

**Daniel Barolsky and Louis Epstein, ed. *Open Access Musicology* (vol. 1). Amherst, MA: Lever Press, 2020.**  
**[https://www.fulcrum.org/epubs/j098zd015?locale=en#/6/2\[OAM-0001\]!/4/4/1:0](https://www.fulcrum.org/epubs/j098zd015?locale=en#/6/2[OAM-0001]!/4/4/1:0). Free.**

*S. Andrew Granade: "Cracking the Code: What Notation Can Tell Us About Our Musical Values"*

*Samuel Dorf: "Ancient Mesopotamian Music, the Politics of Reconstruction, and Extreme Early Music"*

*Sarah F. Williams: "An Intermedia Approach to Seventeenth-Century English Popular Song Culture"*

*Rebecca Cypess: "Instrumental Music in Early Seventeenth-Century Italy: Instruments as Vehicles of Discovery"*

*Dan Blim: "MacDowell's Vanishing Indians"*

*Julia Chybowski: "Jenny Lind and the Making of Mainstream American Popular Music"*

*Nathan C. Bakkum: "Listening to Music History"*

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Volume 1 of *Open Access Musicology* (OAM) is the first installment of a much-anticipated series, written primarily for undergraduate students and their instructors. Open access materials are valuable for classroom instruction as the cost of textbooks has increased at a rate three times that of the rate of inflation ("Chart of the Day . . . Or Century?," <https://www.aei.org/carpe-diem/chart-of-the-day-or-century-5/>). While OAM is not intended to be

used as a textbook *per se*—the editors are clear that the goal of the publication is not content “coverage”—it fills a distinct pedagogical need in undergraduate musicology; that is, it helps instructors communicate the relevance of musicology, it gives students a glimpse of the messiness inherent in historical studies, and it demonstrates the myriad modes of inquiry within the discipline. In short, *OAM* seeks to let students experience the process of musicological investigation and to stimulate lively class discussions around the relationship of music history to performers, listeners, and citizens.

These goals inform nearly every aspect of *OAM*, including the guidelines for authors and the review process (<https://openaccessmusicology.wordpress.com/submissions/>). Authors are urged to use public musicologists as models for their writing style, including Alex Ross (in *The New Yorker*), Richard Taruskin (*New York Times* or *The New Republic*), Bonnie Gordon (Slate.com), and William Cheng (*Huffington Post*). Indeed, the *OAM* articles are written with accessible language, straight forward organization, and even use more casual grammatical conventions such as first and second person and contractions. Article submissions undergo the expected peer review, but in keeping with the student-centered goals of *OAM*, articles are also reviewed by students. Occasionally, I found that the efforts toward casualness caused confusion. Perhaps another round of copyediting might have been helpful.

As an online source, *OAM* has distinct benefits over a traditional textbook or even readings in PDF format. The text size is nicely adjustable and the display can be set to page-by-page, scrolling, or automatic (based on the browser's dimensions). Some articles feature embedded video and audio examples. Rebecca Cypess's article, “Instrumental Music in Early Seventeenth-Century Italy,” for instance, includes an embedded video of The Green Mountain Project's 2012 live performance of Giovanni Gabrieli's “Canzon septimi toni a 8” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yB96NymHfLQ>). *OAM* editors report that Fulcrum/Lever has assured authors that the embedded videos and dynamic media will remain stable for ten years.

The annotation feature offers exciting potential for collective classes reading and thinking. The instructor (or anyone, for that matter) can create an annotation group and share the link. Students can then add their own comments and replies within that group, either visible by all or marked as a private annotation. The original author of an annotation receives an email notification when someone replies. Theoretically, an entire threaded discussion could occur right in the margins of the article. Classes could also collaborate with sections or even with a class at another university. Unfortunately, the annotation app is a little cumbersome and glitchy. There were times when I could not post a reply or see all annotations.

The only aspect of OAM that seemed curiously *unhelpful* for students is the difficulty to download articles for reading offline. In a time when we are especially sensitive to technological inequities, the need for stable and reliable internet access in order to read and interact with the articles seems like a real oversight.<sup>1</sup> The text search function is also glitchy.

The student-centered focus is apparent in the author introductions at the beginning of each article. Authors briefly introduce themselves and describe what they do in musicology, or how they came to musicology, or what is especially intriguing to them about their mode of inquiry. Each of the articles in this volume represents excellent scholarship presented in ways students will find compelling and easy to read and engage with. Authors do not get bogged down in technical details and are consistent in highlighting questions and opportunities for further exploration of ideas—and how to get started pursuing them.

Volume 1 includes seven articles that run about twenty to thirty pages, including end notes, figures, and bibliographies. The extensive bibliographies and notes are invaluable tools for students, intentionally leading them to sources for further study. Articles in this particular volume are perhaps slightly skewed to early music but, of course, selection of articles depends entirely on what is submitted for consideration.

Andrew Granade's article presents the titillating question of where "music" actually resides: Is it in the notation? The sound? Or something else? While the question itself is one that will get students thinking, as an instructor, I was drawn to the clear example of how a researcher moves from curiosity to a question, to investigation, to a narrower question, and then to a working claim. The article serves as a clear model of the process of musicological research.

Such pedagogical concern is apparent throughout, even in the notes. For example, in Samuel Dorf's article on Ancient Mesopotamian music in which he alerts the reader to an opposing argument and provides the bibliographic information to locate it. Even when Dorf concedes "I'm not particularly interested in getting deep into the weeds of ancient Mesopotamian tuning controversies here" (49), he adds a note including a summary of the controversy and sources to consult if the reader *does* happen to be interested in the ancient Mesopotamian tuning controversies.

Dorf presents intriguing queries surrounding the ways we perform "multiple pasts" today as well as a timely and critical discussion of cultural appropriation and ownership of material artifacts. Dorf is careful to not judge the way

1. Articles can be downloaded, but only after an annotation has been added. The reader must open the Hypothes.is app and then click on "Visit annotations in context." The .xhtml file will open in a new window, and that new window will permit Print → Save as PDF. Images or figures will not appear in the PDF, however, and must be accessed through the online version.

extreme early music (music from before 800 CE) is performed; rather the goal is to examine the particularly thorny challenges of performing music from so far in the past. This is an opportunity for students to see how messy historical research can get and how scholars grapple with the messiness when no clear answer presents itself.

Sarah F. Williams's article on seventeenth-century English popular song is a resource for students who are intentionally seeking historically marginalized voices in music, including non-Christian and other non-privileged musics. Equally relevant, the article demonstrates a multidisciplinary approach to music research that is essential to consider in light of the inherently multidisciplinary nature of musicology.

Cypess challenges the reader to synthesize information about cultural and philosophical ideas with knowledge of instrumental music of the seventeenth century, drawing fascinating parallels between the instruments of science as vehicles for scientific exploration and instruments of music as vehicles for not just musical exploration, but for discovery of nature and human emotion. For most undergraduate students, this opens a new world of inquiry in which instruments become an integral part of the story. In the consideration of how performers must respond to their instruments in the context of Frescobaldi's toccatas and the harpsichord, Cypess poses questions such as, "How quickly do the notes decay? How many times can or should they be restruck and ornamented to sustain the sound and emphasize the harmony? How long and how elaborately should each chord be rolled?" (98). These are practical questions that help students realize the relevance of musicological study to their own performance decisions.

Each of these articles are stand-alone works, but if a reader is working through the volume, a number of congruences emerge. For example, several of the authors touch on ideas related to musical borrowing, political meaning, cultural appropriation, and identity. Dan Blim's analysis of Edward MacDowell specifically focuses on these issues. Blim explains that he came to MacDowell essentially through a research rabbit hole, demonstrating how to follow one's curiosity and to venture beyond one's area of specialization. Blim's article is timely as it addresses the Euro-American "Indianist" movement in music within the context of the Vanishing Race theory. Blim explores musical tropes meant to evoke images of indigenous Americans and unpacks the context in which such archetypes were "no longer considered a threat and could be appropriated as nostalgic figures rather than a living oppositional force. Doing so, moreover, erased the unsavory role Euro-Americans played in that vanishing" (112).

Julia Chybowski connects notions of nineteenth-century American celebrity with those of the twenty-first century, claiming that the forces that shaped the life and career of Jenny Lind are still at work today. The chapter serves as a

case study in music as a cultural process with a focus on constructions of race, class, and gender, making it especially helpful for instructors who are eager to integrate these issues into their classes. Chybowski also demonstrates that returning to familiar sources in light of new information often reveals refined or even new ways of seeing that past.

While musicological scholarship is often segregated into sub-disciplines, it is good to see here the integration of studies on popular music, art music, and organology. Nathan C. Bakkum's article on sound recording interrogates the relationships between teachers, students, musical practices, recordings, and history. Bakkum addresses questions central to the day-to-day lives of students: What *are* recordings? Do recordings replace scores? What happens when we listen versus when we create music? How much of the story is captured by recordings? And—importantly—what stories are recordings leaving untold? Bakkum asserts that history is not linear and cannot always be captured in a neat and clear narrative; in fact, “history is better imagined as a dense and expansive web . . . that is alive, just waiting to be discovered” (171).

With *OAM*'s strong potential applications for classroom use, one hopes future volumes will reach publication with a shorter turn-around time than was required for the initial release of volume 1, which required about five years. This effort will be aided by more article submissions, by more volunteers to review submissions, and by instructors organizing students to serve as reviewers. I look forward to new volumes of *OAM* and an ever-increasing range of scholarship with which to engage my students and spark their curiosity.