



Cambridge Faculty of Music Colloquium Michaelmas 2024 Term Card

Welcome!

It has been a pleasure to put together this term's Faculty of Music colloquia – we are very excited to welcome a diverse range of speakers who will share their research on a broad range of topics. You are warmly invited to join the speaker and committee members for dinner (or lunch) afterwards.

In order to accommodate a wider variety of members of the Faculty this year, we are holding two colloquia per term at 12:30pm (instead of the usual 5pm). These will be held in **Week 3** and **Week 7** of each term. For Michaelmas 2024, these will be on **23rd October** and **20th November**. Refreshments will be available in the foyer from 12pm on these dates. With these early afternoon sessions, we especially hope to welcome those with regular evening non-colloquia commitments.

We hope you have a brilliant year and please reach out to us if you have any questions or recommendations.

Colloquium Committee 2024/25

Apolline Gouzi

Nicholas Ong

Suren Pahlevan

Dr Vanessa Paloma Elbaz

Dr Alisha Lola Jones

In memoriam Alexandra Leonzini (1989 – 2024)



Alex Leonzini served as a member of the music faculty colloquium committee for the 2021/22 academic year. She was committed to making the events of the series digitally inclusive by striking a balance between drawing in-person speakers to Cambridge and inviting a diverse roster of scholars to present from locations around the world. She brought charm, irony, and genuine curiosity to her role chairing sessions. She was always respectful, but she never shied away from asking challenging questions, whether the speaker was an emerging scholar or a tenured professor. Alex took the responsibility of hosting a guest in the faculty seriously, and she went to every post-colloquium dinner, dazzling invited presenters with her wit and wide-ranging research interests. Tadhg Sauvey, a friend and colleague from the committee, fondly remembers working with her:

I first got to know Alex when we both ended up on the Faculty colloquium committee. It was impossible not to be struck by this new colleague's sense of humour, a very special humour, hearty and mordant, all her own but irresistible. (Once when I announced that I had to miss a colloquium, leaving the others in the lurch: "No problemo! Well... little problemo, but manageable problemo." It was funnier when she said it. Another time, when we learned that an eminent personage wanted to come to the post-colloquium dinner: "Great, I'll wear my finest hoodie.") This was covid times and there were moments of stress, there were moments of panic, and they may indeed have involved some flailing as we struggled to understand why Zoom wouldn't work or the microphone refused to turn on, but whatever happened it was such a relief to know that Alex was there, with her good humour, carrying us along, always confident, radiating enthusiasm, and lightening the atmosphere. I'm sure each of the speakers who came that year would agree that without her, their Cambridge excursion would have been much less than it was.



Co-conveners Colloquium Committee 2021/22

Nicky Swett

Tadhg Sauvey

Colloquium Schedule (Michaelmas 2024)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Title and Speaker</u>
2	5pm	<i>Chanter la guerre</i> during the Seven Years War Olivia Bloechl (University of Pittsburgh)
3	12:30pm	On Organology, Tikkun and Baraka: The Venerated Lives of North African Torah Scrolls Ilana Webster-Kogen (SOAS, University of London)
4	5pm	Arts of Extraction: Oil, Digital Audio and Geo-Histories of Sound Gavin Williams (King's College London)
5	5pm	Songs in the Key of Life: Stylistic Adaptation and the 1970s Music Industry Justin Williams (University of Bristol)
6	5pm	'Don't gawp up at it!' Listening to the organ in early Lutheranism Anna Stepler (Peterhouse, Cambridge)
7	12:30pm	Restoring Obrecht's <i>Missa Scaramella</i> Fabrice Fitch (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)
8	5pm	Grappling With a Woman-Thinker: Representations of Female Pianists in the Writings of Alexei Losev Marina Frolova-Walker (University of Cambridge)

Week 2: 5pm, 16th October 2024, Recital Room

Professor Olivia Bloechl

Professor of Music, University of Pittsburgh

Chanter la guerre during the Seven Years War

In this lecture, I focus more closely on singing and dancing embodiment as a site for the world-making I introduced in the first lecture. As a case study, I discuss the practice of performing Haudenosaunee-style personal war songs in negotiations to form multi-Indigenous/European military coalitions during the Seven Years' War. French and British colonial archives extensively document these intercultural rituals that the French termed "chanter la guerre." However, missionaries' and officers' writings often furnish more performance details than official records, so I turn to French officers' writings and to war song transcriptions for information on performances by Montcalm's officers in negotiations convened in 1756-57. In fact, Bougainville performed his personal war song several times, including in his ceremonial adoption by the Kahnawá:ke Kanien'keha'ka (Caughnawaga Mohawk) Turtle clan. His learning to embody Haudenosaunee men's ways of singing in war councils and adoptions conformed to longstanding Six Nations protocols for forming alliances, and it furthered French military aims. Yet Bougainville's and Montcalm's writings suggest their discomfort with the intimacy and indistinction between Indigenous/European combatants entailed in "chanter la guerre." I read their discomfort as responding to the contradictions of forming intercultural alliances in a colonializing zone. **This is lecture 2 of Professor Bloechl's Wort Residency in the faculty.*



OLIVIA BLOECHL is a Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, where she joined the Department of Music in 2017. She had previously taught at UCLA and Bucknell University. An alumna of Smith College, Massachusetts, she received a Ph.D. in Musicology at the University of Pennsylvania in 2002. Prof. Bloechl is a music historian and cultural theorist with wide-ranging interests clustered in the early modern period and the long eighteenth century (1500-1800). Her research emphasizes music and sound in early Atlantic empires, French Baroque opera (especially *tragédie en musique*), postcolonialism, and global music history and historiography. Her full-length publications include [*Native American Song at the Frontiers of Early Modern Music*](#) (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008) and [*Opera and the Political Imaginary in Old Regime France*](#) (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2017), which was supported by an ACLS Charles A. Ryskamp Research Fellowship and a generous subvention from the James R. Anthony Endowment of the AMS. With Melanie Lowe and Jeffrey Kallberg she also co-edited the collection [*Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*](#) (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015).). Her current book project, which undergirds her lecture series for the Wort Residency here in Cambridge, is "Sound and Song in the Allegheny World, 1740-1776," a study of Indigenous/settler sonic interaction and exchange in the upper Ohio River valley (especially the Ohio Forks region, near Pittsburgh) before the American Revolution.



Week 3: 12:30pm, 23rd October 2024, Recital Room

Dr Ilana Webster-Kogen

Joe Loss Reader in Jewish Music, SOAS University of London

On Organology, Tikkun and Baraka: The Venerated Lives of North African Torah Scrolls



For Jews all over the world, the Torah scroll is the height of holiness, framed as the carefully designed and produced word of God. Jews give great attention to the care of Torah scrolls, ensuring they are maintained and protected so that they can be used for ritually chanting the Torah portion at regular intervals. North African Jews stand out in their use of Torah scrolls in the breadth of their veneration practices, practices that celebrate the Torah and its role as divine intermediary, and Jews from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya will often frame the scroll in terms that are kabbalistic (based in Jewish mysticism) or informed by Sufi ritual habits. It is like a member of the community, referred to in the Bible and in liturgy as the “Tree of Life” (*Etz Hayim*) and often described anthropomorphically as having clothing (*me’il*) and a birthday (*Simhat Torah*). This presentation explores the many ways that North African communities anthropomorphize Torah scrolls, treating them in ways that to an observer would clearly suggest semi-human agency and its own life cycle. Within this framework of anthropomorphism, we consider the ontological status of the scroll from the perspectives of organology, mysticism, and ritual healing. As we query the broad suggestion in the literature of the Torah scroll as a gendered, male space, we examine the ways that women put faith in its healing and productive power. By examining a veneration habitus that centres anthropomorphism, organology, mystical repair (*tikkun*) and divine blessings (*baraka*), we propose a ritual reconsideration of human-object interstices.

ILANA WEBSTER-KOGEN is the Joe Loss Reader in Jewish Music at SOAS University of London, where she is the Head of the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics. She is the author of the award-winning book *Citizen Azmari: Making Ethiopian Music in Tel Aviv*, published in 2018 by Wesleyan University Press. She publishes primarily in the disciplines of Ethnomusicology, Jewish Studies, and Middle East Studies, and she has been awarded visiting positions at Yale, UPenn and NYU Abu Dhabi. Her presentation today comes from her next book manuscript, entitled *Traders, Chanters and Mystics: the Networked Afterlives of North African Torah Scrolls*.



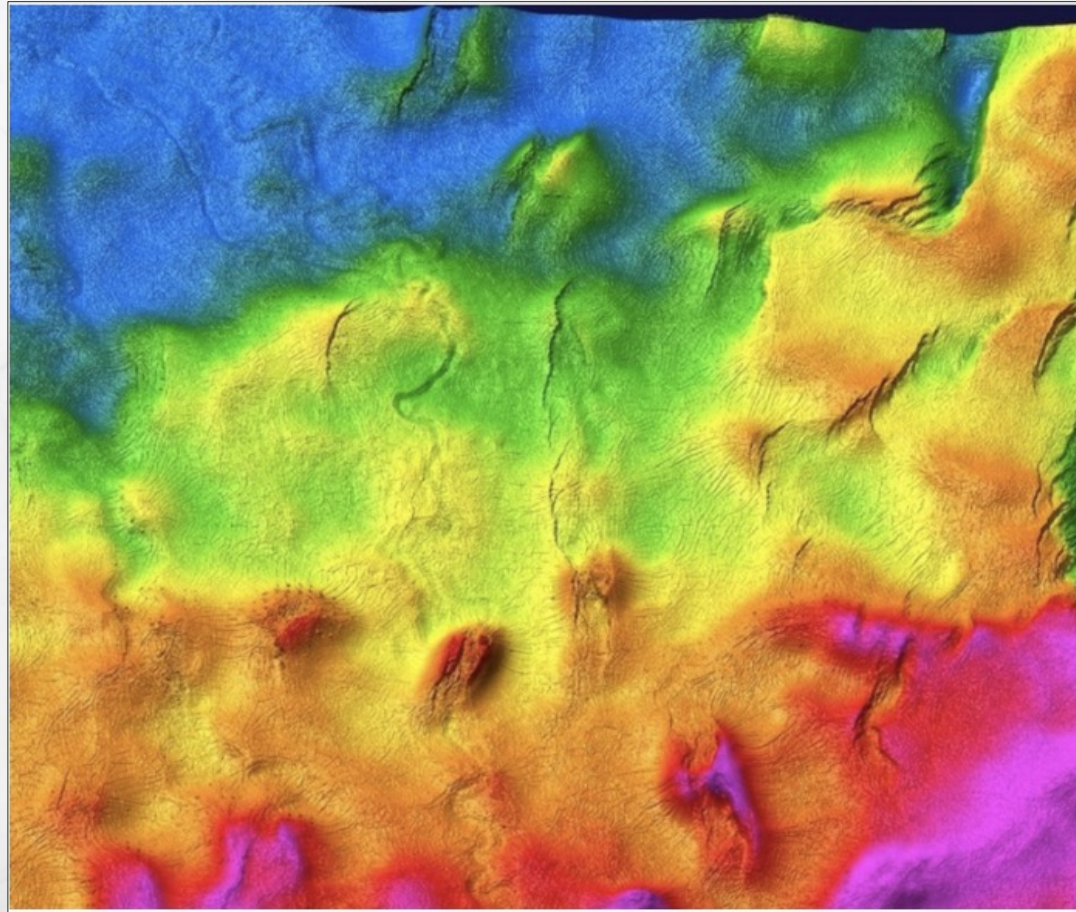
Week 4: 5pm, 30th October 2024, Recital Room

Dr Gavin Williams

Lecturer in Music, King's College London

Arts of Extraction: Oil, Digital Audio and Geo-Histories of Sound

Ethnomusicologists have long called attention to extractive dynamics in musical cultures. But what of sound as a technology of extraction in the oil industry? This colloquium will explore the convergence, since the Second World War, between seismic survey and oil industries in which dynamite and air gun explosions have become standard ways of sounding the earth's strata. It will peer into the history of mathematics, computing, and spectrographic analysis; it will consider the effects of underwater blasts on marine life; and it will track the implications for early digital audio, in particular, focussing on efforts to clean up shellac discs using digital techniques borrowed from the analysis of seismic recordings in search of oil. Ultimately, my goal will be (in this talk or some point in the future) to evaluate the extent to which sonic practices of oil extraction have bled into auditory and musical cultures more broadly, and vice versa, as well as the extent to which both oil and music register capitalism's framing of the earth in extractible terms.



GAVIN WILLIAMS is a Lecturer in Music at King's College London. He was a Junior Research Fellow at Jesus College, Cambridge, between 2013-16, and since lived and worked in UC Berkeley and Cardiff. His book *Format Friction: Perspectives on the Shellac Disc* was published by University of Chicago Press in June, and he is currently putting together an edited collection together with co-editors Laudan Nooshin and Annette Davison called *Critical Perspectives on Petrosonics*.

Week 5: 5pm, 6th November 2024, Recital Room

Professor Justin Williams

Professor of Music, University of Bristol

Songs in the Key of Life: Stylistic Adaptation and the 1970s Music Industry

The 1970s have been described as a 'fragile decade' in US history: Nixon's resignation, the decreasing popularity of the Vietnam War, waning public faith in national government, economic recession, the OPEC oil crisis, mass unemployment, economic deregulation, and the lack of fulfilment of many of the promises of the Civil Rights movement. In contrast, the recorded music industry continued on a rising trajectory, with ever more financial support from multinational corporations. In 1975 Stevie Wonder signed a new contract with Motown for an unprecedented \$37 million, one which gave him full artistic control over his projects. The first output from this new contract was the Grammy-winning *Songs in the Key of Life*, a double album released in 1976 with additional four-song EP. The album is seen as the culmination of his 'mature period', and it has frequently topped the best albums of the 1970s lists. *SitKoL* is reflective of Black pop's ties to its history: soul, funk, blues, and jazz, but also borrows from rock's growing excess and jazz fusion's proclivity for hybridity. Using *SitKoL* as case study, my paper demonstrates how the album can be understood as the culmination of Wonder's own personal musical style; as contextualizing the rising support infrastructure of the music industry (and Black capitalism); and as exemplary of superstar 1970s artists' ability to adapt multiple styles (Schnittke 1971; Williams 2022) to their own maximalist visions.



JUSTIN A. WILLIAMS is a Professor in Music at the University of Bristol (UK), the author of *Rhyming and Stealin: Musical Borrowing in Hip-Hop* (Michigan, 2013) and *Brithop: The Politics of UK Rap in the New Century* (Oxford, 2021). He is editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop* (Cambridge, 2015), and co-editor (with Katherine Williams) of the *Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter* (2016) and the *Singer-Songwriter Handbook* (2017). As a musician in California, he led a jazz piano trio and played trumpet with the award-winning band Bucho!



Week 6: 5pm, 13th November 2024, Lecture Room 2

Dr Anna Steppler

Junior Research Fellow, Peterhouse, Cambridge

‘Don’t gawp up at it!’ Listening to the organ in early Lutheranism



In the first century after Luther’s Reformation, debates flared up time and again over perceived remnants of papist superstition. The organ frequently came under fire in Protestant spaces, representative of musical excess and overt splendour, its continued presence far from assured. As a physical object, it was swept up into debates over idolatry, causing Lutheran theologians and music theorists alike to centre the organ’s living sonic presence as justification for its religious purpose. Lutheranism actively promoted attentive, reasoned listening as integral to faith. Centred on hearing the sermon, this intense, directed attention also became associated with finding meaning in the organ’s textless music. This desire for instrumental music to bear meaning – and the fear that it did not – reveals early modern attitudes to (instrumental) voices and the rationality (or not) of musical sound, and offers a glimpse into how one might learn to listen c1600. Dr Steppler will be playing a programme inspired by this research at Trinity College Chapel in the pre-evensong organ music on Sunday November 17th (5:40pm). Extensive chorale fantasias by Michael Praetorius (1609) and Samuel Scheidt (1624) will be interweaved with lighter pieces from the Susanne van Soldt manuscript (1599) giving an opportunity to listen to the organ ‘in the Lutheran manner.’



ANNA STEPPLER is Junior Research Fellow in Music at Peterhouse. An organist, she combines scholarship and performance, and her work centres on the organ as both creator of sacred space and site of cultural knowledge, ideals, and exploration across history. She received her Ph.D. in Musicology from Cornell University (Ithaca, NY, December 2022) for her dissertation “Michael Praetorius, the Organ, and the Possibilities of Instrumental Music,” which argues for the organ’s pivotal role in discussions of instrumental music in Lutheran courtly circles before the Thirty Years’ War, and was awarded Cornell’s Donald J. Grout Memorial Prize for an exceptional dissertation in Music. She is currently expanding this research into a monograph. Her work has appeared in various forums including *Journal of Musicology*, *The Organ Yearbook* and *Women & Music*.

Week 7: 12:30pm, 20th November 2024, Lecture Room 2

Dr Fabrice Fitch

Senior Research Fellow, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Restoring Obrecht's *Missa Scaramella*

In this lecture I will present and discuss my reconstruction (or restoration) of the fragmentary *Missa Scaramella* by Jacob Obrecht (c.1457/8–1505). It survives uniquely in two of an original set of four part-books. Reconstructing the material of the two missing part-books (the top voice and the tenor) poses very different problems. I will explore these challenges with reference to the finished edition (*Jacob Obrecht: Missa Scaramella, edited and restored by Fabrice Fitch (with Philip Weller and Paul Kolb)*, Utrecht, 2024) which has also been recorded by the Binchois Consort (dir. Andrew Kirkman) for Hyperion.



FABRICE FITCH is a composer and musicologist specializing in Renaissance polyphony. He has written *Johannes Ockeghem: Masses and Models* (Paris, 1997), the only full-length book in English on the composer, and most *Renaissance Polyphony* (Cambridge, 2020) and co-edited *Bon jour, bon mois et bonne estrenne: Essays on Renaissance Music in Honour of David Fallows* (Woodbridge, 2011). He has published widely on composers active around 1500, notably Obrecht and Agricola. He is a member of the editorial boards of *Early Music* and the *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* and has been a reviewer with *Gramophone* for over 25 years. His compositions have been performed by leading soloists and chamber ensembles (including Richard Craig and Neil Heyde, the Diotima and Kreutzer String Quartets, Distractfold, Ensemble Exposé, Leones, Fretwork, Exaudi, and the Binchois Consort) and broadcast internationally. He is currently Senior Research Fellow at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

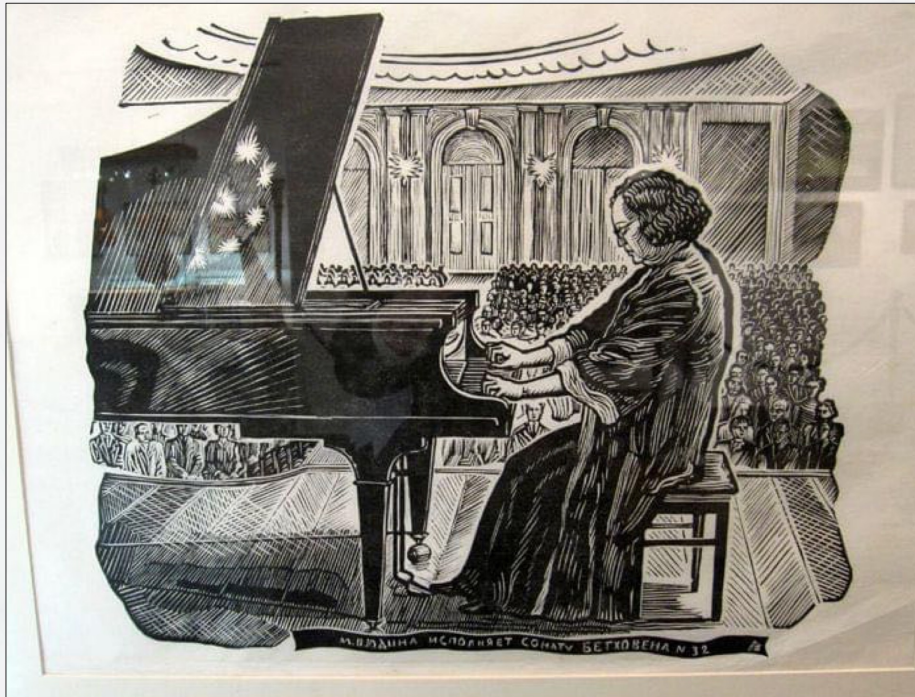


Week 8: 5pm, 27th November 2024, Recital Room

Professor Marina Frolova-Walker, FBA

Professor of Music History, University of Cambridge

Grappling With a Woman-Thinker: Representations of Female Pianists in the Writings of Alexei Losev



The last third of the 19th century saw great advances in the professionalisation of female pianists in Russia. The two conservatories, founded in the early 1860s, issued their best graduates a diploma that declared them to be “free artists”. The society was highly stratified, but not rigidly so, and this new social status gave women the opportunity to build a prestigious career in music, long before such possibilities opened in other professions. Russian belles-lettres was slow to reflect this momentous change, and although the literary type of the “konservatorka” (female conservatory graduate) became an occasional symbol of the liberated woman, the treatment was often satirical. Against this background, four works of fiction by Alexei Losev stand out, since each of them features a female protagonist who is a concert pianist. They were all written in 1932-33, when Losev returned to society after serving in a labour camp, and they were all inspired by the concert pianist Maria Yudina, whom he knew personally. In each case the male character engages in some kind of “battle” with the woman, which can end in tragedy: the pianist of the novel *The Woman-Thinker*, for example, is humiliated, raped and killed. My aim in this paper is twofold: first, to unravel the reasons for this strange desire to “battle” a female concert pianist, which lies deep at the heart of Losev’s philosophy of music; and second, to explain the total blindness of previous Losev commentators to the disturbing nature of this recurring narrative design.



MARINA FROLOVA-WALKER is Professor of Music History at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, where she is also Director of Studies in Music. Between 2018 and 2019, she was Visiting Professor of Russian Music and then Professor of Music from 2019 to 2023 at Gresham College where she delivered lectures on ‘Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes’, ‘Russian Piano Masterpieces’, and ‘Music Under Stalin’, amongst others. Her many awards and appointments include a Fellowship of the British Academy, and the Dent Medal awarded by the Royal Musical Association in 2015. Marina has published extensively on Russian music of the 19th and 20th centuries, and her most recent book (co-written with Jonathan Walker) which explored Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 5 was published in 2024 by Oxford University Press.