

Music Department

Colloquium series Fall 2020

Thursdays | 4:40–6:10pm | Online: <https://wesleyan.zoom.us/j/97924122311>

This lecture series showcases new work by performers, composers, and scholars in ethnomusicology, musicology, music theory, sound art, and cultural history. The colloquia also invite dialogue with professionals working in the arts, music journalism, and in librarianship. A brief virtual reception follows each formal presentation, offering a chance for online collegiality. New this year is the [Colloquium Spotify playlist](#), which provides music related to each colloquium, archived on the department website, along with the list of past colloquium visitors. The Fall 2020 series is organized by Jane Alden with the assistance of Grant Cook. All meetings take place online, via Zoom (address above). Reminders will be sent to enrolled students, Music Department faculty and staff, and registered visitors. Others wishing to register for one or all Music Department colloquia should complete our [online registration form](#). Questions may be sent to gcook@wesleyan.edu or jalden01@wesleyan.edu.

Fall 2020, 4:40–6:10pm

Sept 24 **LARAAJI** (multi-instrumentalist musician and mystic, NYC)
“LAUGHTER & CREATIVITY”

Oct 1 **Anna Morcom** (ethnomusicologist, UCLA)
“Music, Exchange, and the Production of Value: A case study of Hindustani Music”

* affiliated Navaratri event on Oct 1: *Sakthi Vibrations* (2018), screening of a film by **Zoe Sherinian**, 8pm*

Oct 8 **Bridgid Bergin** (International Contemporary Ensemble, '17 MA in ethnomusicology)
“Conversation: Artistic Producing & Marketing During COVID-19”

Oct 15 **Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol** (composer/performer/scholar, NEC)
“Reconstructing a Turkish identity in Boston: *Jazz, Mehter, Byzantine music, and bimusicality*”

Oct 22 **Zosha Di Castri** (composer, Columbia University)
“The Makeup and Mockup of a Musical Process”

Oct 29 **Larry Polansky** (composer, emeritus Dartmouth, UC Santa Cruz)
“Around and a round: Improvising a Life in Music”

Nov 5 **Clifton Boyd** (music theorist, Yale University)
“‘Stay in Your Own (Musical) Backyard’: Segregation, Discrimination, and the Cost of ‘Keeping it Barbershop’”

* affiliated event hosted by the Physics Department on Nov 12 at 11:50–1:10 (link available by request)

Theo Geisel (Max-Planck Institute for Dynamics and Self-Organization)
“The Psychophysics of Musical Rhythms and the Riddle of Swing”

Biographies

LARAAJI is a musician, multi-instrumentalist, mystic and laughter meditation practitioner based in New York City. He attended Howard University, a historically black university in Washington D.C. on a scholarship to study composition and piano. LARAAJI'S experiments and explorations with the open tuned electric autoharp/zither began with a gentle nudge from his divine guidance. In 1976, in Queens, NY, he had gone into a pawn shop to trade his guitar for much-needed cash, but was guided to instead acquire the autoharp/zither in the store window. Heeding this mystical and startling guidance, he left the shop with a Kentucky Blue Grass instrument he had never touched before. But within a few weeks, LARAAJI had discovered a new sound vocabulary with this 36-stringed American folk instrument. After open-minded experimentation with altered tunings, LARAAJI arrived at a deeply engaging and exotic new age music performance sound, which he sometimes refers to as "Celestial Vibration," recalling an earlier paranormal sound hearing experience. LARAAJI began studying Eastern mysticism and improvising trance-inducing jams on his modified autoharp, processed through various electronic effects. In 1979, Brian Eno saw LARAAJI playing in Washington Square Park and invited him to record an album for his seminal Ambient series (*Ambient 3: Day of Radiance*, released 1980). Since then LARAAJI has recorded over 50 solo and collab albums, the latest of which are three solo piano improvisation LPs, *SUN PIANO* (just released), *MOON PIANO & THROUGH LUMINOUS EYES*. He also conducts healing laughter playshops around the world. See <http://laraaji.blogspot.com/> and follow @[edwardlgordon](#)

Mohindar Brar Sambhi Chair of Indian Music at the School of Music, UCLA, **Anna Morcom** works on music and dance in India and Tibet from diverse perspectives that seek to understand the contemporary world and processes of change in and through musical culture. Her research is ethnographically-based and interdisciplinary and encompasses traditional as well as popular musics. Her publications include *Unity and discord: Music and politics in contemporary Tibet* (2004, Tibet Information Network); *Hindi film songs and the cinema* (2007, Ashgate); [Illicit worlds of Indian dance: Cultures of exclusion](#) (2013, Hurst and OUP); and articles in a range of peer-reviewed journals – *Ethnomusicology*, *Popular Music*, *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, *South Asian Film and Media*, *Cultural and Social History*, and *HIMALAYA*. She made a VCD album of Tibetan songs with the singer Tenzin Gyatso in Tibet in 2006, entitled *sPrin Gyi Metok* ('Cloud flowers').

As an ethnomusicologist, violist, writer, and arts administrator, **Bridgid Bergin** has a passion for the sustainment and preservation of the arts while creating connections to a larger cross-cultural network via various art forms. Her research has focused on Carnatic music, gender and music, and urban theory, questioning notions of space, place, and identity. She received her B.M. in Musical Studies with a minor in Women's Studies from SUNY Potsdam, Crane School of Music in 2015 and M.A. in Ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University in 2017. Bridgid currently works as the Production and Communications Manager for the [International Contemporary Ensemble](#).

Mehmet Ali Sanlikol is a multi-instrumentalist/vocalist, ethnomusicologist, and composer, whose unique blend of contemporary composition, jazz and Turkish music has been praised by critics all over the world. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2016 premiering his piece *Harabat/The Intoxicated* with the American Composers Orchestra. Sanlikol pairs Turkish instruments such as *zurna* (double reed wind), *ney* (end-blown flute), *kös* (large kettledrums) and *nekkare* (small kettledrums) with large ensembles to perform compositions in which Turkish *makam* (modes) and *usul* (rhythmic cycles) are intertwined with contemporary composition. In his "coffeehouse opera", *Othello in the Seraglio: The Tragedy of Sümbül The Black Eunuch*, he bridges the musical cultures of opera house and coffeehouse, Baroque Italy and Ottoman Turkey. Performed 20 times within three years, it draws audiences into a meditation on race, slavery, sexuality and the entwined histories of East and West. Sanlikol has composed for, performed, and toured with Dave Liebman, Bob Brookmeyer, Billy Cobham, Anat Cohen, Antonio Sanchez, Tiger Okoshi, Gil Goldstein, Esperanza Spalding, The Boston Camerata, The Boston Cello Quartet, A Far Cry string orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Okay Temiz and Erkan Oğur. He is the president of DÜNYA, a musicians' collective dedicated to contemporary presentations of Turkish traditions, in interaction with other world traditions. Active as a scholar, his book *The Musician Mehters* was published in English and Turkish in 2011. Sanlikol is a full-time faculty member at New England Conservatory and he is also the director of NEC's Intercultural Institute. He has recently released a new jazz orchestra album, see <https://www.sanlikol.com/whatsnext/>

Zosha Di Castri is a Canadian composer/pianist/sound artist living in New York. Her work, which has been performed internationally, extends beyond purely concert music including projects with electronics, installations, and collaborations with video and dance. She has worked with such ensembles as the BBC Symphony and BBC Singers, San Francisco Symphony, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the L.A. Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, ICE, JACK Quartet, Ekmeles, the NEM, and Talea Ensemble among others. Upcoming projects include a Koussevitzky commission from the Library of Congress for percussionist Steve Schick and ICE and a commission for the Grossman Ensemble in Chicago. Zosha is currently the Francis Goelet Assistant Professor of Music at Columbia University and recently finished a year-long fellowship at the Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris. Her debut album *Tachitipo*, released November 2019 to critical acclaim, can be found on New Focus Recordings. See <http://www.zoshadicastri.com/works/>

Larry Polansky is a composer, theorist, performer, editor, writer, and teacher. He is Emeritus Strauss Professor of Music at Dartmouth College, Emeritus Professor of Music at the University of California Santa Cruz, and the co-founder and co-director of [Frog Peak Music](#) (A Composers' Collective). His many solo CDs are available on *New World Records*, *Artifact*, *Cold Blue* and other labels, and his music is widely anthologized. In 2004, at the request of Crawford Seeger's estate, he completed and edited her major monograph *The Music of American Folk Song* (published by the University of Rochester Press). His writings on American music include works on James Tenney, Crawford Seeger, Lou Harrison, Beyer, and many others. He is also a co-author of *Music and Computers*, a web-text published by Key Publications. Polansky served as the main editor for a posthumously published collection of Tenney's theoretical writings, *From Scratch*, published by the University of Illinois Press in 2015. As a performer (primarily as guitarist and mandolinist), he has premiered and recorded important contemporary works and served as the curator (and guitarist) for the *Downtown Ensemble* (NYC). He was part of *Trio* (with Kui Dong and Christian Wolff) for over a decade. In 2010, he wrote the score for Stacey Steers' *Night Hunter*, an experimental animation chosen for the Telluride, Sundance, Rotterdam, and other film festivals, and selected for the New York New Films/New Directors festival at Lincoln Center. He produced a major festival of American Sign Language (ASL) poetry and has written a short opera in ASL (*Paradox*), a for percussionist/ASL interpreter (*Veditz*). Recent writings include a large scale theoretical paper — *The Structure of Morphological Space* (with co-author David Kant) — dealing with the mathematics of “contour”, published in *Perspectives of New Music*.

Clifton Boyd is a music theorist and activist who examines the role of music theory in the social culture of American vernacular musical communities, with a focus on racial and gender discrimination. His research has been supported by the Margery Morgan Lowens Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Society for American Music and the Howard Mayer Brown Fellowship from the American Musicological Society. He is the founder of [Project Spectrum](#), a coalition committed to increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in music academia. As chair (2017–19), he oversaw the organization of the 2018 national symposium *Diversifying Music Academia: Strengthening the Pipeline*. For his work with Project Spectrum, he is twice a recipient of the Sphinx Organization's MPower Artist Grant. His writing on diversity in academia has been featured in *Inside Higher Ed*. He is currently completing a dissertation at Yale University entitled “The Role of Vernacular Music Theory in the Institution of Barbershop Music.”

Abstracts

LARAAJ “LAUGHTER & CREATIVITY”

LARAAJ intends to guide us into the realm of self-induced laughter releasing, as a practice for wellness and creativity enhancement. We will have the opportunity to experience directing our self-induced laughter into areas of our body for fuller energizing and relaxing impact. Then, we will be treated to an immersive celestial sound meditation. This uplifting and educational session will be followed by a Q&A period. For further information see this [recent article](#).

Anna Morcom “Music, Exchange, and the Production of Value: A case study of Hindustani Music”

This talk presents new approaches to studying the economics of music in ways that see it as constituted by social relationships, social processes, and social mediation. I focus on Hindustani music as a form of intersubjective exchange and value production, looking at aspects of performance and transmission using an action-based theory of value deriving from the work of Nancy Munn (1986), later developed by David Graeber (2001). I identify Hindustani music as an example of what Annette Weiner terms an 'inalienable possession', an object of 'transcendent value' (1992) and I analyse the 'work' that is done to make it and remake it as such. My approach develops theory from economic anthropology, which has overwhelmingly focused on tangible or material objects for the study of the intangible activity of performance. Looking at the creation of value in musical performance as lying in myriad forms of exchange, involving performers, audience, participants, patrons, and musical sounds and structures, evades restrictive paradigms that focus on either production or consumption, or on music as commodity versus music as art or vocation.

Bridgid Bergin "Conversation: Artistic Producing & Marketing During COVID-19"

In this talk, Bergin will retrace her journey from ethnomusicological work to artistic producing and marketing, situating it within the broader context of "applied/public" ethnomusicology. As Production and Communications Manager for the International Contemporary Ensemble, she will focus on this group's recent adaptations to working in digital spaces.

Mehmet Ali Sanlikol "Reconstructing a Turkish identity in Boston: *Jazz, Mehter, Byzantine music, and bimusicality*"

Immigrants are often challenged by how much of their already-formed identity and inherited culture to leave behind while adapting to their new social environment. In this paper I will focus on several social and ideological aspects of my environment while growing up in Turkey and then add to it certain specifics of what I came to experience in Boston as an immigrant. Finally, I will explain and demonstrate via examples how Turkish music has 'travelled' to be a part of my life in the US while helping reconstruct both my identity as well as my musical output.

Zosha Di Castri "The Makeup and Mockup of a Musical Process"

This talk will offer an introduction to Di Castri's compositional methods and eclectic interdisciplinary approaches through the prism of her recent solo, chamber, orchestral, and music-theatre work. Using elements of improvisation, composition, collaboration, various forms of musical notation, video as documentation, sound recording, and employing detailed digital audio mockups to communicate her ideas, she illustrates how her approach shifts depending on the setting and particular constraints of a given project. Rather than employing a single musical process that is structurally fixed, she discusses the artistic freedom she has found in allowing her writing to be context-sensitive and ever-evolving.

Larry Polansky "Around and a round: Improvising a Life in Music"

Polansky will talk about the multi-faceted life of a composer/performer/theorist/editor/musicologist and advocate of contemporary (and other) musics. He will use examples of different musical activities over the course of his life/career to expand on ways that these seemingly disparate activities can become integrally enmeshed in each other. Part of the challenge of navigating a life dedicated to forward-looking music is to find adaptive strategies. Polansky argues that the cultivation of imagination, in varied and disparate musical activities, contributes to a deeper understanding of ourselves, and others.

Clifton Boyd (music theorist, Yale University) "Stay in Your Own (Musical) Backyard": Segregation, Discrimination, and the Cost of "Keeping it Barbershop"

In tandem with their desire to preserve the barbershop style, the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) has historically discriminated against those deemed to be outside of this musical tradition, in particular women and people of color. In order to combat this history, the BHS recently launched a new strategic vision, "Everyone in Harmony." Yet the question remains: how is the changing social culture of the BHS reflected in the musical aesthetics of the barbershop style? In this talk I examine the role that music theory and musical style have played in the BHS during moments of political and civil unrest. I observe that the Society's demographic changes are rarely paired with reflections on the barbershop style,

allowing racist and sexist music-theoretical concepts from the BHS's early history to persist in the Society's social consciousness.



Looking forward to seeing you all on Thursday afternoons and providing a warm welcome to our guests.

simple question

3 voice round

polansky

What time does the bell ring? What time does the bell ring? What time - does the bell - ring!

The musical notation is written on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a 4/4 time signature, followed by a 3/4 time signature, and ends with a 7/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. A small asterisk is placed above the first measure. The lyrics are written below the staff, with hyphens under the words 'time' and 'ring' in the final measure to indicate a long note.

* (a small bell may be rung here — each voice may use a different bell if they like)

lp
MacDowell Colony
Peterborough, NH
4/20/10
rev. 04/20/10 4:30 PM