

# Music Department Colloquium Series 2023-2024

Wednesdays | 4:30–6:00pm | Adzenyah Rehearsal Hall 003 (unless otherwise noted)

## FALL 2023

### **Laraaji—*Laughter Playshop***

**Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 4:30pm**

**World Music Hall**

LARAAJI is an internationally recognized musician, multi-instrumentalist, mystic, and laughter meditation practitioner based in New York City. He is known for his specially designed electric zither, his vocal performances and his improvisation; he also works with African mbire, synthesizers, hand drums, and percussion. Experimentation with altered tunings has led LARAAJI to a deeply engaging performance sound, which he refers to as “Celestial Vibration,” recalling an earlier paranormal sound hearing experience. LARAAJI brings Eastern mysticism to trance-inducing jams on his modified autoharp, with various electronic effects. He has recorded over 50 solo and collab albums, see <http://laraaji.blogspot.com/> and follow @edwardlgordon

LARAAJI’s September 21-23, 2023 mini-residency at Wesleyan will comprise a “Laughter Playshop” (9/21/2023, WMH, 4:30-6pm) and a “Celestial Sound Bath” (9/22/2023, WMH, 6–7pm). In the former, he will lead a meditative opening to inner laughter through guided chanting and *laughter-cises*. The Friday night performance will be a multi-instrumental immersive sound experience.

Presented by the Music Department and co-sponsored by the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life, Astronomy Department, Center for African American Studies, Center for the Arts Creative Campus Initiative, College of the Environment, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, and Religion Department.

### **Peter Zummo ('70, MA '75) - “*Applying University Studies to Real-World Situations*”**

**Thursday, September 28, 2023 at 4:30pm**

**Adzenyah Rehearsal Hall 003**

In 1975 after earning a Masters degree in World Music at Wesleyan, I moved to New York City and began making music there. The work I had done at Wesleyan resonated with the creative scene in downtown Manhattan, which was the living and working space for many visual and performing artists. Ideas were shared across styles and art forms. Friends and colleagues met up at various venues. Most events were announced via postcards, posters and mentions in local publications.

One of the musicians and composers I met then was Arthur Russell. We played in each other’s ensembles, and worked together for other composers and bandleaders. Sharing a rehearsal space in the early 1980s, we tried out our latest ideas, with the help of a few microphones, large speakers, and cassette recorders.

Some of us were more focused on making it in the music business than others, but the experiment continued as the underlying motivation. And while more commercial aspects of music making were lurking around, it was the possibility of making a rapprochement between serious and popular music that informed the creative work and the discussion that surrounded it. A project might bring together artists with various backgrounds, education, and esthetics, from

university to the street. I learned to adjust to fast-paced working situations with musicians who did not read music or use the terminology I was in the habit of using. Working as a musician as well as a creative artist, it's necessary to understand one's own unique strengths and abilities, because the competition is intense. There are life-changing teachers in and out of the university.

**Peter Zummo** is a composer and trombonist whose work with the contemporary trombone is genre non-conforming, and yet finds a place in both contemporary-classical and vernacular genres. He has been a visiting artist at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, and the Conservatory of Amsterdam. His recordings have been published by a variety new and experimental labels such as Sleeping Bag Records, Persian Cardinal Recordings, Loris, XI, Lovely Music, Strut, Optimo, Vula Viel, Penumbra and 7K records.

From 1981 through 2015, Zummo held various titles at the New York Arts Program, including Professor of Music at Ohio Wesleyan University, and acting director of the program.

**Garrett Field (PhD '19; the Ohio State University) - "Rethinking Rāga in Free Rhythm: Karnatak Ālāpana and Eloquent Writing "**

**Thursday, October 5, 2023 at 4:30pm  
Adzenyah Rehearsal Hall 003**

Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology/Musicology at Ohio University [Garrett Field](#) MA '08, PhD '13 examines the playing of South Indian Karnatak mandolinist U. Srinivas (1969–2014) to offer a clearer view of the interesting musical processes that occur during improvisational performances. This event is part of the [47th annual Navaratri Festival at Wesleyan](#).

The patterns of notes used as a basis for improvisation in South Indian Karnatak music are called *rāga*. The free-rhythmic melodic improvisation of *rāga* is known as *ālāpana*, and it is common to consider *ālāpana* as "musical speech." Yet Field argues that *ālāpana* is less like an unscripted, off-the-cuff speech, and more like the eloquent writing of a speechwriter. Field more specifically contends that three underlying principles of *ālāpana* are coherence (the creation of sections to produce a portrait of the improvisation's structure), cohesion (the musical ways that phrases within the sections are tied together), and rhetorical climax. Field seeks to bear out his argument through the analysis of these principles in four *ālāpana* performed by Srinivas.

Field is the author of *Modernizing Composition: Sinhala Song, Poetry, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Sri Lanka* (University of California Press, 2017). He has published research articles in *Modern Asian Studies*, *Anthropological Linguistics*, *Analytical Approaches to World Music*, and *The Journal of Asian Studies*. He has received support for his research from the Fulbright-Hays Award, Ohio University's Baker Fund Award, and two Sinhala Language Instruction Grants from the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies. Field is a performer of South Indian classical music and leads the Ohio University Indian Music Ensemble. His teachers were Adjunct Associate Professor of Music B. Balasubrahmanian, Adjunct Associate Professor of Music David Nelson PhD '91, and Kalpana Venkat.

**Garrett Field** is the author of *Modernizing Composition: Sinhala Song, Poetry, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Sri Lanka* (University of California Press, 2017). He has published research articles in *Modern Asian Studies*, *Anthropological Linguistics*, *Analytical Approaches to World Music*, and *The Journal of Asian Studies*. He has received support for his research from the Fulbright-Hays Award, Ohio University's Baker Fund Award, and two Sinhala Language Instruction Grants from the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies. Field is a performer of South Indian classical music and leads the Ohio University Indian Music Ensemble. His teachers were Adjunct Associate Professor of Music B. Balasubrahmanian, Adjunct Associate Professor of Music David Nelson, and Kalpana Venkat.

**William Brooks ('65; The Orpheus Institute, Brussels) with contributions from the Winslow Family "Wesleyan, Winslow: The Works"**

**Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 4:30pm**  
**Adzenyah Rehearsal Hall 003**

Richard Winslow ('40) taught and conducted Music at Wesleyan from 1949 – 1983. During his tenure he helped found Wesleyan's World Music Program, arrange the publication of John Cage's *Silence* and take the Wesleyan Concert Choir on numerous international tours. Brooks, who credits much of his thinking to Winslow's tutelage, is creating editions of significant pieces from Winslow's substantial compositional oeuvre.

**William Brooks ('65)** taught at the University of Illinois and the University of York until his retirement in 2021. A composer and musicologist, his work focuses on the history and implications of experimentalism, broadly conceived, and on a pragmatic approach to popular music.

**Andrew Raffo Dewar (PhD '09; The University of Alabama School of Music)—"Musical Experiments Between the Lines"**

**Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 4:30pm**  
**Boger 112**

Dewar will discuss several of his musical works that explore an area between the visual and aural, ethnography and composition, science and art. Dewar will also discuss practical aspects of his career as an artist/scholar and academic/artist that may be useful for colloquium attendees' future plans.

**Andrew Raffo Dewar** is Professor of Interdisciplinary Arts in New College and the School of Music at the University of Alabama. He is a composer, soprano saxophonist, electronic musician, ethnomusicologist, and arts organizer. As an artist/scholar of experimental musics, his published work includes ethnographic research on avant-garde jazz, 1970s intermedia art in Argentina, 1960s electronic music group the Sonic Arts Union, philosophical issues of ontology in performance and emerging music technologies, as well as a body of original music for his performing ensembles in the US and Europe, music for film, compositions incorporating oral history, biofeedback, cybernetic feedback, data sonification, and cross-disciplinary installations utilizing 3D spatial audio.

**Kyle Gann (Bard College)—"How to Make Microtones Fun"**

**Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 4:30pm**  
**Adzenyah Rehearsal Hall 003**

Microtonality has had a difficult time gaining a foothold in the general music world because the theory applied to it is often needlessly complex and unrelated to the way people listen. To work its way into the public's good graces, microtonal music can't replace the kinds of harmonies music already uses with exotic ones, but must include the familiar harmonies and build on them in a clearly logical manner. My three-and-a-half-hour piece for three retuned Disklaviers, *Hyperchromatica*, offers a range of attempted solutions.

**Kyle Gann** is a composer and the author of seven books on American music, including books on microtonality, Charles Ives's *Concord Sonata*, John Cage's *4'33"*, Conlon Nancarrow, and Robert Ashley. He studied composition with Ben Johnston, Morton Feldman, and Peter Gena, and about a fourth of his music is microtonal. His major works include two piano concertos, a symphony, *Transcendental Sonnets* for chorus and orchestra, the microtonal music theater

piece *Custer and Sitting Bull*, *The Planets* for mixed octet, and *Hyperchromatica* for three retuned, computer-driven pianos. His music is available on the New Albion, New World, Cold Blue, Lovely Music, Mode, Other Minds, Meyer Media, Innova, New Tone, Microfest, Vous Ne Revez Pas Encore, Brilliant Classics, and Monroe Street labels.

**David Fossum (MA'10, Arizona State University) "What's an Arrangement Worth?: Copyright, Folk Music, and the value of Creativity in Turkey"**

**Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 4:30pm**

**Boger Hall 112**

Copyright is supposed to reward creators for their creativity. Yet there are no clear criteria for measuring the value of this creativity or *how* creative a work is. Drawing on a case study from my book manuscript in progress, *Copyright Consciousness: Musical Creativity and Intellectual Property in Turkey*, this talk links implicit criteria of creative value to a larger history of nation-building. The launching point for my inquiry is a policy, idiosyncratic to Turkey's two copyright collecting societies for musical authors, according to which arrangers of anonymous folk music were long offered only a limited (10%) royalty on sales and performances of their arrangements (whereas a 100% royalty is common in most jurisdictions). While some arrangers complained about this policy, my ethnographic data reveal that many musicians found it natural. Through analyses of a range of arrangements of folk tunes and songs, I highlight the forms of creative agency often erased by this widespread tendency to minimize their originality. I identify several factors that might account for this tendency, including the conflicting interests of actors in the industry, legal doctrine specific to Turkey, and bureaucratic convenience, but none of these explain the policy as well as a fourth factor: widely internalized folkloristic ideologies that locate creative agency primarily in a romanticized vision of the nation's past. The stakes of this finding transcend a normative critique of the policy itself. Rather, my analysis highlights how Turkey's history of nationalist cultural reformism gets reinscribed into copyright, an ostensibly identity-blind cultural policy regime whose arbiters constantly strive to harmonize it with international practice.

**Dave Fossum** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Music, Dance and Theatre at Arizona State University. Combining extensive ethnographic fieldwork and archival research, he studies ideas about creativity and intellectual property, focusing particularly on music in Turkey and Central Asia. He has received fellowships and grants from Brown University, the University of Pittsburgh, the American Research Institute in Turkey, and the Reed Foundation. He has published articles in *Ethnomusicology*, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, *Asian Music*, and *Analytical Approaches to World Music*. His book manuscript-in-progress, *Copyright Consciousness: Musical Creativity and Intellectual Property in Turkey*, ethnographically documents how stakeholders make sense of and respond to the music copyright system's purported failures and perceived injustices, often by integrating their experiences into larger narratives about Turkish society, the nature and value of musical creativity, or the histories of national genres.

**Postponed:**

**Aaron Bittel (Wesleyan University World Music Archives)—“Archival Doings, Participatory Collective Remembering, and the CFA's 100th ”**

**Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 4:30pm**

**Adzenyah Rehearsal Hall 003**

Broadly speaking, as a culture group we tend to think of encounters with archives as discoveries of fixed records – flawed, incomplete, and contested, but nonetheless fixed at some point in the historical past. On the other hand, professional archivists speak in terms of an archival life cycle: one which classically followed a cradle-to-grave trajectory, but which in more recent tellings

includes conceptions of reincarnation, feedback, or simply ongoing exchange. Archives – by which we might mean individual documents, collections of those documents, the institutions tasked with sustaining them, or the socio-cultural experiences they embody – are constantly and continually being created, collected, organized, preserved, consulted, disseminated, and recreated. They allow us to engage with memory and remembering across time, a kind of trans-chronological dialogue among past, present, and future interlocutors. Our role in this conversation need not be restricted to hearing from the past. So, in the year that we're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Center for the Arts, this presentation is an open call for anyone and everyone to get archivally engaged with both the CFA's beginnings and its eventual (we hope!) centenary. I'll lay out the projects already planned or underway for this year, opportunities for participation, and a bigger vision for how we as a creative community can have ongoing exchange with our past and future.

**Aaron M. Bittel** is Director of the World Music Archives and Music Librarian at Wesleyan University, where he works to promote creative ways of engaging with a diverse collection of cultural heritage materials, from unique to common. Previously, he served as Archivist-Librarian and Head of Digital Projects at the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive, and was also an adjunct faculty member, teaching courses on audiovisual archives and oral history at UCLA. He has regularly contributed to the cultural collections field, especially in the areas of education and training, and research archives, as part of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC), the Music Library Association (MLA), and the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA). Aaron is also an active musician with scholarly and performing interests in free reed instruments and traditional musics of Quebec, Ireland, and the Balkans.