

Abstracts, Southwest Society for Ethnomusicology

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Friday, March 1

Session 1: 9-10:30 am

Red Rock and Chinese Musical Modernization in the 1980s China, Ya-Hui Cheng (University of South Florida)

This paper discusses the musical modernization of Chinese rock in the 1980s. Studies on Chinese Rock have focused on the complicated sociopolitical condition that existed during the initial development of rock music in China. For instance, Andrews Jones (1992) in his ground-breaking research defined this musical genre as an unofficial underground phenomenon that challenged the communist state with lyrics which incited political rebellion by the youth. Baranovitch (2003) also argued that Chinese Rock was a form of social rebellion that expressed a dissatisfactory dynamic in communist regime. Those two studies also suggest that the decline of rock music in 1990s was caused by the Tiananmen Square incident. Conversely, Kloet (2002) suggests that the connection between rock and social rebellion became mythologized and Chinese didn't "express a strong involvement in the events of June 4th 1989." Studies from those aforementioned scholars present different approaches to challenge our comprehension of the rock music's social effect in China. Building upon their sociological methods, I study the musical structure in Chinese rock to reveal the connection between rock music and Chinese socialist ideology and identify musical structure represents how Chinese cultural roots support the social reformation. Through my analysis, I argue that the rock music of 1980s China absorbed the westernized form of self-expression, allowing the youth to express themselves and to create the space for them to participate in ongoing social reforms. Consequently, rock music symbolized patriotic support for the socialist reformation, and was a social device that caused the modernization of music.

"Sing Me Back Home": Songwriting, Language Shift, and Italian Colonialism in Sardinia, Kristina Jacobsen (University of New Mexico)

This paper examines responses to Italian colonialism on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia, Italy, and focuses on how this history is expressed today in sonic form through performances of American roots music by Sardinian musicians. I lived in Sardinia for three months, where I toured as a professional country musician and singer-songwriter. As a cultural anthropologist, I was captivated by the surprisingly rich Americana music scene, and it struck me that the reasons for the music genre's popularity were connected to Italian colonialism. This led me to formulate my main question for this research: how do performances of American roots music by Sardinian musicians cement a sense of connection to the island of Sardinia and strengthen a sense of political and cultural separation from the Italian mainland on this semi-sovereign Mediterranean island? Based on three months of ethnographic fieldwork writing and recording songs with Sardinian songwriters, in this presentation I explore how Sardinians, whose semi-autonomous region is the poorest province in Italy, negotiate their colonial past and "postcolonial" present through performances of original songs. These country-sounding songs are sung not only in English, but also in Sardinian or Sardo, an endangered Romance language akin to Latin that incorporates Byzantine Greek, Catalan, Spanish and Italian due to occupations of Sardinia by these people groups. Using a methodology I call "ethnographic songwriting," I explore what incorporating songwriting into ethnographic fieldwork might have to offer arts-based research methodologies and the field of ethnomusicology, more broadly.

Changüí Music and its Importance in Cuban Culture, Susan Bjork (University of Arizona)

I recently traveled to Cuba for two weeks studying music and dance. We spent a day in Guantánamo where I experienced changüí music for the first time; it immediately caught my attention leaving me wanting to learn more about the style. Changüí music of eastern Cuba started in the mountains around the coffee plantations of Yateras near Guantánamo around 1845. It is used for gatherings with food, alcohol, music, dancing, and socializing. Research is limited on this style of music, warranting further study. Some researchers suggest that changüí music is just a form of Cuban son music; however, I feel that it is more and should be researched as a separate style. I will demonstrate that there are musical characteristics that can be found in son music that trace back to changüí and how changüí music is still growing in popularity as a musical style today. Changüí music contains the marimba, tres guitar, bongos, maracas, and güiro. The lyrics tell of important musicians and history in changüí. It is clear that changüí music is a distinct musical heritage that needs to be preserved. Further study needs to be completed exploring changüí separately from the son family.

Session 2: 10:40-12:10 am

The Design and Assessment of Interactive Songs for Teaching Statistics: An NSF-Funded Interdisciplinary Adventure, Larry Lesser (University of Texas at El Paso)

All students love music, though not all love statistics (yet)! Our NSF-funded web-based STEAM intervention actively engages 2- and 4-year college students by having them go beyond recall to supply concepts and contexts that get incorporated (sometimes using a synthesized voice) into a finished song they can play back! The songs are high in educational value (spanning standards-based learning objectives of an intro course), and also have excellent songwriting and production values (written by music composition faculty and STEM faculty/professionals and recorded in UTEP's state-of-the-art commercial music studio). The innovation lets students consult hints as needed and also gives students auto-graded feedback on their responses. The use of song provides multiple entry points to learning content by using both auditory and visual modalities, and bilinguals are further supported because songs deliver content more slowly (and more memorably) than speech, and because a student can pause, replay, or rewind the recording. For real-time web processing, the synthetic voice uses simple text-to-speech technology adjusted for pitch and duration to fill in gaps in the recording allowing for up to 4-syllable student responses, while applying checks on spelling and answer correctness with hints as needed. A studio-recorded version with the artists' original lyrics is available for comparison. We'll overview the 28-song collection and discuss results of recent pilot studies and randomized experiments to assess student engagement and learning gains.

Sexual Harassment and Assault: Effects on Creativity, Performance, and Career Trajectory of Female Musicians, Andrea Davis (University of Texas at El Paso)

Women who suffer sexual harassment or assault suffer life-long consequences which affect their educational paths, career trajectories, and mental health. Research suggests that sexual harassment and assault also reduces creative output, limits performance capability, and complicates self promotion. The lasting impacts of sexual assault and harassment in the context of a creative field like music performance can be detrimental to the career of female musicians. More research is needed to measure the prevalence and regularity of sexual harassment and assault in classical music settings. This paper seeks to draw attention to the need for further research of the best practices

that would enhance creativity and musicianship, and limit students' experiences with sexual harassment or assault.

Redes sin fronteras: Tracing Son Jarocho's Transnational Musical Networks, Isaiah Romo (University of New Mexico)

This paper examines the growing presence of *son jarocho* in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. *Son jarocho*, which formed in the coastal Mexican state of Veracruz, has its roots in African, European, and Indigenous musical traditions. It is centered around *fandango* celebrations that unite people of different backgrounds in a community participatory form of song, dance, and instrumentation. My research focuses on the liminal nature of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and how *fronterizo* hybridity shapes an increasingly wider transnational community of *son jarocho* musicians. Using a combination of network analysis, ethnography, oral history, and participant observation, I trace *son jarocho's* contemporary resurgence in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands—in cities such as Albuquerque, Tijuana, Tucson, San Felipe, El Paso, and San Diego—through individual musicians and actors, social media/globalized technologies, and local community *fandango* celebrations. I draw on the theoretical influences and approaches of Mexican and Chicana/o ethnomusicologists and scholars, including Steve Loza, Alejandro Hernández, Randall Kohl, Antonio García de Leon, Rafael Figueroa, and Martha Gonzalez, to argue that the structure and maintenance of the *son jarocho* network follows community organizing dynamics connected to other factors such as migration and grass-roots social justice movements. My study contributes to the knowledge of the cultural production of *son jarocho* in the U.S. and Mexico by examining how multi-ethnic, multi-generational communities of *son jarocho* practitioners transform border music and politics.

Session 3: 2-4 pm

The Exotic Orient in America: Arthur Foote's "Five Poems After Rubaiyat Omar Khayyam," Golriz Shayani (University of Northern Colorado)

In the nineteenth century, Orientalism as a subgenre of the musical exoticism was a popular theme in Europe due to the more discoveries of the East by western explorers. Many artists tried to evoke the Orient in their works. Some artists attempted to separate the Other from Self in conjunction with the rise of nationalism, and others used exotic effects, which contributed to the beauty of their art. Orientalism did not occur in America until World War II, when it began its era of colonization. As Edward Said explains in his “Orientalism” book that Orientalism was not the same in America as in Europe, and it related to the Far East mostly and not the Middle East. However, certain artworks of literature and music from 1837 through to the 1920s, which integrated the ideas related to the Middle East, depart from Said’s idea of American “material” Orientalism. Similar to the popularity of Hafiz’s ghazals among nineteenth-century German poets such as Goethe, a vogue of Omar Khayyam’s Rubaiyat emerged in America through Edward Fitzgerald’s translations of these Persian poems. It was during this time that Arthur Foote, a Bostonian composer, wrote compositions inspired by Khayyam’s quatrains, such as “Five Poems after Rubaiyat Omar Khayyam.” An analysis of this work, using Ralph Locke’s “All the Music in Full Context” paradigm, suggests that Foote’s composition is an Orientalist work in many aspects. “Five Poems after Rubaiyat Omar Khayyam,” written in 1898, also reveals that America’s “material” Orientalism was similar to that of Germany’s.

The Adaptation of Armenian and Its Nearby Musical Cultures in Jazz Performance, Sopon Suwannakit (University of Northern Colorado)

In 1915, many Armenians were forced to flee and to be deported from their homeland to various countries during the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Empire in the midst of the World War I. Among many selected destinations, the United States is one of them. Around the same time, jazz had been born in New Orleans, moving up north, and spreading throughout the United States within a few decades. Armenian culture and jazz had been in contact in the United States since then especially in New York City where jazz was flourishing. Musical influences from Armenian and its nearby musical cultures can be found in many important jazz recordings such as Turkish rhythm in Dave Brubeck's "Blue Rondo à la Turk" from the album Time Out (1959) and Aram Kachaturian musical approach in Miles Davis's modal concept in the album Kind of Blue (1959). Through the last decade, Tigran Hamasyan made his whole career developing his unique jazz improvisational style using Armenian folk musical materials. There have been multiple attempts to adapt Armenian and its nearby musical cultures in jazz performance. This research examines the development of this adaptation since the 1950s with an emphasis on Armenian jazz bands and musicians in New York City since 1975. The result shows multiple ways of the adaptation through the history of jazz and shows how Armenian folk music theory works in jazz improvisation.

Music of *The Lord of the Rings*: Exoticism and Musicological Perspectives about Film Music, Karen De La Rosa (University of Arizona)

In *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy of films, we meet different fictional groups such as elves, dwarves, and ents — groups that are meant to be understood as exotic, both within the film and for the viewer. Scholars have dealt with exoticism in Western art music, but we have yet to see how this concept could be applied to music for films concerning fantastical creatures. In these instances, how can music emanate otherness, and how might this tie into exoticism?

This paper proposes that exoticism is a useful framework for understanding fictional musical worlds. I will draw on Ralph Locke's broad framework for exoticism to discuss how fictional and exotic groups from these films are depicted through music. In order to make these conceptual connections, the study will look at the film's musical themes for the groups mentioned above. These pieces will be assessed in terms of use of the human voice, orchestration, and melodic and harmonic material, among other elements. For example, music with Arabic modes and female voices is routinely used to mark the elves as different from the dwarves, who are depicted musically through the use of male Haka voices (ceremonial vocalizations in the Maori culture). While exoticism is typically understood in the context of depictions of actual cultural and historical groups in genres like opera and symphony, discussions drawn from this analysis will build toward the development of a methodology to study film music from a musicological perspective.

Contemporary Atonal Improvisation: Limitlessness of the Intervallic Approach, Limitations and Dangers of Vernacular Improvisation and an Ultimate Approach of Fully Embracing an Atonal Grid, Jakub Rojek (University of Arizona)

The paper will discuss improvisation as an esoteric and foreign art form and its place in academia. Moreover, it will attempt to explain what has been missing from the improvisational approach over the years and how vernacular improvisation dominated the improvised music scene up until now. It will also demonstrate a non-idiomatic approach to improvisation and its advantages and superiority to any other form of improvised music. In the process, the paper will also discuss definitions of vernacular, and "vernaculars" e.g. classical language, define improvisation as an artistic and creative process, its purpose, development, applications, as well as discuss a blank slate approach, improvisational and transient harmonies, and define an imperfection as an intrinsic

element of improvisational process. At last, the paper will address an extinction of improvisation from classical curriculum of music conservatories in the United States and stylistic and aesthetical dichotomy resulting from it. The situation in music conservatories, and which encapsulates the hitherto mentioned dichotomy between improvising and non-improvising musicians, needs to be addressed urgently in order to restore educational equilibrium once witnessed in music academia. It appears, the main problem students are facing nowadays is the void created by lack of any education and clinics about the art of improvisation. In conclusion, the goal of the paper is to fill the lacuna and scarcity of literature on the art of improvisation, especially non-idiomatic form of it and to advocate for its reinstatement into the academic curriculum.

Saturday, March 2

Session 4: 9-10:30 am

Gershom's Music in the Borderland: The Jewish Immigrant Community and Musical Performance in El Paso, Texas, Robert Diaz (University of Texas at El Paso)

In this paper I argue that El Paso's Jewish community, while blending into the broader cultural fabric of El Paso with relative ease toward the end of the nineteenth century (and continuing to do so presently), has resisted the incorporation of the borderland's musical practices into their own liturgical music. Instead, the evolution of Jewish music in the El Paso has occurred on a macro level, with transformations stemming from international events and popular musical productions. I further argue that El Paso's Jews rarely utilize local musical elements because liturgical music functions as a way to foster a sense of community amongst the region's Jewish immigrants and serves as an educational tool for children. This study is based on interviews I conducted with members of El Paso's Jewish community, along with genealogies of and monographs about Jewish families in the region and scholarship by musicologists on the evolution of Jewish music. Ample scholarship has been produced about the Jewish families of El Paso, but these studies tend to focus on the business, civic, and religious endeavors of El Paso's Jewish immigrants. While these accomplishments are important, there is a dearth of information to be found on the persistence and evolution of cultural traditions that local Jewish immigrants brought with them from their homelands. Any references to cultural practices are usually incidental or limited. That is especially true with regards to musical traditions and performances. This analysis seeks to reverse that trend, highlighting the importance of music in the Jewish community.

Music and Resilience Among Borderlands Immigrants, Flora Newberry (University of Texas at El Paso)

Immigration creates stresses and challenges for individuals and communities. The current political climate in the U.S., which includes tightening of border security, restriction of legal avenues of immigration, threats of deportation to settled immigrant groups, and anti-immigrant rhetoric, has greatly increased the stress and challenges faced by immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border. Research among immigrants at the border reveals the many ways that music builds resilience in individuals and communities during stressful times. The areas around the U.S.-Mexico border contain a wide variety of immigrant groups in different circumstances; some having been settled for generations, while others are newly arrived. The role of music in building resilience in the face of these stresses

and challenges is considered for immigrants in transit, immigrants in border camps, resettled immigrants, internal immigrants, and international immigrants. Groups studied include immigrants from the “caravan” camped at the border in Tijuana, Mexico; immigrants in a temporary shelter in Juarez, Mexico; and members of a Salsa band in El Paso, Tx.

Highlighted by this research are the ways that music binds individuals to past and present communities, while building opportunities for future connections. Building on and expanding research done by Adelaida Reyes-Schramm with Vietnamese refugees in New Jersey, this study applies her ideas to settled immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border and emerging groups of immigrants who have recently migrated to the U.S.-Mexico border from Central America.

Sones Y Chilenas: Afro-Mexican Musical Traditions as Resistance to the False Imaginary, Alex Garcia (University of Texas at El Paso)

An appropriate and accurate analogy for describing Mexican folk music is of a nesting doll. On the surface popular expressions seem distinct and unique. Yet, when we open the first nesting doll, a concealed regional folk tradition is found inside, and in succession when that one is investigated further we find still another. The jarabes, sones del pais, jarochos and chilenas, find their origins in prohibited afro-mestizo music traditions that are fused with both iberian and amerindio mestizo elements. The son jarochos’ prominence came as an act of resistance that can be attributed to its prohibition by a catholic edict in 1776 by the Inquisition Tribunal of Mexico City-- which banned the performance of its songs and its dances throughout the colony of New Spain.¹

The appropriation of those aforementioned cultural expressions along with the propagation of the idealized mestizo imaginary, since the nineteenth century has enabled the exclusion and erasure of the influence and contributions of the Afromestizo. The recovery of afro-descendant identity speaks out directly to the erasure and exclusion of an african influence on the people, the music and the overall culture of Mexico. My objective with this study is to present a comparative analysis of two folk music traditions from Mexico which find their origins in afrodescendiente communities. My other intention is to reflect cultural difference for this expansive and diverse ethnic group of Afro-descendant Mexicans as a contribution to the efforts within the ongoing and dynamic process of constitutional recognition for those communities.

¹Saldivar Y Silva, Gabriel, and Elisa Osorio Bolio. *Historia De La Música En México: (épocas Precortesiana Y Colonial)*. Toluca, Méx.: Ediciones Del Gobierno Del Estado De México, 1987.; Pgs. 251-252., “La palabra son aplicada a la música, parece que fue usada por primera vez oficialmente al prohibirse un baile y coplas el año de 1766, el cual clasificamos entre la música de los negros.”