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Articles

Reviews and Dialogues

Toward a People's History of Western Music

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This essay began as an idealistic response to a practical problem. I had recently stepped into a full-time, contingent position at a large school of music at a public university. Along with other teaching duties, I was tasked with the second half of the two-semester sequence in Western art music. I was lucky to have supportive senior colleagues in my area, and my area director gave me free reign to teach the class as I saw fit. There were, however, constraints. The textbook was determined for the year. The date range and conceptual geography were prescribed by course title as it appeared in the catalog: "History of Western Music, Classical Era to the Present." Many of my colleagues expected their students to have a basic competence with canonic styles of Western art music, and some students shared this expectation.

Reasons for dissatisfaction with surveys are many and understandable. The practical problem of "coverage"—how is one to fit hundreds of years and thousands of works into a few months?—dovetails with the suspicion of grand narratives in critical inquiry that has grown steadily since the 1970s across the humanities.[1] Indeed, musical narratives that traffic in ideas of evolution and historical inevitability not only silence the richness of historical contingency, but also affirm the outcomes of the very worst historical processes—colonialism, white supremacy, European (and later American) hegemony—without calling these processes into question.

This will be a familiar set of issues for many musicology and music history faculty, as will be institutional responses to them. Some elite institutions

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1. See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi with a foreword by Frederic Jameson (Manchester University Press, 1984), 27–37; and Jameson's foreword, xi–xiv. For an articulation of the political stakes of this perspective, see Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (Basic Books, 2003), 13.

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have removed the required status of these specific courses from their curricula, though in some cases the limited courses on offer, combined with a required number of credits, de facto reproduce the old requirement. Others have reduced their survey to a single semester. Very few have disentangled the logic of the survey from the curriculum altogether.[2] Careful reading of job postings in the field of musicology and comparison with online course catalogs also suggest that, while applicants are encouraged to have research specialties in noncanonic musics, with an emphasis on Afrodiasporic musics, teaching expectations frequently include some portion of a survey of Western art music. Junior and, especially, contingent faculty teaching the survey may be the least methodologically committed to the course *and* the least institutionally empowered to change the curriculum.

Perhaps the administrative burden of curriculum change is simply too heavy. At The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, for example, the survey course I taught was required for music majors and fulfilled a university general-education writing requirement. Such requirements are often carefully calibrated so that music students participating in many ensembles or with student-teaching obligations can fulfill general-education requirements without overloading, while also taking into account federal aid rules that limit elective courses.[3] Indeed, one might hesitate to do away with a humanities course so intricately enmeshed in a preprofessional curriculum at a time when the humanities are being sold for parts. The survey, it seems—alongside the repertoire and concepts it typically entails—has been dislodged from its prominence in the intellectual vocation of musicology, but it remains firmly entrenched in the educational practice.

Skepticism of the survey is related to the question of the canon, a specter that haunts undergraduate teaching in fields like music history, art history, and literature, whose legacy in connoisseurship causes a gravitation toward history of style as the central pedagogy. While the process of canon formation is certainly crucial to the historiography of Western bourgeois culture, concepts of "the canon" often serve as a shorthand for a host of issues that would be better dealt with as discrete entities. For example, when Harold Bloom, Cornel West, or Scott Burnham defend the Western canon as a "conversation among great

2. While discrepancies between published curriculum descriptions and actual offerings are common at many institutions, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a rare example of a wholesale rejection of surveys. See "Transformations in Music Studies at Carolina," UNC College of Arts and Sciences, Music, accessed May 16, 2024, https://music.unc.edu/undergraduate/transformations-in-music-studies-at-carolina/.

3. See, for example, "Course Program of Study," The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, One Stop Student Services, accessed July 15, 2024, https://onestop.utk.edu/scholarships-financial-aid/financial-aid/course-program-of-study-cpos/.

thinkers" that we might engage with directly through their works,[4] or when ideology entrepreneurs such as Christopher Rufo defend it as a proxy for the greatness of Western civilization,[5] the political and pedagogical debates raised are related but not identical. The question of why many opera companies and symphony orchestras rely on the same handful of works to break even financially in an era of austerity and widespread disinvestment from the arts and humanities is also related but requires its own analysis.

My goal here is not to deal with these interrelated conceptions of the canon directly, but rather to point toward a pedagogical approach that does not depend either on the canon or its negation as its focal point. There have been many proposals for breaking free of the canon in its most limited sense. Marcia Citron's classic calls for integrating female composers into the canon have certainly been impactful, though she herself is critical of the "add-and-stir" approach.[6] Alejandro Madrid has more recently critiqued the "reformist" approach to the canon, which would "expand it in order to reproduce the values and ideologies that control the shaping and reshaping of that canonic fantasy."[7] This might usefully be compared to what philosopher Olúfémi O. Táíwò has recently termed *elite capture*, by which elites from within a marginalized group are integrated into dominant power structures as a tactic for occluding the continuing oppressive structure. As Táíwò writes, focus on "attentional injustice in the selection of spokespeople and book lists" routinely "directs what little attentional power we can control at symbolic sites of power rather than at the root political issues" that have resulted in spaces of concentrated influence—in this case, the canon of classical music—that are overwhelmingly white and male.[8]

4. Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1994); Cornel West and Jeremy Tate, "Howard University's removal of classics is a spiritual catastrophe," *Washington Post*, April 19, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/04/19/cornel-west-howard-classics/; and Scott Burnham, review of *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow: An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity*, by Karol Berger, *The Hopkins Review* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 303–6. The phrase is West and Tate's, though Burnham uses the similar formulation of "the Great Conversation" (306).

5. On Rufo, see Annie Abrams and Roosevelt Montás, "The Defenders of Classical Education Are Destroying It," *The Atlantic*, March 15, 2023, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/03/liberal-education-desantis-humanities-western-canon/673395/. Rufo articulates his own ideological program as a board member at New College of Florida in "The Difficult Work of Academic Reform: New College of Florida enters its second year under new leadership," *City Journal*, August 17, 2024, https://www.city-journal.org/article/the-difficult-work-of-academic-reform.

6. See Marcia J. Citron, "Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon," *Journal of Musicology* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 104; and "Women and the Western Art Canon: Where Are We Now?" *Notes* 64, no. 2 (2007): 209–15.

7. Alejandro L. Madrid, "Diversity, Tokenism, Non-Canonical Musics, and the Crisis of the Humanities in U.S. Academia," this **Journal** 7, no. 2 (2017): 125.

8. Olúfémi O. Táíwò, *Elite Capture: How the Powerful Took Over Identity Politics (And Everything Else)* (Haymarket Books, 2022), 72. Táíwò's intervention is applicable at a much

I favor Madrid's "critical approach to the canon," which examines it as a construct with inbuilt biases.[9] However, the undergraduate survey is not always the most appropriate place for deconstruction. My students may understand implicit notions of the canon, but they have no wholesale narrative at their disposal to deconstruct. Madrid's proposed solution—a revision of the entire curriculum around "transhistorical" and "dialogical" topics—is promising, and an impressive array of topics courses is apparent across the field.[10] On a practical level, however, this is not possible for many instructors, particularly contingent faculty. My first time teaching the portion of the survey that inspired this article was during the second semester of a one-year contract, and curriculum revisions may take years to implement. In a previous contingent teaching post, when I taught a different portion of the survey, I did not have institutional access to any materials, including course management systems, until a few weeks before the term began. While I had supportive colleagues at both institutions, the casualized economy of the neoliberal university can make choosing one's own classes, much less proposing and teaching new classes, nearly impossible for many instructors.

On a philosophical level, an overreliance on the transhistorical and the thematic—however important many of these courses are—leaves our curricula exposed on another flank, related to what Fredric Jameson calls the "crisis in historicity." The postmodern subject, Jameson writes, "has lost its capacity to actively extend its pro-tensions and re-tensions across the temporal manifold and to organize its past and future into a coherent experience."[11] Though this is part of the diagnosis Jameson provides for postmodern art, it should equally concern any educator of historical topics. More recently, Anna Kornbluh has argued that the loss of historicity observed by Jameson has since been compounded into a demand for immediacy in culture that accompanies the economics of just-in-time production and on-demand purchasing. That is, an economics that promises to cut out the middleman naturalizes a cultural style that "negates mediation to effect flow and indistinction."[12] Here, we might observe, is not only the place where time becomes space, but also where there is no space.

In fact, as Kornbluh illuminates, "immediacy" connects the practical and the philosophical as a logic that underwrites both the phenomenon of the at-will, contract employee as an alternative for the tenure line and pedagogies

broader level in higher education, as well, particularly as it concerns issues of hiring, admission, and leadership.

9. Madrid, "Diversity," 126.

10. Madrid, "Diversity."

11. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Duke University Press, 1991), 24.

12. Anna Kornbluh, *Immediacy or, The Style of Too Late Capitalism* (Verso, 2023), 12–13.

that aim for "self-exploration, therapy, and mirroring or affirmative representation" at the same time that they eschew the distancing mediations of "forms, concepts, and canons."[13] Whether chosen by the instructor or bequeathed by the curriculum, the survey is well poised to slow these logics under the defamiliarizing light of historical distance and the hard work of constructing and critiquing narratives and metanarratives.

Finally, while I do not have any investment in the canon as such, moves away from this repertoire may de facto accompany a move away from its historical and geographic provenance: modern Europe. Critical study of modern Europe remains an important aspect of understanding the world. As Dominique Kirchner Reill has noted in adumbrating related challenges in history departments, it is difficult to imagine studying capitalism or colonialism without studying Europe, and part of developing a less Eurocentric curriculum should involve analysis of the conditions that created that narrowed lens of focus to begin with.[14] Without the critical study of the material conditions in which the canon was formed, moreover, the narration of this material can easily be ceded to commentators for whom studying a culture is tantamount to praising its products. Given the role the idea of "Western civilization" is currently playing in reactionary politics within and outside the academy, I believe that it is important not to cede this territory.

With this set of constraints and impetuses in mind, I suggest that the survey can be transformed into a site of struggle against rather than a refuge for the sexist, racist, imperialist, and increasingly neoliberal capitalist ideologies that the canon supports. My model is Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*.[15] The volume narrates the familiar periods and milestones of US history through the experiences, accounts, and ideas of workers, organizers, and radical intellectuals. It is rich in quotations of primary sources and narrated with urgency and clarity. I first encountered the book in a history class in a public high school in South Carolina, where my teacher paired it with a traditional textbook. Revisionist historians bear the weight of justifying the counternarratives they propose, and Zinn meets this task head-on from the opening chapter, which tells the story of Columbus's arrival in the Western Hemisphere from "the view point of the Arawaks," whom the Spanish enslaved. In calling out the "inevitable taking of sides which comes from selection and emphasis in history," he not only shows his own hand, but also forces the student to ask of

13. Kornbluh, *Immediacy*, 89. Kornbluh takes these connections further by considering the rise of the college "writing program" alongside the demise of the job market for permanent positions in the humanities. See Kornbluh, 85–90.

14. Dominique Kirchner Reill, "Irrelevant Scapegoat: The Perils of Doing European History in Post-Trump America," *Contemporary European History* 23 (2023): 27–32, esp. 30–31.

15. Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States, 1492–Present* (HarperCollins, 2005).

the standard US history textbook: which side are *you* on?[16] Such textbooks, like those used in the survey of Western art music, are one of the remaining genres in which large swaths of sequential history are presented, and, if nothing else, Zinn's approach punctures the inevitability of their narratives.

While Zinn is frank about his intellectual commitments, one of the strengths of the text is that it maintains a focus on primary evidence. Though he was translating the academic movement of "people's history" or "history from below" that began in British Marxist circles to a secondary school or public audience,[17] he does not resort to pithy or dogmatic (or patronizing) "explainers," but rather presents the reader with extensive primary sources so they may challenge his conclusions and reach their own. In this way, the work has also lent itself to what has been called a "people's pedagogy," in which educators have excerpted and expanded upon the text and fostered open-ended discussion in the classroom.[18]

Authors following Zinn's model have added *A People's History of Modern India*, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, *A People's History of Modern Europe*, even *A People's History of Tennis*; but as of yet, no *People's History of Western Music*.[19] This article is an effort to sketch out how one might teach such a class in the absence of such a resource. I outline three places to make a breach into the survey, covering the same geography and chronology but resisting the ideology of the canon. First, after some practical notes on course design, I point to vernacular music and its traces within art music as a glimpse of the subaltern and a site of class struggle. Second, I sketch out possible case studies that illuminate music's role in the material experiences of everyday people. Third, I suggest a continued role for art music as a source of intellectual history and one of many models for human flourishing, which need not be irredeemably encumbered by its historical associations with the ruling classes. While I have chosen examples from my own teaching, the full project of a "People's History of Western Music" remains an aspiration, and this article is one step in articulating the outlines of what this course might eventually be.

16. Zinn, 10.

17. For an excellent reappraisal of the movement's origins, possibilities, shortcomings, and dilutions, see Priya Satia, "The Forgotten Dreams of History-from-Below," *Journal of Social History* 57, no. 3 (Spring 2024): 420–30.

18. See, for example, "Teachers: A People's Pedagogy," in Robert Cohen and Sonia E. Murrow, *Rethinking America's Past: Howard Zinn's* A People's History of the United States *in the Classroom and Beyond* (University of Georgia Press, 2021).

19. Suchitra Vijayan, *Midnight's Borders: A People's History of Modern India* (Melville House, 2021); Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (Beacon Press, 2014); William A. Pelz, *A People's History of Modern Europe* (Pluto Press, 2016); David Berry, *A People's History of Tennis* (Pluto Press, 2020).

Practical Considerations: The Syllabus and the Classroom

While my goal here is to outline an approach to content and framing within the conditions given by the survey, a few notes about the practicalities of teaching the course will be helpful. I have taught versions of this course with section sizes ranging from twenty-two to forty-seven students at a public R1 and a public R2 institution, both in the Southeastern United States. Each time the course has run on a Monday–Wednesday–Friday schedule, with fifty-minute class periods. My attempt has been to harmonize the nature of the class format with the type of skills and concepts I wish to instill. To do so, I have organized this course in a three-part, repeating rhythm. On Mondays, I give a lecture with a short preliminary reading from the textbook and built-in listening and discussion activities, and I refer to these as "Historical Narratives" days.[20] On Wednesdays, I assign one or two short primary sources and one or two musical examples and ask for a 250-word written response before class, and we spend the class period discussing the primary sources in depth and listening to portions of the music. In larger sections, I rely heavily on partner work, and I circulate while pairs are discussing so I can engage with smaller groups of students before returning to full group discussion. I call this day "Historical Materials." Fridays are focused around "Case Studies," for which I have taken inspiration from Sara Haefeli's approach.[21] These take place in small groups and typically revolve around a short reading and/or listening assignment with some discussion questions, a "mini-project," or some mixture of the two. Most of the work for case studies takes place during class time, and I circulate to engage with groups and answer questions.

This three-day rhythm, while far from perfect, allows us to work on discrete skills and also to make a large class smaller. I try to be explicit about my goals, which I explain as such: on Monday, we grasp the construct of historiography; on Wednesday, we deconstruct it through direct encounter with historical artifacts; and on Friday, we construct new narratives. This approach helps me remind students early that knowledge is constructed, that they should be aware of who constructs it, including me and the authors of textbooks, that they should be critical of such constructions, and that they also play a role in this process. I tell them that I understand history as a series of material contradictions inherent in any society, which, upon their resolution, create new contradictions, and that art at once "reflects and justifies its times," as Ernst Bloch puts it, but also

20. I have used Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford University Press, 2005); and its abridged counterpart, Richard Taruskin and Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, college ed., 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2019).

21. Sara Haefeli, *Teaching Music History with Cases: A Teacher's Guide* (Routledge, 2023).

may contain an excess that "rips open the times."[22] I owe this understanding of culture and history rooted in dialectical materialism to the tradition of the Frankfurt School and other Western Marxist thinkers, but I seldom assign theoretical works from these traditions in the course. Rather, it is my hope that in explaining how I make sense of history in the context of "Historical Narrative" days, students will gain an awareness that *all* historiography operates according to theoretical principles or value systems (though seldom articulated so transparently). Moreover, students need not share my intellectual or methodological (and certainly not political) commitments or conclusions; the format of the course is designed so that each week becomes progressively more open-ended and student-driven. Ending each week with group work ensures that conclusions are not merely plural, but collaboratively reached.

Which People, and Are They the Folk?

The idea of "the people" has played a major role in Western musical thinking since the late eighteenth century in the form of "the folk." While this concept ought to be historicized and scrutinized in its own right, the European obsession with "the folk" has left behind useful materials for understanding "the people" in a more expansive sense. Folk song in Western music is always already mediated through transcription, arranging, publishing, and later, recording. Studying these mediations, however, affords students a trace of a "people's" music, while providing a stage for class relation and conflict. To introduce this dynamic, I assign excerpts from two primary sources on "folk music" to read together, bookending the nineteenth century: Johann Gottfried Herder's *Ancient Folk Songs* and W. E. B. Du Bois's chapter "The Sorrow Songs" from *The Souls of Black Folk*.[23] Students are often surprised by the nature of Herder's folk; there is a Romantic, colonial gaze, yet this is directed not only at the people of Madagascar resisting the French, but also at Indigenous people within the European North. As Philip Bohlman has noted, there is a nascent anticolonialism in Herder's project, which students are sometimes surprised to detect, accustomed as they are to the flatness of European thought as portrayed in textbook overviews.[24] If many students are surprised by Herder's interest in Indigenous forms of knowledge, I find myself surprised with how readily some students accept his essentialism. In a standout passage, Herder writes:

22. Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (MIT Press, 1988), 39.

23. Johann Gottfried Herder and Philip V. Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses: Herder on Music and Nationalism*, trans. Philip V. Bohlman (University of California Press, 2017), 21–43; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 8th ed. (A. C. McLurg & Co., 1909), 250–64.

24. Philip V. Bohlman, "Herder's Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 7, no. 1 (2010): 17.

> *Warlike* peoples sing of the deeds of their ancestors, which in turn urge them on to deeds of their own. *Gentle* peoples sing *love songs* full of nature and simplicity. Those peoples with *cleverness and humor* insert puzzles into their songs and then solve those puzzles, playing with words and simile. A people with a *more creative imagination* possesses songs that contain poems, exaggerating and energizing life itself. Finally, a people that survives under the *barren, horrible conditions* of nature creates gods . . . horrible gods, gods who are giants . . . with songs that *negotiate* freedom and nobility.[25]

Although the concept of essentialism has entered the vernacular, some students struggle to recognize it when mobilized in laudatory tones, and this source helps expose the reliance on such terms as shorthands without understanding them.[26]

Alongside this text, we listen to Schubert's "Eine altschottische Ballade," D 923 ("Edward"), considering the figure of the folk in the bourgeois imagination as a nationally flavored cipher for universal themes.[27] We then turn closer to home: the very same song had been transmitted to Appalachia during the nineteenth century and had been collected by Herder's heirs, Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles, in the twentieth.[28] Research in the science of teaching and learning suggests that students retain information better when connecting the unknown to the familiar,[29] and when I taught this material in East Tennessee, the context of Appalachian folk music was quite familiar indeed. On the one hand, this connection helps students link the musical style they colloquially know as folk music to the concept's European genealogy. On the other, it also draws attention to continuities in vernacular music making that only periodically register in elite discourse.

Pairing Herder with Du Bois is illuminating for its inversion of the folk's connection to the soil. In Europe, the figure of "the folk" would lead to nationalist tropes of "blood and soil,"[30] but Du Bois refigures the relation to the soil in a liberatory vein: Herder's folk are *of* the soil, but Du Bois's have conquered the

25. Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, 36–37 (emphasis original).

26. To help provide some critical heft to these discussions, I often assign short excerpts from Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1978). I suspect that the ease with which students lapse into essentialism relates to certain contemporary discourses that orient cultural difference around notions of cultural (and even racial) fixity.

27. In his "Correspondence about Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples," Herder compares this to the story of Cain and Abel. See Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, 140–67. The song excerpt is reproduced on Malcolm Wren, "Eine altschottische Ballade, D 923," Schubert Song Texts, accessed May 15, 2024, https://www.schubertsong.uk/text/eine-altschottische-ballade/.

28. Bohlman, "Herder's Nineteenth Century," 4.

29. James M. Lang, *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning* (Jossey-Bass, 2016), 91–100.

30. The clearest articulation of this transformation in music history remains Richard Taruskin, "Nationalism," Grove Music Online (2001).

soil that they were forced to till. The distance with which this early work of Du Bois treats enslaved African Americans, referring to them as a "primitive type," as well as the essentialism he himself employs in exulting their music are also apparent after engaging with Herder,[31] and an expanded unit would create time for discussion of Du Bois's later, more internationalist and Marxist-inspired works. This expansion would also provide room to discuss Du Bois's friendship with Paul Robeson (whose performances of Harry T. Burleigh's arrangements of spirituals I also include with this lesson), extending lines of continuity from the late eighteenth century into the early twentieth and demonstrating that the legacy of the Romantic era is itself multiply determined.

As Zora Neale Hurston reminds us, however, these arrangements are a mediation, "the works of Negro composers or adaptors *based* on the spirituals."[32] Her point is ontological, but she also raises an important methodological issue that is worth working through with students: oral practices will always be approached through mediation in a writing-based intellectual tradition. To be sure, transforming the survey must also involve embracing new methodologies drawing from archeology and other disciplines and at times encouraging what Saidiya Hartman has called "critical fabulation."[33] However, the site of such mediation can itself provide important insight into the structural dynamics that constitute the category of "the folk." Later in the semester, we return to "the folk" in the context of Romantic nationalism. Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 2, the so-called "Little Russian" Symphony (op. 17), provides a timely example. This is a noncanonic work by a canonic composer, and the use of folk melodies within an orchestral composition is a classic touchstone of the survey.[34] Tchaikovsky himself admits, however, that the credit for the most popular movement should go not to him, but rather to one Pyotr Gerasimovich.[35] Gerasimovich was a peasant servant who worked for Tchaikovsky during a summer stay on his sister's Kamenka estate in Ukraine. Gerasimovich, Tchaikovsky tells us, frequently

31. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 251.

32. Zora Neale Hurston, "Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals," in *Negro: An Anthology*, ed. Nancy Cunard and Hugh Ford (Frederick Ungar Publishing), 224 (emphasis original).

33. A number of archeological approaches are outlined in *The Cambridge History of World Music*, ed. Philip V. Bohlman (Cambridge University Press, 2013). On "critical fabulation," see Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 26 (June 2008): 11. For its application in music studies, see Roger Mathew Grant, "Colonial Galant: Three Analytical Perspectives from the Chiquitano Missions," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 75, no. 1 (2022): 129–62.

34. See, for example, the "Eastern and Northern Europe" subsection in J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 10th ed. (W. W. Norton & Company, 2019), 736–45.

35. Letter from Pyotr Tchaikovsky to Modest Tchaikovsky, February 13/25, 1873, quoted in "Sympony No. 2," Tchaikovsky Research, last modified February 25, 2024, https://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Symphony_No._2.

sang the Ukrainian folk tune "The Crane," which would supply the thematic material for the finale, while the composer was at work.

This account elucidates a number of relationships between ethnicity, class, and imperial power that Romantic nationalism often obscures but music can help trace. First, Tchaikovsky is Gerasimovich's employer. While, from a class perspective, Tchaikovsky is sometimes referred to as the "the last of the court composers," working "under virtually eighteenth-century conditions," since his income came from wealthy private patrons and the monarchy itself,[36] this account highlights his position as a member of the landed gentry who can himself compel local peasants into waged labor. This is an opportunity to remind students that Gerasimovich would have likely been born in bondage, as the abolition of serfdom in the Russian Empire was roughly concurrent with the abolition of slavery in the United States.

This leads to an additional frame of reference; while human bondage was not racialized in the Russian Empire as it was in the United States, the issue of ethnicity is directly thematized by the symphony. Fully historicizing the complex history of Ukrainian nationalism would likely take more time than many instructors can devote in the music history survey, yet the simple fact that Ukraine was under Russian Imperial rule, paired with the diminutive epithet of the symphony ("Little Russian"), makes the relationship of paternalistic dominance of a proximate Other fairly legible to students. Finally, the long progression from music as "act" to "text" that emerges across the survey beginning in the Middle Ages and is explicitly thematized in Richard Taruskin's *Oxford History of Western Music* in both the full and college versions takes on distinct social meaning here.[37] Gerasimovich is "doing" music as some form of everyday alleviation of the tedium of labor. Tchaikovsky extracts this melody as surplus value, objectifies it into a part of his own intellectual property, and folds it into a symphonic imperial frame, claiming the Ukrainian folk (as a synecdoche for Ukraine) as a junior partner to Russian Imperial hegemony.[38]

This critique, however, does not supplant, but rather supplements close engagement with music. In this exercise, students are exposed to the finale's theme-and-variation form, which in turn lends itself to analogies across social and musical analysis. For example, within this context, students are prepared

36. Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton University Press), 276.

37. The phrase itself comes from the eponymous essay in Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

38. For an overview of external imposition on Ukrainian sovereignty from an ethnomusicological perspective, see Maria Sonevytsky, *Wild Music: Sound and Sovereignty in Ukraine* (Wesleyan University Press, 2019), 2–26. For the competing Russian and Ukrainian nationalisms in Ukraine in the late imperial period, see Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Cornell University Press, 2017).

not to simply view folk melodies as uncomplicated signifiers of nationalism, but to consider how these melodies are deployed; in this theme-and-variation movement, the persistence of the folk melodies without motivic development lends itself well to discussions of the idea of "the folk" as an ahistorical, eternal essence.

Historicizing the Music of People without History

There are many recent publications that exemplify material approaches to European vernacular musics and can be effectively excerpted for challenging but short undergraduate readings. Of particular interest to me are recent studies which complicate the Herderian notion of the folk as rural, rooted, and "organic," such as Oskar Cox Jensen's *The Ballad-Singer in Georgian and Victorian London* and Jacek Blaszkiewicz's *Fanfare for a City: Music and the Urban Imagination in Haussmann's Paris*, each of which situate daily musical practice within urban environments through which both elites and nonelites moved.[39] In one Friday case study, I assign an excerpt from Kevin Karnes's "Recollecting Jewish Musics from the Baltic Bloodlands" and provide a set of reading guidelines and discussion questions for students to prepare.[40] This particular essay is effective for teaching students how to read for aims, methods, and materials, as Karnes provides a clear architecture for his argument at the outset. It also builds on ideas of mediation while complicating Westphalian, Romantic, and Soviet ideas of "people" and "nation," highlighting plurality, exchange, and localized styles within the Pale of Settlement. Additionally, it features multiple transcriptions of vernacular music performed in urban and village settings in both public and private spaces in traditions that might alternately be considered as "folk" or "popular." During class, students meet in preassigned groups of three or four to compare their observations, and answer a series of discussion questions, which they submit at the end of class.

On one iteration of this "Case Study" day, I had prepared the discussion by showing maps of the Pale of Settlement and sharing some basic demographic statistics regarding population exchange, emigration, and genocide in Europe. While checking in with student groups, it was apparent that many had little prior education on any of these topics. Moreover, upon further discussion with some students, I was confronted not only with a lack of basic knowledge of

39. Oskar Cox Jensen, *The Ballad Singer in Georgian and Victorian London* (Cambridge University Press, 2021); Jacek Blaszkiewicz, *Fanfare for a City: Music and the Urban Imagination in Haussmann's Paris* (University of California Press, 2023).

40. Kevin C. Karnes, "Recollecting Jewish Musics from the Baltic Bloodlands," *Acta Musicologica* 84, fasc. 2 (2012): 253–88. Another excellent text for such cases is Adalyat Issiyeva, *Representing Russia's Orient: From Ethnography to Art Song* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

modern European history, but also with the flattening of historical perspective that Jameson and Kornbluh observe. Both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, the nineteenth-century pogroms and the Second World War, appeared to students as a single "back then." Karnes's article traces the career of a single song collector across the seams of the Russian Revolution and the Holocaust, which allows readers to chart shifts in the valence of identity formations over the course of distinct and consequential stretches of history. This historicization of concepts of identity, culture, and music making is increasingly hard for students to comprehend as history appears as a totality at their fingertips. While there is certainly room in our curricula for transhistorical, topics-based courses, this case study highlighted to me the continued need for courses that teach students to think historically, conceptualize chronology, and experience temporal distance. This has always been one of the potential strengths of the survey, and the familiar pedagogy of history of style might even be mobilized to further define and add texture to social history. Moreover, cases such as this, which deal with historical vernacular music, instill habits of thought that are distinct from but complementary to the aims of ethnomusicology coursework.

Base and Superstructure

The "bottom-up" social history represented by urban and rural folk-song collections can also be paired with intellectual history that illuminates social conditions in historically grounded ways. This is, perhaps, the easiest adjustment to make to adapt conventional approaches to music history to a "people's" approach. It has a deep tradition within music scholarship, evident in the works of the New Musicology, and a rich pedigree in the immanent critique of Theodor Adorno. When Adorno writes, "if we listen to Beethoven and do not hear anything of the revolutionary bourgeoise . . . we understand Beethoven no better than does one who cannot follow the purely musical content of his pieces," he invites us to investigate both social conditions and musical form.[41] I typically teach Beethoven's "Eroica" with the familiar image of the cover page of the score, with Napoleon Bonaparte's name violently scratched out, but this rings as little more than an amusing anecdote that points toward Beethoven's abstract liberal sympathies. To fully heed Adorno's call, students need to be equipped with an understanding of bourgeois revolution and the material conditions that created it at the end of the ancien régime; luckily, the tradition of people's history has provided ample material to share with students, much of it

41. Theodor Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton (Seabury Press, 1972), 62.

far more accessible than Adorno himself.[42] Armed with an understanding of the socioeconomic basis of Beethoven's statement, there are now real stakes to close listening, not mere historical trivia and deformations from sonata form to identify. Though the goal here is not "coverage," this inquiry is rooted in a canonic work and demonstrates the continued value of such works, not as emblems of universal greatness but as dynamic heuristics for historical conditions.

I organize one case study around precisely this type of inquiry, using Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* as vectors of gender and class conflict. Textbooks frequently acknowledge the importance of class and gender relations to *Figaro*, and I use standard demonstrations to introduce fundamentals of opera buffa here. For example, Richard Taruskin and Christopher Gibbs's textbook notes that Mozart provides accompanied recitative to servant characters, calling this a "musical democracy."[43] Their account, like many, also tells students that Mozart's finales in the opera are impressive from the perspective of dramatic and musical integration. In class, we scrutinize these claims, focusing on some of the most lauded moments in the opera—the Countess's sympathetic accompanied recitative and aria ("E Susanna non vien . . . Dove sono") and those impressive finales. We take the customary assertion that gender and socioeconomic status are staged, but we dedicate class time to interrogating how. Through rudimentary musical hermeneutics, we can arrive at the conclusion that this opera fundamentally depoliticizes gendered and class violence: servants are musically "ennobled" in the same way that nobles are humanized (accompanied recitative), and the largescale tonal and textural planning of the finales serve to reinforce the ultimate stability of the class scheme. The peasants get to play their tricks and the orchestra will accompany their speech, but they are still peasants.

These sorts of interpretive exercises require guidance from the instructor, and I am often met with some resistance when leading students to such readings. This, as I understand it, is a combination of healthy skepticism and a less healthy attachment to authorial intention. I have had only marginal success disabusing students of the importance of authors' intentions, which is, after all, only muddied by contemporary vernacular discussions of individual agency and laudable efforts to humanize historical figures. Rather than relying on such argumentation, I allow students to reach their own conclusions about the horizon of plausible interpretation given historical conditions through a case study that pairs with *Figaro*. On a separate day, I assign students characters from *Don Giovanni* in small groups, and they create pitches for a spinoff opera or television series on their assigned character. As part of their pitch, students are required

42. See, for example, Eric Hazan, *A People's History of the French Revolution*, trans. David Fernbach (Verso, 2014).

43. Taruskin and Gibbs, *Oxford History of Western Music*, 340.

to play the role of historical consultant, and they prepare for their group work by doing independent research on gender and class conditions in Mozart's time (and occasionally in the character Giovanni's). Rich discussions emerge. While conversations around Zerlina predictably draw out contrasting readings (likely reflecting students' own differing affinities, conscious or unconscious, with second- or third-wave feminism or their own more conservative mores) the less charismatic Masetto and Ottavio force students to think creatively about how to understand Enlightenment ideas of masculinity, an exercise with fewer clear available scripts for them to rely upon.

And yet, these representations of gendered class struggle in Mozart, eloquent as they may be, bring us away from the protagonists of a "people's history." After two successful iterations of this case study and a clear vacuum where the French Revolution itself stood, I added an additional week that takes it on directly. This one includes as primary sources both the Marquis de Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson's "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" that immediately preceded the revolution and Maximilien Robespierre's response to it—a classic text of liberalism and a fundamentally radical one (the main conflict is over the right to private property).[44] The musical works paired with these documents are a selection of mostly amateur songs used at demonstrations and festivals during the French Revolution, and I ask students to consider how elite and mass political discourse relate (or do not relate) to one another.[45]

The case study from this week allows further engagement both with and beyond the canon. I ask students to read the first scene of Trinidadian historian C. L. R. James's play about the Haitian Revolution, *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History*, which thematizes the contradiction between the French Revolution's universalist ideals and France's continued domination of Haiti.[46] Moreover, the fictionalized account includes thoughtfully integrated references to music, including both an aria from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Haitian drumming. Students discuss these uses of music, then they propose potential creative works based on another underrecognized thread of the revolutionary weave, that of the emancipation of the Jews in France, with reference to another set of publicly available primary

44. Both are collected, alongside many other valuable documents, at "The French Revolution," Marxists Internet Archive, last updated November 12, 2024, https://www.marxists.org/history/france/revolution/index.htm.

45. These songs are collected in the well-researched public resource "Songs of the Revolution," Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité: Exploring the French Revolution, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (George Mason University) and American Social History Project (City University of New York), accessed January 23, 2025, https://revolution.chnm.org/exhibits/show/liberty--equality--fraternity/songs-of-the-revolution.

46. C. L. R. James, *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History: A Play in Three Acts*, ed. Christian Høgsbjerg with a foreword by Laurent Dubois (Duke University Press, 2013).

sources and ideas of how music might animate their proposed creative works.[47] My goal with this case study is twofold: to help students conceptualize a history of Europe that surpasses Europe's geographical bounds and to help students engage with actors within European history who were themselves subaltern.

Emancipation, not Symbolic Representation

Finally, it is necessary to return to the idea of "the folk" as a Romantic concept and my own call, after Zinn's, for a "people's history." At times, the music of each might be coextensive; music performed, written, and enjoyed by the agrarian or urban working classes or the uprooted or dispossessed might be the same music that the bourgeoisie recognizes as "folk music." But this is not an essential connection. The former is dynamic, the latter static; the former can seek to emancipate itself from its material conditions, the latter an idealization of these very conditions. The purpose of a "people's history of Western music" is to foreground the former, emancipatory potential and to "maintain the focus on the (disavowed) rift in all human societies," as J. P. E. Harper-Scott puts it, which "is possible only when scholars refuse to too closely identify people with a particular cultural identity." Harper-Scott continues: "The alternative is to give the mythical impression of unity which is essential to the 'all in this together' ideology of the economic slash-and-burn polices dreamt up by the ruling elite in response to the international capitalist crises of 2008 onwards."[48] In other words, this approach seeks not to add socioeconomic Others to the mix-and-stir method for the sake of "giving voice" to the "voiceless" (which they never were), but rather to highlight class antagonisms which persist to this day. To remediate such antagonisms while class persists would merely be obfuscation.

Similarly, it is important to define class not as "manners, values, and taste," as does Thomas Chatterton Williams, a contemporary defender of the canon, but as one's relationship to labor, wealth, and capital.[49] This disciplined approach sidesteps frequent disavowals of engagement with certain forms of Western art music (and, to some extent, jazz and other complex forms) as elitist. Harper-Scott, after Alain Badiou, calls this disavowal "democratic-materialist" in that it

47. See "The Emancipation of the Jews," Marxists Internet Archive, accessed January 23, 2025, https://www.marxists.org/history/france/revolution/emancipation-jews.htm; and "France," How Jews Became Citizens: Highlights from the Sid Lapidus Collection, Center for Jewish History, accessed January 23, 2025, https://www.cjh.org/lapidus/France.html.

48. J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 194.

49. Thomas Chatterton Williams, "My Family's Life Inside and Outside America's Racial Categories," *New York Times Magazine*, September 17, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/17/magazine/black-white-family-race.html.

is validated by the market and is democratic only in the sense that a "counting of customers is confused with counting of balloted voices."[50] If Western art music is not worthy of study simply because of its historical prestige, vernacular and popular musics are not more worthy of study simply because they have larger audiences or, more crudely, because they sell better.

With this ground cleared, we may also affirm the place of forms of complex music, including forms of Western art music, within a people's history, alongside historical forms of vernacular music. Marianna Ritchey, in her bold defense of musical autonomy (or, as she puts it, "our vast *collective* potential for useless creative activity"), puts her finger on the hypocrisy of the accusation of elitism within the academy, which "takes as a given that people without institutional educations can't understand and don't enjoy complexity, an implication that is itself elitist."[51] Ritchey goes on to point out that one of the very few times that Marx invokes musical composition in his oeuvre is as an example of hard, complex work that might be freely chosen.[52] To return to one of the starting principles of this essay, the opening provided by Ritchey and Marx here allows us to move beyond a merely deconstructive model, which may often fall flat for students who have yet to receive the "received narrative."

Moreover, to admit complex music and direct engagement with it, within and beyond canonic repertoires, allows us to validate both our students' suspicion of traditional wisdom and their own choice to study music in an institutional setting. After all, our mission as instructors of music history, as I understand it, is not to turn students away from the study of music, but rather toward it, and my attempted intervention is to add a layer of class consciousness and critique, rooted in historical materialism, to the increasingly pluralistic array of musics on offer. Even within the chronological, stylistic, and geographic bounds of the typical survey, there are ample examples of working-class heroes who can serve as models for our students. The above-mentioned Paul Robeson, whose father was born into slavery, sang across folk, popular, and art-song repertories (and originated the role of Louverture in C. L. R. James's play); the Russian modernist Nikolai Roslavets (1881–1944) was himself a provincial peasant who would advocate proletarian musical education. Importantly, neither approached this task with condescension toward "the people." (In fact, it was Roslavets's downfall within the narrowing political terrain of the Soviet 1930s that he advocated sharing an advanced stylistic language with the masses, rather than composing mass songs from an elite perch.[53])

50. Harper-Scott, *Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, 184.

51. Marianna Ritchey, "Resisting Usefulness," *Current Musicology* 108 (Spring 2021): 49, 34 (emphasis original).

52. Ritchey, 47–48.

53. Anna Ferenc, "Roslavets, Nikolay Andreyevich," Grove Music Online (2001).

Musicians like Robeson and Roslavets were what Antonio Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks*, might have called "organic intellectuals," who, embedded in their own specific class, create an interface with the "traditional" intellectuals, and provide some form of political leadership within their own class.[54] For Gramsci, school plays a large role in the formation of the intellectual strata, and this is relevant to the music history classroom on two levels: not only are we providing intellectual training, but many of our students will themselves go on to be music educators at the primary and secondary levels. Our students will themselves be organic intellectuals producing more organic intellectuals. This is particularly the case at large, comprehensive schools of music, which tend to be more bound by performance-focused accrediting bodies like the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), and therefore have less of a free hand to revise their curricula. In other words, for many music students who will themselves be embedded within the formative spaces of primary or secondary music classrooms—rare sites of conviviality and collective creativity in public life—one of their only opportunities for sustained critical engagement with a musical tradition in which they will be practitioners is in the survey. This opportunity is too important to waste.

These brief examples are but a first attempt to renarrate and reframe the survey of Western music since the Classical period. Europe may be the land of Beethoven and Wagner, but it is also the land of Ashkenazy songsters in the Pale, the land of Nordic reindeer herders, the land of itinerant urban musicians, not to mention industrial workers and peasants of all genders. All of them had their own music which, like that of Beethoven and Wagner, is worth studying not simply on aesthetic grounds nor for the sake of symbolic inclusion within a hegemonic grand tradition. Rather than including music of ordinary people within the dehistoricizing episteme of the canon, I suggest that we rehistoricize the canon alongside the vernacular musics that arose from contrasting class strata within the same geographic and chronological coordinates. So-called "folk music" and its urban counterparts have been either confined to an ahistorical past or written out of history, in ways that mirror the eternal present granted to canonic works of Western art music. Studying each of these forms of music making, as well as their points of contact, not as ciphers for but as products of their material conditions, affords students an understanding of their own place in the world as musicians that mere history of style does not.

In the final chapter of *A People's History of the United States*, "The Coming Revolt of the Guards," Zinn acknowledges the place not only for "demonstrations, marches, civil disobedience; strikes and boycotts and general strikes; direct action to redistribute wealth, to reconstruct institutions, to revamp

54. Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 3–23.

relationships," but also for "creating—in music, literature, drama, all the arts, and all the areas of work and play in everyday life—a new culture of sharing, of respect, a new joy in the collaboration of people to help themselves and one another."[55] A "people's history of Western music" aims to illuminate both the long history of causes for revolt and the long history of alternative cultures of joyful collaboration. Zinn's volume demonstrates that, when told from below, rather than through the voices of Washington, Lincoln, or Truman, a synthetic history of the United States could be rigorous, narratively engaging, and could animate values of human flourishing. In absence of such a volume for Western music, let us inhabit the survey in this spirit.

55. Zinn, *People's History*, 627.

Walking with Headphones? Engaging with Technologically Mediated Soundwalking

Laura Dallman

Soundwalking is not new, but it is an activity that many of my undergraduate students have not encountered. In its purest—or purist—form, it is a fairly simple idea: a person walks, and while walking, they listen attentively to the surrounding environment. Soundwalking can be experienced individually or as a group, and reactions to sounds in an environment often result in an increased awareness of both the self and the world.

On the surface, soundwalking may seem both straightforward and an ideal teaching tool. It's not difficult to do, and the increased sense of awareness it promotes is usually positive. But the further we dig into soundwalking, the more complexities arise. Soundwalking can be used superficially, as a simple exercise to encourage active listening, or it can lead to deep considerations of community, representation, history, and technology. For students with or without musical backgrounds, reflecting on how they hear a particular space while learning about its people and past readily yields several points for critical discussion.[1]

In *Soundwalking through Time, Space, and Technologies* (2023), artist and scholar Jacek Smolicki asks, "How can we turn soundwalking from being innocent into a more critical practice, a technique for reconsidering how we, individuals and human collectives, situate ourselves in and account for surrounding

I would like to sincerely thank my colleagues Sarah Politz and Lucy Caplan who read early drafts of this article as well as my two anonymous reviewers and Melanie Lowe for their valuable feedback during the writing and revising process.

1. In my teaching, particularly in general-education courses, I make sure to limit my own use of music jargon and explain any terms that musically inclined students may bring up in classroom discussion. This fosters a sense of access and aims to increase comprehension for students coming from multiple backgrounds and pursuing a variety of majors. When I assign soundwalks, I encourage walking but acknowledge that we all have bodies with varying abilities. My students are able to do a seated observation of a soundscape if that better fits their physical needs.

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environments?"[2] Although Smolicki is speaking about critical approaches to soundwalking in general, I turn his question toward technologically mediated soundwalks with my undergraduate students—an easy stretch for the digital natives of Generation Z.[3] Along with my own pedagogical experiences, this article incorporates findings from an IRB-approved study with students in my general-education course on music and the environment (fall 2023). I argue that considerations of technological mediation in soundwalks should not be framed as a straightforward binary construction regarding the presence or absence of technology.[4] Indeed, there is significant value in facilitating discussion of the nuances of technological mediation in soundwalking in undergraduate teaching.

Following a section that draws on two earlier publications in this **Journal** to describe soundwalking in the university classroom, I offer a brief history of soundwalking while in the process problematizing the role of technological mediation in soundwalks. Both sections reveal the multifaceted nature of soundwalking, which resists any easy binaries. The second half of this article presents a two-part case study. To provide an example of how an artist may approach technological mediation and how listeners might respond, I first describe Ellen Reid's *SOUNDWALK*, a GPS-enabled soundwalk available in select public parks, by means of an autoethnographic reflection.[5] Then, using

2. Jacek Smolicki, "Composing, Recomposing, and Decomposing with Soundscapes," in *Soundwalking through Time, Space, and Technologies*, ed. Jacek Smolicki (Routledge, 2023), 182.

3. In a summary for a 2024 study titled "Exploring Technology Preferences Among Gen Z," the Consumer Technology Association reported that Gen Z owns, on average, thirteen technology products—for example, smartphones, wireless earbuds/headphones, gaming consoles, and televisions. Gen Z reports using six of these products on a daily basis. Smartphones, and in particular Apple iOS smartphones, are their preferred device, with just under 95% of Gen Z owning one. See Consumer Technology Association, "CTA Research: Exploring Gen Z Views and Preferences in Technology," February 20, 2024, https://www.cta.tech/press-releases/cta-research-exploring-gen-z-views-and-preferences-in-technology.

4. In this article, I often shorten "technologically mediated" to simply "mediated" to keep the text from becoming cumbersome. All references to mediated soundwalks or mediated soundwalking in this article are referring to technological mediation, as opposed to other kinds of mediation. Similarly, unmediated soundwalks or soundwalking refers to the absence of technological mediation.

5. Other mediated soundwalks with easily accessible online audio components could also work as points of departure for student discussion, including Saltwater Soundwalk, Sonia Killmann and Laura Fisher's "Going Out|Going In," John Luther Adams's *Soundwalk 9:09*, or the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Kids Soundwalks.

In Seattle, the Saltwater Soundwalk lays along a stretch of coastline and helps walkers appreciate "the people, land, and waterways" that define the city, particularly by centering on "Indigenous Coast Salish voices and language." See Erika Lindsay, "New Podcast Saltwater Soundwalk Highlights the People, Land and Water of Seattle," Art Beat, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, August 25, 2022, https://artbeat.seattle.gov/2022/08/25/new-podcast-saltwater-soundwalk-highlights-the-people-land-and-water-of-seattle/. Although it is described as site-specific, both the full tour and twelve shorter vignettes are available on SoundCloud.

my autoethnographic account of Reid's *SOUNDWALK* as a launchpad, I analyze student responses to questions about technologically mediated soundwalking. To prepare for discussion, my students considered how soundwalks are defined, how artists may approach mediation in soundwalks, and how users may also engage with processes of mediation.

Soundwalking in the University Classroom

In their 2017 article "Resounding the Campus? Pedagogy, Race, and the Environment," Amanda Black and Andrea Bohlman acknowledge soundwalking as a "canonic exercise" for undergraduates, pointing to its prevalence as an accepted and regular activity in academic settings.[6] Instructors of music-centered courses such as ecomusicology, composition, acoustics, and media studies commonly include soundwalks in their syllabi.[7] While Black and Bohlman

See "Saltwater Soundwalk," SoundCloud, accessed May 16, 2024, https://soundcloud.com/saltwater-soundwalk.

Killmann and Fisher create an experience similar to Ellen Reid's *SOUNDWALK*. In "Going Out|Going In," Killmann provides composed sound to accompany external natural sounds; however, Killmann's sounds are not tied by GPS to any geographical place. The listener/walker chooses where they would like to walk. In a class setting, "Going Out|Going In" may be the best substitute for Reid's *SOUNDWALK*, providing an opportunity for students to experience the duality of composed music and natural sounds. See "Sound Walks & Field Recording," Sonia Killmann's personal website, accessed May 16, 2024, https://sonia-killmann.com/soundwalks-fieldrecording.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art commissioned *Soundwalk 9:09* to celebrate the opening of the Met Breuer in 2016. See "The Met Breuer Opens to the Public on March 18, 2016 Expanding the Met's Modern and Contemporary Program," Metropolitan Museum of Art Press Release, March 1, 2016, https://www.metmuseum.org/press-releases/the-met-breuer-inaugural-season-2016-news. Adams states that he "sculpted and filtered" submitted sound recordings to create two halves to his work: a walk to the Breuer building (*Soundwalk 9:09: Downtown*) and the walk back to the main museum (*Soundwalk 9:09: Uptown*). See "Download: John Luther Adams's Crowd-Sourced 'Soundwalk 9:09,'" WQXR, March 1, 2016, https://www.wqxr.org/story/download-john-luther-adamss-soundwalk-909/. In addition to listening to *Soundwalk 9:09*, students could also crowdsource recordings from a particular area or use a particular theme to create a collective soundwalk.

Music educators might be particularly interested in Kids Soundwalks. These narrated recordings spotlight the Australian landscape and range from about five to ten minutes. Some episodes simply describe the surrounding aural and visual environment, while others use these observations to highlight behaviors such as sharing, gratefulness, and finding courage. See Teo Gebert and Rachael Coopes, "Soundwalks," Kids Listen, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, accessed May 16, 2024, https://www.abc.net.au/kidslisten/programs/soundwalks.

6. Amanda M. Black and Andrea F. Bohlman, "Resounding the Campus: Pedagogy, Race, and the Environment," this **Journal** 8, no. 1 (2017): 6.

7. Black and Bohlman, 6. See also Tyler Kinnear et al., "Sonic Histories: Reckoning with Race through Campus Soundscapes," *Environment, Space, Place* 15, no. 1 (2023): 37. In the article's tenth footnote, the authors provide a trove of resources for soundwalking in connection to cultural ethnography, geography, urban planning, education, and sonic art.

applaud the accessibility of several open-access syllabi that include soundwalks, they also criticize several of these examples for not providing adequate space to discuss difference, diversity, or privilege.[8] In particular, Black and Bohlman maintain that many instructors use soundwalking as a supposedly unbiased introduction to "learning how to hear."[9] Students are often encouraged to listen more intently to their immediate environment, observing sounds they may usually fail to notice:

> Soundwalks, like so many immersive or experimental collective performances that invite reflection on the unremarkable, have tended to take as their mission some kind of rehabilitation or reboot. They frequently draw attention to that which is ignored, whether animal, vegetable, mineral, or vibrational.[10]

As the authors note, the resulting binary construction of perceiving/not perceiving, whether of aural or visual stimuli, is problematic, not least because it's too simplistic. An instructor may encourage student discussion by asking *why* patterns of perception may occur, but Black and Bohlman suggest that soundwalks can spur conversation about far more complicated issues. They assert that soundwalks can—and should—be used to explore the intersections of history, race, performance, and environmental awareness.[11]

Indeed, soundwalks occur on lands and in spaces that do not always have neutral histories and meanings, a fact compellingly demonstrated by Black and Bohlman's Beyond the Belltower project. This project at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill included nine soundwalk scores "inspired by research in the University Archives that focused on the themes of race, access, and violence within institutional history."[12] Because UNC-Chapel Hill has many sites historically connected to slavery, racism, and activism, Black and

8. Black and Bohlman, "Resounding the Campus," 16.

9. Black and Bohlman, 6.

10. Black and Bohlman, 15.

11. Black and Bohlman, 7.

12. Black and Bohlman, 18. Beyond the Belltower grew out of a 2015 soundwalk that Bohlman organized for her undergraduate students through the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. On this walk, they all passed a Confederate statue where a demonstration was occurring. Bohlman became concerned about student safety and the possibility of making an unintended political statement, ultimately concluding that she had not adequately prepared for the soundwalk. In response to this experience, Bohlman's graduate students developed a soundwalk, Beyond the Belltower, in a seminar setting, which, in addition to the aforementioned nine scores, included a digital soundmap and a display of primary source materials at the UNC-Chapel Hill music library. A new set of Bohlman's undergraduate students experienced Beyond the Belltower in the context of a music and politics course, and the experience was consciously situated "within the legacy of radical black performance rather than the Canadian soundscape school, which has largely avoided connecting sound with the politics of race and was shaped exclusively by white composers of European heritage." Black and Bohlman, 24.

Bohlman explain that every score, which is tied to a specific location, either "hosts or hides Black history."[13]

Seeking to provide not a model *product* but a model of *process* to emulate, Black and Bohlman emphasize the importance of cultivating dialogue between instructors and students, members of peer or colleague groups, and university and community partners when designing and producing a soundwalk.[14] By fostering activities that have "the potential to reposition listening as a collective exercise in [a] music (history) classroom" and linking "community and collective action," soundwalks can be not only richly site-specific but also historically informed and care-oriented.[15] Moreover, developing a soundwalk with an emphasis on process helps to create space for creativity, curiosity, self-critique, and even humility—all characteristics that we seek to instill in students.[16]

Shortly after Black and Bohlman's Beyond the Belltower, a similar project, titled Sonic Histories, was developed at Western Carolina University (WCU). Sonic Histories

> sought to map the intersection of sonic and physical spaces on campus and their impact on the emotional and somatic experiences of students. . . . Moreover, Sonic Histories challenge[d] WCU's triumphant narrative of progress by curating a lesson which gave students the time and space to actively listen to the sounds of inclusion and exclusion on their own campus.[17]

The walks were designed for small groups of ten to fifteen participants and guided by a student leader who distributed a portfolio of historical documents from the WCU Libraries' Special Collections department. Participants were invited to use these documents to reflect "on the erased/contested sites under consideration, with specific attention to race, class, gender, (dis)ability, and belonging on campus."[18] After each soundwalk, a student leader led a fifteen-minute open discussion, which was recorded and later transcribed. Qualtrics surveys were

13. Black and Bohlman, 19. Black and Bohlman's article mentions the "Black and Blue Tour," which includes sites historically connected to slavery, racism, and activism. It has recently been updated and can be found at "The Black and Carolina Blue Tour," UNC University Libraries, accessed April 19, 2024, https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b84110ce4a204e779e6915e5786ffbe4.

14. Black and Bohlman, 9.

15. Black and Bohlman.

16. Black and Bohlman, 17.

17. Kinnear et al., "Sonic Histories," 34. The authors describe the triumphant narrative as such: "The narrative often goes like this: that historical discrimination against racial minorities is a sad fact, but the university to which you belong has been consistently progressive relative to others at the time. These messages tend to be positive and uplifting—that while there is still work to do, we have always risen to the challenge. This triumphant narrative underestimates the oppression of racial minorities that occurred in the past and present." See Kinnear et al., 41.

18. Kinnear et al., 35.

also distributed both before and after each walk to gather additional written feedback.[19] Like Beyond the Belltower, Sonic Histories engaged with issues of history and race, albeit in a more qualitative manner.[20]

The incorporation of technology has further impacted how soundwalks are now designed, experienced, and perceived. While advocating for increased engagement with the digital humanities, Kate Galloway points to the rise of digital media in her article "Making and Learning with Environmental Sound," asserting:

> As digital media becomes more common in today's reading, writing, performance, outreach, and researching practices, acts of making, tinkering, and explorative play with analog and digital technology, especially sound technologies, are a valuable inclusion to the graduate and undergraduate music history classroom.[21]

Although Galloway is speaking more generally about embracing technology in music history pedagogy, she quickly pivots to the topic of soundwalks. In two of her courses, students are responsible for designing, recording, and editing at least one soundwalk and one sound collage, which are then uploaded to a public website.[22] Students develop their work with a broad audience in mind, aiming to "convey sound studies and music history research" while also considering "the political stakes in producing research intended for public use."[23]

Along with the conceptual expansions offered by Beyond the Belltower, Sonic Histories, and Galloway's students' public-facing sound projects, curated soundwalks can incorporate multiple audio components: for instance, field recordings, spoken text, musical excerpts, or a combination of these sources. Designing such soundwalks requires technological mediation on both the creative side and on the part of the soundwalker; the curator may record, edit, and mix sounds while the soundwalker will require playback devices to host, play, and hear the audio components. Taking the successful navigation of the various technological components for granted, such mediated soundwalks may also "interrogate our technologized interactions with sound and place when recorded soundscapes are analyzed and then communicated through research

19. Kinnear et al.

20. Kinnear et al., 38.

21. Kate Galloway, "Making and Learning with Environmental Sound: Maker Culture, Ecomusicology, and the Digital Humanities in Music History Pedagogy," this **Journal** 8, no. 1 (2017): 51.

22. Galloway, 56. The courses are titled "Music, Sound, and the Environment in the Anthropocene" and "Music, Technology, and Critical Geography." Galloway also notes that soundwalk development is not always a straightforward practice. Ideally, students learn to value the creative process, which may include several revisions. See Galloway, 54.

23. Galloway, 55.

or community soundwalk activities."[24] Engaging with these kinds of issues moves well beyond the simple yes-or-no questions about whether or not technology may be used in a soundwalk. For starters, why should technology be used to represent a given space? What can technology help to reveal about a given community for listeners? How does technology push against—or perhaps enhance—one's understanding of the history, culture, or politics of a given place? It is imperative that instructors who incorporate soundwalking in their courses provide opportunities for students to reflect on the roles technology might play, not merely in soundwalking activities but in their own broader engagement with mediated content. Technology, as we know, is not neutral.

Technologically Mediated Soundwalks, from Then to Now

The group most closely associated with early soundwalking, the World Soundscape Project (WSP), began using soundwalking practices with varying levels of mediation in the 1970s. Lauded by many as launching the field of acoustic ecology, the WSP is not without its critics. Still, the WSP inspired many artists with their soundwork, and there is a rich history of soundwalking that starts with the WSP and leads to present-day practices. Today, mediated soundwalks, enabled by the explosion of technological capabilities in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, present critical questions likely unanticipated by the WSP. The following brief examination of the use of technology in soundwalks from the 1970s through 2025 reinforces my two previous assertions: 1) the use of technology in soundwalks is not an either/or binary proposition, and 2) a deeper critical engagement with mediated soundwalks is needed.

Hildegard Westerkamp, a foundational proponent of soundwalking, seems to define the practice as an unmediated experience. In "Soundwalking as an Ecological Practice," she writes:

> Simply put, a soundwalk is any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment. It is an exploration of our ear/environment relationship, unmediated by microphones, headphones and recording equipment. It is an exploration of what the "naked ear" hears and how we relate and react to it.[25]

I regularly show this definition to my students at the beginning of our soundwalking unit, emphasizing that in this particular essay, Westerkamp excludes technology from the experience. Her description aligns with how I introduce

24. Galloway, 54.

25. Hildegard Westerkamp, "Soundwalking as Ecological Practice," Inside the Soundscape, November 3, 2006, last modified 2023, https://hildegardwesterkamp.ca/writings/writings-by/?post_id=14&title=%E2%80%8Bsoundwalking-as-ecological-practice---2023-update:-spanish-translations-published---2-publicaciones-en-espanol.

my students to soundwalking: we focus on close listening without technological intervention for the first session of the unit. Yet Westerkamp herself produced soundwalking radio broadcasts in the late 1970s and began to create sound collages around the same time.[26] She was certainly not a zealot for unmediated soundwalking or unmediated soundscape practices. As my students move further into the soundwalking unit, I add examples of Westerkamp's work that explicitly involve mediation to encourage students to notice tensions between her technologically mediated and unmediated work.

Such tensions are significant to note, as the history of soundwalks has not progressed linearly from an absence to an inclusion of technological mediation.[27] Indeed, Westerkamp and the WSP promoted both mediated and unmediated modes of listening. On one hand, a primarily improvised mode of unmediated soundwalking often served as the first step for members of the WSP as they studied a soundscape. Soundwalks were recorded to assist in "documenting changes in sonic environments and raising awareness to growing noise pollution."[28] Many of the WSP's public-facing materials, on the other hand, were clearly technologically mediated. In 1972, WSP members Howard Broomfield, Bruce Davis, and Peter Huse began making recordings around Vancouver.[29] The following year, the WSP released *The Vancouver Soundscape*, a double LP with a companion book, based on the recordings by Broomfield, Davis, and Huse.[30] That same year, Davis and Huse set out across Canada to

26. For Westerkamp's own description of her radio work, see "The Soundscape on Radio," in *Radio Rethink: Art, Sound and Transmission*, ed. Daina Augaitis and Dan Lander (Banff Centre for the Arts, 1994), 86–94. See also Smolicki, *Soundwalking through Time*, 3; and Westerkamp, "Soundwork," Inside the Soundscape, accessed May 30, 2025, https://www.hildegardwesterkamp.ca/sound/.

27. R. Murray Schafer arrived at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in 1965, the same year the university was founded, and five years prior to the formal conception of the WSP in 1970. He began working on music and soundscape education, publishing *Ear Cleaning*, a "volume of lecture notes related to his approaches to teaching first-year university music students," in 1967. Michael Palmese, "The World Ear Project (1970–87): Soundscapes, Politics, and the Genesis of Acoustic Ecology," *Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture* 3, no. 1 (2022): 70. See also Milena Droumeva and Randolph Jordan, eds., *Sound, Media, Ecology* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), vii. The introductory section to *Sound, Media, Ecology* provides a succinct timeline of Schafer's work with the WSP, along with the work of other WSP members.

28. Kinnear et al., "Sonic Histories," 37. WSP member Barry Truax shares similar information: "Besides the recordings, the WSP team established 'soundwalking' as a simple technique to evaluate the perceptual and qualitative aspects of a soundscape through a listening walk." See Truax, "Acoustic Ecology and the World Soundscape Project," in *Sound, Media, Ecology*, ed. Milena Droumeva and Randolph Jordan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 23.

29. See Droumeva and Jordan, *Sound, Media, Ecology*, viii. Broomfield, Huse, and Davis continued recording around Vancouver until 1976, but most recordings were made during their first year of work.

30. Droumeva and Jordan, ix. Truax claims that "from the perspective of acoustic ecology, the most important research of the WSP was their initial study of *The Vancouver Soundscape*."

record sound environments, the outcome of which was *Soundscapes of Canada*, a ten-episode radio program that premiered on CBC Radio in October 1974.[31] A few years later, in 1978, Westerkamp premiered her weekly radio program, *Soundwalking*, on Vancouver Co-operative Radio.[32]

Although the WSP faced some criticism, their work inspired further projects.[33] Other artists designed soundwalks, many of which incorporated various forms of technological mediation.[34] For instance, the World Ear Project,

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Truax, "Acoustic Ecology," 23.

31. See Droumeva and Jordan, *Sound, Media, Ecology*, ix–x; and Truax, "Acoustic Ecology," 26. Mitchell Akiyama suggests that *Soundscapes of Canada* is more significant than *The Vancouver Soundscape*, as *Soundscapes of Canada* "articulated the group's ambitious goal of restoring the integrity of the nation's sonic environment." Akiyama, "Nothing Connects Us but Imagined Sound," in *Sound, Media, Ecology*, ed. Milena Droumeva and Randolph Jordan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 117.

32. Droumeva and Jordan, *Sound, Media, Ecology*, xi.

33. For example, Akiyama has addressed the WSP's omission of First Nations perspectives in *Soundscapes of Canada* both in public-facing forums and in his scholarly writing. His research clearly shows that the radio program ignored First Nations and other minorities, effectively excluding sounds from these populations and generating a Eurocentric bias. See Mitchell Akiyama, "Unsettling the World Soundscape Project: Soundscapes of Canada and the Politics of Self-Recognition," *Sounding Out!* August 20, 2015, https://soundstudiesblog.com/2015/08/20/unsettling-the-world-soundscape-project-soundscapes-of-canada-and-the-politics-of-self-recognition/. See also Mack Hagood, "R. Murray Schafer Pt. 2: Critiques & Contradictions," *Phantom Power*, podcast, October 29, 2021, https://phantompod.org/ep-30-r-murray-schafer-pt-2-critiques-and-contradictions/; and Akiyama, "Nothing Connects Us."

In Hagood's podcast, Jonathan Sterne assesses Schafer's problematic terminology, including "schizophonia." Schafer defines it as "the split between an original sound and its electroacoustical transmission or reproduction." R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Destiny Books, 1994), 90. Sterne, however, notes that the word is "based on a non-schizophrenic understanding of schizophrenia and it's also very much based on sort of stereotypes about mental illness and the denigration of mental illness as a metaphor for the fallenness of sound recording." Quoted in Hagood, "R. Murray Schafer Pt. 2."

34. Mack Hagood writes about an intriguing project undertaken by Alan Teibel in the late 1960s and early 1970s titled *environments*. These records, released as pairs, sonically conjured spaces such as the beach or a forest through carefully manipulated field recordings. The purpose of *environments*, though, was more therapeutic. Listeners were not supposed to devote attention to the recordings; rather, "the proper experience of these records involved not listening to them at all." Teibel argued that "only irregular, aperiodic noise would suffice as a technology of the self, calming the distracted mind and letting the user perfect her state of consciousness, because its lack of pattern supplied nothing for the mind to grasp onto." Hagood, "The Ultimate Seashore: Environments and the Nature of Technology," in *Hush: Media and Sonic Self-Control* (Duke University Press, 2019), 118, 119. Thus there are environmental and technological connections between soundwalking and *environments*, but the purpose is vastly different.

There is a long history of environmental recordings. Barry Truax constructs a brief timeline, beginning in 1929 with work by Ludwig Karl Koch, a German-British broadcaster and sound recordist. Koch gathered nonhuman animal sounds, publishing various sound books with accompanying discs in the 1930s. Truax also mentions Tony Schwartz, an American sound recordist, advertising designer, and media theorist who made field recordings in New York City in the 1950s and 1960s. Schwartz's focus was on multicultural traditions, which

first broadcast out of Berkeley, California in August 1970, was an outgrowth of the WSP's work.[35] It included broadcasting soundwalks recorded in a variety of locations, and this work continued through the middle of the 1980s.[36] Musicologist Michael Palmese provides one particularly rich example from its broadcasts:

> [Charles] Amirkhanian [a radio producer in Berkeley] produced a special soundwalk of his own for live broadcast on the World Ear Project in June 1985 while on location with the German composer Stephan Micus in Mundraching, a Bavarian town outside of Munich. The broadcast begins in a remarkable fashion, as the initial sounds of the idyllic landscape are abruptly shattered by the sound of a sonic boom from a passing fighter jet. What results from this coincidence is a conversation between Amirkhanian and Micus on the American military presence in West Germany, nuclear weapons, and how army maneuvers and materiel affect the local community, particularly in the small nearby town of Landsberg.[37]

Not only is this soundwalk mediated through both its recording and subsequent broadcasting, but it also addresses political and cultural concerns connected to the location of the soundwalk. In this instance, the initial technological mediation (i.e., recording equipment) facilitates dialogue in the field about international and local relationships which is then broadcast using another form of technological mediation (i.e., radio), enabling listeners to have a more nuanced understanding of American and German military concerns.

Janet Cardiff's *The Walk Book* (2005), which compiles her work with George Bures Miller from the 1990s and early 2000s, offers another compelling example of technological mediation in a soundwalking project.[38] The book describes creating different components for what Cardiff calls "audio walks," presents

included children's street games. See Truax, "Acoustic Ecology," 36. Michael Palmese refers to Luc Ferrari's *Presque rien no. 1* (*Le lever du jour au bord de la mer*), released in 1970 by Deutsche Grammophon. Palmese describes *Presque rien no. 1* as capturing morning sounds in Vela Luka on the Adriatic coast and as part of a larger series "spurred on by [Ferrari's] cultivation of a heightened listening approach." Palmese also notes that the World Ear Project was driven in large part by listener recordings: "The series initially sought to feature only unedited recordings of ambient sound environments from around the world, urging listeners to take advantage of the proliferation of portable cassette recorders and the resulting ease with which recordings could be made." Palmese, "World Ear Project," 59–60.

35. Palmese, 60.

36. Palmese, 65.

37. Palmese.

38. Janet Cardiff, *The Walk Book* (Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, 2005). Cardiff created her first audio walk during a residency at the Banff Centre in 1991, then proceeded to create several audio walks in New York and London in the 1990s and early 2000s. See Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller, "Walks: Explanation," accessed May 20, 2025, https://cardiff-miller.com/walks/. Ruth Bretherick notes that Cardiff stopped creating audio walks in 2006 and switched her focus to video walks in 2012. See Bretherick's "The Urge to Disappear: Janet

contextual framing for several of these walks, and provides visual images and an accompanying CD for listeners to more fully experience the mediated walks.[39] According to Cardiff's website, which may be more readily accessible to some readers than *The Walk Book*, during an audio walk,

> [a]udiences are given an iPod and headphones and the recording guides them through a narrative of events that occur along a route. The audio playback is layered with various background sounds all recorded in binaural audio which gives the feeling that those recorded sounds are present in the actual environment.[40]

This description clearly indicates that technology is obligatory at all points of the project—during Cardiff's initial creative and developmental stages as well as for the soundwalker engaging with the final product. *The Walk Book* itself relates more of Cardiff's process:

> The artist has already experienced the space that the participants visit. She has infiltrated the site and captured its sounds and then she plays them back later [superscript above text: in a different form]. Having observed the environment and taken note of the patterns of movement there, she can anticipate what **might** happen to us when we visit this place later, what we **might** see, hear, and feel.[41]

In addition to the sounds of the site itself, Cardiff weaves her own voice, other voices, and auxiliary sounds into and out of the audio recording.[42] Her voice-overs include "observations, reflections, and reminiscences, interlaced in the manner of a stream of consciousness."[43] Such layering provides valuable material for listeners to dissect and consider, but more important for my purposes in

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Cardiff's Audio Walks in London and New York," *Oxford Art Journal* 43, no. 3 (December 2020): 427.

39. The book, itself, is one of the most visually arresting books I have seen on any subject. It includes full-color maps, annotated scripts, and photographs, as well as judiciously considered changes in font color, size, and style. For example, Cardiff's words are in blue font. Important text or phrases are in bold typeface and key people and titles are highlighted in yellow. There are several superscript comments added to the main text, which function like an extra voice—like someone adding asides over your shoulder—as you are reading. These superscript comments are different from the footnotes, which appear in wide margins to the side of the main text, allowing readers to see references immediately next to the relevant text as opposed to underneath it.

40. Cardiff and Miller, "Walks."

41. Cardiff, *The Walk Book*, 25 (bold in original).

42. Some of the audio insertions are musical in nature, such as church bells, a chanted nursery rhyme, or a brief instrumental excerpt. Although I have not listened to every walk, it is clear that composed underscoring is not typical.

43. Bretherick, "Urge to Disappear," 429.

this article is the fact that this aspect of the listener's experience could not exist without audio-editing technology.

Just as technological mediation was frequently employed in the first three decades of soundwalking, contemporary sound artists continue to incorporate one or more types of technology in a soundwalk. However, technological mediation constitutes merely the starting point of the creative processes for several of these soundwalk artists. Because many mediated soundwalks interfere with the sonic environment in which they take place—not only by including additional sounds, but by using sounds that were gathered, arranged, and perhaps manipulated from and in other places—Tim Shaw acknowledges that "technological and compositional process are often removed from the listening experience."[44] As such, listeners are not necessarily aware of which sounds an artist may have collected, let alone changed, or why artistic choices were made. Listeners are plunged into a curated environment in which "clear distinctions between audience and performer, composer and listener" have been created.[45] Unless they reveal their artistic choices and processes to listeners, only the sound artist/performer can truly understand the work. For this reason, Shaw champions rendering transparent as many technological processes as possible in works involving soundwalking.

Composer Matthew Burtner scrutinizes the intended purpose of audio-recording equipment in creating soundwalks, noting that recorded elements that might be folded into a soundwalk risk giving "the false impression that the most important sonic aspect of the adventure is contained in the audio sample."[46] In reality, Burtner argues, a recording only offers "acoustic residue"; it cannot substitute for the experience of listening in a particular place.[47] Shaw takes his analysis one step further, arguing that soundwalks that incorporate curated sound—particularly sound that pushes a narrative—risk fictionalizing an environment.[48] In contrast, interdisciplinary artist Jacek Smolicki is concerned with the impact that the abundance of modern technologies may have on soundwalking vis-à-vis the practice's originally intended purpose. He questions the extent to which technologies such as microphones, headphones, hearing aids, and cochlear implants "disrupt that 'most direct aural involvement' that WSP

44. Tim Shaw, "Paths of Dependence: Welcoming the Unwelcome," in *Soundwalking through Time, Space, and Technologies*, ed. Jacek Smolicki (Routledge, 2023), 116.

45. Shaw, 131.

46. Matthew Burtner, "EcoSono: Adventures in Interactive Ecoacoustics in the World," *Organised Sound* 16, no. 3 (December 2011): 236. For Smolicki's incorporation of Burtner's work, see the above-cited Smolicki, "Composing, Recomposing, and Decomposing," 184.

47. Burtner, "EcoSono," 236.

48. Shaw, "Paths of Dependence," 131. Shaw cites insertions of two particular kinds of sound that can fictionalize a surrounding environment: studio-produced Foley audio and/or text-based storytelling.

scholars saw as the fundamental aspect of soundwalking."[49] And then he ponders, conversely, "to what extent can technologies facilitate this access?"[50]

Smolicki hits an important issue straight on the nose. When is technology a benefit in soundwalking? When may it be a detriment? Hearing aids and cochlear implants, for instance, increase accessibility for people with varying aural abilities, an effect generally accepted as positive. Galloway also points to the benefits of simply recording and relistening to soundwalks, which can lead to "examining how the microphone registers place differently than the human ear."[51] Microphones and headphones can also be used to curate a specific kind of listening experience and may therefore draw more people into more careful modes of listening—a positive impact. And yet, if we are to circle back to Shaw's concerns about the fictionalization of sound, we can see how technological mediation inevitably distorts the aural environment, an effect that could be construed negatively.

More specifically, although editing and mixing practices may help to create a sonically pleasing recording of or guide to a soundwalk, such technological interventions effectively change the sound of an original field recording, giving preference to what the artist chooses. These choices might be innocuous, such as the shortening of a long recording or gradually fading into a recording to ease the listener into the soundscape. But an artist could also adjust placement and volume levels to impose a false narrative on the soundwalk experience or create a false representation of it; bringing certain sounds to the forefront or pushing certain sounds to the background could ultimately provide a "dishonest" portrayal of the soundscape. Westerkamp herself alludes to this particular pitfall in her *Kits Beach Soundwalk*.[52]

The manipulation of the aural experience of a soundscape could pose still additional problems—ethical ones. Does the editing or mixing of sounds create an inaccurate representation of the communities residing in the soundwalk area? Does the soundwalk or its recording effectively obscure troubling histories in a location? In what ways might a soundwalk serve a political agenda or perhaps further issues of inequality? In fact, the use of technology alone can exacerbate disparities. Only those with ready access to a smartphone, tablet, or

49. Smolicki, *Soundwalking through Time*, 6.

50. Smolicki.

51. Galloway, "Making and Learning," 54.

52. "Hildegard Westerkamp—Kits Beach Soundwalk (1989)," uploaded by Boundless YouTube account, December 4, 2015, 10 min., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg-96nU6ltLk. Westerkamp acknowledges that a sound editor can augment an original recording: "I could shock you or fool you by saying that the soundscape is this loud [volume level of audio increases], but it is more like this [volume level of audio decreases]" (00:1:42–00:02:01) and "we have bandpass filters and equalizers. We can just go into the studio and get rid of the city [sound]—pretend it's not there" (00:03:03–00:03:15). She does not offer critique after making these statements, but she certainly opens up space for critique.

computer and a pair of headphones can participate in a technologically mediated soundwalk. Given the costs of these devices, such technological requirements risk impeding or excluding the involvement of some listeners. Taken together, the critical questions about mediated soundwalks raised by several soundwalk artists themselves move far beyond the binary choice to use or not to use technology, shifting clearly into an engagement with individual and community values. And there are still more questions to ask! What is the purpose of a particular soundwalk? Is it to walk? Is it to listen? Is to educate? Is to entertain? If listening is paramount to the experience, then what is the listening objective of a technologically mediated soundwalk? What is supposed to be heard, exactly? While I have my own personal responses to these questions, I certainly do not have definitive answers. But as I demonstrate in the following case study of Ellen Reid's *SOUNDWALK*, engaging with multiple responses to such questions and embracing diverse viewpoints may help to move soundwalking in the critical and analytical directions for which many scholars and artists advocate.

Case Study: Reid's *SOUNDWALK*, Context, and Autoethnography

To explore how such deliberations might further develop and transpire, I incorporated Ellen Reid's *SOUNDWALK* into a general-education course I teach on music and the environment. During my experiences of Reid's *SOUNDWALK* in two locations in the summer of 2023, I thought repeatedly about technological mediation. I considered my own listening habits—particularly my own binary assumptions about technological mediation—and issues of sound and place. After I completed my first experience of *SOUNDWALK*, I knew I wanted to solicit additional minds and voices to engage with my reflections and queries. My incoming students (fall 2023) offered an ideal opportunity to do so. What could we learn by diving into this specific soundwalk together?

Before jumping into my experience, let me describe Reid and her work. Reid is an American composer, perhaps most widely recognized for winning the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2019 for her opera, *p r i s m*.[53] Reid debuted her *SOUNDWALK* a year later, in 2020, although she had devised the work's concept years prior.[54] According to her *SOUNDWALK* website, "*Ellen Reid SOUNDWALK* is a GPS-enabled work of public art that uses music to illu-

53. See "About," Ellen Reid's personal website, accessed May 30, 2025, https://ellenreidmusic.com/about.

54. Jeff Lunden, "Central Park Is Alive with the Sound of Music, Thanks to a Site-Specific App," Deceptive Cadence, NPR, October 24, 2020, https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2020/10/24/927121609/ellen-reid-soundwalk-central-park-gps-location-sensitive-app.

minate the natural environment. . . . *SOUNDWALK* is user-guided: the path you choose dictates the music you hear."[55] In summer 2023, I experienced *SOUNDWALK* in two locations: in Dublin in St. Stephen's Green (June 2023) and in London in Regent's Park (July 2023).[56] *SOUNDWALK* is multisited, so while one uses the same app in each location to listen to Reid's sounds, ideally through headphones, each location has a unique pairing of Reid's sounds with GPS coordinates.

Reid's *SOUNDWALK* began receiving attention from major news outlets in the fall of 2020 as she launched the project in its Central Park location (New York City).[57] In addition to publicizing her *SOUNDWALK*, news coverage described the composed elements that Reid included in the piece. For example, NPR revealed that Reid wrote twenty-five musical "cells" that were inspired by nature. She wrote these initial cells in June and July of 2020. Musicians recorded their parts remotely in August, and then Reid and an engineer mixed the recordings together.[58] Finally, Reid and a sound designer walked through Central Park to "beta test where and how the music [would be] triggered."[59]

As *SOUNDWALK* expanded to more locations, Reid's catalog of sounds expanded, too. For the Griffith Park location in Los Angeles, for instance, Reid

55. "Ellen Reid *SOUNDWALK*," accessed May 16, 2024, https://www.ellenreidsoundwalk.com/ (italics original).

56. First, I have to thank Leo Walker for drawing my attention to the *SOUNDWALK* in St. Stephen's Green. I would not have known about it without our conversation! Second, when I encountered the work, *SOUNDWALK* was offered in nine cities around the world: Athens, Dublin, London, Knoxville, Laguna Beach, Los Angeles, New York City, San Francisco, and Tokyo. See "Find a Soundwalk," Ellen Reid *SOUNDWALK* website, accessed May 16, 2024, https://www.ellenreidsoundwalk.com/locations-1. Two walks were available in Los Angeles: one on the UCLA campus and one in Griffith Park. Reid had also developed past soundwalks in Norfolk, Vienna, and Virginia Beach, Virginia; Jacksonville, Oregon; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Saratoga Springs, New York.

57. For examples from the press, see Lunden, "Central Park Is Alive"; Anthony Tommasini, "Over Headphones and in a Truck, the Philharmonic Stays Alive," *New York Times*, September 14, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/14/arts/music/new-york-philharmonic.html; and Deborah Vankin, "Griffith Park Hikers, Listen Up: 'Ellen Reid Soundwalk' is a GPS-Enabled Musical Map," *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 2021, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2021-02-18/ellen-reid-soundwalk-griffith-park-music-map. Vankin's article mentions that the Central Park location opened in September of 2020. For an example of a longer audiovisual press piece from the following summer, see "Ellen Reid's Griffith Park Soundscape," uploaded by PBS SoCal (Artbound), June 22, 2021, 11 min., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70hQoctOyDs&t=54s.

58. Vankin provides the dates in her "Griffith Park Hikers" article. Lunden specifically mentions musicians from the New York Philharmonic in his "Central Park Is Alive"; however, while Tommasini's and Vankin's articles mention the Philharmonic musicians, they also list the Young People's Chorus of New York City. Additionally, Tommasini mentions the jazz group Poole and the Gang and Vankin mentions Reid's Soundwalk Ensemble, which includes musicians from around the United States.

59. Lunden, "Central Park Is Alive."

used more than one hundred cells. Geotagged to specific locations, the cells vary in timbre and length.[60] The *Los Angeles Times* reported, "as visitors move through [Griffith Park], they wander into and out of musical cells, like sonic zones. And, depending on the pace visitors keep, they'll hear different parts of a cell at different locations along the walk."[61] This means that no two walks, even at the same location, are the same.

When experiencing a Reid *SOUNDWALK*, participants are instructed to connect headphones to their devices in order to hear Reid's musical cells through an app. In colorful plaques posted around St. Stephen's Green (Dublin), a photograph of which is presented in figure 1, there were four simple directions: download the Ellen Reid *SOUNDWALK* app, download the St. Stephen's Green *SOUNDWALK*, *put on your headphones* (my emphasis), and begin your walk.[62] In a *Los Angeles Times* article from February 2021, Reid describes her *SOUNDWALK* as an activity that is meant to be "phone-in-pocket" but that "you're supposed to hear your footsteps."[63] Headphones are key, but they should not be the sole source of aural information.

60. Some cells last nearly twenty minutes, while others sound for less than a single minute. See Vankin, "Griffith Park Hikers."

61. Vankin, "Griffith Park Hikers." In the national news coverage, it is particularly striking when Reid discusses how she made compositional choices with regard to specific spaces. For instance, when speaking about Regent's Park in London, Reid describes accessing St. John's Lodge Garden, a more secretive part of the park just northeast of Queen Mary's Gardens, which is a space that is often locked. In a conversation with Rosie McCrum, Reid states, "Once I got in [to St. John's Lodge Garden], it was this whole world of incredibly manicured trees and statues. So whilst the sonic layer opens, so do all these other layers too." Rosie McCrum, "Ellen Reid's SOUNDWALK Comes to Regent's Park," The Camdenist, September 21, 2022, https://camdenist.com/music/ellen-reid-soundwalk-regents-park/.

In Central Park, Reid took inspiration for the Ramble, a wooded area of thirty-six acres that birdwatchers frequent, from a nationally reported incident on Memorial Day of 2020. See Sarah Maslin Nir, "How 2 Lives Collided in Central Park, Rattling the Nation," *New York Times*, June 14, 2020, modified October 14, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/14/nyregion/central-park-amy-cooper-christian-racism.html. (There were several reports in major newspapers in the days after Memorial Day, and several editorials also ran in June.) Reid described to NPR how she conceived of the music for the Ramble after reading a profile on Christian Cooper in *The New York Times*: "I went through the interview and wrote down all of the birds that he named, and then I transcribed their musical calls." Quoted in Lunden, "Central Park Is Alive." Using Cooper's words that closed out his interview, she titled the Ramble cell "The Birds Belong to All of Us."

62. These same four basic directions are provided in the featured video on Reid's *SOUNDWALK* web page. See the *SOUNDWALK* website, https://www.ellenreidsoundwalk.com/. The directions appear in the web page's embedded video from 00:04:56–00:05:11. It's also worth noting that instructional signs for *SOUNDWALK* were conspicuously absent in London's Regent's Park.

63. Quoted in Vankin, "Griffith Park Hikers."

Figure 1: St. Stephen's Green *SOUNDWALK* instructions. Photograph by the author.

A tension between recorded and environmental sound struck me immediately in St. Stephen's Green. I quickly jotted down some notes in my journal near the beginning of my walk, documenting my listening experience:

> *[*SOUNDWALK*] seems to mask some sounds—it's a richer experience when it's quieter and I hear the world around me. I can't* ***not*** *hear the music. I'm trained to hear it first. While the music plays, I do hear birds, dog collars jingling, traffic, and construction, but I miss the smaller sounds—footsteps, rustling, breathing.*[64]

Continuing around St. Stephen's Green, I eventually made my way to the middle of the park, where there is a series of round structures, represented by five circles in the middle of the map in figure 2.[65] In the image, this middle section of the park is highlighted in pink, and my location is indicated by a blue dot. I

64. Author's personal journal entry, June 10, 2023.

65. The middle structure is a circular, landscaped area. The two outer structures are reminiscent of huts on stilts. The two inner structures are fountains.

noted intensifying percussion from the app while in this area, and I marked the presence of low drones, a rhythmic ride cymbal, and a drum set in my journal. I also wrote:

> *Now [I'm] 100% NOT listening to environment, but [I'm] still interacting with structures in [the] environment; so [I'm] not listening to the environment, but still aware of it and searching for meaning.*[66]

I wanted to remain open to the experience, but I became frustrated by the feeling of being aurally disconnected from the park. While I valued the visual connection that I had established to St. Stephen's Green, I did not want my only meaningful relationship to the park to be visual. That felt antithetical to the act of soundwalking.

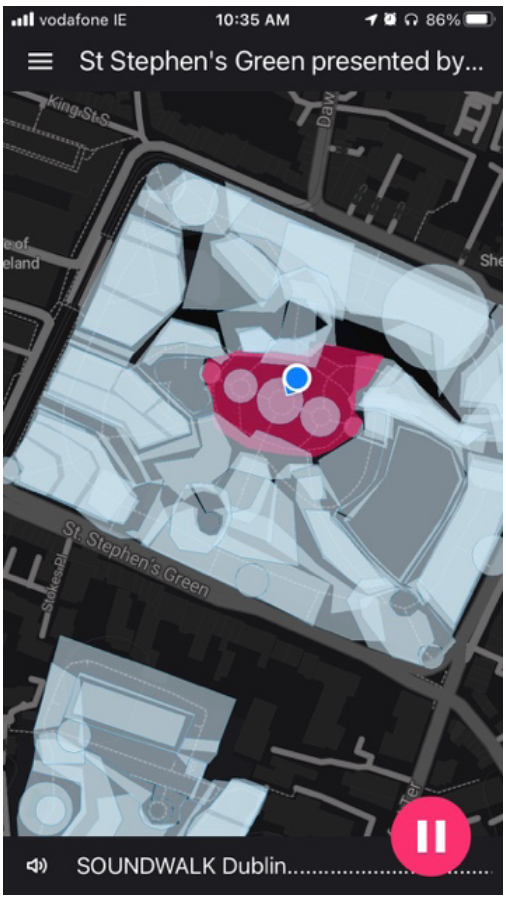

Figure 2: Author's screenshot of the interactive map for St. Stephen's Green, *SOUNDWALK* app

It's clear that headphones are crucial to the success of Reid's *SOUNDWALK*; yet, when a person uses headphones, whether for music, podcasts, or other

66. Author's personal journal entry, June 10, 2023.

media, it is easy for recorded sounds coming through the headphones to cover sounds coming from the external environment. Volume, and in particular the delicate act of balancing the volumes of inner (headphones) and outer (park) soundscapes—both of which form central aspects of *SOUNDWALK*—is a challenge. One can quickly become focused on music or voices coming through the headphones, especially if the app's volume is turned up loud or if the volume of a musical cell increases. The latter happened to me with the percussion in the middle of St. Stephen's Green.

When my students complete soundwalks in an unmediated fashion, sans headphones, smartphones, or other devices, they often raise a similar issue. Many of them admit to walking around campus with headphones in their ears, oblivious to the sounds of the surrounding environment. When they remove their headphones for their soundwalk, they frequently reassess their listening habits and notice a completely different soundscape.[67] They often remark in class or in written observations that they have neglected to give sufficient attention to sounds—and sometimes significant sounds—because they are focusing primarily on the media flowing through their headphones.[68]

While they may not explicitly say as much, my students seem to recognize the power and appeal of their personal devices—usually a smartphone—and the forms of mobile listening these devices afford. Their observations of their own behavior echo research by sound studies scholar Michael Bull in his book *Sounding Out the City* (2000). Many of my students readily admit to using their smartphones to create their own soundworld, which is set apart from the environment in which they are walking or commuting to/from campus. In the first chapter of his book, Bull succinctly writes, "mobility is inscribed into the very design of personal stereos, enabling users to travel through any space accompanied by their own 'individualized' soundworld."[69] He articulates a similar idea in one of the final chapters: "The mobility of personal stereos enable[s] users to maintain contact with their favourite types of music around which aspects of their own social identity, orientations and interests are formed and constituted."[70]

67. The participants in Sonic Histories reported similar behaviors. "As one student put it, 'I try to be more conscious of the sounds around me and take in each and every one of them.' Another student stated that they used to 'block everything out but now I listen to what is happening around me.'" Kinnear et al., "Sonic Histories," 46.

68. Many of my students have also continued to make meaningful observations about how they engage with mediated content, weaving connecting threads between their use of technology and active/passive listening.

69. Michael Bull, *Sounding out the City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life* (Berg, 2000), 3.

70. Bull, 153.

Although Bull is writing about the Walkman personal stereo, today's smartphones are utilized similarly.[71] Users are able to take their smartphones nearly everywhere, and they largely have control over what they hear. My students often affirm that they, like the listeners in Bull's study, choose music or other audio content to influence their daily, or even hourly dispositions. Their choices are conscious, and their selected audio often intentionally masks or blocks sounds emanating from public places.[72] My students' behaviors are not new.

Yet listening in this way creates a situation in which listeners can retreat into or become isolated in worlds of their own making. Bull suggests that "switching off [a personal stereo] becomes tantamount to killing off [a listener's] private world and returning them to the diminished space and duration of the disenchanted and mundane outside world."[73] In other words, emerging from one's own curated soundworld may be more than just undesirable—it may feel risky, dangerous, or worse.[74] While I have experienced my own displeasure at pausing audio to deal with an issue in the "real" world, Bull's assertion seems slightly overstated. I do not doubt that he is basing this comment on his research interviews, nor do I think he is misrepresenting his subjects. But I would counter his claim with two observations: first, in many instances, listeners do easily return to their private world at a later time; and second, the outside world is not always disenchanting or mundane to listeners. My students have assured me that both of these are true. In fact, they have repeatedly reported that taking a unmediated soundwalk is one of their favorite activities of the semester. Many of them enjoy simply "unplugging" from technology.

This echoes my own experience while engaging with Reid's *SOUNDWALK*. After my initial walk in Dublin, I decided to "unplug" myself from my headphones in the London *SOUNDWALK* location. I felt that Reid's musical cells had dominated my listening experience in St. Stephen's Green by blocking out sounds of the surrounding environment and I did not want to feel overly occupied by the mediated content. Thus in Regent's Park, I tried a different approach to listening. I discarded my headphones and switched to playing the app from my phone's built-in speakers. Straightway, I realized that my change of approach was effectively adding to the soundscape—perhaps even creating noise pollution—and that the resulting sounds could be heard by other visitors to the park who had no desire to have musical accompaniment to their strolls. I wrestled with that realization throughout my walk, but nevertheless I continued to play the music from my phone to try and gain what I considered to be

71. Clearly, though, smartphones are far more technologically capable and advanced than a Walkman.

72. Bull, *Sounding out the City*, 44.

73. Bull, 36.

74. Bull, 137, 154.

a better balance between Reid's cells and sounds that emanated from the park's environment.

My choice had additional advantages. In Regent's Park, I was not alone. My husband and son were with me, and playing the *SOUNDWALK* from my phone allowed them to experience Reid's work too. *SOUNDWALK* became more of a group listening activity, as opposed to an exclusionary "Mom-doing-research-on-a-family-outing" activity. At one point, my son, who was three at the time, made the astute observation that the music was changing as we moved; he seemed to understand that Reid's sounds are tied to place. Playing the music from my phone also allowed me to use my husband's phone to record both Reid's musical cells and the sounds of the park. Since Reid's *SOUNDWALK* is GPS-enabled, one cannot hear the musical cells outside of the spaces that are geotagged. Albeit far from professional quality, the personal "field recordings" I created on my husband's phone helped to document the multiple sonic dimensions of my experience so that I could give future students some idea of what I was experiencing.

I did not journal while in Regent's Park, since I was attempting to make the experience more tolerable for my family, but I do know that playing the music from my phone created a better balance for me. I distinctly recall hearing more natural sounds as a result of changing my approach, including birds, water, and the conversations of other visitors in the park. My recordings also picked up some wind and the occasional crunchy footstep. We also happened to be in Regent's Park on July 10, 2023, the day that President Biden was scheduled to meet with King Charles III and Rishi Sunak.[75] When the President of the United States visits London, he often stays at the residence of the United States Ambassador, which is in Regent's Park.[76] While we were in the park, there was a noticeable police presence and we saw no fewer than four helicopters—some clearly marked as American—that were descending and preparing to land. The sound from the helicopters was so deafening that, in my recordings, it obliterates Reid's *SOUNDWALK*.

Although one might contend that the bulk of my experiences of Reid's *SOUNDWALK* reflects a binary of embracing technological mediation—in

75. See "Readout of President Joe Biden's Meeting with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of United Kingdom," The White House, July 10, 2023, https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/07/10/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-meeting-with-prime-minister-rishi-sunak-of-the-united-kingdom-4/; and "Readout of President Joe Biden's Meeting with King Charles III," The White House, July 10, 2023, https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/07/10/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-meeting-with-king-charles-iii/.

76. See "U.S. Ambassador's Residence – London, United Kingdom," Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, accessed July 1, 2025, https://fapeculturaldiplomacy.org/embassies/london; and "Historical Context and Background," Winfield House, accessed July 1, 2025, https://winfieldhouse.org/historical-context/.

this case, headphones—or not, I would argue that my experiences nevertheless open the door for nuanced observation and discussion, both pedagogically and personally. First, with regard to technology, the decision to play audio directly from a phone instead of through headphones exposes the important issue of alternate modes of listening. How does one choose to use a given technology, and why? Deviating from listening norms also ties into questions concerning the listener's agency. How closely does one follow an artist's instructions, and why? Second, considering the circumstances of each listening experience allows for the examination of personal and environmental influences. With whom does one listen? And how does one listen? These are all issues that could be discussed in the classroom, but individual listeners may also benefit from contemplating these questions.

In my experiences of *SOUNDWALK*, the physicality of my listening shifted from place to place. During my walk in St. Stephen's Green, which was my first encounter with Reid's work, I mostly adhered to Reid's instructions. In Regent's Park, where I felt more familiar with Reid's work and intentions, I deviated from her directions, allowing her music to sound from my phone and mingle with the surrounding people, objects, and landscapes. Personal circumstances played a key role in both Regent's Park and St. Stephen's Green, since in London I walked with my family and in Dublin I walked alone. Clearly, political events of the day also impacted my soundwalk in Regent's Park. Reid could not have anticipated President Biden's visit, nor that it would have prompted me to think more broadly about the park, its visitors, and even its diplomatic history.

Such observations move far beyond the simple presence of technological mediation, thereby complicating its function and impact. They reveal possible tensions between artistic intent and audience intervention. The context of a mediated walk, which can include a host of variables, also accords meaning to the experience. These are issues well worth contemplating to oneself, but they are also well worth presenting to students.

Case Study: Reid's *SOUNDWALK*, Student Discussion

I base the second half of my case study on my students' own observations and narratives. I customarily challenge my students to engage critically with questions pertaining to technological mediation in soundwalking, and they often take our classroom dialogues well beyond binary observations into more meaningful territory. For pedagogues interested in including soundwalking in their teaching, I offer my unit framework immediately below as a point of reference. Explaining how I structure my unit also provides a launchpad to describe my own students' conversations from fall 2023, which concretely illustrate the nuanced dialogues they have produced.

I have included soundwalking in my courses since the fall of 2021, and many of my students have been invigorated by the soundwalking unit I have designed. I incorporate soundwalking most often in my general-education course on music and the environment, which serves underclassmen—primarily freshmen and sophomores—of varying interests and a diversity of majors.[77] Over a two-week period, outlined in table 1, my students readily participate in and discuss various soundwalks.

Day	**Topic**	**Readings and Recordings[78] / Assignments**
1: Monday	Unmediated Soundwalking	Westerkamp's "Soundwalking" Westerkamp's "Soundwalking as an Ecological Practice"
		Explain/Assign: Unmediated Soundwalk In-Class Discussion Questions: In what kind of setting would you **like** to take a soundwalk (e.g., rural, urban, trails, paved walkways)? Why? Is there consensus in your group, or is there [a] diversity of settings?

77. I have also used soundwalking in the music history sequence for music majors, albeit in a more condensed fashion.

78. Several of these readings are cited throughout this article. For reference, those that have not been cited elsewhere include: Westerkamp, "Soundwalking," Inside the Soundscape, accessed July 1, 2025, https://hildegardwesterkamp.ca/writings/writings-by/?post_id=13&title=soundwalking; Christos Carras, "Soundwalks: An Experiential Path to New Sonic Art," *Organised Sound* 24, no. 3 (2019): 261–73; Amanda Gutiérrez et al., "How Do Soundwalks Engage Urban Communities in Soundscape Awareness?" paper for Invisible Places conference (São Miguel Island, Azores, Portugal), April 2017, http://invisibleplaces.org/2017/pdf/Gutierrez-b.pdf; and Westerkamp, "Soundscape of Cities," Inside the Soundscape, accessed July 1, 2025, https://hildegardwesterkamp.ca/writings/writings-by/?post_id=22&title=soundscapes-of-cities. For the video on the second day, see Amanda Gutiérrez, "What is a Soundwalk?" accessed July 1, 2025, http://www.amandagutierrez.net/eng/portfolio/sound-walks/ (scroll down to the middle of the page). Daugherty's *MotorCity Triptych* is a sonic depiction of Detroit and is accessible on YouTube. Other musical works that depict a city (e.g., Gershwin's *An American in Paris*) could easily substitute for *MotorCity Triptych*.

Day	Topic	Readings and Recordings/ Assignments
2: Wednesday	Design and Impact of Soundwalks	Carras's "Soundwalks: An Experiential Path to New Sonic Art," Parts 1–6 Gutiérrez, Leonardson, and Long's "How Do Soundwalks Engage Urban Communities in Soundscape Awareness?" Gutiérrez's "What Is a Soundwalk?" (Video)
		In-Class Discussion Questions: What are possible benefits of soundwalking? Could taking a soundwalk draw attention to any broader issues or concerns outside of nature?
3: Thursday	TA Session	Planning Your Soundwalk
4: Monday[79]	Mediated Soundwalking	Smolicki's *Soundwalking through Time, Space, and Technologies*, "Introduction" Vankin's "Griffith Park Hikers, Listen Up" (*Los Angeles Times*)
		No In-Class Discussion: Explanation of IRB Study (*to be completed the following class period*)
5: Wednesday	Urban Soundscapes	Westerkamp's "Soundscape of Cities" Daugherty's *MotorCity Triptych* (Musical Recording)
		In-Class Discussion Questions: IRB Study (*see below*)
6: Thursday	TA Session	TBD: Determined by Needs/Interests of Students

79. In the latest iteration of the course (fall 2024), I also added about seven minutes of audio listening to the fourth day's assignments: "Saltwater Soundwalk Shorts," Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, SoundCloud, excerpts 1–4, https://soundcloud.com/saltwater-soundwalk/sets/saltwater-soundwalk-shorts.

Day	Topic	Readings and Recordings/ Assignments
7: Friday	N/A	Due: Unmediated Soundwalk Assignment

Table 1: Soundwalking unit, two-week framework (fall 2023)

In late September of 2023, I asked my students to engage with Reid's *SOUNDWALK*.[80] Before considering Reid's work, though, we spent time with Westerkamp's ideas regarding unmediated soundwalks. My pedagogical purpose for including Reid's *SOUNDWALK* was to balance the focus on unmediated sound with at least one extended mediated example, thus providing a comparative soundwalk for students using technology that would be familiar to them. I surmised that students might have a lot to say about a soundwalk that incorporated the modern, ubiquitous tool of headphones.

Since I knew students could not engage directly with Reid's work at our home institution or its city (the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida), I assigned to my students a 2021 article by Deborah Vankin about Reid's Griffith Park walk and invited them to explore Reid's *SOUNDWALK* website prior to our fourth class meeting of the unit.[81] During class, I presented a summary of my summer experiences with Reid's *SOUNDWALK* and supplemented course materials with my personal photographs and sound clips.[82] Even though my students could not experience Reid's work in person, I trusted these various resources could allow students to begin considering the soundwalk's significance.

During this same class period, I described the IRB study I would conduct during the next (fifth) class period, which would present in-class discussion questions about mediated soundwalking. In that fifth class period, I presented four numbered prompts (below), which consisted primarily of question sets, on a discussion board within Canvas, the online learning platform at the

80. I obtained IRB approval from the University of Florida using an online exemption tool. My study, titled "Soundwalking: A Changing Activity," was given a unique protocol number (ET00020611) a few days prior to the class period in which my students engaged with my questions. In the class period prior to the formal study, I had prepped students by explaining my study and its purpose, giving them a verbal summary of the consent form, and allowing time for questions. On the day of the study, I provided the consent form again in written form. Students had the opportunity to decline to participate, but none chose to do so. I have anonymized all student responses by using a unique numerical identification system.

81. Vankin, "Griffith Park Hikers."

82. At this point in the unit, students had been given their unmediated soundwalk assignment, but they still had four days to complete and submit it. Presenting my observations prior to the due date of the assignment did not seem to cause any problems with student submissions—the submissions I read seemed authentic and not overly derived from my lecture content.

University of Florida. Students were allowed to respond to whichever one of the four prompts they found most appealing, and I gave them the opportunity to chat in small groups before submitting individual discussion posts on Canvas.[83] We also followed up in class with a short verbal dialogue.

These are the prompts I posted:

1. Has the definition of soundwalk changed over time? Should the definition change over time? Can mediated technology enhance a soundwalk? Degrade a soundwalk?
2. How might artists approach the issue of using mediated technology?
3. In a mediated soundwalk, should you only walk with your headphones in? Is it acceptable to take them out and play sound through your phone?
4. Can you only do something like Reid's *SOUNDWALK* by yourself? In what ways could you do this activity with others?

In hindsight, it would have been better to divide the first prompt into two separate sets of questions. This would have allowed one question set to focus on the definition of a soundwalk, while the second set would have targeted the impact of technological mediation on a soundwalk. In future discussions, then, there could be a total of five prompts or I could eliminate the question set regarding the definition of a soundwalk in order to focus more purposefully on technological mediation. I might also change the language of the first set of questions to include "definition and practice of soundwalking" to broaden the discussion. To avoid a potential binary between enhance/degrade, I could condense the second question set to a single question asking, "How does technological mediation affect/change a soundwalk?"

Each question, whether left as phrased or reworded, invokes the concept of value. At the most basic level, the first set of questions about definition targets students' conceptual understanding and critical thinking; pedagogically, there is merit in simply comprehending a concept. The next issue—the second half of the first prompt—shifts to technology, asking whether it enhances or degrades a soundwalk. This pivot ushers students toward the familiar idea of mediated content; it also requires students to think carefully about how they engage with mediated content. The second prompt, which focuses on artistic methods, prompts students to consider the complexities of the creative process. Artists

83. In this particular general-education class, I have students write a short response to a daily question in order to make sure I hear from every student. As we all know, not every student likes to participate verbally in class discussion. I should note, though, that I have students talk in assigned groups of three or four prior to making their individual posts. This means that, whether or not they have a verbal exchange of ideas with me in the classroom, they are still verbally exchanging ideas with their peers prior to submitting a written response.

have many choices to make, and each choice has significance. The third and fourth sets of questions broach the relationship between the volume of sound and its influence on the surrounding environment by asking students not only to evaluate their own listening habits, but also to reflect upon the social impact of their listening. To offer two quick examples, sharing sound can be intentional, as in a group setting where multiple people desire access to the same sound, but there is only one sound source. It can also be unintentional if one simply decides to forego headphones and listen through their device's speakers without thinking of how this choice impacts nearby people. How one listens can impact more than oneself.

A summary of student responses to the four prompts is provided in table 2. On the day of the discussion, all of my students submitted responses on the Canvas discussion board.[84] Students were asked to clearly identify which prompt they were responding to in their submissions; all but four students followed this direction. Yet, the content of these four students' answers made it clear which prompt they were answering. Since prompts 1, 2, and 3 asked about technological mediation and soundwalking, I will discuss responses only to these three prompts.

	Number of Student Responses	**Percentage of Total Responses[85]**
Prompt 1	15	22.7%
Prompt 2	5	7.6%
Prompt 3	37	56.1%
Prompt 4	9	13.6%

Table 2: Reid *SOUNDWALK* discussion posts

Table 2 shows a clear preference for the third prompt, which invited students to consider their own listening habits as well as the auditory impact those habits might have on others. The students' discussion posts addressing this prompt leaned heavily in two directions. First, several students found it acceptable to play sound through a phone's speakers on a soundwalk, and they actually encouraged this behavior in order to better interact with both the artist's constructed sound and the surrounding environment. Second, many students suggested using dual modes of listening during a soundwalk. Sometimes, they focused on having both options available and switching between using headphones and using a phone speaker, in order to allow for a fuller listening

84. I had sixty-six students in this class. My TA recorded one student as absent, but that student did post a response.

85. The percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

experience.[86] Other times, students focused on who would be near them during the soundwalk experience. They suggested playing audible sound while alone but using headphones around other people so as not to disturb their sound environment. Only a handful of students were adamant about only using headphones.

Some discussion posts provided more nuanced reflections on the classroom material. One student suggested that using a phone speaker lets the phone act as "more of a guide," perhaps propelling or pushing the listener through the surrounding environment.[87] Another proposed that the perceived duality between natural and recorded sounds allowed for increased complexity during the listening experience.[88] Their response implied that artistic and environmental sounds can interweave. Conversely, a different student remarked that high-end, noise-canceling headphones could greatly alter a soundwalk.

> *While listening through headphones, you would mostly be hearing the sounds from the headphones with the sounds of your environment becoming background noise or possibly completely inaudible depending on the level of noise-cancellation in the headphones.*[89]

Advocating for safety, two students also noted that walking with headphones could mute environmental sounds that would otherwise signal danger. Here is one student's take:

> *In a mediated soundwalk, I feel as if that you should not only go on soundwalks with just your headphones in. This is because this could potentially make you less aware of your surroundings when walking and could put the person doing the soundwalk in danger of any passing people, bikes, or other potential harms.*[90]

When read back-to-back with the remark about noise cancellation, the concerns about safety become more pressing. It is not hard to imagine getting immersed in recorded sound and letting your attention to safety lapse when using headphones of superb quality. Perhaps in a space constructed expressly

86. As one student clearly articulated, "You should not only walk with your headphones in . . . you could take them out at some points and take in the environment as well." Student 23.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

87. Student 54.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

88. Student 12.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

89. Student 49.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

90. Student 1.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity"; Student 62.1 listed similar safety concerns in their post.

for pedestrians, without bicycle or vehicle traffic, soundwalkers' safety is a bit more protected by virtue of the space's design. In that situation, as one student observed,

> *having headphones in . . . allows us to block out the sound from outside of our headphones and just focus on the different aspects of the audio. This would also allow us to take in the visual aspect of our surroundings as there are less distractors.*[91]

This last observation brings the artist's intention, whether a soundwalker may be aware of it or not, to the foreground. Does an artist intend for soundwalkers to become engrossed with the audio, perhaps paradoxically as a means to focus on the surrounding visual instead of sonic environment? More generally, how much weight does, or should, the artist's intention have on a soundwalker's experience? Three students weighed in on this dilemma, with one writing:

> *Taking off the headphones is a way for the listener to make the soundwalk their own, and individualize it to a point where it can resonate deeper with the person. Although this is not exactly the artists [*sic*] vision, it is a way to insert yourself into the space and their work.*[92]

This student prioritizes the listener over the artist.[93] The artist is not completely disregarded, but it is acceptable for the individual's experience to supersede the artist's original intention. In other words, the artist may set parameters, but individual listeners will shape the outcome.

In contrast, another student prioritized the artist over the listener:

> *I think that both options [listening with or without headphones] are acceptable, but that it depends on the artist's intention. For example, if the artist wants to have the listener tie together the mediated sound through the headphones with the visual stimulus of the natural world, then the headphones should be*

91. Student 5.3, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

92. Student 57.3, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

93. Placing a similar emphasis on individuality, another student remarked: "It really depends on the walker. This is an individual, unique experience and for that reason, the walker should do what's most comfortable and rewarding for them. If keeping headphones in allows the walker to fully immerse themself into the experience and free them from distractions, then the walker should keep them in. However, if the walker feels disconnected from the environment when they have headphones in, then the walker should try playing the sound from their phone or keeping only one headphone in. It's really whatever is the most rewarding to that particular walker." Student 38.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity." Student 61.2 listed similar concerns in their post.

> *used so the listener can understand the parallels or meaning behind the artist's decision. However, if the artist is not specific about using headphones, then I believe that playing the mediated sound through a speaker could better ground the soundwalk to the natural music and the environment.*[94]

It becomes the artist's responsibility, then, to clearly communicate how their audience is to engage with their work. Without well-defined instructions, the soundwalker is free to make their own decisions.

A final subset of students proposed alternate ways of listening, moving beyond the two options offered in the prompt. Three students advocated for using a headphone in only one ear.[95] Personal-stereo users exhibited this behavior in Bull's *Sounding out the City*, as did participants in Sonic Histories.[96] Another student suggested wearing headphones around their neck.[97] The latter would allow the audio to be "loud enough to hear, but not loud enough to disturb others," thus directing the sound "towards your ears, away from others, and with enough space to allow natural sounds to reach your ears along with the mediated soundwalk."[98]

While the third prompt encouraged students to evaluate their own listening habits, the first prompt focused on general comprehension and the possible benefits of mediated content. Students primarily responded in the affirmative to the first question set, which asked if the definition of "soundwalk" had changed over time. Several students drew on Westerkamp and indicated that her definition needed to change because the world is changing, particularly in light of

94. Student 56.3, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

95. Students 33.2, 15.3, and 63.2, September 27, 2023, comments on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

96. See Bull, *Sounding out the City*, 100. In the Sonic Histories project, students also reported "choosing to only keep one earbud in so as to 'appreciate that our campus still contains organic sounds.'" Kinnear et al., "Sonic Histories," 46.

97. After I delivered a presentation at Oak Hammock, a retirement community in Gainesville, Florida, a resident approached me and told me about Shokz headphones. These open-ear headphones might be ideal for *SOUNDWALK*; one design rests near the preauricular region, in front of the ear, while another design sits further back on the concha without blocking the ear canal. As the Shokz company writes, "In modern society, people choose to wear noise-canceling headphones to help block out the ambient noise around them. However, this also blocks communication between people and blocks the noise of traffic, so people are less aware of the safety of their surroundings. Shokz believes in a . . . vision that brings people together, one that allows you to keep your ears open so you can hear what is going on around you." See "Our Story," Shokz website, accessed May 16, 2024, https://shokz.com/pages/our-story. Thus, although not designed for soundwalking, Shokz headphones do seem suited for it.

98. Student 44.3, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

technological advancements.[99] One student argued that Westerkamp's definition of a soundwalk already allowed for creativity and growth: "The definition of soundwalk ('a walk with a focus of listening to the environment') was very broad to begin with and allowed room for interpretation."[100] Another student implied that change was ongoing, and that by expanding what constitutes a soundwalk, soundwalks themselves can become more diverse and inclusive.[101] I have not assigned my students any of the earlier writings I cited by Black and Bohlman, Galloway, or Shaw, but these observations lead me to believe that students could engage productively with them.[102]

Responses to the second question set (of the first prompt), about whether mediated technology enhances or degrades a soundwalk, were more divided. Several students pointed out the positive ways technology adds to soundwalks. One student cited increased accessibility for the participant, noting that "someone who is hard of hearing can still participate in a soundwalk if they have a cochlear implant or hearing aids."[103] Another student noted modern reliance on technology, particularly by Generation Z.[104] They proposed, "with younger generations being more dependent on technology, incorporating technology into soundwalking could make it more accessible and engaging for younger generations, which will keep the practice of soundwalking alive."[105] Echoing Westerkamp's description of the capabilities of audio technology in *Kits Beach Soundwalk,* a third student noted the potential for recognizing overlooked sounds by "utilizing microphones to amplify the quieter noises that typically get drowned out by more prominent ones" but treaded into perhaps more controversial grounds by describing the use of "audio technology to minimize or completely eliminate the dominant sounds."[106]

99. Some students referred to Westerkamp directly while others referred to her ideas without naming her.

100. Student 27.2, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity." The student is clearly drawing on one of Westerkamp's sentences from "Soundwalking as an Ecological Practice" (2006): "Simply put, a soundwalk is any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment."

101. Student 51.2, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

102. As shown in table 1, my students do read writing by Smolicki.

103. Student 14.2, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

104. Bull notes that "personal-stereo use also takes its place within a cultural environment saturated with communication technologies and their products." Bull, *Sounding out the City*, 152. That "saturation" has surely increased to something more akin to a flood since 2000. Technology has exploded with regard to smartphones and apps, tablets, laptops, smartwatches, smart appliances, and AI.

105. Student 64.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

106. Student 14.2.

Referring directly to Westerkamp's work, another student recollected that "Westerkamp herself used technology to record and share soundwalks through her radio show."[107] This student also used newly acquired course knowledge to argue that "the concept of unmediated listening has always been more of an ideal and the complete exclusion of technology was never intended."[108] Yet another student hypothesized that soundwalking will remain

> *an ever-evolving activity with the emergence of new and future technologies. . . . With the advent of new and emerging technologies, including digital recordings, on-demand audio streaming, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence, individuals will discover news ways [to] engage in a soundwalk and thus expand the frontier of the forms and mediums that can add and layer to the core activity of a soundwalk.*[109]

A few students, though, were hard pressed to find advantages to mediated soundwalks. One simply stated at the end of their post, "the only thing that should be listened to on a soundwalk is the environment in the immediate area of the person conducting the soundwalk."[110] Another student suggested that technological mediation can distract a listener, but situated that claim within the observation that others' technology may be a part of the soundwalking environment.

> *Mediated technology degrades a soundwalk because it interferes with your environment and is distracting. Your environment should be everything around you, even if its [*sic*] from other people's technology. But when you use technology, it distracts you from perceiving everything around you.*[111]

Subjectivity was another theme that ran through the students' discussion posts. A person's individual experiences, needs, and preferences will undoubtedly come into play as they choose what kind of soundwalk to undertake, or even whether to take a soundwalk at all. An intriguing angle that I did not

107. Student 7.2, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

108. Student 7.2.

109. Student 17.3, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

110. Student 24.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity." Another student made a case for simplicity: "Technology can degrade a soundwalk because it can take away from the beauty in the simplicity of just listening to nature without using any technology." Student 58.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

111. Student 46.2, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

even conceive of involved the idea of escape. One particularly creative student offered the following commentary:

> *I find a lot of intrigue in thinking about how that same [mediated] technology could . . . provide us with an escape if we so choose. What makes us want to remove ourselves from a place is just as much a part of it as what makes us want to embrace it and be a part of it. We should not ignore this. At the beginning of this class, we talked a lot about how active listening is one of the keys to doing a soundwalk, but what if my environment makes me not want to listen? Technology could give us a way to do that.*[112]

This student rightly asserts that the opposite of an expected or frequent reaction can occur. We spend significant time in my general-education course talking about how to listen and become an active participant in an environment. We focus on primarily positive interactions and experiences. Yet, some of us may find an environment repulsive; a person may reject engaging further with it or in it. To ignore that someone may feel negatively about an environment, and by extension disregard the reality that technology can draw us out of that space, is tantamount to disregarding the environment and its impact.

This notion of welcome distraction recalls Bull's observation that listening to a personal stereo could provide a sense of escapism. To describe one participant's experience, he explains that

> [u]nwanted thoughts are blocked out during her journeying till she arrives at her destination where her attention is taken up with other things. In this instance the personal stereo functions as a kind of "in-between," filling up time and space in between contact with others, transporting the user out of place and time into a form of weightlessness of the present.[113]

Although my student's response has more of a negative tone, it is clear, once again, that their observation parallels earlier listening behaviors.

Students engaged least with the second prompt, but their responses still provided revealing commentary pertaining to it. This prompt aimed to put students in the mindset of the creative artist. A handful of students focused primarily on the importance of eschewing technological mediation in order to center natural sounds, a stance that may reveal a bias in my own teaching. As mentioned earlier, I draw on Westerkamp at the beginning of the soundwalking unit and require an unmediated walk for the course's soundwalking assignment. A couple of students latched onto the idea of control, with one even suggesting that an artist could have complete control over a soundwalk if they use virtual

112. Student 35.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

113. Bull, *Sounding out the City*, 49.

reality.[114] Another acknowledged that while mediated technology can point the ears to potentially overlooked sounds, technological mediation will always insert the artist into the listening experience by influencing what is heard:

> *[For] an artist who wants listeners to pay attention to specific sounds and is trying to make quieter sounds become more recognized, a mediated soundwalk will probably allow them to achieve this goal. . . . However, for an artist who wants the listener to interpret the sounds on their own and reflect on what they believe the soundwalk represents for them, mediated technology will only hinder that natural response from the listener. To mediate is to involve oneself in something which means a soundwalk with mediation will inherently evoke a response that is influenced by the artist.*[115]

By and large, I was impressed by my students' responses. Many of them offered earnest and meaningful reflections that went well beyond any simple binary division, which suggests that they wanted to engage with and found value in the discussion. In some cases, I would have liked to have seen less affirmation from my students about the issues I presented in class.[116] Yet, it seems important to note that students in my general-education course are largely freshmen and sophomores, and many of these undergraduates are in the process of learning how to think critically and express their thoughts.[117] But as evidenced by several of the quotes presented in this analysis, many students are ready to jump into nuanced classroom discussions. Those who choose not to participate verbally in the classroom can still benefit from having a space where they see and hear their peers modeling critical-thinking skills.

I would take one more step and assert that while I am arguing that mediated soundwalking can be examined and debated in detail in an undergraduate university course, and that this activity has value, my students' answers to my questions are not the most valuable aspect of classroom discussion. The dialogues that result from their active engagement with the questions have the

114. Student 9.2, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

115. Student 30.1, September 27, 2023, comment on discussion board "September 27: A Changing Activity."

116. In these cases, students seemed to reiterate course materials instead of thinking beyond them.

117. It is worth noting that the freshman and sophomore students I had in the fall of 2023 had an interrupted educational experience in high school due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and contemporary metrics were showing that incoming college students did not always feel prepared for collegiate coursework. See, for example, "ACT Test Scores for U.S. Students Drop to a 30-Year Low," NPR, October 12, 2023, https://www.npr.org/2023/10/12/1205404298/act-test-scores-college-admissions-30-year-low; and Emma Hall, "Prospective College Students Increasingly Say They Feel Unprepared for Higher Education," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 12, 2023, https://www.chronicle.com/article/prospective-college-students-increasingly-say-they-feel-unprepared-for-higher-education.

greatest significance. In other words, I am not seeking any particular answers to the questions I ask. My goal is for students to be able to demonstrate that they can engage with questions and respond thoughtfully to them, and I am grateful to witness many of them rising to that challenge. In fact, students are pushing me, too.[118] In having conversations with Generation-Z students about mediated soundwalks, I have become more aware of not just their embrace of multiple technologies, but how they consider the impact of those technologies on their daily lives. It is heartening to know that these students are well equipped to contemplate how various technologies have an effect on surrounding environments.

Revisiting Our Route

As revealed in their nuanced observations regarding technological mediation in soundwalks, my undergraduate students are broadening their understanding of soundwalking. They recognize that technological mediation is far more complex than a simple presence-or-absence binary construction and, once noted, can apply critical thinking to assess the benefits and detriments that arise in a soundwalk. In fact, members of Generation Z may find mediated soundwalks attractive precisely *because* of their technological mediation. And yet, despite the possibilities technology affords for future soundwalks, particularly in the realms of streaming and virtual reality, there will always be soundwalkers who prefer to engage only with an unmediated natural environment.

In wrestling with questions of sonic impact, listener etiquette, personal safety, artistic intention, and other such issues regarding the use of technology in soundwalking, my students and I acknowledge that there is much complexity in the experience. We refute any assertion that there is a single, "correct" way to incorporate technological mediation, let alone a "right" way to undertake a soundwalk. Our grappling with a multitude of interconnected topics aligns with Black and Bohlman's contention that open conversations about difference, diversity, and privilege in soundwalking can be far more valuable than simply

118. In the introduction to *Sound, Media, Ecology*, Milena Droumeva reflects on her teaching. She also conveys her process of learning from her students, who she describes as "the toughest critics, the most relevant audience to the ideas of acoustic ecology." She recognizes, too, that many of her students are "ensconced in the multisensory electronic boudoir of their mobile devices." As such, she was—at least at the time of her book's publication—increasingly incorporating technology in the classroom. She had students working with both analog (e.g., pen/paper) and digital (e.g., smartphone) devices. See Milena Droumeva and Randolph Jordan, "Sound, Media, Ecology: Introduction in Three Acts," in *Sound, Media, Ecology*, ed. Milena Droumeva and Randolph Jordan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 11, 13.

taking a soundwalk to practice "better" or more attentive listening.[119] Our grappling also provides a response to Smolicki's advocacy for soundwalking as a critical practice. We are not developing any definitive answers or solutions to the questions we raise; rather, we are noticeably moving beyond "innocent" conversations. We are thinking critically.

My students remain interested and invested in soundwalking, and as such, they eagerly consider what soundwalking means for *all* of us. Buoyed by my students' engagement with this exercise, I invite instructors to move beyond the "canonic exercise" of a "simple" soundwalk and try soundwalking with headphones.

119. Black and Bohlman warn that assigning soundwalks to listen better/attentively could morph into listening "aggressively" or "correctly." They encourage instructors to avoid using strict rubrics and outcome-oriented language in soundwalk assignments. Black and Bohlman, "Resounding the Campus," 16.

Renihan, Colleen, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright, eds. *Sound Pedagogy: Radical Care in Music*. Foreword by William Cheng. University of Illinois Press, 2024. 302 pages. $28.00. ISBN: 978-0-252-08770-7 (Paper).

Christi Jay Wells

My fingers type the phrase, "attached please find my review of *Sound Pedagogy*," and simultaneous feelings of pride, guilt, relief, and embarrassment wash over me as I prepare to hit send. This review is coming in late, late enough to delay this issue of *JMHP* and place precisely the type of burden on its editor that I myself found frustrating in the seemingly endless "cat-herding" labor that shapes so much of an editor's work and stress. However, at the moment I'm more concerned with my mother's recent cancer diagnosis as I prepare to visit her in the hospital, having spent the bulk of last week in another hospital as another family member dealt with respiratory problems. While I've struggled to get the review of this important volume *exactly* right, to produce the kinds of sparklingly crafted insights and turns of phrase I pride myself—perhaps to a fault—on always delivering, I'm letting good enough be good enough (as I would *certainly* counsel any student in a similar situation to do) and hitting send so I can get my ass to the hospital and be with my mom. I would never start a book review with what feels like such a nakedly self-indulgent opening were I not moved to honor the spirit of this powerful collection of essays, which throughout entreats all of us to enact various forms of care through what might be called a rigorous practice of vulnerable kindness, one that asks us to dismantle norms including (but certainly not limited to) hyperproductivity and perfectionism. Throughout its essays, *Sound Pedagogy* and its authors ask us to engage our students and communities with an ethic of care that regards all those around us as whole persons leading complex, often difficult lives and, just as importantly, to introspectively and vulnerably extend that same care and grace to ourselves.

As its editors—Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright—frame this volume's work and its urgency, "music in higher education needs repair

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through radical care" (p. 1). As a pathway toward this repair, they offer "sound pedagogy," a model that rests on a fundamental claim: that radical care must play a central role in the pedagogy and curricula of music classrooms and institutions. The model of radical care advocated for throughout this book prioritizes our students' and our own (faculty's) well-being over the content of the subjects we teach, emphasizing the need for our educational spaces to contribute to our community's collective well-being. This advocacy position, to be clear, does not seek to simply jettison music-historical content nor to eschew the importance of musicological inquiry and its methods, indeed far from it. The book's authors demonstrate throughout that musicological research and teaching have valuable, specific contributions to make to communities of care and to the promotion of well-being both within and beyond higher-ed music institutions. Toward that end, this volume and the sound pedagogy for which it advocates build substantively and explicitly on the work of William Cheng, whose transformative 2016 book, *Just Vibrations*, is engaged with both in the editors' introductory essay and throughout several subsequent chapters (and Cheng himself furnishes an insightful and provocative foreword, which very effectively sets the table for the essays to follow.) As such, *Sound Pedagogy* seeks to disrupt the highly competitive cultural economy of music making with a charge, as Cheng argues for, to shift our focus from doing well to doing good. As Cheng puts it, "doing good would involve reaching out and reaching back, lending help to those in need, and seeking opportunities for care and repair. Repair is a crucial word here. Its many significations include physical reassembly, bodily rehabilitation, restorative justice, monetary reparation, and disaster relief."[1]

The reparative categories Cheng enumerates, among others, inform the variegated approaches to and aspects of sound pedagogy offered by the book's sixteen chapters, which are organized into three sections that focus in turn on curricular advocacy, expanding pedagogical horizons, and emphasizing self-care. The first two sections feature a range of interventions into both the content and methods of teaching music history rooted in sound pedagogy's ethos of radical care. A number of essays feature specific conceptual frameworks, such as Colleen Renihan's application of empathy as a guiding principle in teaching opera, John Spilker's advocacy for radical honesty as a pathway to intersectional equity and well-being in the classroom, and Stephanie Jensen-Moulton's explication of universal design as a means of building a "kind classroom." Frederick A. Peterbark broadens the discussion of care beyond the classroom, bringing an administrator's perspective to bear on extending an ethic of care throughout a student's entire experience with the institution, including during the process

1. William Cheng, *Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good* (University of Michigan Press, 2016), 8.

of recruitment. Where these pieces largely discuss connections and dialogues between faculty and students (or between faculty, students, and staff), three essays expand this set of considerations toward wider conceptualizations of community. William A. Everett and Matteo Magarotto apply a public-musicology framework to interrogate the relationship between opera pedagogy and representational ethics. Mark Katz advocates for in-class collaboration with artists as a means for fostering both equity and empathy across classrooms, curricula, and institutions, and Kate Galloway extends this call for collaboration and empathy beyond strictly human interactions and into the realm of nonhuman expressions of music and musicality.

Notably, several authors across these sections frame their work in response to specific incidents of racial hate and violence. Sara Haefeli's opening anecdote frames her discussion of curriculum and repertory selection as necessarily in dialogue with students' need to respond to anti-Black violence and the Black Lives Matter movement's charge for equity and justice across all spheres of life in the US. Molly M. Breckling's piece recounts her classroom response to a white supremacist rally in the small college town where she teaches. Eric Hung opens his essay by recounting the 2021 murders of Asian women in the Atlanta metro area to advocate for a "socially responsible music history pedagogy," one that is "not just about the well-being of our students, but also about how our teaching alters the relationships students have with the historical and contemporary communities—particularly marginalized communities—we explore in our classrooms" (p. 138). Through confronting readers with this atrocity and our complicity in the cultural and media landscape that informed the killer's motivations, Hung makes clear the urgency of reckoning far more substantively with the Orientalist stereotypes replete in a range of music repertories and that we risk reinforcing in our classrooms. In drawing these connections, these essays remind us of the necessity of considering both the need for our teaching to respond meaningfully to the immanent issues our students face beyond our classrooms and the short- and long-term material impacts our teaching work can have, both for good and for ill, on the communities our students inhabit and the many spaces they navigate.

The essays in *Sound Pedagogy*'s final section, on self-care, focus introspectively and vulnerably on the authors' own identities and experiences in relationship to their teaching work, with Reba A. Wissner reflecting on her experience as a first-generation student, Amanda Christina Soto on her experience as a Tejana faculty member addressing border-related trauma in her home state of Texas, and Laura Moore Pruett and Mary Natvig sharing their own journeys as teachers grappling with challenges of physical and mental health respectively. The section is bookended by two essays explicating self-care frameworks: from Nathan A. Langfitt, who provides a counselor and student-affairs professional's

perspective on promoting student mental health, and Trudi Wright, who proposes the Jesuit concept of *Cura Personalis* as a framework for community and well-being within and beyond higher education. This section's emphasis on the relationship between self-care and community care provides a welcome disruption of the self-sacrificing mode of care for students that is too often an implicit expectation of teachers (whose deep care for our students' well-being is highly exploitable by the institutions where we work) and that often alarmingly models the romantic martyrdom that problematically shapes cultural norms across the arts. We do not, in fact, need to suffer to do our work and care for our students. By caring as radically for ourselves as for others, we both model healthier behaviors and contribute to a more sustainable collective foundation from which to do this urgently needed transformative work.

Alongside structures to nurture our physical and mental capacity to sustain transformative practices, *Sound Pedagogy* also provides vital conceptual tools to form and traverse pathways toward meaningful change. Among the volume's most valuable contributions is its application of a wide range of concepts from a diversity of fields and thinkers to the specific contexts of musicology classrooms and music schools and departments. Many of us have engaged on some level with the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, bell hooks, Paulo Freire, Brené Brown, and other scholars whose work connects pedagogy with justice and wellness, but *Sound Pedagogy* puts the "rubber to the road" by furnishing actionable models, rooted in vulnerable reflection, for how concepts including intersectionality, decolonization, and care pedagogy can meaningfully transform our classrooms and institutions. As such, *Sound Pedagogy* should prove a valuable resource for any teacher or administrator whose work involves substantial engagement with music students or who is charged with teaching about music to a broad range of learners. I, for one, will certainly be revising the syllabus for my own graduate seminar in music history pedagogy to emphasize both content and methods from this book's chapters, and I very much look forward to exploring its rich ideas and interventions with my students this coming fall.

Still, while the book's advocacy for breaking down barriers and fostering inclusion and equity are powerful, there is a bit of tension throughout *Sound Pedagogy* in defining the scope of both its audience and the spaces in which it seeks to deploy its interventions. On the one hand, the editors situate *Sound Pedagogy* explicitly as a disciplinary project, stating that "the premise of this book is, ultimately, that care-based pedagogy can facilitate the systemic change that remains possible and necessary for our discipline" (p. 2). At the same time, it is replete with advocacy for an expansive focus on the entire scope of music-institutional spaces and for a dismantling of barriers between fields and disciplines. While the volume does indeed feature voices often absent from discourses in music history pedagogy, e.g., colleagues who work in recruitment

and career services, it is largely dominated by musicologists, most of whom are working full time as musicology faculty (which the editors do readily acknowledge in the book's introduction) and its essays concern themselves largely with work done within musicology courses. This is not necessarily a problem in and of itself; no single book can cover all angles or feature all perspectives. Indeed, this volume's situatedness within the discursive sphere of musicology and music history pedagogy, coupled with care pedagogy's emphasis on understanding the entirety of our students' circumstances and challenges, provides rich and novel applications of our robust fieldwide training. Throughout, these essays demonstrate the value of research that prioritizes the deep interrogation of culture and context which in turn helps us to unpack the types of institutional pressures and demands both faculty and students carry into our classrooms. However, as this book frames the scope of its radical intervention not as confined to musicology or music history pedagogy but as impacting the full gamut of music in higher education, and as it contains numerous critiques of toxic practices and ideologies within music schools and conservatories, it problematically excludes the voices of those whose work makes up in many such spaces the lion's share of a student's experience and whose very presence often forms students' principal impetus for enrolling: the performance faculty who run studios, teach one-on-one lessons, and recruit and mentor the students who, at least in my institution, comprise the bulk of the student body with whom musicologists interact.

While our disciplinary training and institutional roles may offer specific, valuable insights into the institutional cultures of music in higher education, there is perhaps a missed opportunity in the volume to more materially advance this work of repair as a collective, multidisciplinary project which will necessitate all hands on deck, including close collaboration with our colleagues in fields such as music education, music therapy, and music performance, many of whom are actively involved in projects of reparative work themselves. To be clear, some essays nod to research in music education and to discourses within organizations such as the College Music Society, whose scope extends across disciplines in which music teaching takes place. Furthermore, there are compelling reasons to attend to how musicologists can be more attuned to the manifold pressures our students face in our systems as they are rather than as they should be. Throughout, the authors do highlight the specific problematics of musicology's attachment to Eurocentric, white-centering "traditions" in curricular structure, pedagogical tactics, and disciplinary culture, and the editors explicitly name the parsing of music inquiry into its traditional subfields as itself "symptomatic of white supremacy culture, all of which do damage to many individuals who engage with them" (p. 4). Nevertheless, there are several moments throughout the book when musicology classrooms are singled out as potential safe havens from the damaging competitiveness and gatekeeping that

are either implicitly or explicitly blamed on the institutional culture of music performance.

The dismantling of performing-arts toxicity in higher education must ultimately be enacted as a broadly collective project lest we run the risk of reinforcing existing perceptions of musicological exceptionalism and widening the fraught chasm between the so-called "academic" and "applied" areas of college music teaching. A healing of this often contentious dynamic, which does not serve our students, needs to be part of our reparative project. That said, I don't honestly know whether this issue could have been more thoroughly addressed without sacrificing at least some degree of the rich and variegated perspectives and ideas this book puts forward from *within* musicology (following the book's own framing of the field, I should really say the musicology community) and the breadth of much-needed disciplinary interventions it offers; we do indeed need to get our own house in order. If anything, I hope that the book's much-needed questioning of gatekeeping at all levels and its adoption of a radical care-based framework will lead to future sound pedagogy–focused volumes where the voices represented more fully realize the inclusive, multidisciplinary model of music inquiry for which this book so passionately and effectively advocates.

In informal conversations at conferences, I've often heard flippant critiques of music history pedagogy scholarship that ostensibly distill "merely" to "here's what I did in this class I taught." I think one of *Sound Pedagogy*'s most important features is that it does not move away from but rather leans into this format, because frankly, as a field we don't say nearly enough about what goes on in our classrooms, and the transparency and vulnerability with which the authors in this volume share their stories of "on-the-ground" challenges and triumphs provide a much-needed contribution to our fieldwide culture. In this way, *Sound Pedagogy* is an intervention into discourses of music pedagogy in some ways similar to what *Shadows in the Field* has been for music ethnography: a lifting of the veil to discuss with vulnerability and transparency those parts of our life and work that we talk about with trusted friends and colleagues but almost never put in print.[2] By sharing difficult lessons learned, strategies for navigating uncomfortable moments and dynamics, and best practices to negotiate complex power structures with an eye toward equity and care, we move toward not only a critically necessary reshaping of our teaching and pedagogy, but also a valuable and equitable restructuring of what counts as "scholarly inquiry" in our field in a way that more meaningfully values the totality of the work we do and the full, complex selves we ought to more fully welcome into that work.

2. Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, eds., *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

Community, Collaboration, and Care in Practice

A Conversation with Colleen Renihan, John Spilker-Beed, and Trudi Wright, Coeditors of *Sound Pedagogy: Radical Care in Music*

In light of the toxicities of academic labor,[1] collaboration and community have never been more crucial to our work, a reality experienced viscerally during the years of isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.[2] But collaboration is not at all straightforward in academic environments. In our experience, the tightly drawn borders of our respective music disciplines do not encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. There are also very real challenges concerning time and resources that hinder any truly collaborative work, as well as the strengthening of community.

In this conversational piece of collaborative writing, we share insights into both the challenging and rewarding aspects of coediting *Sound Pedagogy: Radical Care in Music* during the turbulent period of the early 2020s.[3] In the spirit of Carol Gilligan's ethics of care, we wish to lay bare the details of our collaborative journey, thus resisting the traditional (and artificial) distinction between public and private matters.[4] Ultimately, we argue for collaboration and care as tools of resistance that might counter the perpetuation of endemic disconnection, emotional exhaustion, and divisiveness in academic culture.

We also aim to continue conversations begun by the American Musicological Society's Pedagogy Study Group that took place during "Pedagogy Fridays" online meetings in the fall of 2022. Specifically, we discuss how aspects of

1. See John Smyth, *Toxic University: Zombie Leadership, Academic Rock Stars and Neoliberal Ideology* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); and Mie Plotnikof and Ea Høg Utoft, "The 'New Normal' of Academia in Pandemic Times: Resisting Toxicity through Care," *Gender, Work & Organization* 29, no. 4 (2022): 1259–71.

2. See Grace Gao and Linna Sai, "Towards a 'Virtual' World: Social Isolation and Struggles during the COVID-19 Pandemic as Single Women Living Alone," *Gender, Work & Organization* 27, no. 5 (2020): 754–62; and Michelle Newcomb, "The Emotional Labour of Academia in the Time of a Pandemic: A Feminist Reflection," *Qualitative Social Work* 20, no. 1–2 (2021): 639–44.

3. Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright, eds., *Sound Pedagogy: Radical Care in Music* (University of Illinois Press, 2024).

4. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Harvard University Press, 2016).

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collaboration are key to a pedagogy of care, particularly during times when neoliberal ideals are being prioritized by academic administrations, and when politics of difference are dividing communities.[5] By drawing on aspects of our individual teaching practices, we explore ways that our learnings about collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic years have in turn informed our pedagogical approaches and tools for teaching. Finally, we consider why and how it remains necessary to be radical in our centering of pedagogies of collaboration.

The three of us first met in 2017 in Boston at the Teaching Music History conference when presenting on a panel that explored different expressions of care for our students and colleagues. Our experiences at that conference, along with feedback from its many generous attendees, inspired us to coedit S*ound Pedagogy*, a book that would include the brilliant work of many members of the American Musicological Society's Pedagogy Study Group. The journey our book took from idea to publication is a complicated but beautiful one, and we are especially proud of our care-filled collaborative process that valued difficult conversations, time to take care of ourselves and our families, respectful dialogue, mutually defined deadlines, slow work, and a celebration of the unique strengths that each editor brought to the table.[6]

We have learned that, now more than ever, there is much to be gained through collaboration. In our estimation, collaboration *is* care. But collaboration and care are especially difficult at the present moment as the increased emphasis on scarcity and efficiency in higher education strains institutions and people more and more each year.[7] Indeed, some college and university administrations have even resorted to "toxic positivity" and bids for emotional labor with students to extract more care-based work from staff and faculty, while at the same time reducing faculty and staff support resources, compensation, and benefits.[8] Notwithstanding Beckie Supiano's bold declaration, in 2022, that

5. See Beth Mintz, "Neoliberalism and the Crisis in Higher Education: The Cost of Ideology," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 80, no. 1 (2021): 79–112.

6. Our impetus and model for slowing down is inspired by the collaborative work of Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber in *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* (University of Toronto Press, 2016).

7. See, for example, Melanie Lawrence and Goli M. Rezai-Rashti, "Pursuing Neoliberal Performativity? Performance-Based Funding and Accountability in Higher Education in Ontario, Canada," in *Discourses of Globalisation and Higher Education Reforms: Emerging Paradigms*, ed. Joseph Zajda and W. James Jacob (Springer Cham, 2022).

8. For a discussion of the risks of touting toxic positivity in the context of crises in higher education, see Jeffery Aper, "Calling Dr. Pangloss: The Self-Defeating Logic of Forced Positivity," *Journal of Educational Thought* 56, no. 3 (2023): 211–30. See also Virginia Moran and Talia Nadir, "The Caustic Power of Excessive Positivity: How Vocation and Resiliency Narratives Challenge Librarianship," working paper, Association of College & Research Libraries National Conference (virtual), 2021, https://alair.ala.org/items/a641c058-018b-4f9a-96be-bc9cb427e28e. The paper explores the risks of toxic positivity and what the authors term the mythology of *vocational awe*—a term that certainly also applies to work in music.

"Student Success Requires Faculty Well-Being," such a call too often falls on resistant administrative ears in scarcity environments.[9]

In the conversation that follows, we each share aspects of the collaborative process that challenged us, but from which we also learned a great deal. We also share some of the practical takeaways that we have incorporated into our pedagogy as the result of our collaboration. The conversation below reflects our first tentative steps to transform our work in music by envisioning collaboration as care.

Colleen: To start, I'll consider the intersection between collaboration and one of my frequent intellectual preoccupations—time and temporality. One of the biggest lessons I learned from the process of coediting this book is that collaborative work takes a great deal of time because it is often messy. This realization emerged from the most frustrating point in our collaboration: summer 2020, a time of anger, confusion, stress, and disorientation. The weight of that period combined with (or in tension with) the ways academics in Western culture have been socialized to work, to produce, and to organize their time was incredibly taxing. Disciplinary habits and ingrained expectations of producing work at a certain rate, coupled with the evolving complexity of the collaborative parts of the project, caused dissonance and anxiety. As the book's threads got longer and more tangled, we also felt the center of the project shift. The three of us found ourselves in different stages of "not-yetness," a process of growth in knowledge without having fully arrived at mastery.[10] We ultimately came to understand that care pedagogy was inextricably linked to intersectional equity.

The need for our continual self-education brought many frustrating conversations that revealed numerous holes in our knowledge, which in turn caused us to question our expertise (never easy) and reconsider the shape of the discipline that we thought we knew so well. We also came to recognize that (aha!) care pedagogy is at its core an interdisciplinary act while musicology is intrinsically pedagogical. If we hadn't allowed ourselves the time and messiness to explore and read about, say, the feminist roots of care,[11] the intersections

9. Beckie Supiano, "Student Success Requires Faculty Well-Being," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 26, 2022, https://www.chronicle.com/newsletter/teaching/2022-05-26.

10. See Amy Collier and Jen Ross, "For Whom, and For What? Not-Yetness and Thinking Beyond Open Content," *Open Praxis* 9, no. 1 (2017): 7–16; and Amy Collier and Jen Ross, "Complexity, Mess, and Not-yetness: Teaching Online with Emerging Technologies," in *Emergence and Innovation in Digital Learning: Foundations and Applications*, ed. George Veletsianos (Athabasca University Press, 2016), 17–33.

11. See Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140 (1989): 139–67; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99; Virginia Held, *Feminist Morality: Transforming Culture,*

between care and race,[12] and the ways neoliberalism complicates notions of care,[13] we wouldn't have understood the full ramifications of what we and our contributors were dreaming up in this book. In fact, it was astounding to see how care as a topic blew open the project and its disciplinary parameters in ways we hadn't at all initially anticipated.

As I think back on what I experienced as a certain messiness in the process, I realize now that this experience had to do with my preconceptions about time and work: how long should something take? How long *does* something take? Collaborating on *Sound Pedagogy* made me realize how much *time* is bound up in the ways we are socialized to work in academic contexts: think of the implied temporality in deadlines, timeframes, the tenure clock, and pace of publication, not to mention the doomsday aphorism "publish or perish."

To put it directly: these ways of organizing time are all constructs of white supremacy culture. Inspired by Tema Okun's work, we assert in our book that music as a discipline is heavily invested in these priorities (competition, isolation, timeframes, etc.).[14] Once we learned about the complex and uncontainable nature of care and collaboration from scholars of care and critical pedagogy, we came to embrace the reality that this important work should take longer.[15] In short, my biggest learning from this collaboration was that work that engages

Society, and Politics (University of Chicago Press, 1993); Virginia Held, ed., *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics* (Westview Press, 1995); Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford University Press, 2006); Joan Tronto, "Care as a Basis for Radical Political Judgments," *Hypatia* 10, no. 2 (1995): 141–49; and Joan Tronto, "Care as the Work of Citizens: A Modest Proposal," in *Women and Citizenship*, ed. Marilyn Friedman (Oxford University Press, 2005), 130–45.

12. See bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (Routledge, 1994); bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (Routledge, 2004); bell hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom* (Routledge, 2010); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2012); and Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013). See also Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" and "Mapping the Margins."

13. See, for example, Alex Usher, "What People Mean When They Talk about Neoliberal Universities: Part I," Higher Education Strategy Associates, November 20, 2017, https://higheredstrategy.com/what-people-mean-when-they-talk-about-neoliberal-univesities-part-1/; and Rebecca Lund, "The Social Organization of Boasting in the Neoliberal University," *Gender and Education* 32, no. 4 (2020): 466–85.

14. Tema Okun, "White Supremacy Culture," updated February 2025, https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/. Her original 1999 collaborative article of the same name is found here: https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf.

15. The need for "slow" is also embraced in disability studies. See, for example, the work of Ellen Samuels, who writes about the nonlinearity of crip time, and that of Ashley Shew, who suggests that, given our experiences teaching in the COVID-19 era, "clocks should bend to our bodies." Ellen Samuels, "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2017), https://dsq-sds.org/index.php/dsq/article/view/5824/4684; Ashley Shew, "Let COVID-19 Expand Awareness of Disability Tech," *Nature* 581, no. 7806 (2020): 9–10.

us in true self-reflection, significant personal transformation, and interdisciplinary thinking just takes longer. And we need to be mindful of this reality when we ask our students to engage in the same.

John: Colleen, to bounce off of your story of key learnings, I'm going to discuss some teaching applications of interdisciplinarity, care, equity, and slowing down. These are takeaways from our publication collaboration that I use in my classroom, and I would suggest that any instructor could easily adapt them for use in theirs. In my senior capstone course, for instance, students used to present a traditional research project; students' topics were determined during the course's second week and their projects followed the customary timeline for proposal, bibliography, outline, and final presentation. But since 2018, music students at my university have shared with the campus community just how exhausted and anxiety ridden they feel by the beginning of their last year in the music program. So, I adjusted. Looking back from the vantage point of the present moment, the best changes I have made to my teaching came during the pandemic years.

I now have my students read *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown, a BIPOC author, community leader, and scholar of leadership, a field unquestionably dominated by white cisgender men.[16] Adaptive leadership tools are the *first* thing students learn in my classes. The genre as listed on the book's back cover is "self-help"—a problematic and revealing term, for it is a pejorative, racist, and sexist microaggression that diminishes brown's BIPOC queer work in adaptive leadership. The "self-help" label invites dismissal, whereas a more accurate label such as "leadership" or "adaptive leadership" might have invited the more dubious reader to think twice. brown demonstrates that collaboration requires processes of adaptive leadership, and that adaptive leadership requires collaboration. When reading each chapter, my students discuss examples of how to embrace adaptive leadership strategies and bring them into our work as musicians to create something new or make changes in our field. At its core, the students' scholarship of integration and application is interdisciplinary.

As for changes to the research project, a student's topic now emerges much later in the semester, between weeks five and nine. The capstone presentation

16. adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (AK Press, 2017). Many understandably experience a culture of white, upper-class, patriarchal dominance in the field of adaptive leadership as white colleagues commonly only reference the foundational work of Marty Linksy and Ronald Heifetz, all published by Harvard. See Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Harvard University Press, 1998); Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Change*, 2nd ed. (Harvard Business Review Press, 2017); and Ronald Heifetz et al., *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (Harvard Business Press, 2009). Certainly people with minoritized identities have been leading in adaptive manners for centuries, and could share their expertise with the field.

is no longer a report of finished work but a roadmap for a future and provisional project they will undertake and develop further after they are settled into their careers. As part of this presentation, students discuss the beginning-stage research needed to chart the course for the postgraduation career project. The instructions read: "Design a SMALL project that applies principles of *Emergent Strategy* to create more possibilities in the work you want to do in the world (perhaps thinking about your immediate career environment?). Perhaps you identify problems that need collaboration to find adaptive processes to work together toward solutions." By design, the assignment gives students permission to pursue a slow research process and generate a small research product. To share a concrete example, one student interested in vocal pedagogy prepared a project to bring trauma-informed teaching practices into studio voice teaching. Pedagogical materials such as studio policies and procedures, a learning contract, and sample lesson plans will be developed after graduation as she works in her studio. This new take on the traditional semester-long research assignment models slowness and not-yetness, which Colleen and Trudi will discuss in more depth.

Colleen: Yes! This new approach respects the *time* it takes to do this work and allows for flexibility in the research timeline depending on what each student needs for their project.

John: As our work got tough during the pandemic in ways that none of us anticipated, I can now see, looking back, that the three of us assumed roles in the editorial process that kept us equitably at the table in nonjudgment and in nonviolence. Our work together exemplified how The King Center defines practicing nonviolence as a way of life.[17] In fact, there are many ways that we have been socialized to accept violence as normal. In addition to physical violence, we can all bring ideological, emotional, spiritual, and procedural violence to people, especially to those from minoritized groups. Marshall Rosenberg's scholarship on and practice of nonviolent communication present another approach to nonviolence as a way of life.[18] All approaches to nonviolence could be adapted to enhance our collaborations, teaching, and learning.

I was the brainstormer of our group, with an emphasis on storm, or so it felt for me on the inside. It's summer 2020. I started learning about race in depth during the spring of 2019. I'm angry, worried, afraid, and ashamed. I know

17. For information about Martin Luther King Jr.'s six principles of nonviolent living, see "The King Philosophy–Nonviolence 365," The King Center, accessed June 15, 2023, https://thekingcenter.org/about-tkc/the-king-philosophy/.

18. Marshall B. Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, 3rd ed. (PuddleDancer Press, 2015).

I'm bringing up information about racial equity that is very uncomfortable for white people to say out loud, let alone engage with carefully with other white scholars and musicians in academic discourse. I'm scared I'm ruining our relationships. I'm ashamed I don't know the right words to say about what I'm seeing unfold in our society. I still have much to learn in this area of research and how it relates to care pedagogy. My work to this point was heavily rooted in the writings of Brené Brown and Parker Palmer. I'm embarrassed I don't know it all. I wanted to run away. In addition, I was taking on new life roles, daunting then, fulfilling now. At the time, I was two years into a divorce and coparenting, and four years into trauma therapy. I was (and still am) figuring out that I don't have to be ashamed to be a post-Catholic, post-Mormon, gay, divorced dad.

Colleen was the connector. She always saw how the pieces I brought to the table might connect to her personal and professional context for conceptualizing social justice: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.[19] Still today, no such cultural and educational cognate exists in the United States government, leaving Trudi and me at an experiential loss as US-based scholars. Colleen also noticed possible areas for incorporating tenets of racial justice in our book. However, each of these topics required time and space for further research to understand the connections and then to allow them to develop. Again, more slowness and not-yetness.

Trudi modeled the tenets of nonviolent love. She said, "John, these tough conversations only strengthen our friendship and our collaboration. Keep bringing everything you are bringing." With cultural and educational humility, she modeled the posture of "I don't know what this means, or I don't understand this uncomfortable sticking point about capitalism, or because of my positionality at a Jesuit institution, it is necessary for me to reconcile the best practices of Jesuit teaching with the difficult history of Jesuit conquest of Indigenous land."

Trudi: It was very difficult for all of us to reconcile with our moments of not-yetness. As Colleen mentioned earlier, as "experts," we are trained to be (or trained to appear to be) the sage in every room. It is so challenging to unlearn this expectation and to honestly admit to colleagues what you don't know. Such acknowledgement, however, is the very thing that strengthens our ability for continued learning and thus improves our teaching and our collaborations. Being open to admitting our "not-yetness" is an important part of a growth mindset, instead of a fixed mindset.

19. See "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," Government of Canada, updated December 12, 2024, https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525.

John: From our research, writing, and editorial collaboration, I took away fierce lessons and opportunities for growth around 1) listening to others in order to see gaps in our understandings without being reactive, 2) listening to learn from others, 3) being with and holding the experience of feeling misunderstood, 4) being comfortable with the fact that I might not know something or yet have words to describe it, and 5) noticing and managing embodied emotional responses. How must my students feel each day when they experience roadblocks to their learning and are afraid to speak up due to the socialization of control, the performance of intelligence, and perfectionism in the classroom? This reluctance to speak up is often intensified in the stifling dominant-group ideologies of music departments, where many music faculty and students still refuse to advance equity by, at bare minimum, noticing the impact of their behavior and working to mitigate the negative effects of whiteness, patriarchy, sexism, and ableism. Speaking up is the least we can do. As we work in a subdiscipline that still prizes the lone book author as better than the lone article writer, our cowritten introduction to *Sound Pedagogy* is, for me, the piece of writing that I am most proud of to date.[20] I would never have embarked on or achieved a book-like object in print without Colleen, Trudi, and our collaboration.[21]

Trudi: This fruitful collaboration with John and Colleen led me to a practice of collaborative teaching evaluation called "Teaching Squares," about which I presented in a lighting talk at the 2022 Teaching Music History conference.[22] In this practice, educators form a teaching group in which all members observe each other's classes in order to learn from one another. After the class observations have concluded, instead of giving critical feedback based on a traditional evaluative model, each member shares what they observed in the others' classes and how their recollections can *positively* impact their own teaching. This exercise celebrates the best in each pedagogue's classroom, while inspiring each member to try new things to enhance their teaching methods. I began this practice at my own university with a colleague in the philosophy department; she is now my regular teaching partner. As my colleague and I continue to grow in our teaching relationship, I'm mindful of the lessons I learned through

20. Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright, "Introduction: Radical Care," in *Sound Pedagogy: Radical Care in Music*, ed. Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright (University of Illinois Press, 2024), 1–33.

21. Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright, "Acknowledgments," in *Sound Pedagogy: Radical Care in Music*, ed. Colleen Renihan, John Spilker, and Trudi Wright (University of Illinois Press, 2024), xv–xvii.

22. For a great introduction to teaching squares, see Carol Berenson, "Teaching Squares: Observe and Reflect on Teaching and Learning," Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning Guide Series, June 2017, https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/Teaching%20Squares%20Guide%20Final%20v2.pdf.

collaboration with John and Colleen. Particularly impactful is the simple practice of finding ways to bring your personal gifts and talents into the collaboration and to encourage others to offer theirs while also stretching and improving the many other skills you possess. When you are in collaboration, you always have teachers with you to help you grow. Be comfortable in the discomfort because they will have your back.

Colleen: Trudi, the collaborative approach you mention here recalls our experience with acknowledging and being comfortable with owning holes in our knowledge. A significant part of successful collaboration seems to involve making peace with this state of not-yetness, and with allowing others to teach you. This call to resist the isolation and monoculture of academia reminds me of my Black studies colleague Katherine McKittrick's work on citational practice as both a form of resistance and central to community building. For McKittrick, the process of citation is inherently collaborative and effectively roots writing in the very act of collaboration. In her words, "the works cited, all of them, when understood as *in conversation* with each other, demonstrate an interconnected story that resists oppression."[23] McKittrick positions Black studies as a postdisciplinary conversation that can "resist racial and gendered violence through the sharing of ideas."[24] What is striking in this observation is the centrality of collaboration itself and the naming of community as essential to the integrity of academic writing. As John, Trudi, and I came to recognize how multidisciplinary and anti/counterdisciplinary the concept of care in pedagogy actually might be—especially in the field of music—the citational practices, both among our editorial community of three and in our writing of specific chapters of the book, became the place where we built and named the community in which we imagined/hoped/prayed our work would live.

Trudi: Indeed. A major lesson of our collaboration is that the three of us are constantly growing through our feelings of discomfort as we continue to learn new things. This is something we expect of our students all the time, but don't encounter as much as teachers and scholars (unless you are writing your first book!). Although both John and Colleen have already brought this up, it's worth reiterating. Throughout the process of writing our chapters and editing our book, I experienced feelings of inadequacy *many* times, especially in connection with tasks that were part of the publishing process, sources I had not read (and felt like I should have), and concepts I did not yet understand. Feelings of inadequacy are common, daily occurrences for our students and, unfortunately,

23. Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Duke University Press, 2021), 28 (emphasis original).

24. McKittrick, *Dear Science,* 30.

college and university music programs tend to complain about such perceived inadequacies instead of treating them as opportunities for learning. In the academy, we may label students as deficient (and they then internalize this feeling of deficiency or inadequacy), just as I labeled myself deficient at times during the collaborative process. To encapsulate what we learned in the process of creating this book together, I quote from our collaboratively authored introduction:

> Kevin Gannon calls for a pedagogical orientation that eschews blame and judgment toward students who arrive with different academic experience or ways of knowing. Higher education socializes faculty to view students' struggles as deficiency, low effort, or lack of dedication. Instead of lamenting what we view as a lack of preparedness and placing blame on the student, he introduces a pedagogy of radical hope. Centered in Freireian thought, Gannon's teaching framework is "life-affirming, inclusive, and centers student agency and praxis." He builds on the scholarship of Amy Collier and Jen Ross, who celebrate the "not-yetness" or nascent skills students possess, a concept desperately needed for care pedagogy in music. Consider, for example, how often we shame and penalize students for not learning something we believe they were supposed to in a previous course. Gannon states, "Not-yetness urges us to encounter students as people in process, not as fixed and insurmountable deficits." "Students can't [sight read, hear chordal progressions, or use software to notate music]? Well, not yet. But they will. Can't [imagine the ways that music upholds systemic oppression]? Not yet, at least. But our job is to help them find the ways to get closer to yet." Together with Gannon, we believe care pedagogy can transform our learning spaces to serve as sites of potential and becoming.[25]

I also think "not-yetness" is something John, Colleen, and I are beginning to internalize for ourselves, because in our collaboration, we reminded each other of it a lot: "Don't know all the things you have to do to get your book published? Not yet, but we're working on it!" We also used this concept when we discussed how to frame difficult topics and difficult language in our book. We knew some colleagues would be very comfortable with identifying and working toward dismantling systems of racism and oppression, for example, while others may be uncomfortable even reading the word "racist." As we developed an understanding of our own "not-yetness," we began to write more inviting prose so others might begin to identify and celebrate their "not-yetness" too.

John: Trudi, thank you for laying bare the tensions of discomfort and necessity inherent in embracing not-yetness in our research. It's hard to accept such thoughts as "I don't possess a full understanding of specific key concepts," or, "I

25. Renihan et al., "Introduction," 18. All direct quotations in the excerpt derive from Kevin M. Gannon, *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto* (West Virginia University Press, 2020), 24–26. Additional citations in the excerpt include Collier and Ross, "For Whom, and For What?" and "Complexity, Mess, and Not-yetness."

can only continue to learn, to wait for understandings to ripen, for connections to form, and for next steps to emerge in a nonlinear process." The difficulty, anxiety, and frustration involved in such processes are only exacerbated when we don't yet have exhaustive control over the bibliography, as so many important sources are just being published or have not yet been released. The discomfort and necessity of not-yetness also extends to our teaching, especially when we can sense that something isn't working and that we need more guidance, but don't yet know where or how to identify the resources that will revitalize our pedagogical tools. Collaboration absolutely helps, but we still have to wait for new resources to present themselves, ideas to take root, practices to develop, and understandings to ripen.

Colleen: Trudi, your work with not-yetness has not only been a really affirming part of our work on the book, but it's also something that has powerfully impacted my own teaching practice. And I think a lot of this has to do with the classroom culture I've become more thoughtful about. Though students are often resistant to leaning into a concept like not-yetness, I make a point in my courses to motivate them to embrace and leverage it as an exciting state of possibility. Just like we were required to do in our coediting and cowriting, I now talk to students about change and growth: I tell them that, ideally, the people who start the course will have become fundamentally different by the end of the course!

This point brings me back to time and temporality. In fact, the two biggest stumbling blocks in embracing not-yetness for my students are assessment and (again!) time. Students are reluctant to explore alternative positions and ideas, to bring research from other fields into their projects, to test out something new and have to start again, etc., not just because taking such risks could negatively affect their grades, but also because they are so overscheduled that they don't have adequate *time* to spend on such exploration. This is why I am drawn to self-, peer-, and un-grading strategies in my classes, and it is one reason I have pared down the number of assessments in all of my classes.

What does embracing not-yetness mean in practice from the instructor's perspective? It entails: asking students whether the material they are learning does or does not connect with their lived experiences; framing class discussions as spaces in which they are allowed to be wrong, to be confused, and to change their minds; instructing students to respond to one another by building on or making reference to a classmate's thoughts; reassuring students of not just the discomfort but also the freedom involved in changing one's mind; and creating a classroom space that is supportive and safe enough for students to feel able to do each of these things.

Conclusion

Post-pandemic, after years of isolation, masks inhibiting our in-person communication, and diminished cognitive bandwidth from overloaded stress capacity, we are learning anew how to communicate and collaborate. And it's hard, especially given the backdrop of scarcity and efficiency that so many of us in higher education are forced to navigate. We reaffirm Sonya Renee Taylor's invitation to promote stronger, more equitable communities and processes. In April 2020, she said,

> We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate[,] and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.[26]

We believe Taylor's vision has become ever more important in the current political climate of 2025. While it may seem like an audacious claim to make, perhaps now more than ever, we need to reinvest in relearning and repracticing collaboration using a beginner's mind. We also need to rethink ways to teach our students how and why to collaborate, given transformed priorities and understandings of our work in light of care. We agree with artist and writer Johanna Hedva, who states,

> The most anti-capitalist protest is to care for another and to care for yourself. To take on the historically feminized and therefore invisible practice of nursing, nurturing, caring. To take seriously each other's vulnerability and fragility and precarity, and to support it, honor it, empower it. To protect each other, to enact and practice community. A radical kinship, an interdependent sociality, a politics of care.[27]

As we confront and challenge years of a musicological discipline that values individualism, competition, and, in recent years, scarcity, due to the current political-economic climate, we seek to model collaboration as a form of anti-racist feminist leadership—in our research *and* in our classrooms.

26. Sonya Renee Taylor, Instagram, April 2, 2020, https://www.instagram.com/p/B-fc3e-jAlvd/. Quoted in Jazmin Vega, "The Breathing Room: Envisioning a More Just Post-Pandemic World," April 17, 2020, https://today.uic.edu/events/the-breathing-room-envisioning-a-more-just-post-pandemic-world.

27. Johanna Hedva, "Sick Woman Theory," accessed July 25, 2023, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/johanna-hedva-sick-woman-theory?v=1643032424. The essay was first published in *Mask Magazine* in 2016 and then revised in 2020.

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Eduardo Herrera: "Latin America and the Decolonization of Classical Music"

Jennifer Fraser and Gabriela Linares: "Reimagining the Representation of Ethnographic Knowledge: The Philosophy and Methodology of a Digital Humanities Project"

Rebecca Cypess: "Musical Salons of the Enlightenment: Platforms for Women's Musical Agency"

Gurminder Kaur Bhogal: "Racialized Ornament in the Exotic Musical Imagination: Reflections on Framing and Decoloniality"

Megan Kaes Long: "Sixteenth-Century Polyphony and the Modal Paradigm"

Daniel Barolsky: "Wagner on Conducting: The Aesthetics of Anti-Semitism in Performance"

Kimberley Hieb, Megan Murph, and Sarah Suhadolnik

Open Access Musicology (*OAM*) is a freely available, web-based, multi-author essay collection. Part academic journal, part textbook, and part collaboration platform, this pedagogical resource for the music history instructor manifests a broader philosophical response to current curricular challenges as a collection of pedagogical problem-solving tools. The teachers and scholars behind *OAM* reached a new project milestone with the 2022 publication of *OAM*'s second volume. Those familiar with the format of the first volume will see much of the same in volume two. Each essay begins with a personal vignette in which the author or authors reflect on their personal identities and educational experiences. The anecdotes shared in volume two add a compelling, relatable dimension to the essays—particularly for readers of color. The 2022 volume also contains more disciplinary diversity. Contributors

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from a broad array of educational institutions provide more representation from the fields of performance, ethnomusicology, and music theory. To mark the publication of volume two, the contributors to this review reflect on the practical uses of this resource in a variety of institutional settings and class configurations.

A Tool for Teaching Additional Modes of Research and Presentation

Open Access Musicology is published as an electronic, open-access resource to ensure that student access to *OAM* materials is not limited by prohibitive costs. However, "open access" as it relates to the *OAM* project means more than freely available resources.

While today's students tend to struggle with reading long and difficult texts, the writing throughout *OAM*'s second volume is designed to be highly accessible and reader-friendly. Contributors present their methods and arguments with exceptional clarity and without jargon. Along with the authors' personable tone, students will appreciate the brief author statements that preface each article. In these statements, the authors share introductory anecdotes explaining how they got acquainted with the topics of their respective essays. Even if students can't personally relate to the specificities of an author's experience, these object statements explain how one might develop a research interest in such a way that encourages students to explore a project on their own. The articles are vetted by undergraduate students before publication, which means that students also have a say in how all of these adjustments for audience are made in practice.

OAM editorial policies are also designed to support the creation of a textbook-like resource that offers more "open access" to the enriching insights of emerging areas of research. By means of illustration, Jennifer Fraser and Gabriela Linares's contribution to the volume, on the digital-humanities project *Song in the Sumatran Highlands* (conducted from July 2020 to June 2021), exposes students to what editorial board member Sarah Day-O'Connell refers to as "the critical approaches and the interdisciplinarity that actually characterize the field [of musicology]."[1] Using the Scalar platform, Fraser and Linares digitally share and archive their research on *saluang*—a Minangkabau vocal and flute genre from West Sumatra, Indonesia. Scalar's interactive website allows viewers to engage with the songs and texts that comprise the repertoire, the individuals involved in its performance and preservation, and the geographic locations connected to this musical tradition from over a fifty-year span. Particularly noteworthy is the digital mapping of *saluang,* in which each song is geotagged

1. "Open Access Musicology," uploaded by AMS Pedagogy Study Group YouTube account, November 25, 2017, 34 min., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tRBOKperfQ.

and viewable on various map formats (plain, terrain, or satellite). These innovations in the digital humanities enable musicologists to present their research in a way that engages the people of West Sumatra—making it more accessible, enriching, and inclusive, especially for the communities to whom the music belongs.

What can a reading assignment like this accomplish in a music history survey course that a comparable assignment in a topical course devoted to digital-humanities tools and methodologies cannot? Fraser and Linares organize their discussion around foundational epistemological questions, namely: what can students gain from engaging with ethnographic research, and how do various modes of knowledge dissemination (e.g., published ethnography, song archives, digital mapping) shape the reception of such research? To foster class discussion that embraces the messiness of historical investigation alongside still additional issues commonly encountered in music history surveys, the essays throughout the volume likewise foreground the complexities of defining key terms and concepts like "style," "classical music," "Latin America," "decolonization," "ethnography," "storytelling," "history," "narratives," "fieldwork," "musical salon," and "the Other."

From this perspective, taken together, the two volumes of *OAM* contain articles that address topics relevant to each era of music history. Volume one includes an essay that addresses "extreme early music,"[2] two essays on seventeenth-century topics, and two essays on twentieth-century topics. Volume two complements the content of volume one with essays on sixteenth-, eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twenty-first-century topics. Instructors can introduce their students to each period of music history with essays drawn from either of *OAM*'s two volumes. Additionally, volume two includes essays about music in Latin America, Indonesia, and India, a noteworthy shift that offers educators the opportunity to resist the Eurocentric lens through which music history has long been taught. While putting *OAM* to work as a central text for a course might not present a cohesive narrative of music history in the manner students may expect, its contents can introduce them to specific types of music scholarship related to every period of music history while also expanding the geographical and epistemological purview of a music history survey course.

2. Samuel Dorf, "Ancient Mesopotamian Music, the Politics of Reconstruction, and Extreme Early Music," in *Open Access Musicology*, vol. 1, ed. Daniel Barolsky and Louis Epstein (Lever Press, 2020), https://www.fulcrum.org/epubs/j098zd015?locale=en#/6/18[OAM-0007]!/4/2[ch03]/2[header0301]/2/2[p30]/1:0.

A Tool for Implementing Problem-Based Learning

Instead of traversing a traditional music-historical narrative, a course developed around the content of *Open Access Musicology* would survey various modes of inquiry as exhibited by the contextual and historical studies, ethnomusicological explorations, and theoretical analyses of historical repertoire published in each volume. Additionally, the material presented in these volumes is suitable for teaching music history with case studies as described by Sara Haefeli in *Teaching Music History with Cases: A Teacher's Guide*.[3] By structuring an introductory music course around the various cases presented in *OAM,* instructors would grant students "windows" into various periods of music history, making it a valuable resource for educators seeking to transcend the traditional music history survey. Moreover, the essays, especially those in volume two, could inspire Problem-Based Learning activities that build on the methodological models that the authors provide throughout the publication.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an active-learning framework that presents students with hypothetical situations to navigate by posing questions that do not have easy or straightforward answers.[4] In stark contrast with the age-old "sage on the stage" approach to teaching, PBL is "inquiry-driven, student-centered, experiential, and collaborative."[5] Rather than lecture, PBL instructors introduce open-ended problems to their students that connect to the real world. Then, working alone or in groups, students conduct self-directed research through which they learn to gather information and improve their understanding of the issues related to the particular problem under investigation. Finally, students share their findings, present potential solutions to the problem, and reflect on what they learned from the activity.

Rebecca Cypess's contribution to *OAM*, for instance, titled "Musical Salons of the Enlightenment: Platforms for Women's Musical Agency," uses case studies to describe how musical salons in eighteenth-century Europe offered women an otherwise nonexistent platform for expression and agency. Cypess also explains how musical salons reflected and shaped the musical experiences

3. Sara Haefeli, *Teaching Music History with Cases: A Teacher's Guide* (Routledge, 2023).

4. The implementation of Problem-Based Learning in music classrooms has been explored in Philip Duker, Kris Shaffer, and Daniel Stevens, "Problem-Based Learning in Music: A Guide for Instructors," *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy*, vol. 2, http://flipcamp.org/engagingstudents2/essays/dukerShafferStevens.html; Natalie Sarrazin, ed., *Problem-Based Learning in the College Music Classroom* (Routledge, 2019); and Hon-Lun Yang, "Teaching Music History at Hong Kong Baptist University: Problem-Based Learning and Outcome-Based Teaching and Learning," this **Journal** 4, no. 2 (2014): 329–32.

5. Daniel Stevens, "Part 1: Problem-Based Learning in the Music Classroom, A Rationale," in Philip Duker, Kris Shaffer, and Daniel Stevens, "Problem-Based Learning in Music: A Guide for Instructors," *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy*, vol. 2, http://flipcamp.org/engagingstudents2/essays/stevens.html.

and practices of women in the eighteenth century. After reading the article, instructors could task their students with establishing an imaginary yet comparable musical salon today. Just as women were not privy to performing publicly or engaging fully in concert life in eighteenth-century Europe, students might consider the ways in which underrepresented populations lack access to mainstream musical outlets today. How might the musical activities of such populations be analogous to musical salons of the eighteenth century, and how might those involved benefit from them?

The methodologies employed throughout the essays of *OAM* volume two are diverse and conceived in such a way that their foundations are transparent to students. The essays offer students easy-to-follow examples of musicological inquiry and argumentation that could be replicated in PBL lessons that either use or echo the essays' methodological and conceptual models. For example, Eduardo Herrera's "Latin America and the Decolonization of Classical Music" introduces the reader to the impact of colonization on cultural and musical practices, and through three case studies demonstrates the "complications, failures, and successes that emerged with efforts to decolonize classical music" (p. 2). While introducing students to decolonial initiatives in the field of music, this essay could also provide a jumping-off point for a PBL activity in which students are asked to put themselves in the position of a consultant. Students could be asked to consider how the organizations at the center of each of Herrera's case studies could improve on their work or how the various organizations could have learned from each other's mistakes and successes. To engage in a higher level of creativity, students could be asked to create a new organization with decolonial aims similar to those addressed in each case study based in an area of the world they are familiar with. This activity would encourage students to consider the colonization and decolonization of music culture, practice, and education from a "boots-on-the-ground" perspective.

The accessible language and transparent nature of the methodologies at play in each of the essays published in both volumes of *OAM* make them ideal pedagogical resources: the articles would work well for introducing students to the process of reading musicological scholarship while also providing material for Problem-Based Learning activities that encourage students to develop their own projects by following the straightforward examples presented by *OAM*'s authors. Moreover, the inclusion throughout the volume of evocative imagery—from photographs of Latin American composers and Sumatran musicians to paintings of women musicians from the eighteenth century to images of Hindi musicians, and more—could further help readers of color feel a sense of belonging and see themselves as part of history in the classical music sphere.

A Tool for Making Sustainable Open-Access Music History Materials (More) Attainable

In 2019, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Dynamic Coalition's "Recommendation on OER" was adopted by UNESCO member states, thereby establishing a "normative framework" for pursuit of the following five objectives in connection with Open Educational Resources (alternatively referred to as OER in the way that Open Access is referenced as OA):

1. Build capacity of stakeholders to create, access, reuse, adapt, and redistribute OER
2. Develop supportive policy
3. Encourage inclusive and equitable quality OER
4. Nurture the creation of sustainability models for OER
5. Facilitate international cooperation[6]

While such a development could be viewed as evidence of the largescale importance or potential of OER, a 2023 study by music education scholar Tanya Allen quantifies a "general unawareness" of OER among music faculty in the United States. Allen's results indicate that most (57 percent) of the participants in her cross-sectional survey of music faculty teaching at postsecondary institutions accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) "lacked awareness of OER," with "76 participants (19%) having heard the term but knew little about it and 158 participants (39%) not aware of OER before completing the questionnaire."[7] This is not an indictment of music faculty in the United States. On the contrary, these seemingly incongruous data points call attention to the larger disconnect that exists between increasingly global discussions about the value of OER in the abstract and the logistical challenges that inhibit use of OER in everyday teaching practices. Indeed, Allen's findings generally substantiate the analytical framework proposed by Glenda Cox and Henry Trotter for understanding patterns in OER adoption. In their "OER Adoption Pyramid,"[8] *access*, defined as "access to infrastructure: computers, internet, electricity," and *permission*, defined as "permission to use/create OER, as determined by institutional IP policy," are foundational to OER adoption.

6. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, "Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER)," accessed June 20, 2025, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373755/PDF/373755eng.pdf.multi.page=3.

7. Tanya Allen, "Awareness and Future Use of Open Educational Resources by Music Faculty," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 41, no. 2 (2023): 53–54.

8. The OER Adoption Pyramid diagram can be viewed in Allen, 49.

They prop up *awareness*, defined as "awareness of OER, the concept, and how it differs from other educational resources," *capacity*, defined as "capacity to find, use, create and/or upload OER personally or with support," *availability*, defined as "availability of relevant OER of requisite quality," and *volition*, defined as the volition of individuals and/or institutions "to adopt OER."[9] As the foundational layers of the pyramid, both "access" and "permission" are defined as environmental or "externally determined" conditions that make possible the "volition" to adopt OER.[10]

This means that, for musicologists, the added demands of prohibitively expensive licensing fees and the necessity of media-rich digital formats for publication are not just limitations on the commercial viability of available open-access music history textbooks. They are also field-specific obstacles that inhibit the development of both musicologists' adoption of OER and that of new open-access materials for use in music history curriculums. In this landscape, the principles of design and editing that led to the publication of both volumes of *OAM* offer a path forward. Specifically, broader field-wide investment in *OAM* as a community-centered pedagogical project could help musicologists disentangle the "externally determined" limitations on the expansion of music history OER from those barriers to use (and awareness) of more practical and sustainable music history OER that can and should be overcome. (Spoiler alert: sweeping reforms of US intellectual property law will have to occur before there is an "app," or easy-to-implement classroom tool, for making an all-in-one open-access resource that inclusively covers music that is not in the public domain.)

Initial research suggests that, after obtaining "awareness," availability of the resources required to incorporate an OER into practices of music teaching is the most reliable determining factor for OER adoption. In Allen's study, available "support," i.e., the "time, money, knowledge, training, or other specific support" needed for "adopting or creating an open textbook," ranked second in importance after financial benefits to students in the study participants' list of criteria for evaluating OER for use (or creation).[11] The refrain "I have to write my own sometimes, even though I'm not the best person to do it" reverberates through the anecdotal evidence compiled by Rachel E. Scott and Anne Shelley in their 2023 study, "'Having a Textbook Locks Me into a Particular Narrative': Affordable and Open Educational Resources in Music Higher Education."[12] With the help of their interviewees, Scott and Shelley catalog the sometimes

9. Allen.

10. Allen.

11. Allen, 54.

12. Rachel E. Scott and Anne Shelley, "'Having a Textbook Locks Me into a Particular Narrative': Affordable and Open Educational Resources in Music Higher Education," *Notes* 79, no. 3 (March 2023): 323.

arduous and often unpredictable labors of reviewing, cobbling together, and locating last-minute replacements for available open-access resources as a low or no-cost alternative for a more conventional (and more expensive) comprehensive textbook. Several study participants indicated that, should this work not satisfy all of one's curricular needs, then they opt to undertake the time-intensive process of creating their own supplements to such replacement materials—the needs for which have not always fallen within a single educator's strengths and/or immediate area(s) of expertise.

As a platform for collaboration in these efforts, *OAM* provides a far more sustainable alternative. Although published in two distinct volumes, each individual essay in *OAM* by self-selected experts in their respective fields is archived and searchable by author and topic on the *OAM* website, providing instructors with a *changeable* "build-your-own-textbook" option, of sorts. Currently, instructors can choose to assign any or all of the thirteen essays, which cover topics including early music, Italian music, English music, music of the Americas, chamber music, musical notation, colonialism, women in music, and ethnomusicology. Imagine what new kinds of adaptability could be achieved with more contributions. In just 3,000–6,000 words (according to *OAM* submission guidelines), individual musicologists could help other instructors make a variety of "new" textbooks—including the one they might be looking for—without taking on the gargantuan effort of creating an entirely new and comprehensive resource from scratch.

In volume two of *OAM*, relevant audio and score excerpts are provided in the form of contributor-curated hyperlinks. When such supplementary musical media are not provided by the contributor or collected and shared as a part of a digital-humanities project (as in Fraser and Linares's essay), they take the form of YouTube videos, Spotify backups, and links to scores on the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP). A publisher landing page has been added for the musical examples on YouTube that the text of *OAM* essays engage with the most, ensuring that student and instructor alike have reliable metadata for the corresponding recordings (and don't have to go searching for it themselves). Some contributors also provide suggestions for further reading.

The other impediments to OER adoption cataloged by Scott and Shelley can be attributed to what *OAM* editors conceive of as the growing divide they want to bridge between musicology and the more narrowly defined music history survey curriculums that musicology faculty are tasked with delivering. Consider, for instance, the irreconcilable nature of two of the most urgent pedagogical problems that are moving more and more instructors toward OER as alternatives to traditional resources. Where some participants in Scott and Shelley's study struggled to engage students with conventional textbooks as opaque "piles of facts," others lamented being shackled to a single, all-encompassing

narrative.[13] "If you're using a text in music history," one interviewee suggested, then "that's pretty much the narrative."[14] When both concerns are present, the assumed audience of the instructor becomes larger than those sitting in their classroom. We might be quick to blame this set of problems on the cost of the resource in question, as an expensive resource means the instructor "has to use it all." But this does not wholly account for why the routine practice of identifying gaps in a piece of scholarship and critiquing the methodological choices that produced it can feel more foreign in the music history classroom. The push and pull of larger debates surrounding canon formation in Western classical music can inadvertently put undergraduate students at the center of historiographical discussions for which they are not fully prepared.

Concerns about "quality control" raised in evaluations of OER also tend to speak more to an instructor's relationships outside of the classroom than they do to the needs of an instructor's students. Consider, for instance, the remarks of a textbook author interviewed by Scott and Shelley, who, after some deliberation, opted not to publish open access:

> Currently there is no [similar] textbook carried by a publisher and we are trying to reinvent the curriculum from the ground up. We wanted to go with an established publisher so we can get reviews and guidance from the publisher; we wanted to shift discourse in the field, and so we needed that support.[15]

Given that contributors to *OAM* "get reviews," a comment like this one would seem to hinge on a certain defensiveness pertaining to the distinction between scholar-created and peer-reviewed materials, on the one hand, and "other" available content. This isn't to say that we should all succumb to student pressures and embrace Wikipedia, or something similar, as a primary source for course materials; rather, it is an invitation for reflection. At what point do reasonable concerns about the depth and scholarly rigor of open-access materials elide with questions about what it means to successfully navigate a career as a musicology professor? With the demands of teaching and service in academia growing ever higher, and research time and resources in even shorter supply, when are musicology faculty *not* operating from a defensive posture?

As a twenty-first-century model for how musicologists can collaborate on open-access materials tailored to our specific needs, *Open Access Musicology* begins to move beyond such hangups. The relative length of a contribution to *OAM* limits the time/expense of preparing a longer, standard-length publication that, even while potentially reaching a large audience, may not carry

13. Scott and Shelley, 312.
14. Quoted in Scott and Shelley, 319.
15. Quoted in Scott and Shelley, 325.

much more weight in a tenure case. The pedagogical aims of *OAM* also provide potentially welcome opportunities for advanced graduate students to begin publishing sooner than they might otherwise; graduate students might share some of their preliminary findings in essays that model a methodological approach for other students. Looking ahead, a critical mass of *OAM* contributions could reduce the labor required to adjust courses for expanded use of included materials. Admittedly, in such uncertain times, this is not much of an incentive for anyone to take on another *OAM* essay or similar project, but the commercial alternatives tied to more exclusionary platforms for streaming cannot offer such motivation. In the long run, undue reliance on obsolete media players and new editions of conventional textbooks will likely create more work for an instructor, while an OER that can offer carefully edited coverage of more teaching topics over time will require less work to employ.

Are you concerned, as one of Scott and Shelley's study participants was, that "students are increasingly uncritical of resources they can access online[,] . . . don't read past the first paragraph[,] and [are] not really assessing in a critical way the source of the materials, authenticity, [and] author credentials?"[16] The first paragraph of each *OAM* essay introduces both the author and the author's professional credentials in a way that invites the reader to read more critically, well before the discussions of methodology included in each essay explicitly address the topic. Are you worried, as several Scott and Shelley study participants were, that an OER might not prepare students for "success in graduate admissions" in the same way conventional music history textbooks have?[17] To be sure, methodical review of a conventional music history text that provides "comprehensive" historical coverage remains the most efficient way to prepare for a "conventional" and "comprehensive" graduate entrance exam. However, this does little to prepare students with an understanding of what direction(s) graduate work in musicology might take and what larger impact their research might have upon completion. Students working their way through *OAM* volume two will learn about how musicological scholarship can be inspired by literature review (e.g., Herrera's reading of a "provocative essay," p. 1), world travel, interest in specific performers/historical performance practice, and/or an author's flair for the decorative arts.[18] They will also discover that scholarship does not have to take the form of a conventional textbook or encyclopedia. It can fuel the creation of commercial recordings, support the development of interactive music maps/timelines, involve interview collections, help to build song

16. Quoted in Scott and Shelley, 323.

17. Scott and Shelley, 311.

18. See Gurminder Kaur Bhogal, "Racialized Ornament in the Exotic Musical Imagination: Reflections on Framing and Decoloniality," in *Open Access Musicology*, vol. 2, ed. Daniel Barolsky and Louis Epstein (Lever Press, 2022), https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/85770.

archives, and drive the organization of public conferences and performances. Scholarship can also equip individuals with the agency to see gaps in their own training and to better provide for future generations of music students. Isn't the undergraduate student who is prepared to read and think critically in these ways more prepared for graduate study than the student who can place out of a music history review course?

In closing, it is worth underscoring the extent to which the *Open Access Musicology* project supports the objectives of the UNESCO "Recommendation on OER": a "normative framework" for the creation, development, and support of OER. First (objective one), as use of included materials expands, the emphasis *OAM* puts on the processes and problem solving entailed by the often messy work of musicological research will "build capacity" of music history students, musicology graduate students, and professional scholars as members of a larger community of "stakeholders" in OER. Undergraduates working with *OAM* essays are not confined in their thinking by a singular historical narrative, and contributors become more practiced in the art of engaging audiences beyond the currently besieged ivory tower. The involvement of both scholars and students in a multitiered peer-review process familiarizes students who may aspire to graduate study with the day-to-day activities of the musicologist outside the music history classroom more immediately, while also addressing widely reported "quality control" concerns about OER in an inclusive fashion (objective three). This workflow gives *OAM* the functionality to "facilitate cooperation" on a large scale that could become increasingly international in scope (objective five). Or, at the very least, the data *OAM* editors are collecting on "how [*OAM*] articles are being used in classrooms around the world" could "develop supporting policy" in the form of new evidence-based teaching practices for use of OER in the music history classroom (objective two). Where students might see an uncomfortable lack of twenty-first-century conveniences (i.e., fully searchable encyclopedic coverage of a course topic, or immediate access to associated audio/visual material), instructors will see the beginnings of a sustainable method of developing and implementing open-access teaching materials for widespread use in music history courses (objective four).