
Music Department

Colloquium series Spring 2021 | Online:

Thursdays | 4:40–6:10pm

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. The Colloquium Spotify playlist provides music related to each colloquium, archived on the department website, along with the list of past colloquium guests. The Spring 2021 series is organized by Jane Alden with the assistance of Ryan Seward. 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 rseward@wesleyan.edu or jalden01@wesleyan.edu.

Spring 2021, 4:40–6:10pm

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| Feb 18 | Sōzan Katō, Satoko Takemoto, and Kazuhide Nakayasu (Japan)
“New Music for Traditional Instruments in Contemporary Japan: Challenges and Collaborations” |
| Feb 25 | Rachel Colwell (PhD in Ethnomusicology from UC-Berkeley)
“Unsettling Colonial Listening: The Politics of Multisensory Experience in Tunisian-Andalusi Music” |
| Mar 04 | John Corbett (Chicago-based writer, curator, and producer)
“Musical Jigsaw Life” |
| Mar 11 | Adam Tinkle (Assistant Professor, Skidmore College)
“Draw Sounds Out of Homes” |
| Mar 18 | Zeynep Bulut (Assistant Professor, Queens University Belfast)
“Self-Talk and Migration of Voices” |
| Mar 25 | Kevin C. Holt (Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at Wesleyan, PhD from Columbia University)
“YEEK! Atlanta Hip-Hop Dance and the Subversion of Expressing ‘Your Energetic Explosive Klimax’” |

The series is generously funded by the Music Department, with co-sponsoring from the College of East Asian Studies (February 18), the Department of African American Studies, and the Center for African American Studies (March 25)

Biographies

Sōzan Katō is a Tozan-style shakuhachi player who has studied with Wazan Hirōka and Jōzan Katō, his father. He is a graduate of Nagoya College of Music’s traditional Japanese music department, where he currently serves as an assistant instructor of shakuhachi. A two-time winner of the national Tozan-style Shakuhachi Honkyoku Competition grand prize, he has also received the Japanese Minister of Education Prize for the Arts and the Sankei Shimbun Award. He regularly appears in a variety of television, radio, and stage events, performing in both traditional and contemporary ensembles. He is particularly focused on promoting new works for Japanese instruments. **Satoko Takemoto** is a Sawai-style koto shihan (grand master). She began her studies at the age of three with her mother Ayako Niimi, eventually becoming an uchideshi (live-in apprentice) for renowned koto performer Kazue Sawai. After passing the competitive NHK Hōgaku

Audition, she was featured on the broadcaster's Hōgaku Hitotoki program. Director of the Ki no Kai koto classroom, she teaches a large number of koto students and ensembles throughout the Nagoya area. **Kazuhide Nakayasu** is a composer, guitarist, and producer for the Nagoya-based theater troupe Team Performance Lab. During his time in the composition department of Nagoya College of Music, where he studied with Shūji Kozakura and Yasuaki Ishikawa, he began koto performance with Minae Okazaki. With a background in jazz and classical guitar performance, his work bridges the worlds of contemporary jazz and traditional Japanese music. In addition to his work as a video producer for Team Performance Lab, he arranges live stage and circus events with koto player Satoko Takemoto, shakuhachi player Sōzan Kato, and guitarist Akira Naruse.

Rachel Colwell is an ethnomusicologist specializing in Tunisian-Andalusi Art Music (*ma'lūf*) and listening practices. She received her Doctorate in Ethnomusicology at the University of California, Berkeley and her B.A. in Anthropology and Musical Studies at Oberlin College. In her ethnographic work, she investigates the connections to geographic places and movements, emplaced sonic histories, and affective orientations perpetuated and challenged through contemporary Tunisian listening. She advocates for increased attention toward musical access and participation in post-authoritarian contexts and for embodied and emplaced knowledge as key sites of continued anti-colonial resistance and scholarship. During the 2019-2020 academic year she served as the Visiting Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology at Grinnell College, where she taught courses of her own design and instructed an Arab music ensemble.

A writer, curator, and producer, **John Corbett** is co-owner of the Chicago art gallery Corbett vs. Dempsey, which has produced a plethora of books and audio recordings of new and historical jazz, experimental, and improvised music. Corbett is author of *Pick up the Pieces: Excursions in Seventies Music* (2019), *Vinyl Freak: Love Letters to a Dying Medium* (2017), *A Listener's Guide to Free Improvisation* (2016), *Microgroove: Forays into Other Music* (2015), and *Extended Play: Sounding Off from John Cage to Dr. Funkenstein* (1994) and co-editor (with Anthony Elms and Terri Kapsalis) of *Pathways to Unknown Worlds: Sun Ra, El Saturn and Chicago's Afro-Futurist Underground, 1954-68* (2007). As an essayist and reviewer, Corbett has written for numerous academic and commercial publications, including *DownBeat*, *The Wire*, *The Chicago Reader*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *NKA*, *Bomb*, *LitHub*, and *Lapham's Quarterly*. Corbett has written extensively on the musicians Sun Ra and Peter Brötzmann, as well as on Jim Lutes, Charline Von Heyl, Christopher Wool, Albert Oehlen, and Sadie Benning, among others. The Unheard Music Series, Corbett's label, existed from 1999-2006, prior to Corbett vs. Dempsey. Invited to be guest artistic director of JazzFest Berlin, Corbett also co-produced the Empty Bottle Festival of Jazz and Improvised Music and has organized many musical events and festivals, at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Guggenheim Museum of Art, and the Menil Collection, Houston. Corbett taught at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1988 to 2014.

Adam Tinkle creates, teaches, and writes about music, sound, media, installation, auditory culture, social participation/cooperation and performance. At the center of Adam's work are strategies for artistic engagement, interactivity, and pedagogy that draw on experimental music. A Wesleyan alum (BA '08) with a PhD from the UCSD Music Department's interdisciplinary Integrative Studies program, he is director of the John B. Moore Documentary Studies collaborative at Skidmore College, where he teaches courses in sound, media studies, and co-creative modalities. He is an improvising woodwind player, singer-songwriter, electronic musician, video artist, and creator of audio narrative works. Adam collaborates with animals, amateurs, students, kids, strangers, and communities. In 2010, he co-founded the Universal Language Orchestra, a group of elementary-aged novice musicians that composed, improvised, and built their own instruments. The SoundMind workshop series (2016–), deeply influenced by his studies with Pauline Oliveros, combined meditation, sensory awareness, and aesthetic activation of the breath, body, and voice, exploring resonance and vibration through touching, listening, and collaborative creation. He has produced an audio drama with Marina Abramović and Kim Stanley Robinson, and an immersive, head-reactive (or "ambisonic") sound design and musical score for "How to Tell a True Immigrant Story," an award-winning 360 VR film, and is currently co-producing a podcast called *Pandemic Bardo*, about the resonances of Tibetan teachings on death and dying in the age of COVID-19. For more, see www.riskyforager.com, www.adamtinkle.com

Zeynep Bulut is a composer and Lecturer at Queen's University Belfast. She received her Ph.D. in Critical Studies/Experimental Practices in Music from the University of California at San Diego (2011), M.A. in Visual Arts Visual Communication Design from Sabanci University (2002) and B.A. in Sociology from Bogazici University, Istanbul (2000).

She also studied opera in the State Conservatory of Mimar Sinan University (1996-1999), and ethnomusicology in MIAM (Centre for Advanced Studies in Music) at Istanbul Technical University (2003-2005). Her research interests include voice and sound studies, experimental music, sound and media art, technologies of hearing and speech, digital media and culture, deaf performance and culture, and music and medicine. She is currently completing her first book, titled *Building a Voice: Sound, Surface, Skin*, which theorizes the emergence, embodiment, and mediation of voice as skin, drawing on nonverbal voice in experimental music and interactive media art. Her articles have appeared in various volumes and journals including *Perspectives of New Music*, *Postmodern Culture*, and *Music and Politics*. She has exhibited sound works, composed and performed vocal pieces for concert, video and theatre, and released the singles *Eclipse* (2019) and *Loneliness* (video release 2020; single release 2021, available on YouTube and digital music platforms). She is sound review editor for *Sound Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, and project lead for the collaborative research initiative “Map A Voice.” For more info, see <https://pure.qub.ac.uk/en/persons/zeynep-bulut>

Kevin C. Holt holds a doctorate in ethnomusicology from Columbia University in the City of New York. Additionally, he holds an MA in African-American Studies from Columbia University’s Institute for Research in African-American Studies, a BA in African-American Studies from Oberlin College and a BMus in classical performance on the double bass from Oberlin Conservatory of Music. His work focuses on race and sociomusical performance in U.S. popular culture with an emphasis on hip-hop in the American south. He is currently the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at Wesleyan University and will be joining Stony Brook University SUNY’s Department of Music as an assistant professor of ethnomusicology in 2021.

Abstracts

“New Music for Traditional Instruments in Contemporary Japan: Challenges and Collaborations” (Souzan Katō, Satoko Takemoto, and Kazuhide Nakayasu)

In twenty-first century Japan, where traditional music is often marginalized, performers of traditional instruments often form close collaborations with composers, and the three musicians on this program represent one such effort: shakuhachi player Sōzan Kato, koto player Satoko Takemoto, and composer Kazuhide Nakayasu. The first part of the presentation will feature visual recordings of original musical performances from 2019, as well as an introduction of each member’s path to traditional music. An extended Q&A will form the second half of the colloquium – attendees are encouraged to ask about writing for these instruments, as well as the place of traditional Japanese music in contemporary society.

“Unsettling Colonial Listening: The Politics of Multisensory Experience in Tunisian-Andalusi Music” (Rachel Colwell)

In this talk I examine the profound impact of French Colonialism on Tunisians’ embodied sensory experiences of listening to *ma’lūf*, an Andalusi-Tunisian music. While much has been written about the ‘modernization’ and secularization of *ma’lūf* as an Arab Art Music during the Colonial and Nationalist periods, this talk offers new approaches to locating colonization within and between social-sensory bodies. Drawing on my field research and work in the Anthropology and History of the Senses, Postcolonial Studies, and Indigenous Studies I ask: what does ‘un-settling’ Colonial *ma’lūf* listening look, sound, smell, taste, and feel like for Tunisians? What role(s) can Tunisian and International Music researchers play in supporting sensory reclamation? Broadly speaking, what can multi- and inter-sensory experiences of listening and performance teach us about music?

“Musical Jigsaw Life” (John Corbett)

Twenty years ago, through a tenuous chain of circumstances, I managed to prevent an enormous cache of materials related to the musician and proto-Afrofuturist Sun Ra from going into a dumpster. For me personally it was the pinnacle of a certain kind of engagement with the *stuff* of music history – a belief in the relevance of material culture, a passion for preserving and interpreting it – but it also tied that zealous interest back into a question of practice. How do the different parts of one’s engagement within the fields of creative and popular music – as a writer, as a scholar, as a producer, as a fan – relate to one another? Do they cross-pollinate? Do they conflict? Are they sustainable? How do you

nurture them? And where do they find their outlet? In this presentation, I will reflect on the Sun Ra adventure – playing a few never-heard examples from the hundreds of tapes that were part of the archive – in the context of work as a music journalist, art gallerist, and curator, meditating on the precarious position of improvised and experimental music in the broader scope of cultural history.

**“Draw Sounds Out of Homes”
(Adam Tinkle)**

This presentation makes a case for the instrumentalization of tactics from experimental music towards modest and quotidian forms of social cooperation -- and through it, perhaps to certain kinds of institutional transformation. Trampling down a path laid decades ago by composers like Pauline Oliveros and Cornelius Cardew (who themselves were rediscovering and diagramming tactics of non-expert participation and bricolage that are intrinsic to so many vernacular traditions), I am interested in how experimental listening and sound-making might bring together those of diverse abilities and disparate musical enculturation in shared effort and shared affect.

We will begin by collectively performing a text score that I composed -- or, really, ripped off from Christian Wolff's *Stones* (1969) -- during the early COVID lockdown. And then, proceeding from a discussion of listening and sound-making with the near-at-hand, I will discuss a 2019 engagement with the historic musical instrument collection of a local history museum in Vermont. In describing how, along with the collective Seven Count, I went about creating new music for this group of odd, old instruments, I will develop a set of notions about the fraught-yet-mutable politics of archives, pragmatic noise, deskilled amateurism, and the immanent sonic agency in the material specificity of the objects around us. And I will share how these working principles went on to become a kind of “score” for my sonic engagement with the challenges of 2020.

**“Self-Talk and Migration of Voices”
(Zeynep Bulut)**

We constantly talk with ourselves, internally or externally. As we talk, which voice do we hear loudly? How do we know which voice is talking? How do we regulate and mobilize the multiple voices, which we speak with and which speak through us? And how do we re-calibrate hearing of a voice in the act of listening to others, including both humans and nonhumans? This talk will discuss these questions drawing on cases of self-talk and voice-hearing in behavioural sciences, and theories of embodied voice and listening in experimental music practices.

**“YEEK! Atlanta Hip-Hop Dance and the Subversion of Expressing ‘Your Energetic Explosive Klimax’”
(Kevin Holt)**

Yeeking is a hip-hop dance format that formed in Atlanta during the 1980s that, by the 1990s, became one of the foundational tenets of local Atlanta hip-hop aesthetics. It began in the roller rinks, as a form of coordinated skate-dancing, but eventually dancers began to form (un-skated) competitive troops that would move in perfect synchronicity as they battled for prestige and belonging. This happened during a time when the city of Atlanta increased policing surrounding black youth, particularly to dictate the ways they were allowed to occupy public space. Dancers on the yeek scene began producing/performing music specifically to fit their movements, ultimately leading to the formation of several Atlanta hip-hop party formats. Correspondingly, much of Atlanta's hip-hop party music brought focus back onto black bodies in motion, which, I argue, constituted a kind of performative resistance to aggressive policing tactics that were used specifically to restrict black youth recreational behavior. My talk focuses on Atlanta's yeek community in order to discuss historical and social linkages between yeeking, Atlanta hip-hop, and subversive embodiment as a means of expressing political resistance.



Looking forward to seeing you all at these events, hosting the second semester of the Colloquium Quiz (more prizes), and providing a warm welcome to our guests.