

BLACK SOUNDS MATTER

Virtual Colloquium Series
February 3 – April 21, 2022
Thursdays: 4:30pm–6pm
Free on Zoom

Reservations:
www.wesleyan.edu/cfa/bsm



INTERSECTIONAL (re)CONNECTIONS OF AFRICAN and AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSICS AT WESLEYAN

PROFILES

Dwight Andrews

Professor of Music Theory and African American Music, Emory University

Dwight Andrews is Professor of Music Theory and African American Music at Emory University and Pastor of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. He holds degrees from the University of Michigan, the Yale Divinity School, and a PhD in Music Theory from Yale University. Andrews is presently a Dubois Research Fellow at Harvard University, working on a manuscript on spirituality, religion, and jazz. His research interests include twentieth-century music theory and aesthetics, and the intersections of race, gender, and commodification of African American music. As a multi-instrumentalist, he has appeared on over twenty-five jazz and 'new music' recordings with artists such as Jay Hoggard, Wadada Leo Smith, Anthony Davis, and Geri Allen. Andrews has also been recognized for his collaborations with playwright August Wilson, having served as musical director for the Broadway productions of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, and *Seven Guitars*. His film credits include the documentaries *W.E.B. Dubois: A Biography in Four Voices*, *Homecoming*, *The Old Settler*, *The Piano Lesson*, and *Miss Evers' Boys*.

Neely Bruce

John Spencer Camp Professor of Music, Wesleyan University

Neely Bruce is the John Spencer Camp Professor of Music at Wesleyan. His compositions include three full-length operas; five one-act operas; works for orchestra and band; about 300 solo songs; chamber music; documentary film scores; and a choral setting of the Bill of Rights. Recent major works include the dramatic oratorio *Circular 14: The Apotheosis of Aristides*, for eight soloists, two choruses and large orchestra. His performances of his complete works for solo piano can be heard on SoundCloud. The West End String Quartet recently premiered his *21 Lines: Pulse Music for Sol LeWitt*, at the New Britain Museum of American Art. A scholar of American music, his interests include Anthony Philip Heinrich; Arthur Farwell; music by American women; and *The Sacred Harp*. Currently he is investigating music in the life and work of Sol LeWitt. He has been involved in several major premieres, including *HPSCHD* by John Cage and Lejaren Hiller; *Meteor Farm* and other spatial works by Henry Brant; and unpublished songs of Charles Ives. Bruce came to Wesleyan in the fall of 1974.

Eric Charry

Professor of Music, Wesleyan University

Eric Charry's books include *Mande Music* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), *Hip Hop Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2012), and

A New and Concise History of Rock and R&B (Wesleyan University Press, 2020). He is currently completing a manuscript on Music and Downtown New York.

John Dankwa

Assistant Professor of Music, Wesleyan University

John Dankwa (PhD) is an ethnomusicologist and performer who specializes in African music. His performance area ranges from West African traditional drumming to African pop and art music. Dankwa is currently the director of the West African Drumming and African Pop Music ensembles at Wesleyan. He is also the music director of Ghana Methodist Church choirs in the USA and Canada. As a scholar, Dankwa's current research focuses on Dagara xylophone music tradition in northwestern Ghana. His book-in-progress, *When the Gyil Speaks*, is a study of meaning in Dagara xylophone music. Based on extensive fieldwork in northwestern Ghana, Dankwa's work weaves together Dagara cultural narratives and ethnomusicological theories to illuminate how a single instrument and the music it performs can be invested with so much meaning in the cultural matrix within which it operates. He has presented his work on Dagara music in academic conferences, book chapters, and journal articles.

Ruth Naomi Floyd

Vocalist/Composer, Frederick Douglass Jazz Works

Ruth Naomi Floyd is an Emancipatory Artist, who has focused on the arts and justice work throughout her career. A vocalist and composer, Ms. Floyd leads her multi-faceted ensemble, and her discography consists primarily of original compositions. She performs and lectures on the intersection of beauty, theology, justice, culture, around the world. *The Frederick Douglass Jazz Works* is Ms. Floyd's latest body of compositions for jazz septet, based on the speeches and writings of the great leading orator, abolitionist, writer, publisher, and statesman. This body of work won the Best Vocal Recital Award at the San Francisco Classical Voice Audience Choice Awards for 2020-2021. Ms. Floyd was commissioned by Intercultural Journeys for a new body of work which the National Endowment for the Arts

awarded a Project Grant in May 2021. This body of work, *The Frances Suite*, will explore the life, advocacy, and literary work of Frances Ellen Watkin Harper, and will feature an all-female ensemble of color. The Orrin Evans Trio, featuring Ms. Floyd, was named one of NPR Music's Best Live Sessions of 2021 for their powerful anthem of liberation, the African American Spiritual, "Oh Freedom." A committed music educator, Ms. Floyd is the first African American woman to serve as Founding Director of a university jazz program in the United States. Currently, she is an Artist in Residence at Temple University. In December 2019, Concordia College New York, awarded Ms. Floyd an Honorary Doctorate for her unique and valuable contribution to the arts, her commitment to music education, and her justice work.

Jay Hoggard

Professor of Music and African American Studies, Chair of Music Department, Wesleyan University

Please visit www.jayhoggard.com for more information.

Bill Lowe

Professor of Jazz Studies, Performance and Composition, Tufts University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Bass trombonist and tubaist Bill Lowe has been a major force in the music world for close to fifty years as a performer, composer, producer, and educator. He has worked with most of the masters of African-American creative music, across all genres and musical cliques, from musical legends like Dizzy Gillespie, Eartha Kitt, and Clark Terry, to the leaders of the avant-garde like Muhal Richard Abrams, Henry Threadgill, and Cecil Taylor, to under-heralded greats like Frank Foster, Jaki Byard, George Russell, James Jabbo Ware and Bill Barron. As an educator, Lowe has taught at several major universities, lectured throughout the world from Cuba to Paris, and mentored countless young musicians. In November, 2021, Lowe toured New England and recorded with his SIGNIFYIN' NATIVES Ensemble.

Portia K. Maultsby

Professor Emerita, Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Indiana University Bloomington

Portia K. Maultsby is Professor Emerita of Ethnomusicology in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, founding director of the Archives of African American Music and Culture at Indiana University, founding director of the Indiana University Soul Revue, the country's first credit-bearing ensemble specializing in Black popular music. Receiving the Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from the University of Wisconsin, she specializes in African American music with a focus on religious and popular traditions, African cultural heritage, and the music industry. Professor Maultsby is co-editor of *African American Music: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (2015) and *Issues in African American Music: Power, Gender, Race, Representation* (2016), both published by Routledge Press, and author of the interactive *Timeline of African American Music* permanently featured on Carnegie Hall's website: timeline.carnegiehall.org. She served as Senior Scholar for the inaugural exhibition of the National Museum of African American Music in Nashville. Professor Maultsby has received many awards and honors, a highlight being her selection to present the 2012 Charles Seeger Lecture, the centerpiece of the annual meeting of the Society of Ethnomusicology and one of the highest honors in the field.

Rashida Z. Shaw McMahan

Associate Professor of English, Affiliated Faculty of African American Studies and Theater, Wesleyan University

Rashida Z. Shaw McMahan is an Associate Professor of English and an Affiliated Faculty of African American Studies and Theater. Her research agenda is motivated by a commitment to understanding the role of theatre, drama, and performance within Black lives and an enduring curiosity about how both textual and embodied artistic forms express what it means to live as Black across and within local, national, temporal, and global frameworks. Through multi- and interdisciplinary perspectives and methodologies, her research pays critical attention to the ways in which race, gender, and sexuality, as well as

politics, place, and popular culture, inform the lives, histories, and imaginings of Black people as expressed through theatrical performance and dramatic literature. Professor Shaw McMahan's monograph, *The Black Circuit: Race, Performance, and Spectatorship in Black Popular Theatre* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020), is a study of contemporary Chitlin Circuit theatre and its historical antecedents, including explorations of theater history, theater criticism, performance studies, ethnography, social theory, and culinary history. Her current projects include an investigation into the public exhibition of children from the Danish West Indies (referred to today as the United States Virgin Islands) in early twentieth century Denmark, investigations into the hypervisibility of African American women characters within the plays of August Wilson, and examinations of the politics of Black pleasure and Black joy as presented within African American drama and performance.

Marvin McNeil

PhD Candidate in Ethnomusicology, Wesleyan University

Marvin McNeill is a Ph.D. candidate in ethnomusicology at Wesleyan University. After serving 20 years as a collegiate band director—most recently serving for 16 years as the associate director and chief arranger for the “Pride of Connecticut” the University of Connecticut Marching Band—Marvin returned to school as a student to pursue and expand upon personal scholarly interests and passions. His research interests include African American folk and popular music traditions with special attention on Black New Orleans brass band and HBCU marching band history, culture, and traditions. Additional research interests include youth culture studies; community and social bonding studies; and affect theory. Marvin is the founding member of The Funky Dawgz Brass Band, a New Orleans style brass band that has toured nationally and internationally. This research project is supported by a 2021 Global South Fellowship awarded by the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South at Tulane University.

Marichal Monts

*Conductor of Ebony Singers, Wesleyan University;
Pastor, Citadel of Love*

Marichal Monts is an alumnus of Wesleyan University and has conducted the university's award winning Ebony Singers for over 35 years. He is the Senior Pastor of The Citadel of Love in Hartford, CT and a Chaplain for The Hartford Police Department and the Connecticut State Legislature. He is the author of three books, *Ordered Steps, Just Like My Father* and *Mindfully Me*.

Robert O'Meally

*Zora Neale Hurston Professor of English
and Comparative Literature, Director, Center
for Jazz Studies, Columbia University*

Robert G. O'Meally has served on the faculty of Columbia University for thirty years. He is the author of *The Craft of Ralph Ellison, Lady Day: The Many Faces of Billie Holiday, The Jazz Singers,* and *Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey*. His edited volumes include *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture, Living With Music: Ralph Ellison's Essays on Jazz, The Norton Anthology of African American Literature, History and Memory in African American Culture,* and the Barnes and Noble editions of Mark Twain, Herman Melville, and Frederick Douglass. For his production of a Smithsonian CD set called *The Jazz Singers*, he was nominated for a Grammy Award. The curator of exhibitions at Jazz at Lincoln Center (2006–2012), O'Meally also has co-curated exhibitions for the High Museum in Atlanta and for the Smithsonian Institution. He has held Guggenheim and Cullman Fellowships, among others. His new books are *The Romare Bearden Reader* (edited for Duke University Press, February 2019) and *Antagonistic Cooperation: Collage, Jazz, and American Fiction* (Columbia University Press, 2022). According to his sons, Mr. O'Meally plays the soprano saxophone "for his own amazement."

Courtney Patterson-Faye

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Wesleyan University

Courtney J. Patterson-Faye, Ph.D. earned her doctorate in African American Studies from Northwestern University. Her research and teaching interests include Black feminist thought,

race, class and gender, fat studies, fashion studies, sexuality, cultural and medical sociology, and HIV/AIDS. Her work has been published in both journals and books, including her article " 'I Like the Way You Move': Theorizing Fat, Black, and Sexy" in *Sexualities*, and her book chapter "When and Where I Always Enter: An Auto-Ethnographic Approach to Black Women's Body Size Politics in Academia," in *The New Black Sociologists: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Marcus Anthony Hunter. Her work has also appeared in the *Du Bois Review, Black Female Sexualities, Designing Apparel for Consumers: The Impact of Body Shape and Size,* and *BBC Proms*. She is currently completing her manuscript, "The Body Contract: Identity, Culture and The Politics of Black Women's Bodies."

Michael Veal

*Henry L. and Lucy G. Moses Professor of Music,
Yale University*

Michael E. Veal is the author of *Fela: The Life & Times of an African Musical Icon* (2001), *Dub: Soundscapes and Shattered Songs in Jamaican Reggae* (2007) and the forthcoming *Living Space: John Coltrane, Miles Davis and Free Jazz, from Analog to Digital*. He is also a bassist and leader of the Afrobeat-jazz band Michael Veal & Aqua Ife.

Su Zheng

*Associate Professor of Music, Affiliated Faculty of East
Asian Studies and Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality
Studies, Wesleyan University*

Su Zheng is an Associate Professor of Music, East Asian Studies (Affiliated), and Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (Affiliated) at Wesleyan University. A feminist ethnomusicologist of Asian American, East Asian, and diasporic music culture, and the faculty co-founder of Wesleyan's Chinese Music Ensemble, Taiko Ensemble, and Korean Drumming Ensemble, Zheng is author of *Claiming Diaspora: Music, Transnationalism, and Cultural Politics in Chinese/Asian America* (Oxford University Press, 2010). She is a recipient of the ACLS/CSCC (Committee on Scholarly Communication with China) National Program for Advanced Study and Research in China Fellowship, as well as the Fulbright U.S. Senior Research Scholar award (China).