

Sound at IASPM-US 2014

Kaleb E. Goldschmitt

Blog post published March 10, 2014 in *Sounding Out!*

<https://doi.org/10.59350/smwf1-60348>

Abstract

For the second weekend in March, the U.S. chapter of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM-US) will be holding its annual meeting at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Keywords

Music (Subfield), Conferences, Hip Hop, Listening, Music, Pedagogy



Recommended citation

Goldschmitt, K. E. (2014, March 10). Sound at IASPM-US 2014. *Sounding Out!*. <https://doi.org/10.59350/smwf1-60348>

Copyright

Copyright © Kaleb E. Goldschmitt 2014. Distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

For the second weekend in March, the U.S. chapter of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM-US) [will be holding its annual meeting at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill](#). Like sound studies, popular music studies is fueled by an interdisciplinary spirit, and many of the questions that currently occupy the popular culture corner of sound studies have much in common with those of us who take the study of music seriously. This year's conference offers a unique theme, "Music Flows," that centers around questions of water, flows, and liquidity. The conference theme also offers more expansive ideas to flows, including mobility, embodiment, sonic materialities, and ecology. While the theme may strike some as unconventional, it ends up being an excellent metaphor for those of us who study musical flows in fields that prefer static works and communities over transient ones.



The James Taylor Bridge over Morgan Creek in his native city of Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Since this is a popular music conference, many of the papers at this meeting take musical texts as their focus (including mine); however, there are still many panels and individual papers that might interest scholars from a sound studies perspective. After all, sound travels better in water than in air, and following that logic, water and sound both feature waves. Indeed, there are papers that take the water waves and sound waves as their inspiration. Compare, for example, *SO!* guest writer [Mack Hagood](#)'s discussion of an early popular recording of water waves against Robin James's philosophical theorizing about sound waves and Neo-Liberalism in the music of Ludacris. Similarly, many papers take their inspiration from the sounds that come from water or are performed in it: Peter Schultz specifically tackles the sound-design of watery environments in video games, while *SO!* guest writer [Josh Ottum](#) investigates the sounds from the floating garbage island in the middle of the ocean. These papers offer attendees the opportunity to consider the large theoretical consequences of changes to the water and waves in recordings.

Some papers approach water from a perspective focused on materiality and mediation. Craig Eley's paper offers a historically grounded study of the hydrophone and underwater recording. Peter McMurray's paper analyzes the problem of making music for watery environments and the challenges of water's sonic conduciveness. For an athletic perspective on hearing music in the water, Niko Higgins talks about the music that swimmers use in their athletic training. These

perspectives on liquid mediation offer a tremendous opportunity to expand sound studies beyond its general dependence on sounds that happen in the open air.

Beyond the more literal takes on the water in music flows, a large portion of the papers have taken their inspiration from the metaphor of social mobility, liquidity, and trade. There are panels and papers that emphasize transnational sonic flows, such as the panel “In and Out of Africa,” and Jason Robinson’s work on recording challenges in a transatlantic jazz collaboration. Two papers in particular deal with the role of African Americans in U.S. diplomatic relations: Darren Mueller’s paper on Dizzy Gillespie as a jazz ambassador, and Kendra Salois’s work on hip-hop diplomacy. Along a similar vein, Yvonne Liao specifically considers ports and their relationship to musical trade in Shanghai’s jazz scene. There is also a paper on the role of music as a social lubricant by Luis-Manuel Garcia that promises to be a real treat.



Megafaun serenades a Chapel Hill, North Carolina crowd, Image by Flickr user abbyladybug

There are also numerous papers that tackle flow and water as a metaphor in music-making and mediation. They include *SO!* guest writer [Mike D’Errico](#)’s study of embodiment and interactivity in digital media, Rebecca Farrugia and Kelly Hay’s study of women’s flow in a Detroit hip-hop scene, and Jonathan Piper’s paper on “sludge” metal. “Anointing Sounds” is a roundtable on music’s materiality and the sounds of religious experience through the Christian metaphors of “anointing” and “healing waters.” Finally, for those scholars seeking the rare paper on record eaters and collecting, check out *SO!* guest writer [Shawn VanCour](#) and Kyle Barnett’s paper.

Other highlights include a keynote by Louise Meintjes, whose book [Sounds of Africa!](#) took the musical recording process in studios as a serious object of study, and one of the last papers of the conference, Matthew Somoroff’s study of James Baldwin as a listener and ethnographer.

Finally, it is worth mentioning how many papers address sound studies' long-standing relationship with soundscapes, ecomusicology, and the environment. There is a panel called "Ecologies of Place" with papers on ecologically-minded music from places as far flung as India, Iceland, Appalachian Ohio, and Canadian parks. There is also a panel on "Urban Soundscapes," including Robert Fry's paper on sound, music, and branding at a hot spring resort and Mathew Robert Swiatlowski's paper on the boom box and the Walkman in urban space.

Many in sound studies cite [Jonathan Sterne's critiques of ocularcentrism](#) in cultural criticism. This conference encourages us to think beyond the air and stasis and shift our focus to the possibilities of liquid metaphors in cultural change.

Scroll down for Kariann's handpicked panels and papers of interest for sound studies folks perusing IASPM-US.

—

Featured Image: One of Chapel Hill's many ponds, at the Outdoor Education Center, Image by Flickr User Kat St Kat

—

[Kariann Goldschmitt](#) is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at New College of Florida and Ringling College of Art and Design. She holds a Ph.D. in Musicology from UCLA (2009) and was the 2009-2011 Mellon Fellow of Non-Western Music at Colby College in Maine. Her scholarly work focuses on Brazilian music, modes of listening, and sonic branding in the global cultural industries. She has published in *The Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *American Music*, *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, and *Luso-Brazilian Review* and contributes to the South American cultural magazine, *Sounds and Colours*.

—



"Franklin Street, Chapel Hill" by Wikimedia user Caroline Culler, CC BY 3.0

Friday, March 14

9:30

"The Fluid 'Field': Recording and Performance in Transatlantic Collaboration"–*Jason Robinson, Amherst College*

"Swimming What You Hear: The Music of Distance Swimmers"– *Niko Higgins, Columbia University*

10:15-11:45

"In and Out of Africa: From Biodiversity to Cultural Diversity: Negotiating Cultural Sustainability, Difference, and Nationhood through World Music in France," *Aleysia Whitmore, Brown University*

"American Afrobeat: Perception and Reception of Antibalas in Nigeria," *Stephanie Shonekan, University of Missouri*

"African Sounds in the American South: Community Radio, Pan-Africanism, and Historically Black Colleges, 1950-1986," *Joshua Clark Davis, Duke University*

"Thinking the Anthropocene Through Sound 'Apeman': The Kinks' Romantic Expression of Environmental Politics and the Paradox of Human Evolution,"
Sara Gulgass, University of Pittsburgh

"Coming of Age in the Post-3.11 Waterscape: Music and Silence in Japanese Animated Cinema and Children's Art," *Kyle Harp, University of California, Riverside*

"Sounds Like Garbage: Paddling Through an Island of Trash Toward a New Sonic Ecology," *Josh Ottum, Ohio University*

"Watery Textualities: The Perceptual Flow of Metric (Re)evaluation in Radiohead's 'Bloom,'" *Michael Lupo, CUNY Graduate Center*

"Splash, Bubble, and Clink: Topic and Timbre in Aquatic Video Game Environments," *Peter Shultz, University of Chicago*

"Just Ludacris Enough: Wave-Forms & Neoliberal Sophrosyne," *Robin James, University of North Carolina-Charlotte*

12:00-1:30

Keynote Lecture: Louise Meintjes, Duke University

1:45-3:45

"Embodiment and Mediation: Riding the 'Sound of Here-and-Now': Locating Groove in Japanese Garage Punk," *Jose Neglia, University of California, Berkeley*

"Air Flows: Breath, Voice, and Authenticity in Three Recordings," *Greg Weinstein, Columbia College Chicago*

"'Them boys kin shore tromp on the strings': Down-Home Virtuosity in Rural Variety Radio," *David VanderHamm, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

"'Less Work, More Flow': Embodied Interactivity and the Ecology of Digital Media," *Mike D'Errico, University of California Los Angeles*

1:45

"Secret Sonic Weapon on Record: Dizzy Gillespie and the Ambassadorial Politics of Jazz," *Darren Mueller, Duke University*

"The Costs of Being Fluid: Popular Music and the Lubrication of Social Frictions," *Luis-Manuel Garcia, Max Planck Institute for Human Development*

2:15

"Soft Power in Hard Times: Affect, Labor, and Ethics in US 'Hip Hop Diplomacy,'" *Kendra Salois, University of Maryland, College Park*

2:45

"Listening with Your Face: The Neo-colonial Politics of Underwater Music," *Peter McMurray, Harvard University*



So nice we put it twice, The James Taylor Bridge, Public Domain

Saturday, March 15

8:30

"Voices of Americas – The Sound of the Radio Programs About Folk Music in Brazil and the USA under the Pan American policy (1936-1945)" –

Rafael Velloso, UFRGS/Brazil & University of Maryland

"The Sound of Sludge: Groove, Materiality and Bodily Experience in Sludge Metal" – *Jonathan Piper, Independent Scholar*

8:30-10:00

Urban Soundscapes

"I Can't Live Without My Radio": The Sony Walkman & the Stereo Boombox in the Urban Soundscape of the 1980s" – *Mathew Robert Swiatlowski, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

"Sounding Hot Springs: Music and Branding in America's Spa City" – *Robert Fry, Vanderbilt University*

"Hip Hop Flows (through Detroit): Women's "Legendary" Work Mapping Marginalization and Sustainability in Urban Sonic Spaces" – *Rebekah Farrugia, Oakland University, Kellie Hay, Oakland University*

10:15-11:45

"Mediating 'Natural' Sounds Going Deep: The Hydrophone and the History of Underwater Recording" – *Craig Eley, Penn State University*

"Early Digital Waves: Irv Teibel's Environments and the Psychologically Ultimate Seashore" – *Mack Hagood, Miami University*

"Sigur Rós and the Soundtrack to Selling Planet Earth" – *Matt DelCiampo, Florida State University*

10:45

"Port sounds: Jazz(-scapes) in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai," *Yvonne Liao, King's College London*

1:45-3:45

Ecologies of Place

"Music, Dance, Theater, Water: Environmental Justice and Ananya Dance Theatre," *Allison Adrian, St. Catherine University*

"Stone and Ice: Resonant metaphors of Jón Leifs ecological music in Iceland's soundscape," *Leslie C. Gay Jr., University of Tennessee*

"Sounds of Recovery and Protest in Appalachian Ohio," *Brian Harnetty, Ohio University*

“Mediated Ecomusicological Flows: The Nexus of Sonic Materiality and Ecotourism in the National Parks Project,” *Kate Galloway, Memorial University of Newfoundland*

2:45

“Music, Mobility, and Streaming: A Multimedia Lecture by the Killer Apps, Iowa City’s Best All-Mobile-Phone Cover Band,” *Kembrew McLeod, University of Iowa and Loren Glass, University of Iowa*



“Cheerleaders, UNC, 1989” by Flickr user North Carolina Digital Heritage Center, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Sunday, March 16

8:30

“Tracking Edible Phonography: Record Eating, Collecting, and Musical Taste,” *Shawn VanCour, NYU and Kyle Barnett, Bellarmine University*

8:30-10

“Anointing Sounds: Holy Ghost Reservoirs in an Age of Mass Media (Roundtable),” *James Bielo, Miami University, Anderson Blanton, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Rory Johnson, Miami University*

11:45

“Voices Above His Head: James Baldwin as Listener and Ethnographer,” *Matthew Somoroff, Duke University*



Chapel Hill's finest, WUNC, image by Flickr user Keith Weston

Kaleb E. Goldschmitt is a scholar of popular music (especially from Brazil) and recorded audio media. Their book, *Bossa Mundo: Brazilian Music in Transnational Media Industries* (Oxford UP, 2020), was a finalist for the Woody Guthrie Book Prize from IASPM-US. From 2021-2024, they co-edited *Journal of Popular Music Studies*. They have taught at Wellesley College since 2016.