



**American Musicological Society
Capital Chapter
Spring 2025 Meeting
Peabody Institute of
The Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD
Saturday, April 5, 2025**

PROGRAM

- 8:45 a.m. **Welcome / Registration / Dues / Refreshments**
- 9:30 a.m. **Session I** (Elyse Ridder-Roe, session chair)
 - **Robert Nosow:** “Mass for a Dead Princess: The *Missa Sicut spina rosam* by Jacob Hobrecht”
 - **Benjamin Rhine:** “A Complicated Character: Carlo Gesualdo, Participatory Culture, and Content Moderation”
- 10:45 a.m. **Session II: Irving Lowens Award for Student Research** (Laurie McManus, session chair)
 - **Tai Nelson:** “DIY Places and Gentrification in the Suburbs: Claims to Place in Silver Spring, Maryland”
 - **Hannah Jackson:** “Anointing, Authenticity, and Ad-libbing”
 - **Edgar I. Gómez Álvarez:** “Lila Downs and Representation of Indigeneity in Mexico”
- 12:15 p.m. **Lowens Award Voting & Lunch Break**
- 2:00 p.m. **Session III** (Meghan Creek, chair)
 - **Carol Collins:** “What Did Euripides’ *Bacchae* Sound Like?”
 - **Kevin Grifone:** ““Wait. Why did the music of the shootout shift?”: Recognizing Modern Applications of Adaptive Music that Enhance Video Game Immersion”
 - **Ronit Seter:** “Musical Works on Trauma, Mourning, and Remembrance: October 7th and Seltenreich’s *The Prisoner’s Dilemma*”
- 3:45 p.m. **Chapter Business Meeting & Lowens Award Results**

Thanks to the musicology department at Peabody for hosting and making this meeting possible.

SESSION I, PAPER 1 (9:30 a.m.)

Mass for a Dead Princess: The *Missa Sicut spina rosam* by Jacob Hobrecht

Robert Nosow

The *Missa Sicut spina rosam* by Jacob Hobrecht presents a number of paradoxes. It sets a cantus firmus from the Use of Paris but appears only in two manuscripts originating with the Habsburg-Burgundian court complex. The sole historiated initial in Jena 22 adorns the Kyrie, underscoring its importance: the Virgin and Child on a crescent moon, surrounded by a flowering rosary, an allusion to the cantus firmus. The initial melds two common iconographic elements in an unusual combination. The style is influenced by Johannes Ockeghem, chapel master of the kings of France, and the head motive quotes both the *Missa Mi-mi* and his motet *Intemerata Dei mater*. Yet the voluptuous melodic and harmonic profile, persistently wending towards the final, E, clearly bespeaks the hand of Hobrecht.

I propose that the Mass was composed for the foundation in memory of Duchess Mary of Burgundy, established 28 October 1483, nineteen months after her death and burial in Bruges. The foundation at the Church of Our Lady, where her gilded tomb still lies, essentially established a daily *Missa de Salve* in discant, sung by four choirboys, their master, a companion singer, and singer-vicars. A low Requiem Mass for Mary of Burgundy followed. It could have been commissioned by her widower, Archduke Maximilian of Austria, during an extended, nearly nineteen-week sojourn in Bruges in 1487. The court of Burgundy followed the Use of Paris, hence the distinct dialect of the cantus firmus.

Following on the research of Jane Hatter, I will show how the somber, “Phrygian” affect of the *Missa Sicut spina rosam* corresponds to other memorial works of the period, including the composer’s lament for his father, *Mille quingentis/Requiem eternam*, dated 1488, in which he lowers the cantus firmus by a step to E. The Mass as a whole may be interpreted on two registers: in honor of the Blessed Mary and the Duchess Mary. The parallelism was deliberately cultivated by the Habsburg-Burgundian court, as manifested in the writings of the court chronicler, Jean Molinet. Likewise the words of the cantus firmus, inscribed in the Mass throughout: “Just as the thorn brought forth a rose, so did Judea bring forth Mary.”

SESSION I, PAPER 2 (10:00 a.m.)

A Complicated Character: Carlo Gesualdo, Participatory Culture, and Content Moderation

Benjamin Rhine

Most performers and non-specialized scholars understand Carlo Gesualdo (1566–1613) as either the double-murderer, the chromaticist, or both. While perception of Gesualdo within the academic and performance communities has been established (e.g., Watkins 2010), Gesualdo’s perception amongst non-specialists has been left unexplored. I contribute to this gap in research by examining anonymous internet discourses on Reddit forums, X (formerly Twitter) threads, and comment sections on YouTube. Gesualdo and his music are suitable for online study given their provocative quality that naturally spurs debate (Teneketzi 2021). Non-specialized listeners’ comments about Gesualdo’s music and personal history are reflective of the media platform’s participatory culture

in relation to content moderation policy. Together, participatory culture and content moderation influence the creation, circulation, and responses of online content (Grimmelmann 2015, Chen, Xu, and Whinston 2011). These studies contribute to musicological and digital humanities scholarship by analyzing the differences in musical discourses between social media platforms. I characterize these differences using content moderation practices as contributive toward their participatory cultures. I find that Reddit’s moderation practices and culture facilitated the most engaged discussions, while YouTube’s policy and culture encouraged a greater quantity but lower quality of discourse, and that of X promoted the least dialogue altogether. I argue that Reddit’s forum setting and built-in reputation system (“karma”) cultivate a more substantive Gesualdo musical discourse, in contrast with X and YouTube, which lack such self-regulatory systems. Informal Gesualdo discourses comprise part of a larger non-professional community of music theorists and history enthusiasts that reveal the nature of social media platforms and how they affect us as members.

SESSION II, LOWENS PAPER 1 (10:45 a.m.)

DIY Places and Gentrification in the Suburbs: Claims to Place in Silver Spring, Maryland

Tai Nelson

On October 17, 2024, three touring DIY artists performed at the (literally) underground Quarry House Tavern in downtown Silver Spring, MD. Each was a solo project with a unique self-constructed musical style, from intense electronic-screamo “digiskramz” to narrative acoustic “prairie princess freak folk,” united by a shared anti-capitalist ethos. Folk punk and 5th wave emo-inspired artist Everybody’s Worried About Owen chose to recognize the dwindling number of venues like Quarry House nationwide which still host DIY shows with a song. On social media, they refer to the raw, lamenting work as a reaction to “feeling like your home and spaces you feel safe in are slowly being ripped away from you.” Yet aboveground, decades of gentrification have pushed immigrants, minorities, and low-income residents out of Silver Spring while Quarry House and its patrons remain. Taking a case study approach, this paper geographically and historically situates my ethnography of the October 17th show within the ongoing narrative of gentrification in Silver Spring to explore the question of who has the ability to claim space in Quarry House and the surrounding area, and how.

I consider DIY participants’ claim to Quarry House to be an example of what sociocultural anthropologist David Verbuč calls a “DIY place” (Verbuč 2022). DIY places are established through the ascription of values like “safe” and “intimate” to the venue by DIY participants, temporarily claiming even commercial spaces like Quarry House as one in which they belong. While a body of work exists on the relationship between music and gentrification in nearby DC, including the similarly community-based hardcore and go-go scenes (e.g., Woods 2022, Martin 2020), the gentrification of the suburbs is a relatively underexplored phenomenon. Urban studies scholar Willow Lung-Amam’s understanding of gentrification in Silver Spring as a “loss of sense of place” felt by small businesses and minority residents (Lung-Amam 2024) begs us to examine how and why a “DIY place” could be established in the same suburb. I argue that the performances of all three artists and the participation of the audience generated a collective sense of safety and belonging among those present in Quarry House Tavern while overlooking processes of displacement occurring in the surrounding downtown. The performers and concertgoers thereby

unintentionally participate in the suburb's reinvestment in white, middle-class claims to place in Silver Spring. This study points toward a need to further examine the role of touring DIY artists and venues in the process of gentrification and their responsibilities to residents as places within cities and suburbs become inaccessible to certain racialized and classed people.

SESSION II, LOWENS PAPER 2 (11:15 a.m.)

Anointing, Authenticity, and Ad-libbing

Hannah Jackson

As Melinda Weekes has argued, improvisation has remained a hallmark of the Gospel music tradition since its inception in the early twentieth century. From groups to individual singing acts, many have been known to employ the widely-regarded authentic convention of Gospel vocal singing known as the improvised ad-lib. Gospel vocalist Kim Burrell's use of the ad-lib, however, brought about serious questioning of her spiritual status as an anointed singer in the Black Church community during her 2024 viral singing engagements. For example, Burrell began singing the well-known hymn, "Thank You, Lord" at one performance in late January 2024. Before completing the song's introductory melodic phrase, Burrell interjected the ad-lib, "It's a solo, God's using me, don't sing with me right now," to a woman in the audience who began singing the popular worship song alongside her. Burrell essentially asserts her anointing, or divine calling, through the use of ad-libs to quiet a straggling audience member. This bold act sent the Gospel music community into a frenzy, igniting discourse on how anointing is delegated. Raymond Wise's insightful commentary distinguishes between performances led by entertainment purposes compared to ones led by spiritual conviction, a key argument differentiating between anointing and authenticity.

Existing scholarship has not explored the way that anointing is bestowed in Gospel vocal singing. My paper differentiates between anointing and authenticity through an analysis of the controversy surrounding the vocal ad-libs of famed Gospel singer Kim Burrell. Specifically, I first define and situate these two concepts and then I apply Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor's concept of a multilayered authenticity in folk music to Gospel music. I argue that anointing can be sullied due to one's character or intent. Further, I use the case of the Burrell controversy to illustrate the two-fold manner in how anointing is assigned in Gospel music ministry, in that it requires both a divine appointment and community validation. The Burrell situation highlights the dynamic role that community plays in anointing, and that while there is a duty for vocalists to honor the conventions of the style, there is an equal one to avoid spiritual complacency.

SESSION II, LOWENS PAPER 3 (11:45 a.m.)

Lila Downs and Representation of Indigeneity in Mexico

Edgar I. Gómez Álvarez

Throughout her career, Mexican American singer, songwriter, and activist Lila Downs has mixed languages and musical styles in a way that is difficult to categorize, since her music spans a range

of genres, from traditional music, rancheras, corridos, and cumbia, to hip hop, jazz, and soul. Drawing from her mixed heritage as the daughter of a Mexican Indigenous mother and an American father, Downs sings in Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya, and other Indigenous languages, as well as Spanish and English. Moreover, Downs also highlights her Indigenous roots visually, as she performs in traditional hand-woven garments known as “huipil,” and uses pre-Hispanic Indigenous symbols in liner notes and music videos, such as the ones decorating the booklet of her second album, *Tree of Life/Arbol de la vida/Yutu tata* (1999).

Downs has been regarded as an advocate for Indigenous communities, particularly in Oaxaca, her state of origin in Southern Mexico. For the most part, Downs’s use of Indigenous culture has been well received by audiences and celebrated by journalists, as one of the artist’s aims is to spark a conversation about racism in Mexico and generate a sense of pride regarding the country’s Indigenous roots. In a way, this practice echoes the nationalist efforts of artists and the Mexican government during the first half of the twentieth century. Even though it has received some scholarly attention, Downs’s work remains understudied in musicology and ethnomusicology in both Mexico and the U.S.

This paper examines how Downs represents Indigenous stories, languages, and sounds in her album *Tree of Life*, which features songs in Mixtec, Zapotec, and Nahuatl, and is inspired by Mixtec cosmology passed down in surviving codices. Through musical and lyrical analysis, I argue that Downs challenges stereotypes about Indigenous people while also inadvertently contributing to them and benefiting financially and professionally as she represents Indigeneity for international audiences. I illustrate this in two songs from *Tree of Life*: “Nueve Hierba” and “Semilla de Piedra,” where Downs highlights Indigenous languages while reinforcing stereotypes of Indigenous people with the use of percussion instruments associated with pre-Hispanic practices, such as drums and ocarinas. This paper contributes to conversations about Indigeneity, representation, and transnational encounters in musicology and ethnomusicology.

SESSION III, PAPER 1 (2:00 p.m.)

What Did Euripides’ *Bacchae* Sound Like?

Carol Collins

Euripides’ ancient Greek tragedy *Bacchae* (*The Bacchantes*) won first prize at its posthumous premiere in the Athenian Theatre of Dionysus in 405 BCE and has been one of the playwright’s most popular works to this day. Noted for its political, social, and religious themes, the play has been performed with various kinds of staging, costuming, and acting methods. Whether or not it has been performed in the original Greek or has incorporated musical elements, it has primarily been constructed from the words of the play without attempts to reconstitute the music of Euripides. Unlike Euripides’ *Orestes*, there are no remaining musical “scores” to foster a reconstruction of this play’s sound. Thus, to witness a performance of *Bacchae* in the modern world is like hearing a musical without the music!

There are, however, ways to reconstruct (from musical fragments) or reconstitute (from texts) ancient Greek music. Current scholars of ancient Greek studies have demonstrated these methodologies. Armand D’Angour reconstructed the chorus of *Orestes*, John C. Franklin reconstituted the music of *Helene*, and Anna Conser reconstituted the music of *Herakles*. I have

incorporated their methodologies but have ultimately followed my own ‘path of discovery’ in resurrecting a possible sound structure for *Bacchae*.

Euripides was noted for his musical experimentation referred to as “New Music.” Therefore, I composed what I call *New* “New Music” for the Parados, or the opening six-part choral section of *Bacchae*. By examining scansion of the text, setting them to metrics, examining the dance form, choosing instruments and mode, and composing melody, I ultimately created plausible music for each part of the Parados. This music may be performed on modern-day instruments that replicate the pertinent ancient instruments. This enables performers to bring the “sound of *Bacchae*” to contemporary audiences for the first time since the 5th century BCE. My presentation will include samplings from the music that I composed with explanations of the decision-making process that led to the meter, mode, and melody of this New “New Music.”

SESSION III, PAPER 2 (2:30 p.m.)

“Wait. Why did the music of the shootout shift?”:

Recognizing Modern Applications of Adaptive Music that Enhance Video Game Immersion

Kevin Grifone

In the last 40 years, music in video games has assumed a pivotal role in game production, from beginnings in computer programming to live recorded orchestral tracks of the twenty-first century. Today, video game music has become a musical artform worthy of study. While many games of the past were limited to linear, narrative scoring like that of films, recent technological advancements have allowed for more complex, non-linear, and high-quality music that adapts to the player’s actions. The term adaptive music has been applied to modern games with interactive musical elements, allowing for a more immersive game experience.

Improvements in audio technology, along with expanded teams of audio engineers, composers, and music directors, have allowed for a greater collaborative and creative musical expression in modern games to enhance the player’s intimate experience. This has led to adaptive music becoming the most immersive application of video game music yet. This is employed in the popular action-adventure western game from 2018: *Red Dead Redemption 2* (RDR2). The story-driven gameplay utilizes layered, dynamic music that adapts and reacts to the player’s actions and circumstances. While this concept of music is not entirely new, innovative and modern applications of adaptive music allow game audio to reach its current apex, which will be demonstrated through the lens of RDR2. The game has never been previously examined in this musical context; its adaptive approach stands alone among modern game soundtracks. While even amateur game enjoyers have noticed instances of this reactive music in the game, no ludomusicologists have studied RDR2’s dynamic musical versatility.

Specific clips of select gameplay missions will be presented and dissected, to closely observe the gradual layering and calculated placement of musical tracks and instruments. As the player progresses throughout part of the story, the soundtrack also adjusts accordingly, frequently adding instrumental lines or swapping out some musical tracks for others. The music will be shown to adapt to the player’s actions on screen, creating an aural sense of musical progression as the player simultaneously advances through each stage of the mission. These layering musical cues can also inform the player of tacit information that parallels on-screen events. An excerpt of gameplay from

an older game will also be exhibited to contrast the lack of adaptive music in the past with RDR2's innovative and effective means of musical storytelling and adaptation. The game's dynamically changing music ultimately immerses the player into the game by means of authentic music that appropriately reacts to the player's actions. When high-quality audio is combined with strategic musical placement in relation to the player's in-game interactions, a higher form of immersion can take place, fulfilling the ultimate goal of the gaming experience.

SESSION III, PAPER 3 (3:00 p.m.)

Musical Works on Trauma, Mourning, and Remembrance:
October 7th and Seltenreich's *The Prisoner's Dilemma*

Ronit Seter

During the twentieth century, at least three memorial compositions became influential: Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947), Penderecki's *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960), and Steve Reich's *Different Trains* (1988). How did these and other works inform Israeli art music compositions written in the aftermath of October 7th? Several leading Israeli composers have expressed the horrifying experiences of 2023 in their 2024 works, among them Josef Bardanashvili, Talia Amar-Krim, Aviya Kopelman, Haim Permont, and Michael Seltenreich. Seltenreich's work *The Prisoner's Dilemma* (2024) is the first to have reached a wide audience—and to have achieved international acclaim. Commissioned by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, and the 2024 Lucerne Festival (funded by the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation), Seltenreich's *Dilemma* was performed in Tel Aviv, Munich, and Lucerne between July and September 2024. Robert Jungwirth, a music editor in Munich, tagged Seltenreich's *Dilemma* “extremely inventive.”

This paper analyzes threads common in Seltenreich's work—and in selected works of his predecessors and peers—and situates them in their Israeli, European, and American contexts. In so doing, I shall highlight the stylistic roots and originality of *The Prisoner's Dilemma*, and ultimately both evaluate and challenge its promotion and reception. Notably, as this paper is informed by studies on memory and identity (Wlodarski 2007 and Calico 2009, respectively) and on trauma (Grimmer 2023), I shall show how *The Prisoner's Dilemma*, through its visceral compositional processes, brought a snapshot of the trauma of October 7th and its aftermath to European audiences.

Capital Chapter of the American Musicological Society Spring 2025 Business Meeting

Agenda

- I. Announcement of the Lowens Award Winner
- II. Elections for chapter officer and student representative vacancies
- III. Reports from chapter officers
- IV. Reports from chapter representatives to the AMS
- V. Discussion: inactive AMS Mid-Atlantic chapter
- VI. Discussion: revisions and reform of Lowens Award procedures and chapter bylaws
- VII. Discussion: possible meeting locations and/or virtual meeting plans for AY 25–26
- VIII. Additional announcements of happenings around the chapter