

Music Department

Colloquium series Spring 2026

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

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 reception follows each formal presentation, offering a chance for collegiality. See our [department website](#) for a list of past colloquium visitors. All meetings take place in person.

Spring 2026, 4:30–6:00pm, Adzenyah Rehearsal Hall 003 (*unless otherwise noted)

- Feb. 12 **Stu Duncan** (Dean of Graduate Student Affairs, Wesleyan University)
“Singing Out of Turn: Metric Disruption and Queer Temporality in Britten’s Peter Grimes”
- Feb. 19 **Andrea Moore** (Associate Professor of Music, Smith College)
“New Music at the New Ends of History”
- Mar. 5 **Aaron Siegel** (MA Wesleyan; composer; co-founder and executive director, Experiments in Opera),
Phil Kline (composer and sound artist), and **Shannon Sindelar** (MFA Carnegie Mellon; adjunct professor Barnard College; producer and director, Experiments in Opera).
“Experiments in Opera, Form and Story”
- Apr. 2 **Theodore Levin** (Professor, Dartmouth College) in conversation with **Saida Daukeyeva** (Assistant Professor, Wesleyan University) and graduate students **Aibek Baiymbetov** and **Aidai Kalmamatova** (Wesleyan University).
Musical Argonauts of Central Asia: The Aga Khan Music Programme’s Quest to Revitalize Cultural Heritage (IUP 2025)

Biographies and Abstracts

Prior to his current role as Dean of Graduate Student Affairs at Wesleyan University, **Stu Paul Duncan** earned a PhD in music theory from Yale University (2017) and a DMA in music composition from Cornell University (2010). Following his graduate studies, he served as an adjunct faculty member in the University of Connecticut's Department of Music and later as Director of Programming and Diversity Recruitment at UConn's Graduate School while also teaching graduate students in Neag School of Education. In 2022, Stu co-authored *Music-Making in U.S. Prisons: Listening to Incarcerated Voices*, building on earlier publications in the *Journal of the International Society for Music Education* and a chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* titled "Behind Different Walls: Restorative and Transformative Justice and Their Relationship to Music Education." More recently, Stu has returned to research on the music of Benjamin Britten, expanding on the chapter "Hypermetric Alienation: Fishing for Meter in Britten's 'Old Joe' from *Peter Grimes*," published in *Inspiration: Essays on Benjamin Britten from a Centenary Symposium*. Stu is also active as an organist and choir director at St. Peter's Church in Cheshire, Connecticut, and is the parent of two young children.

Abstract. This presentation examines Benjamin Britten's distinctive use of metric and hypermetric disruption in vocal music composed between 1943 and 1945, focusing on moments where vocal entries emerge as temporally "out of place" within an established metric order. Drawing on recent developments in metric theory (Malin, Cohn, Krebs, Mirka), I present several analytical vignettes from the *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings* (1943) and the *Holy Sonnets of John Donne* (1945). In each case, an accompanimental introduction establishes a metric or hypermetric framework that fails to prepare the voice's subsequent entry, producing grouping or displacement conflicts that destabilize listeners' expectations at precisely the moment a subject begins to speak or sing.

Building on this analytical framework, the paper reconsiders the pivotal pub round "Old Joe has gone fishing" from *Peter Grimes*. I argue that Grimes's interruption of the Borough is fundamentally hypermetric: he enters a measure early, with a durationally expanded and metrically reoriented version of the tune that disrupts the Borough's otherwise unwavering four-measure hypermetric stability. Unlike the earlier song examples, however, Grimes's intervention does not simply coexist with the surrounding texture but actively reshapes it, forcing the Borough to regroup and ultimately to reassert collective control by sustaining multiple, conflicting hypermetric layers simultaneously. Hypermeter thus functions not merely as background structure but as a musical agent through which social belonging, authority, and exclusion are negotiated.

Heard through a queer analytic lens, these recurrent moments of metric misalignment take on broader expressive significance. Britten's repeated staging of voices that enter early, late, or according to an incompatible temporal logic suggests an aesthetics of temporal nonconformity, in which difference is articulated through being out of sync with normative structures. In *Peter Grimes*, Grimes's failure to align with the Borough's hypermetric order mirrors his inability to assimilate to its social and moral codes, rendering queerness audible as a problem of timing as much as identity. Such a perspective does not reduce metric conflict to biography; rather, it situates Britten's temporal disruptions within a queer aesthetics of misalignment, offering a richer account of how metric structure participates in the opera's dramatic and political work.

Andrea Moore is Associate Professor of Music at Smith College. Her research interests are centered on new music and musical institutions, and include questions of musical value and prestige, contemporary Bach culture and other post-canonic traces, and cultural memory. Recent publications include a chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of Economic Ethnomusicology* and her 2025 book, *Audible Loss: New Music and the Crisis of Memory* (Fordham University Press).

Abstract. Since 1945, global memory culture has often been driven by the convictions behind Holocaust remembrance: that remembrance prevents recurrence, and that to "never forget" is to embrace specific moral lessons. These lessons have aligned with democratic principles of tolerance, equal protection for all citizens, and freedoms of speech, religion, and press. In the post-Cold War era, the convergence of memory's lessons with state democracy seemed complete, and grandly declared the "end of history" by political scientist Francis Fukuyama, the apex and termination of a long dialectical process.

These memory imperatives have produced a surfeit of commemorative projects, further inflated in the U.S. by the memorial culture of 9/11. In the face of such excess, forgetting, rather than remembering, can seem aspirational, suggesting a future in which historical lessons, especially those whose recognition was hard-won,

no longer require the same vigilance. Yet since 2025, history itself has been rapidly repurposed: unwritten and rewritten, stripped from public sites, and suppressed. With these "new ends of history"—where history is terminated and repurposed toward authoritarian aims—the assumption that memorials can offer a perpetual account for future audiences can no longer be taken for granted.

In this talk, I suggest it is here that musical memorials can make a distinctive intervention. Their liveness and ephemerality—which may otherwise render them less legible as memory—become strengths in a moment when other forms of memory can find the very histories they address into question. Taking Joel Thompson's *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed* as a case, I suggest that these pieces operate not just as musical *works* but flexible and repeated memory *acts* that, with new urgency, eschew monumental permanence.

From vast electronic symphonies to chamber music and song cycles, **Phil Kline's** work has been hailed for its originality, beauty, and subversive subtext. Raised in the suburbs of Akron, Ohio, Phil came to New York City to study poetry with Kenneth Koch and David Shapiro at Columbia. Shortly after graduation, he moved to the East Village, cofounded the rock band the Del-Byzanteens with Jim Jarmusch, Jamie Nares, and Lucy Sante, collaborated with Nan Goldin on the soundtrack to *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, and played guitar in the notorious Glenn Branca Ensemble. Many of his early compositions evolved from performance art and used large numbers of boomboxes, such as *Bachman's Warbler* and the outdoor Christmas cult classic *Unsilent Night*, which is now an annual holiday tradition celebrated around the world. Other notable works include *Exquisite Corpses*, written for the Bang on a Can All-Stars; the politically-charged *Zippo Songs* and *Rumsfeld Songs*; *John the Revelator*, a setting of the Latin Mass written for early music specialists Lionheart; the song cycles *Out Cold* and *Florida Man*, both written for Theo Bleckmann and the orchestral work *In a Handbasket*. Phil is currently immersed in music theater projects, including *Ghost Story*, a site-specific cycle for soprano Nicoletta Berry with Yarn/Wire, recently premiered at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston; and *BLINK*, an upcoming opera about a fugitive family encountering the spectre of Nikola Tesla in the ruined New Yorker Hotel at the end of time.

Shannon Sindelar is a theater director and producer based in New York City. Recent directing work includes the NYC premieres of Experiments in Opera's *Five Ways to Die* and Lisa Clair's *Willa's Authentic Self*, and regional premieres of Madeleine George's *Hurricane Diane*, Clare Barron's *Dance Nation*, and the Southern premiere of Jaclyn Backus' *Men on Boats*. She currently serves as producing director for the Obie Award-winning company The Builders Association and is managing producer with Experiments in Opera. She's an adjunct professor at Barnard College and an affiliated artist with New Georges. She serves on the advisory board for the Edward F. Albee Foundation and is board president of the performance ensemble Object Collection. MFA: Carnegie Mellon (John Wells Directing Fellow).

Aaron Siegel has worked as a musician, composer, writer, photographer, organizer and educator for 25 years in New York City. Celebrated as a composer of works for percussion ("hypnotic clouds of chiming tones" – The New Yorker) and the stage ("softly shattering" – NY Times), Siegel has a long history as an improvising percussionist and bandleader. Since 2011, Siegel has co-led the radical opera collective Experiments in Opera ("Raw, funny, surreal, and disarmingly human" – Opera News), helping to bring to the stage countless works by composers and writers and expanding the boundaries of musical storytelling. He is also an accomplished photographer and filmmaker, working in experimental forms to illuminate everyday wonders. Always happy to explore in community with others, Siegel has created work with A.M. Homes, Mallory Catlett, Tracy K. Smith, Emily Manzo, Mantra Percussion, Anthony Braxton, Memorize the Sky, Anthony Roth Costanzo and the EiO Writers Room among others.

Abstract. Composer Phil Kline, Stage Director Shannon Sindelar and Composer/Producer Aaron Siegel (Wes MA '05) visit the CFA campus to share their perspectives on experimental opera practices and concerns. Kline is in the midst of his development of a new opera work entitled *BLINK*, which will be directed in its premiere production by Sindelar. The two will discuss the origins of the piece and their evolving collaboration, including contributions from artist Jim Jarmusch, and share some of the work in progress. Siegel, one of the co-founders of Experiments in Opera, a NYC-based opera collective, will help facilitate the conversation.

Theodore Levin is the Arthur R. Virgin Professor of Music at Dartmouth College. He first visited Central Asia in 1974 and has been traveling there ever since. As an advocate for music and musicians from other cultures, he

has written books, produced recordings, curated concerts and festivals, and contributed to international arts initiatives, including, since 2000, the Aga Khan Music Programme. His previous books include *Where Rivers and Mountains Sing: Sound, Music, and Nomadism in Tuva and Beyond*; *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia (and Queens, New York)*; and *The Music of Central Asia*, co-edited with Saida Daukeyeva and Elmira Köchümkulova.

Abstract. *Musical Argonauts of Central Asia* tells the story of the Aga Khan Music Programme (AKMP) and its sustained efforts to revitalize Central Asian musical heritage in the wake of seven decades of Soviet rule. Theodore Levin, who worked with the program since its inception, offers an insider's account of how the AKMP's development tactics and strategies were formulated and their outcomes assessed. In doing so, Levin addresses fundamental questions about the power of music and what NGOs can do to help shape music's social impact: In what sense are music, musicians, and musical life amenable to interventions by a development organization? What do such interventions contribute to the quality of life of their beneficiaries? And what does an ethical development intervention in music look like? In chronicling the work of the AKMP, Levin establishes the bona fides of a type of institutional cultural activism that isn't captured by rubrics such as applied ethnomusicology, public folklore, and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Featuring case studies of country-specific interventions in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, *Musical Argonauts of Central Asia* provides a practical roadmap for aspiring activist ethnomusicologists and folklorists that models best practices, analyzes failures, and advocates for the role that ethnographers can and should play in international development organizations.