

## Stewarding a Shared Resource: A Response to Paul Luongo

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My deepest thanks to Paul Luongo for his thoughtful article, to this Journal for publishing it, and to Sara Haefeli for inviting me to respond.<sup>1</sup> The choice of repertoire for the music history classes we teach is of central importance to us and our students. Because I assumed responsibility for the *Norton Anthology of Western Music (NAWM)* after it was already the most widely used anthology in music history, I have always seen my role as the steward of a shared resource, consulting broadly and shaping each new edition in response to all the feedback I receive. Although *NAWM* will soon be in new hands, I will continue as a consultant, and I remain deeply interested in ongoing discussions about what to keep and what to change. At a time when musicologists and music history teachers are reconsidering everything from what to teach to how to teach it, Luongo's article is a welcome contribution to that conversation.

These are challenging times for authors, editors, and publishers of textbooks. The old consensus on what to include has shifted, reflected in and encouraged by the changes I have made in the last four editions of *NAWM* and *A History of Western Music (HWM)*, but we have not yet arrived at a new consensus. In that circumstance, I have felt that the most important contribution I can make is to create books that allow instructors range, that make space for new narratives and a wide repertoire without foreclosing possibilities. If we are going to reach a new consensus, we must hear from everyone who cares about these resources. By outlining here where I agree and disagree with Luongo, I hope to further that discussion, and I invite everyone who reads this to send your thoughts to the publisher, W. W. Norton.

Luongo traces changes from the first edition of *NAWM* in 1980 through the eighth in 2019, then offers several recommendations:

1. Thanks also to Chris Freitag, Heather Platt, and the Pedagogy Study Group of the American Musicological Society for helpful conversations about *NAWM*.

- adding more representation of traditions outside art music;
- increasing the proportion of pieces by women, African Americans, and other underrepresented groups;
- examining works through queer and feminist theory;
- decoupling *NAWM* from *HWM* and *Concise History of Western Music (CHWM)*;
- shifting to an online anthology with more wide-ranging and diverse selections from which instructors can choose;
- dropping the commentaries that accompany each selection or making them optional;
- expanding the recording package to include contrasting performances of some selections;
- and even starting afresh “to overhaul the fundamental identity of *NAWM*.”

The first two are directions I have pursued for two decades and would gladly see extended. The third presents interesting possibilities. The others, as I will argue, are either impractical or would change the purpose and lessen the value of *NAWM*.

### ***NAWM*'s History: Purposes and Premises**

I appreciate Luongo's sense of *NAWM*'s history, examining each edition as a moment of both change and continuity. Some aspects have been consistent throughout all eight editions, while the change of editors after 2001 brought two new premises: a different view of music history and a different approach to making decisions.

As Luongo points out, Claude V. Palisca's first edition enlarged the conception of an historical anthology of music. Previous anthologies focused on early music, but Palisca created a “geographically and chronologically sweeping” anthology that extended to the 1960s and spanned from Russia to the United States. Its purpose was to put into students' hands pieces that would bring alive the narrative in Donald Jay Grout's *A History of Western Music*, examples they could encounter directly in score and sound and could study in depth to learn each type, style, and genre for themselves and to make historical connections across time and place. That purpose and that breadth have been hallmarks of *NAWM* ever since.

The growing diversity in each edition of *NAWM* reflects the broadening narrative in *HWM* and *CHWM*. When Palisca added ancient Greek music to the second edition and works by women to the third and fourth, he was reflecting changes in *HWM*. When I added music from Latin America to the fifth edition of *NAWM*, I did so not only because of concern for diversity and

inclusion but also because I considered it necessary to tell the story of Western music in its contexts and include all of the Americas in that story.<sup>2</sup> Every aspect of diversity in *NAWM*, from the presence of medieval song from Spain, France, Italy, and Germany to the ragtime, blues, jazz, stage music, wind music, choral music, chamber music, piano music, orchestral music, and electronic music in the twentieth century, is woven into the narrative in *HWM*, helping to show the amazing variety of our common tradition. The case that all these kinds of music are part of a shared broad tradition is far stronger when *HWM* and *NAWM* are used together than when *NAWM* is used without the context provided by *HWM*.<sup>3</sup> For these and other reasons, I do not think decoupling *HWM* and *NAWM* would be an improvement.

The goal of comprehensiveness Palisca announced in his first preface has also been a constant through all eight editions. But this goal is tempered by another, of limiting the repertoire to what can be treated during a two-semester sequence. An anthology of 150 to 229 selections (about fourteen to nineteen hours of listening) suggests treating on average five to eight pieces a week (28 to 38 minutes of listening), a reasonable amount. These limits allow a level of comprehensiveness comparable to a sketch rather than an oil painting. Luongo notes that one cannot teach a rich history of jazz or musicals from the selections in *NAWM*, but the same is true for every category from motets to symphonies. No type of music is covered in a manner that can be called comprehensive; although all are worthy of deeper engagement in a course dedicated to them or over a lifetime, each can only be sketched in a survey.

The purpose of a survey is to map a territory, as an aide for future exploration. Ideally, students will make their own maps of the musical landscape as they encounter new pieces, types, genres, and styles alongside more familiar ones and draw connections among them all.<sup>4</sup> *HWM* and *NAWM* can serve respectively as a guidebook that provides an overview and describes prominent features, and as a kind of tour bus that takes students to places of interest they

2. For my rationale, see J. Peter Burkholder, "Music of the Americas and Historical Narratives," *American Music* 27 (Winter 2009): 399–423.

3. Luongo's comments on the section headings in the table of contents of the third volume of *NAWM*, that they give the appearance of "two separate narratives," exemplify the problems of detaching *NAWM* from *HWM*. As in every other era, these headings are simply the titles of the corresponding chapters in *HWM*, present in *NAWM* to help the student and instructor link the selections in the anthology to the story in the text. That story is one of intertwining strands. To keep chapters relatively brief and keep the tale of each strand coherent, it made sense in each timeframe since 1900 to alternate non-classical and classical traditions—always in that order, making the importance of all these traditions clear.

4. I develop this metaphor in "Renewing the Survey," in *The Norton Guide to Teaching Music History*, ed. C. Matthew Balensuela (New York: Norton, 2019), 3–15. See also my article "The Value of a Music History Survey," this *Journal* 5, no. 2 (2015): 57–63.

can experience directly for themselves. The point of including every type of music from motets to musicals is to make sure they are all on the map. I agree with Luongo that representation of music outside the classical tradition since the early nineteenth century should be increased, with reductions elsewhere to keep the content reasonable. The question is how to find the right balance.

While the basic purposes of *NAWM* have stayed consistent, and the growing diversity of music in it aligns with changes in the story told in *HWM* and *CHWM*, Luongo rightly emphasizes the significant change in approach when I became the author of *HWM* and editor of *NAWM*. In Luongo's words, Palisca's preface to the first edition of *NAWM* drew "a linear narrative," a "tightly contrived line of style development [that] creates an evolutionary view of music history," while my preface to the fifth and later editions framed the selections "not only as steps in the development of musical style, but also as products of their place and time" and invited readers "to embrace their own agency—to discover the multiple histories revealed through these works. This anthology no longer provided a singular path through music history with a presumed place of arrival; it provided a web of connections intended for freer exploration."

This point is worth stressing. My preface, titled "Making Connections: How to Use This Anthology," is a guide to how students can make their own maps. It is also a window into how musicologists think, which is part of what we seek to teach. But it cannot serve either purpose if students do not read it or internalize its message, and they are unlikely to do either unless their instructor assigns them to read it and discusses it in class. In my experience, doing so enhances students' interest and engages them directly with the music in a joint exploration. Leaving them to respond to choices in *NAWM* without confronting the rationale behind them significantly decreases its value as an instructional resource.

I wanted the territory students would survey to encompass all kinds of music in Europe and the Americas except folk and traditional music (which seemed too far afield to include), so that every student could find places on their map for the music they love, listen to, practice, and perform. I recognized that not all of it could be covered in equal measure, for practical reasons and because I could not expect instructors to change their courses too much too fast, but there should be multiple paths leading in as many directions as possible. I designed the narrative in *HWM* to embrace variety by focusing on themes that made it easier to encompass diverse voices beyond any single line of development: "the people who created, performed, heard, and paid for this music; the choices they made and why they made them; what they valued most

in the music; and how these choices reflected both tradition and innovation.”<sup>5</sup> I pressed for more selections in *NAWM* in order to make room for multiple strands of connection, and made every selection serve as an example for multiple threads in the narrative, from styles and genres to techniques, social functions, performance, reception, expressivity, and interactions with poetry, dance, theater, and other arts.

There already were many examples outside the realm of art music: music for dancing; functional church music from chant through motets and masses to sacred concertos and a J. S. Bach cantata; and music for amateurs from sixteenth-century madrigals and instrumental music to keyboard suites and sonatas, string quartets, piano music, and Lieder. But because the repertoire in later periods focused exclusively on music in the classical tradition, all this functional music looked in retrospect like it was part of that tradition. To make the point clearer, I added more functional church music, from sixteenth-century chorales and metric psalms to two of Arvo Pärt’s *Seven Magnificat Antiphons*; more music for amateurs, from William Billings’s fugging tune *Creation* to oratorios by Haydn and Mendelssohn, a Schubert partsong, a Foster parlor song, a Dvořák *Slavonic Dance* for piano four hands, and teaching pieces by Bach and Bartók; and the ragtime, blues, and jazz numbers mentioned earlier. As I have already suggested, expanding the proportion of music outside the classical tradition in the last two centuries would be very welcome.

But there are constraints on such expansion, and the most important is a consequence of the second major difference between editors. Luongo points out that while Palisca created the first edition as a product of his own vision, I have had a much more collaborative approach. The proposal, detailed outline, and works list I created for my first edition of *HWM* and *NAWM* were reviewed by sixteen scholars before I began writing; every volume I have produced has been thoroughly reviewed by twenty or more scholars and teachers; and after each new edition, Norton has solicited feedback from hundreds of instructors using *NAWM* about which selections they find most useful and what they recommend keeping, adding, or dropping. I have taken all of these recommendations seriously, following those that were most persuasive or widely shared, and every suggestion led me to a clearer rationale for what to include or leave out and made *NAWM* and *HWM* better books.

They also set limits. For example, a survey of instructors using the fifth edition of *NAWM* showed that relatively few assigned or taught selections I had added representing band music, popular song, choral music after Handel, jazz, Latin American music, and women born after 1800. The comparatively

5. “Preface to the Seventh Edition,” in J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 7th ed. (New York: Norton, 2006), xxiii.

low usage would typically argue for taking these items out of the anthology. I asked my Norton editor, Maribeth Payne, to keep them, and she agreed, because we both believed that these were areas that needed to be better represented in music history courses. Over the years the percentage of instructors assigning and teaching these pieces has risen considerably, especially for the jazz selections and pieces by Latin American and women composers. But until that happened I felt constrained about adding more; I could nudge, but I could not force change. This explains Luongo's findings that the fifth and eighth editions of *NAWM* showed noticeable expansion in these areas, while the sixth and seventh editions did not.

I asked my current Norton editor, Chris Freitag, for his thoughts on this question. He wrote:

I think [Luongo] significantly underestimates the importance of the input we get from instructors in determining the contents. It may have been true in Palisca's day that the choices were largely his, with consultation from select colleagues, but the selection process is very different now. The author and editor give a lot of weight to the suggestions and feedback from the hundreds of instructors who respond to our various surveys. While we are not bound to be responsive to those preferences (and sometimes choose despite them), to ignore them would be foolish. For all the grandeur of its legacy and reputation, and the importance it may have had for the field as a whole, *NAWM* is not a free-standing monument to music. While it may have been a formative force in the development of the music history survey, it is now as much a reflection of that course and the people who teach it as it is a force for change. It is a tool, intended primarily for classroom use, and the voices of those who make use of it are a critical part of the selection process.

Those voices have influenced my choices at every step. For example, in writing the nineteenth-century section of *HWM*, I kept Grout's organization by genre (with some tweaks) so that I could tell the story I wanted to tell, focusing on the mass market for music and its results, including amateur music-making at home and in choral societies, large public concerts and stage performances, the rise of the virtuosos, the subsequent vogue for historical concerts, and the creation of the classical repertoire, first in choral music, then in chamber music, orchestral music, and opera. But many reviewers and users had urged me to organize *HWM* and *NAWM* by composer, since they taught their classes that way. To accommodate them, I created a modular organization, where Schubert,



Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann, Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Hensel, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, and others appear in more than one place but in discrete subsections that could be pulled out easily by instructors who organize their class by composer. This led to a tendency to use examples for different genres by the same composers—and as Luongo points out, all those with multiple selections in *NAWM* are white men. But in the most recent survey, Clara Schumann's Piano Trio is the highest rated nineteenth-century chamber work in *NAWM*, suggesting that it is time to reduce the doubling up for canonic male composers; instructors are ready to teach a wider range of composers if we can find the right pieces.

### What to Do (Or Not to Do) Now?

To return to Luongo's recommendations for change in *NAWM*, I have been pursuing his first two as rapidly as I can for two decades, and I recognize there is more to do, from adding more Black, Asian, and women composers to increasing the proportion of music outside the classical tradition. This is much easier to accomplish in *HWM*, where race, gender, and sexuality can be woven into the narrative. By expanding treatment of jazz and popular music and distributing it over several chapters, I was able to add eight Black composers to *NAWM*, plus Black performers like Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, and Louis Armstrong in the recorded anthology, and to mention many more while discussing African American music from spirituals to hip hop. In the tenth edition of *HWM*, I have added mentions of Black composers and musicians in the classical realm, such as composer Joseph Bologne (Chevalier de Saint-Georges) and sopranos Elizabeth Greenfield and Sissieretta Jones. It would be helpful in the next editions to add more Black classical composers to *NAWM* as Luongo suggests and to continue the story of racial barriers in classical music in *HWM* with performers like Marian Anderson and Paul Robeson and discrimination against Black orchestral players and conductors. Hearing specific suggestions for people and pieces to include is enormously helpful.

Yet, as Luongo mentions, there are economic and practical limitations to adding new repertoire to *NAWM*, especially material under copyright, which includes virtually all music since the 1920s. In the fifth edition I tried to add a song from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* to represent Broadway musicals of the 1940s, but the four pages of piano-vocal score would have cost more than five percent of my entire budget for permissions; worse, most publishers have "most-favored-nations" clauses that require them to receive a per-page rate equivalent to the highest received by any publisher, and adding this score would have sent the permissions cost for the entire anthology through the roof.

Likewise, Luongo's recommendation to include contrasting performances of some selections is a terrific idea for instructors, but it is impossible for *NAWM* to add many more (beyond the two different realizations of Euripides's *Orestes* chorus and of Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* already present), again for reasons of cost. Freitag comments from the publisher's perspective:

The permissions costs for the scores we include are daunting, and between the arcane licensing rules of major music publishers, with favored-nations clauses and the like, and the market pressure to keep the price of the volumes reasonably low, there are choices that simply can't be made. The same applies to the recordings. The suggestion to provide more than one recording of a single work in order to discuss differences in performance practice has merit, but it also comes at a cost. While it is an important market to all of us who work in and around it, music history is—in publishing terms—a small market, which means that the costs of creating books, anthologies, and other resources must be spread over relatively modest numbers of copies sold. The result of increasing those costs is higher prices.

Similar problems affect Luongo's suggestion that *NAWM* shift to an online anthology with more wide-ranging selections from which instructors can choose. As Freitag points out,

the assumptions that the author makes about the potential for digital delivery to increase the scope and diversity of the anthology are, sadly, unfounded. Our experience with attempting to clear the necessary electronic rights has shown us how much more expensive that process can be. Some publishers simply will not grant such rights. At the same time, when we have tested the idea of a digital version of the anthology with instructors the response has been lackluster. A large portion of them prefer a print anthology that students can bring to class, mark up with notes and analysis, and take to a piano. While those are attitudes and behaviors that might change with time and with improvements in technology, we are not there yet, and are not likely to be there for some time.

Other recommendations I simply disagree with. For reasons already stated, I see the coupling of *NAWM* with *HWM* and *CHWM* to be a strength, as they work together to link an overview of music history with deep engagement with individual pieces of music. The commentaries on each selection provide necessary background on the creation of each piece and on unfamiliar aspects of notation and performance, and the analytical discussions provide a great



variety of models for how to explore and experience pieces of music over a wide span of time, place, style, and type. Reviewers and instructors also report with near unanimity that they and their students value the commentaries in *NAWM* and the pairing of the anthology with the overarching narrative in the textbook. Starting afresh “to overhaul the fundamental identity of *NAWM*” and change the entire repertoire would force thousands of instructors to rewrite their syllabi from scratch, an effect equivalent to withdrawing *NAWM* from publication.

In my view, continuing to offer the package as currently envisioned, and continuing in future editions to adjust the repertoire to reflect changing views of what to include, will meet the needs of the greatest number of instructors while allowing teachers flexibility to adapt it to suit their individual approaches, whether that be to use the anthology and text together or one without the other; to add and omit other selections; to promote discussion of performance practice by assigning contrasting performances; to frame the music by women and by gay, lesbian, and bisexual composers from Leoninus to Jennifer Higdon using feminist or queer theory; or to assemble their own anthologies for their classes.

When I took on rewriting *HWM* and editing *NAWM*, I did not see them as my books. I understood that they were shared resources, used so widely that they were common property, jointly owned by every scholar and teacher of music history, and I knew that listening to many voices and hearing all opinions is a constant necessity. I have my own views and lean into them in my choices, but as much as I can I have sought to represent the consensus of the field, bringing together prevailing narratives with new and competing points of view, and making both *HWM* and *NAWM* useful for many approaches to teaching. Just as in my preface I challenge students to embrace their own agency in making connections, I respect every instructor’s agency; I do not want to impose one historical view or path through history on every teacher who uses this book and anthology.

I greatly appreciate Paul Luongo’s article as a well-considered contribution to the conversation. I hope it sparks many further contributions, in print, among instructors, and in direct communications to the editors and publisher. Please send us your opinions. You can reach Chris Freitag at [cfreitag@wnorton.com](mailto:cfreitag@wnorton.com) and me at [burkhold@indiana.edu](mailto:burkhold@indiana.edu).