerged on the world stage with unprecedented regularity, recognition, and influence. During this first period of sustained interaction between Hindustani and American musicians, Hindustani music became inextricably linked to cultural movements in the United States that embraced this music as a potential vehicle for, and signifier of, spiritual transcendence. Beginning with violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who met sitarist Ravi Shankar in the early 1950s, and continuing with jazz saxophonist John Coltrane, who befriended Shankar in 1964, I question the ways influential American musicians approached North Indian musical culture during this time period. What did Hindustani music represent to musicians such as Menuhin and Coltrane, and why are these representations significant in the histories of both Hindustani music and American music? I ask the same questions with regard to philosopher Alan Watts. Though Watts was neither a performing musician nor a student of Indian music himself, he befriended sarodist Ali Akbar Khan in the late 1960s and played a vital role in founding the Ali Akbar College of Music in Berkeley in 1968. To situate this work historically, I assess how these individuals' conceptions of Indian music were either consistent with, or at odds with, powerful social currents of the time.

**12:15-1:30 Lunchtime activity**

UC Davis graduate students have formed a partnership with the local North Sacramento- Hagginwood Library (which has a community outreach program of its own) to effectively engage with the children of this neighborhood. Many of the children who come to the library are unaccompanied by adults, but find this library to be their safe place away from home and school. Through this partnership we can hope to inspire the next generation of music scholars and share an expanded opportunity of learning music -- an opportunity which would not be allotted to them normally. **We invite participants of the NCCSEM conference to communicate with the children during lunch hour using video conferencing technology** readily available to us through our facilities. We invite scholars to fill their apportioned time slot by demonstrating or talking about a specific instrument, bringing visual/auditory experiences appropriate for children, and reserving time at the end for Q&A. There will be a Davis music graduate student present at the library to introduce the scholar and facilitate the interactions with the children.

**10:45am-12:15pm Session IIb in Mus 115**

Panel chair: Patricia Vergara, UC Merced

**Who can afford to play experimental music? Cultural Politics, the Avant-garde, and Popular Music in Salvador.**

*Ritwik Banerji, University of California, Berkeley*

While experimental music practices have recently been examined both within and beyond Euro-American contexts, little attention has been paid to the economic and cultural conditions shaping their development. Drawing on nine months of fieldwork in Salvador, Brazil, this paper examines how such conditions delimit the possibilities of realizing experimental projects through a biographical ethnography of percussionist and composer Nei Sacramento. Inspired by the Afro-Brazilian religious practice of Candomblé, Sacramento's "Tocandomblé" project radically reworks the rhythmic structure of musical compositions from this spiritual tradition while preserving the Bahian audience's ability to immediately recognize their source. In collaboration with choreographers Vera Passos and Rosangela Silvestre, Sacramento conceives of this project as a modernist critique of the Bahian culture industry's reduction of Brazilian musical blackness to an accessory to party and pleasure for tourists and other participants of nightlife in Salvador. However, while many musicians in Sacramento's social network are both capable and willing to support his critique of local culture industries, the realities of cultural economics in Salvador consistently contravene. Though they possess the musical competence required to realize his demanding and unorthodox compositions, they cannot afford to choose several, long rehearsals for meager compensation with Sacramento over the abundant, higher-paying gigs playing popular genres such as axé or samba-reggae. Thus this paper argues that ethnographic work on the cultural-economic conditions defining the possibilities of realizing experimental musical practices are a necessary corollary to analyses of such practices aesthetically.

**The Capitalist Industry of Participatory Music Education in Rio de Janeiro's Oficinas.**

*Andrew G Snyder, University of California, Berkeley*

Every night in Rio de Janeiro, one has a huge variety of options to study a new instrument or dance practice. Various institutions, schools, and venues offer weekly *oficinas* ("workshops" or classes) to train beginning musicians, amateurs, and experienced professionals in a wide diversity of Brazilian and international styles. Managed by established bands, these classes that run throughout the year often provide instruction to participate in a band's *bloco*, or participatory carnival music organization, in Rio's annual "street carnival"—which encompasses the free musical events in the streets during carnival. As street carnival has grown in the past decades, *oficinas* have proliferated, making *paying to learn music* a fashionable way to participate and support the street carnival movement. Rio's *oficinas* invite us to rethink standard tropes of capitalism as fostering spectacle,

presentational forms, and passive consumption and as being antithetical to “movements.” While scholars have upheld the “agency” of audiences, fans, and listeners, I examine Rio’s *oficina* musicians as what Alvin Toffler calls “prosumers,” who both consume and produce music. It is through consuming musical education provided by one’s favorite local bands that these musicians participate in these bands’ *blocos* and come to start their own bands and *blocos*. Pushing against standard ethnomusicological tropes that view participatory music making as an anti-capitalist act, I show that the *oficina* movement and larger street carnival are participatory movements that are also governed by capitalist rationales and exigencies. While not celebrating capitalism, I illustrate what is musically possible within capitalism.

**From the Kitchen to the Living Room: Racial Democracy and Percussion in Bahia (Brazil).**

*Juan Diego Diaz, University of California, Davis*

Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Brazilian governments and intellectuals have promoted a hybrid national identity in Brazil composed of three megaethnic groups: European, African, and Amerindian. This mixed identity has been tied up to an ideology of racial democracy proposing that racial relationships in Brazil are free or minimally affected by racism. Gilberto Freyre (1933), one of the main proponents of racial democracy, has written that racial harmony started in colonial Brazil in the houses of Portuguese where they lived with their black slaves in amicable terms. In Bahia, one of the epicenters of black culture in Brazil, this ideology has been contested by black communities, especially since the 1970s, on the grounds that it hides the persistent racism they suffer. This paper presents a contemporary response to this ideology by Orkestra Rumpilezz, a big band from Bahia that mixes jazz with Afro-Brazilian genres. In their performances, the leader of the orchestra spotlights percussion and percussionists, which he associates mainly with Afro-Brazilian music. By placing percussion at the center stage, Rumpilezz’s director believes that he is “moving percussion from the kitchen to the living room,” in a clear reference to Freyre’s explanation of household dynamics between masters and slaves. This paper argues that with this gesture, Rumpilezz places percussion, and therefore Afro-Brazilians, in the living room (the proverbial place of the master) thus, critiquing racial democracy. The analysis engages instrumentation, performance practices (layout of musicians on the stage, color and style of dressing, visual symbols), musical structure, and rhetoric.

**1:45pm-3:45pm Session IIIa in Pitzer Center**

Panel chair: Jayson Beaster-Jones, UC Merced

**Old Habits, New Traditions: Valuing Virtuosity and Emplacing the Local in Scotland’s Folk Music Scene.**

*Rebecca Lomnicky, University of California, Berkeley*

In the 1950s, the Scottish folk music revival ignited mass interest in nostalgic imaginaries, local identity, and commercial practices – themes which have shaped Scottish music since long before the revival and remain prominent points of contention today, often exacerbated within the festival circuit. In Scotland and the diaspora, folk music festivals and the Scottish Highland Games feature performances of Scottish traditional music and are both tied to a complex history of commercial interests and preservationist intentions. While these festivals have evolved with changing times, much of the way they were initially created has remained intact and continues to influence how musicians and attendees create, perceive, and experience festival performances. This paper draws on fieldwork conducted at the Orkney Folk Festival and the Gordon Castle Country Fair, two distinct festivals in Scotland, to discuss some of the ways that musicians and audiences conceive of traditional music and the festival scene today. I suggest that while Scottish musicians and audiences have begun to move past the nostalgic imaginaries and authenticity debates that thrive in American festivals, Scots are still forced to negotiate these issues due to the tourists that visit with commercialized expectations. Despite their investment in new sounds and a changing tradition, I argue that Scottish audiences remain captivated by musical virtuosity and value place in the form of local connections and romanticized rurality. I further suggest that musicians are negotiating these values by sonically altering the tradition while simultaneously situating their performance within longstanding historical discourses.

**Kū Kia`i Mauna: The Musical Remapping of Hawaiian Indigenous Spaces on Mauna Kea.***Sarah McCarthy, Stanford University*

On April 2, 2015, dozens of k̄anaka maoli (Native Hawaiians) and their allies joined together in pule (prayer) with the police officers sent to remove them from their sacred mountain Mauna Kea. The protestors had gathered to obstruct construction vehicles from heading up the mountain, protecting Mauna Kea from the desecration that would be caused by the development of an enormous Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT) on its summit. Mauna Kea is considered the piko (spiritual center) of Hawai`i. The contracts for the development of the TMT were forged without the consent of the people who have cultural claims to the land, which inspired k̄anaka maoli to rise in protest. Along the route from 9,200 to 13,804 feet elevation, the officers were met with groups of chanting, singing, and praying protestors. Ultimately, they arrested thirty-one protestors who refused to leave the road. One of the last groups of zip-tied protestors created a sonic barrier before they were placed into the police vans, filling both physical and temporal space by loudly chanting Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu's oli (chant) "Kū Ha`aheo e Ku`u Hawai`i." In this paper, I explore the remapping of Hawaiian indigenous spaces through k̄anaka musical resistance on Mauna Kea on April 2, 2105. I argue that chant, song, and prayer were the media through which k̄anaka were able to re-sacrilize and de-colonize space on the mountain. I suggest that this offers a lens through which music and chant can be observed as a political strategy in other protest movements.

**The cantorial lesson: An ethnography of a learning encounter.***Jeremiah Lockwood, Stanford University*

In this paper, I discuss a private cantorial lesson I took with an elder cantor, 103-year-old Julius Blackman of San Francisco, CA. I analyze the formal presentation of musical materials in the lesson for clues about the history of the genre and the specific musical characteristics that pedagogues seek to cultivate in their students. The cantorial lesson is an idiosyncratic learning environment in which a novice learner attempts to recreate musical improvisations performed by a master cantorial pedagogue. Elder pedagogues present students with a kaleidoscopic curriculum of constantly unfolding rearticulations of core motifs and melodies. The pedagogue demands that the student repeat his phrases, setting a nearly impossible task that demands ear training, vocal prowess and deep genre knowledge. In this essay, I argue that this kaleidoscopic curriculum offers an intentional challenge to concepts of linear progress in learning and that the form of the cantorial lesson aligns with the desired outcome of training a novice performer in the arts of improvisation and the acquisition of perspectives specific to the craft of Jewish liturgical interpretation.

**Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy: The Bitter Spirit of an Audible Utopia.***David Wilson, Stanford University.*

In China's early socialist era, the Maoist regime undertook a systematic effort to change the public understanding of Chinese history. This effort framed the pre-socialist period as an era of bitterness, and the victory of the socialist forces as the dawn of a new, unprecedentedly joyful epoch. This paper investigates historiographical accounts of the ways in which China's bitter past was framed by state actors in the 1950s, and analyzes the ways in which these narratives were formalized and (officially) aestheticized through the state-sponsored musical works of the Cultural Revolution. In particular, I focus on the female roles in the model opera *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*. This work can reveal some of the ways in which art adapted, formalized, and crystalized the "speaking bitterness" practices of thousands of government-trained model citizens, particularly women. The discursive practice of speaking bitterness framed the speakers' histories in language that aligned with that of the socialist regime's ideological views of China's imperial and Republican past. I argue that the model works not only provide insight into official ideological views of the widespread discursive practice of speaking bitterness, but also provide a unique glimpse into socialist China's program of nation-state building, and the role of affectivity in that process. Finally, I discuss the ways in which the afterlife of the model works has preserved the legacy of speaking bitterness, decades after the state abandoned it as a discursive practice.