

Sound at EMP Pop Con 2012

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Abstract

As our Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Stoeve-Ackerman mentioned in her Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) Conference Round-Up post from this past Monday, this weekend will be action packed for those interested in media studies and popular music studies.

Keywords

Music (Subfield), American Studies, Asian And Asian American Studies, Black Studies, Conferences, Film/Movies/Cinema

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PopCon2012_WebTout

As our Editor-in-Chief [Jennifer Stoeve-Ackerman](#) mentioned in her [Society for Cinema and Media Studies \(SCMS\) Conference Round-Up post from this past Monday](#), this weekend will be action packed for those interested in media studies and popular music studies. This year is the first year the [Experience Music Project Museum \(EMP\)](#) POP Conference will take place on the East Coast—sponsored by New York University’s [Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music](#). In addition, the EMP POP Conference will be jointly held with the [International Association for the Study of Popular Music \(US\)](#) Conference (IASPM-US for short). With that in mind we have brought two conference round-up posts this week. (Speaking of blogging about conferences, don’t miss [IASPM’s blog coverage of EMP POP Conference 2012](#), where they are previewing several papers that will be read at the conference.) Even though our editorial collective is still working on the technology to enable us to be in several places at once so we don’t miss out on these awesome opportunities, I will be *Sounding Out*’s eyes and ears at EMP POP Conference. I will also attempt to live-tweet the panels I am attending. You can find me at [@literarychica](#), or you can follow the conference tweet stream at [#PopCon](#)

The EMP POP Conference has been bringing together academics and non-academics alike, musicians and non-musicians alike, music writers and non-music-writers to discuss the direction of popular culture—especially popular music. The theme of this year’s POP Conference is [Sounds of the City](#), and what better location for these cross-disciplinary conversations than New York City? From the conference website:

Presenters will pay particular attention to what urban environments have meant for race, gender, and sexuality. Jazz, rock, indie, country, metal, electronic dance music, roots, disco, and Broadway music are but some of the sounds that will be the subject of entire panels.

The city becomes the place to explore how sound is constructed but also how the city helps construct sound—and its counterpart, noise. Detroit, Berlin, and New York City, among others, take center stage in this year’s program. Many of the panel topics show an interest in thinking about how sound influences our notion of urban space, which brings to my mind the “cities of feeling” that [Carlo Rotella](#) talks about in his book [October Cities: The Redevelopment of Urban Literature](#). If, according to Rotella, “literary writers are in the business of imagining cities,” here at the EMP POP Conference there is an impulse to consider how do sound and noise participate in that imagining, and how gender and race play a role (3). The conference offerings illustrate an attempt to think about the sounds of the city in a broader sense, not just limiting it to music. Although the EMP POP Conference stands out for its critical focus on everything related to popular music, this year’s panels are more sound-studies oriented.

Another indication of the sound studies influence at this year’s EMP POP Conference is a focus on listening. There seems to be an inclination not just to think about the sounds within the city but how we listen to those sounds. Listening is an important factor in how sound is constructed; in other words, an analysis of sound is not limited to the sounds themselves, but how those who listen interpret those sounds, or how listeners themselves are perceived. From the [Feminist Working Group](#)’s Friday panel titled **Turn It Up! One: Listening to Difference** to Gustavus Stadler’s

“Aural Drag: Warhol as Pop Listener” to the Sunday panel **Urban Ears**, listening is part of the conversation taking place at NYU this weekend about sound and urban space.

Our regular readers will see several familiar names in the program. [Gayle Wald](#) is [presenting on the Marvelettes Friday morning](#) on the [Afro Imaginaries](#) panel. [Gustavus Stadler](#) is moderating the [Lonely Subcultures](#) panel on Friday and presenting on Andy Warhol in his paper [“Aural Drag: Warhol as Pop Listener.”](#) (Insider tip: keep an ear out for Eric Lott, who will be presenting on the same panel as Stadler; you can expect a blog post from Lott in the upcoming months.) [Karen Tongson](#), who blogged for us on *The Voice*, will be presenting a paper titled [“Drive and Sounds of the ‘80s Metropolis.”](#) [Scott Poulson-Bryant](#) will be participating in the Saturday afternoon roundtable on Whitney Houston titled [“Newark’s Finest: Reflections on Whitney Houston.”](#) Last but not least, [Regina Bradley](#), one of our regular writers, and myself will be presenting together on a roundtable on Sunday titled [“I Pledge Allegiance to the Block: Cityscapes, Hegemonic Sound, and Blackness.”](#)

The conference will take place at [New York University’s Kimmel Center](#), and is free of charge. To find out more about the presenters or to read about all the other outstanding panels at the conference, please [visit the conference website](#). So if you’re in the New York City area Thursday through Sunday (or if you’re considering hopping on a train from Boston to check out some panels—wink wink), the conference will be well worth your while!

Please comment to let SO! know what you think—both before and after EMP PopCon 2012. If I missed your panel in my round up, please drop me a line: lms@soundingoutblog.com

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[Liana M. Silva](#) is co-founder and Managing Editor of Sounding Out! She is also a PhD candidate at Binghamton University.

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THURSDAY, March 22

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Thursday, March 22, 2012 7:00pm-8:30pm

Conference Opening Keynote: The Artist in the City: with Angélique Kidjo, Esperanza Spalding, Santigold, and Himanshu Suri (aka Heems)

Room: Eisner & Lubin Auditorium KC 401

Writing about how jazz in the mid-20th century reflected lived experience in New York city's tenements, the scholar Shane Vogel quoted Duke Ellington's description of his swing symphony, "Harlem Air Shaft": "So much goes on in a Harlem air shaft...You hear fights, you smell dinner, you hear people making love. You hear intimate gossip floating down. You hear the radio. An air shaft is one great big loudspeaker." In the crowded city, the musician-composer becomes a living receiver, distilling a static field of sounds and sensations into an evocative whole.

This keynote event gathers together four prominent artists whose work reflects a cosmopolitan worldview, with each artist rooted in his or her particular urban home. Grammy winning Beninose singer-songwriter Angélique Kidjo has truly had a global career, having recorded albums in a staggering array of languages, styles, genres and cities; her recently-released live album *Spirit Rising* is a career retrospective featuring diverse guests like Ezra Koenig, Josh Groban and the Kuumba Singers. Grammy winner Esperanza Spalding is about to release her third album, *Radio Music Society*, a border-crossing blend of jazz, soul, funk and pop that reflects the cities she loves: New York, Barcelona, and her birthplace of Portland, Oregon. Philadelphia-bred, Brooklyn-based Santigold (Santi White) is one of the brightest lights of the East Coast bohemian underground; her upcoming second album, *Master of My Make Believe*, takes her incendiary blend of hip hop, indie rock and dance music to a new level. On his recent mixtape *Nehru Jackets*, Himanshu Suri (Heems) of the Queens-identified hip hop group Das Racist drops wit and wisdom about the ups and downs of life in Gotham's five boroughs. Discussing their new work and how they've formed their own sound and vision in relationship to the urban spaces where they thrive, these artists consider what's changed and what remains consistent in the half-century plus since the Duke found heaven in the clanging multiplicity of the air shaft.

Moderator: Ann Powers

Featuring:

Angélique Kidjo

Esperanza Spalding

Santigold

Himanshu Suri



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FRIDAY, March 23

Friday, March 23, 2012

Friday, March 23, 2012 9:00 am-11:00 am

Afro-Imaginaries

Room: KC 804/5

Moderator: Banning Eyre

Featuring:

Gayle Wald, "'Deliver De Letter': 'Please Mr. Postman,' the Marvelettes, and the Afro-Caribbean Imaginary"

Emily J. Lordi, "Moving Out: White Flight and Sly and the Family Stone's 'Stand!'"

Koushik Banerjea, "Cities of the Dead: Soundscaping Race, Memory and Desire in a Forgotten London"

Wills Glasspiegel & Martin Scherzinger, "Beyoncé's Afro-Future: Power and Play in 'Run the World (Girls)'"

Repositioning Urban Pop

Room: KC 808

Moderator: Barbara Browning

Featuring:

Rustem Ertug Altinay, “‘In Konya she would marry a regular dude, but Serife from Konya is now a Lady’: Power, Sexuality and Cities in Gungor Bayrak’s Autobiographic Songs”

Erin MacLeod, “‘Layers and layers of not-so-dope synths’: Listening to the Music of Addis Ababa”

Mark Lomanno, “Surfaces and (archi)Textures in Canarian Jazz”

Sonic Contestation

Room: KC 406

Moderator: John Melillo

Featuring:

Patrick Deer, “‘The Cassette Played Poptones’: Punk’s Pop Embrace of the City in Ruins”

Jessica Schwartz, “Conform or Die: Composing the City as National Security Threat, 1945-1962”

John Melillo, “Revenant Frequencies: Destructive Sound from “The Waste Land” to *NYC Ghosts and Flowers*”

J. Martin Daughtry, “Evocative Objects and Provocative Actions on the Acoustic Territory of War”

Friday, March 23, 2012 11:15 am-12:45pm

Turn It Up! One: Listening to Difference

Room: KC 808

This panel is sponsored by the Feminist Working Group. Since 2008, we have organized panels, get-togethers and networking opportunities for all feminists who participate in EMP. For more information about our activities, and to get involved, please visit <http://feministworkinggroup.blogspot.com>

Moderator: Lucy O’Brien

Featuring:

Summer Kim Lee, “‘Singin’ Up On You’: Queer Intimacies of the Sonorous Body In ‘The New Sound Karaoke’”

Daniel Sander, “Girl. Reverb. Notes on Queer Tactics of Sonorous Difference”

Kyessa L. Moore, “(Sub)Spacialized Urban Sound, Expressive Communion and Identificatory Dislocations”

Cairo and Athens Spring Up

Room: KC 405

Moderator: Katherine Meizel

Featuring:

Banning Eyre, “Cairo Soundscape: Revolution and Cultural Renaissance”

Maysan Haydar, “Wild in the (Arab) Streets: Songs for the Revolutions”

Hypatia Vourloumis, “Bad Athena: Crises, Syntheses and Sounds of a European Other”

Lonely Subcultures

Room: KC 406

Moderator: Gustavus Stadler

Featuring:

William Hutson, “Abrasive Nostalgia: A Noisescape of Deindustrialization”

Vivian L. Huang, “Not That Innocent: Britney Spears, Laurel Nakadate and Strangers”

Julia DeLeon, “Dance Through the Dark Night: Distance, Dissonance and Queer

Friday, March 23, 2012 2:15pm-3:45pm

Memory, Music, and the Metropolis

Room: KC 804/5

Moderator: Charles Kronengold

Featuring:

Tracy McMullen, “In the Beginning, You Are There: Cloning Genesis and the Return of the Urbane”

Tavia Nyong’o, “Shame and Scandal and Zombies”

Karen Tongson, “Drive and Sounds of the ’80s Metropolis

Broadway Bound

Room: KC 808

Moderator: Caroline Polk O’Meara

Featuring:

Raymond Knapp, “The Sound of Broadway’s Mean Streets”

Jacqueline Warwick, “‘Bigger than Big and Smaller than Small’: Child Stars, Street Urchins, and Little Orphan Annie”

Elizabeth L. Wollman & Susan Tenneriello, “*Spider-Man: Turn off the Dark* and the Ambivalence of Spectacle

Turn It Up! Two: Making Community

Room: KC 405

Moderator: Elizabeth Keenan

Featuring:

Rachel Devitt, “I Love a (Pride) Parade: Queer Community-Building, Temporary Spaces and Politicized Kitsch among LGBT Marching Bands”

Evelyn McDonnell, “The Roads to Ruin”

Matthew Carrillo-Vincent, “Ears to the Streets, Peripheral Beats: The New Social Map of Backpack Rap”

Friday, March 23, 2012 4:00pm-6:00 pm

Roundtable: “Do You Want More?” The Time and Space of Alternative Sonic Blackness

Room: GC 95

The migration of sounds and ideas across time and place encourages synthesis; giving rise to avant garde, radical, and futurist voices. What (other) worlds open up and what (outer) spaces are formed? How do regional sites remix global flows? What factors/forces enable or prohibit certain voices from finding an audience in the national, global or cyber scene? How do we reconcile organicism of sound, as musicians produce out of particular worlds, with the reckless and restless ways music circulates?

Moderator: Jayna Brown, Daphne Brooks, Tavia Nyong’o

Featuring:

Kyle Dargan

Mendi Obadike

Jace Clayton

The work of Barry Jenkins

Location Location Location

Room: KC 802

Moderator: Fabian Holt

Featuring:

Keith Negus, "Making it in the Big City: Small Town Boys, Country Girls and Suburban Dreamers"

Jennifer C. Lena, "The Ground on which the Race was Run: Careers in Pop"

Carl Wilson, "We Hate It When Our Friends Become Successful: The Death and Life of Great North American Scenius"

Kembrew McLeod & Loren Glass, "Killer Apps Play the Sounds of the Cities"

Detroit: Foundation, Eclecticism, and Memory

Room: KC 808

Moderator: Marlon Bailey

Featuring:

Rebekah Farrugia & Kellie Hay, "'The Foundation' in Detroit: Challenging Conventional Ideologies about Sex and Gender in Hip Hop"

Denise Dalphond, "Eclecticism in Detroit: Diverse Dance Party Scenes in Electronic Music"

Carleton S. Gholz, "Remembering Rita: Sound, Sexuality, and Memory"

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Saturday, March 24, 2012

Saturday, March 24, 2012 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Metal Studies Rising

Room: KC 808

Moderator: Jeremy Wallach

Featuring:

Esther Clinton, "The Gothic Menace, Then and Now: Gothic Literature, Heavy Metal Music, and Moral Panics"

Eric Smialek, "How Does Metal Mean? Ways that Musicology Can Contribute to Metal Studies"

Amber R. Clifford-Napoleone, "Hell Bent for Metal: A Study of Queer Fans of Heavy Metal"

Nelson Varas-Diaz & Eliut R. Rivera-Segarra, "Heavy Metal music in the Caribbean Setting: Social Practices and Meanings of Music at the Periphery"

Saturday, March 24, 2012 11:15am-12:45pm

Street Dreams: Blackness on the Move

Room: KC 802

Moderator: Alexandra T. Vazquez

Featuring:

Adrienne Brown, "Rehearing Hip-Hop Automotivity"

Sonya Posmentier, "City Streets, Country Roads: Zora Neale Hurston's Moving Sound"

Francisco Robles, "'This bitter earth may not be so bitter after all': Political Promise and Sonic Geography in Killer of Sheep and We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite"

Sexuality and the City

Room: KC 405

Moderator: Franklin Bruno

Featuring:

Philip Gentry, "The Erotics of Chance"

Emily Tartanella, "'A Country Mile Behind the World': A Smithsian Sense of Place "

Elias Krell, "Singing the Contours of the City: Transvocality and Affect in Lucas Silveira's Toronto"

Preserving Soundscapes

Room: KC 406

Moderator: Laura Lavernia

Featuring:

Matthew Hayes, “Preserving America’s Endangered Soundscapes: An Emerging Field in Historic Preservation”

Barrett Martin, “Preserving Musical Memory: Physical Space and Socio-Economic-Cultural Identity”

Devon Powers, “Writing Music (Into) History”

Saturday, March 24, 2012 2:15pm-3:45pm

Warhol’s New York

Room: KC 914

Moderator: Jonathan Flatley

Featuring:

Gustavus Stadler, “Aural Drag: Warhol as Pop Listener”

Eric Lott, “Andy’s Mick: Warhol Builds a Better Jagger”

Bryan Waterman, “‘It’s Too ‘Too Too’ to Put a Finger On’: Tom Verlaine’s Lost Lisp and the Secret History of the New York Underground”

Losing It in the City

Room: KC 804/5

Moderator: Ken Wissoker

Featuring:

Carolina González, “DomiNegro turf: Whose Uptown?”

Keith M. Harris, “‘I don’t care anymore’: Deep Soul, Doris Duke, and the Allegory of Migration”

Michael B. Gillespie, “We Almost Lost Detroit: Sonic Historiography, 9/11, and Theo Parrish”

Saturday, March 24, 2012 4:00pm-6:00pm

Roundtable: Feminist and Queer Studies of Race in Sound

Room KC 804/5

This roundtable convenes two fields of scholarly inquiry—critical race studies and feminist theory/queer studies—to explore the following interrelated questions: How does sound construct racialized and gendered meaning and/or prompt processes of racial subjection? How might various hermeneutics of sound enrich and/or expand current ethnic and gender studies

approaches to the study of racial formation? And how might we collectively forge a feminist, queer analytic for the study of racialized sound and sonic processes of racialization?

Moderator: Kevin Fellezs

Featuring:

Kirstie Dorr

Roshanak Kheshti

Deborah Vargas

Saturday, March 24, 2012 6:15pm-7:30pm
IASPM-US General Membership Meeting

Room: Rosenthal Pavilion, 10th Floor

The general membership meeting of IASPM-US is the organization's opportunity to gather together and discuss the accomplishments of the past year, any concerns or issues that have arisen, and plans for the coming year. All IASPM members are welcome. We would also like to invite any interested regular EMP participants who might be interested in joining IASPM. Beyond our normal business, the general meeting this year will feature the announcement of the first winner of the Charles Hamm Memorial Award in recognition of lifetime contribution to Popular Music Studies. In addition, the David Sanjek Award for best paper by a graduate student at the meeting will be announced.

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SUNDAY, March 25

SUNDAY, March 25, 2012

Sunday, March 25, 2012 9:00 am to 11:00 am

'Silver City Bound': Black Women Musicians & the Urban Avant Garde

Room: KC 905/7

Moderator: Imani Perry

Featuring:

Daphne A. Brooks, “‘One of these mornings, you’re gonna rise up singing’: The Secret Black Feminist History of the Gershwins’ *Porgy and Bess*”

Farah Jasmine Griffin, “Playing through the Changes: Mary Lou Williams’ Manhattan”

Salamishah Tillet, “Bethlehem, Boardwalks, and the City of Brotherly Love: Nina Simone’s Pre-Civil Rights Aesthetic”

Jayna Brown, “After the End of the World: Afro Diasporan Feminism and Alternative Dimensions of Sound”

Distanced Listening

Room: KC 802

Moderator: Tom Miller

Featuring:

Jeremy Morris, “Hear, Here: Location-Based Music”

Van Truong, “Distant Sounds”

Mark Katz, “Analog and Digital: A Love Story”

Karl Hagstrom Miller, “I am Sitting in a Room: The Private Pop Experience”

Sunday, March 25, 2012 11:15am-12:45am

Utopian Spaces in an Accelerated Age

Room: KC 802

Moderator: Eric Lott

Featuring:

Wayne Marshall, “Music as Social Life in an Age of Platform Politricks”

Julianne Escobedo Shepherd, “Cunt Music: When Vogue House Dips Meet Dipset”

Max Pearl & Alexis Stephens, “New Jack City: Frenzied Cultures, Transitory Spaces (or, how I learned to stop worrying and embrace the hype cycle)”

Sunday, March 25, 2012 2:15pm-3:45pm

Urban Ears

Room: KC 905/7

Moderator: Greil Marcus

Featuring:

Sonnet Retman, “Muddy the Waters: Other Stories of Love and Theft in the Making of the Delta Blues”

David Suisman, “The Urban Ear of Tony Schwartz”

Franklin Bruno, “Who Put the Arrow in ‘Cupid?’: Hugo and Luigi’s Schlock ‘n’ Soul”

A Girl’s Guide to the Urban Imaginary

Room: KC 914

Moderated by: Jacqueline Warwick

Featuring:

Elizabeth Keenan, “Out in the Streets: 1960s Girl Groups and the Imagined Urban Space of New York City”

Sarah Dougher, “Making Noise in the Safe Space: How Girls’ Rock Camps Make Place in the City”

Diane Pecknold, “The Spectral Cityscapes of Tween Pop”

“Beat Street”: New York City Hip-Hop

Room: KC 804/5

Moderator: Oliver Wang

Featuring:

Patrick Rivers, “Rumble in the Concrete Jungle: Beat Battles in NYC and Their Impact on Hip-Hop Production”

Shanté Paradigm Smalls, “‘Voices Carry’: Queer Dissonance and the Travel of NYC 1980s Hip-Hop Sound”

Chris Tabron, “‘Boom It in Ya Jeep’: Low-end Theories of Black Aurality in 90’s NYC Hip-Hop”

Roundtable – I Pledge Allegiance to the Block: Cityscapes, Hegemonic Sound, and Blackness

Room: KC 808

Whether a homesite for protest and resistance or, as Alain Locke suggests, an escape from the ‘medieval’ south, the city serves as both a muse and haven for black American cultural expression. Although city-scapes are heavily represented in African American music and popular culture, more

discussion is needed about how the city is often a hegemonic space of black cultural expression. In other words, how does an urban setting dictate power and blackness in the (African) American community?

Moderator: Guthrie Ramsey

Featuring:

Regina Bradley

Fredara Hadley

Matthew D. Morrison

Liana Silva

Sunday, March 25, 2012 4:00pm-6:00pm

Modern English

Room: KC 808

Moderator: Devin McKinney

Julia Sneeringer, “‘I’d Never Even Been to Manchester’: Liverpool Musicians in Hamburg’s Entertainment Economy, 1960-1965”

Leonard Nevarez, “How Joy Division came to sound like Manchester”

Lucy O’Brien, “Can I Have a Taste of Your Ice Cream? (Post punk feminism and the Yorkshire Ripper)”

Gillian Gower, “Riot Culture: Beats, Banksy, and the Bristol Sound”