

Sound at SEM 2014

Sounding Out! Authors

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

<https://doi.org/10.59350/9zhx1-avs45>

Abstract

Hot on the heels of the American Musicological Society and Society for Music Theory's joint annual meeting in Milwaukee, the Society for Ethnomusicology will hold its 59th Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, November 13-16, 2014, hosted by the University of Pittsburgh.

Keywords

Music (Subfield), Acoustics, American Studies, Conferences, Cultural Studies, Curation



Recommended citation

Authors, S. O. (2014, November 10). Sound at SEM 2014. *Sounding Out!*. <https://doi.org/10.59350/9zhx1-avs45>

Copyright

Copyright © Sounding Out! Authors 2014. Distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Hot on the heels of the American Musicological Society and Society for Music Theory's joint annual meeting in Milwaukee, the Society for Ethnomusicology will hold its 59th Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, November 13-16, 2014, hosted by the University of Pittsburgh. SEM is arguably one of the conferences most hospitable to sound studies, and several panels feature strong papers.

On Wednesday, Nov. 12, the **"Music and Labor"** pre-conference symposium features some fascinating papers of interest to sound scholars and includes a keynote address by **Dr. Marcus Rediker**, Distinguished Professor of Atlantic History at the University of Pittsburgh. With panels titled **"(Re) Conceptualizing Music and Labor," "The Labor of Music in Transitioning Economies," "Art as Work: Defying Capitalist Hegemony and National Narrative through Musical Activism and Creative Adaptation,"** and **"Transformation of Music Labor Regimes in Socialist and Post-Socialist Southeastern Europe,"** even the papers that aren't especially sound studies-related have the potential to demonstrate deft interdisciplinary approaches that would be applicable (and fruitful) in sound studies research.

One of the first sound studies events of the conference program is the annual meeting of the **Sound Studies Special Interest Group**. Dr. Allen Roda, Jane and Morgan Whitney Research Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and I are currently co-chairs of the SIG; anyone interested in sound studies will not want to miss our meeting on **Thursday, November 13 at 12:30-1:30 PM in the Duquesne Room**. This year's meeting will mark the SIG's 6th anniversary since it was formed in 2009. The group now has over 100 members and is represented on several panels at the 2014 conference in Pittsburgh. One co-chair seat will become vacant this year, and the group will hold elections to fill this position at the meeting; we also plan to discuss plans for more visibility online and among the academic community.

Before the meeting, come early to the 8:00-10:30 AM session in that same room to catch **Molly McBride's** paper, **"The Sounds of Humor: Listening to Gender in Early Barn Dance Radio,"** or see a whole sound studies panel titled **"Auditory Histories of the Indian Ocean: Hearing the Soundworlds of the Past"** in the Allegheny Room.



"The Cathedral of Learning at UPitt"

by Flickr user Carlos Hernandez, CC

BY-NC-SA 2.0

If you can't make those early panels on the first day, the convention boasts numerous, high-quality sound studies sessions, many of which convene simultaneously. There have been several sound studies-related panels and individual papers at past meetings, but the number of high-quality papers is certainly trending in favor of more sound studies.

Also, the last several annual meetings have featured a soundwalk hosted by the Sound Studies SIG. This year is no different; however, rather than having a guided walk around the host city, this year's soundwalk will be self-guided. Using the Twitter hashtag **#semsoundwalk**, participants will listen to Pittsburgh, the acoustic environment of the conference itself, the coffee shop where they stop for refreshment, or wherever they happen to find themselves between 1:15 – 6:00PM on Friday, Nov. 14. Be sure to follow the hashtag – even if you're not in Pittsburgh – to "listen" along with conference participants.

I am delighted to see that this year's conference unites the SEM's commitment to the study of world musics and cultures and sound studies, particularly in panels such as **"Auditory Histories of the Indian Ocean: Hearing the Soundworlds of the Past," "Contemplating Voice in Cross-Cultural Perspective,"** and **"Regulating Space, Regulating Sound: Musical Practice and Institutional Mediation in São Paulo, Brazil."** This year also highlights the SEM's strong interdisciplinary bent and makes even more room at the epistemological table for the examination of technoculture and its implications for sound studies and the larger ethnomusicological community.

Because of the sheer volume of sound studies activities, rather than listing my "picks" for the conference, I've listed most of the relevant papers and sessions, leaving the hard decision up to you. In fact, there are so many genuine sound studies panels and papers (or papers on closely related topics) its easy to see why the blurry line that demarcates "sound studies" from "music studies" seems blurriest at SEM. For those who cannot attend the conference, some of this year's panels will be live-streamed. The **Special Interest Groups for Sound Studies and Ecomusicology** are also co-hosting a roundtable on Saturday morning. For more information about the conference and to catch the live-streamed sessions, visit the conference website at <http://www.indiana.edu/~semhome/2014/>.

Michael Austin is Assistant Professor of Media, Journalism, and Film and coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program in the School of Communications at Howard University where he teaches courses in music production, sound design for film and audio production. He holds a Ph.D. in Humanities – Aesthetic Studies (with a specialization in Arts and Technology) from the University of Texas at Dallas and music degrees from UT-San Antonio and UT-Austin. He is also affiliated with the Laboratoire Musique et Informatique de Marseille, an audio/music technology and informatics lab in Marseille, France, and is co-chair of the Society for Ethnomusicology's Special Interest Group for Sound Studies.

Featured image: “[Musician](#)” by Flickr user Joanna, CC BY-NC 2.0



“Cathedral of learning/Stephen Foster Memorial – Painted by Light” by Flickr user Sriram Bala, CC BY-NC 2.0

WEDNESDAY, November 12

8:00 am – 8:00 pm

Ballroom 3, Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown Hotel
Pre-Conference Symposium: “Music and Labor”

THURSDAY, November 13

8:30 – 10:30 am

Duquesne Room

“The Sounds of Humor: Listening to Gender on Early Barn Dance Radio,” Molly McBride, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Alleghany Room

Session: *Auditory Histories of the Indian Ocean: Hearing the Soundworlds of the Past*

“Wonders and Strange Things: Practices of Auditory History before Recorded Sound,” Katherine

Butler Schofield, King's College London

"Notes in the Margins: Sumatran Religious Hybridity and the Efficacy of Sound," Julia Byl, King's College London

"Contact, Contestation and Compromise: Sound and Space in 19th-Century Singapore," Jenny McCallum, King's College London

"A 'Wayang of the Orang Puteh': Theatres, Music Halls and Audiences in High-Imperial, Calcutta, Madras, Penang and Singapore," David Lunn, King's College London

10:45am -12:15 pm

Sterling 3 Room

"Sounding Neoliberalism in the Richmond City Jail," Andrew C. McGraw, University of Richmond

Heinz Room

"The Color of Sound: Timbre in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*," Sydney A. Boyd, Rice University

12:30 – 1:30 pm

Duquesne Room

Special Interest Group for Sound Studies

1:45 – 3:45 pm

Sterlings 1 Room

"Radio Archives and the Art of Persuasion: Preserving Social Hierarchies in the Airwaves of Lima" Carlos Odria, Florida State University

Ft. Pitt Room

Session: *Mediated Musics, Mediated Lives*

"Uploading Matepe: The Role of Online Learning Communities and the Desire to Connect to Northeastern Zimbabwe," Jocelyn A. Moon, University of Washington; Zachary Moon, Independent Scholar

"Staging Overcoming: Disability, Meritocracy, and the Envoicing of Dreams," William Cheng, Dartmouth University

"As Time Goes By: Car Radio and Spatiotemporal Manipulations of the Travel Experience in 20th-Century America," Sarah Messbauer, University of California, Davis

"'How Can We Live in a Country Like This?' Music, Talk Radio, and Moral Anxiety," Karl Haas, Boston University

Sterling 3 Room

Session: *Oxide and Memory: Tape Culture and the Communal Archive*

Oxide and Memory: Tape Culture and the Communal Archive

"Magnetic Tape, Materiality, and the Interpretation of Non-Commercial Cassette and Reel-to-Reel Recordings from Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula," Laura Risk, McGill University

"Family Sense and Family Sound: Home Recordings and Greek-American Identity," Panayotis League, Harvard University

"The Memory of Media: Autoarchivization and Empowerment in 1970s Jazz," Michael C. Heller,

University of Massachusetts, Boston

"Reimagining the Community Sound Archive: Cultural Memory and the Case for 'Slow' Archiving in a Gaspesian Village," Glenn Patterson, Memorial University of Newfoundland

4:00 – 5:30 pm

Sterlings 1 Room

Panel: *Contemplating Voice in Cross-Cultural Perspective*

"The Gravest of Female Voices: Women and the Alto in Sacred Harp," Sarah E. Kahre, Florida State University

"Re-sounding Waljinah: Aging and the Voice in Indonesia," Russ P. Skelchy, University of California, Riverside

"Katajjaq: Between Vocal Games, Place and Identity," Raj S. Singh, York University

Sterlings 3 Room

Session: *Rumors, Sound Leakages and Individual Tales: Disruptive Listening in Zones of Conflict*

"From the Struggle for Citizenship to the Fragmentation of Justice: Reflections on the Place of Dinka Songs in South Sudan's Transitional Justice Process," Angela Impey, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London

"Internet Rumors and the Changing Sounds of Uyghur Religiosity: The Case of the Snake Monkey Woman," Rachel Harris, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London

"The Cantor and the Muezzin's Duet at the Western Wall: Contesting Sound Spaces on the Frayed Seams of the Israel-Palestine Conflict," Abigail Wood, University of Haifa

Heinz Room

Session: *Historiography, Historicity, and Biography*

"A Sonic Historiography of Early Sample-Based Hip-Hop Recordings," Patrick Rivers, University of New Haven

"Biography as Methodology in the Study of Okinawan Folk Song," Kirk A. King, University of British Columbia

"Sounding the Silent Image: Uilleann Piper as Ethnographic Object in Early Hollywood Film," Ivan Goff, New York University



Untitled by Flickr user David Kent, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

FRIDAY, November 14

7:00 – 8:00 am

Special Interest Group for Voice Studies

8:30 – 10:30 am

Commonwealth 1-2 Room, live streaming

Session: *Sound Networks: Socio-Political Identity, Engagement, and Mobilization through Music in Cyberspace and Independent Media*

**Sponsored by the Popular Music Section and Special Interest Group for Sound Studies*

"Technological Factors Conditioning the Socio-Political Power of Music in Cyberspace," Michael Frishkopf, University of Alberta

"Cyber-Mobilization, Informational Intimacy, and Musical Frames in Ukraine's EuroMaidan Protests," Adriana Helbig, University of Pittsburgh

"Countering Spirals of Silence: Protest Music and the Anonymity of Cyberspace in the Japanese Antinuclear Movement," Noriko Manabe, Princeton University

"Living (and Dying) the Rock and Roll Dream: Alternative Media and the Politics of 'Making It' as an Iranian Underground Musician," Farzaneh Hemmasi, University of Toronto

Sterling 1 Room

Session: *Affective Environments and the Bioregional Soundscape*

**Sponsored by the Special Interest Group for Ecomusicology*

"'Landscape is Not Just What Your Eyes See': Battery Radio, the Technological Soundscape, and

Sonically Knowing the Battery, Kate Galloway, Memorial University of Newfoundland

"Re-sounding Caribou: Musical Posthumanism in Being Caribou," Erin Scheffer, University of Toronto

"Cold, Crisp, and Dry: Inuit and Southern Concepts of the Northern Soundscape," Jeffrey van den Scott, Northwestern University

Discussant, Nancy Guy, University of California, San Diego

Duquesne Room

"The Sound of Affective Fact," Matthew Sumera, University of Minnesota

1:15 – 6:30 pm

Soundwalk: A Sonic Environmental Survey of the SEM Annual Meeting

**Sponsored by the Special Interest Groups for Sound Studies and Ecomusicology. Follow the walk on Twitter: #semsoundwalk*

(Meet in Wyndham Grand main lobby at 1:15pm. Reconvene in lobby at 6:00)

1:45 – 3:45 pm

Smithfield Room

Session: *Strident Voices: Material and Political Alignments*

**Sponsored by the Special Interest Group for Voice Studies*

"Registering Protest: Voice, Precarity, and Assertion in Crisis Portugal," Lila Ellen Gray, University of Amsterdam

"Quiet, Racialized Vocality at Fisk University," Marti Newland, Columbia University

"'The Rough Voice of Tenderness': Chavela Vargas and Mexican Song," Kelley Tatro, North Central College

Discussant: Amanda Weidman, Bryn Mawr College

4:00 – 5:30 pm

Heinz Room

Session: *Celebratory Sounds and the Politics of Engagement*

"Creating Zakopower in Postsocialist Poland," Louise J. Wrazen, York University

"Merry-Making and Loyalty to the Movement: Conviviality as a Core Parameter of Traditionalism in Aysén, Chile," Gregory J. Robinson, George Mason University

"Sounding the Carnavalesque: Changing Identities for a Sonic Icon of the Popular," Michael S. O'Brien, College of Charleston



"Musical Mystery" by Flickr user Robert Wilhoit, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

SATURDAY, November 15

8:30 – 10:30 am

Sterlings 1 Room

Roundtable: *Sound Studies, Ecomusicology, and Post-Humanism In/For/With Ethnomusicology*

**Sponsored by the Special Interests Groups for Ecomusicology and for Sound Studies*

P. Allen Roda, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Jennifer Post, University of Arizona

Mark Pedelty, University of Minnesota

Michael Silvers, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Ben Tausig, Stony Brook University

Zeynep Bulut, King's College London

10:45 am – 12:15 pm

Benedum Room, *live streaming*

Musical Instruments, Material Cultures, and Sound Ecologies

"Bulgarian Acoustemological Tales: Narrativity, Agrarian Ecology, and the Kaval's Voice," Donna A. Buchanan, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Sterling 1 Room

Session: *Theorizing Sound*

"Water Sounds: Distance Swimmers and Ecomusicology," Niko Higgins, Columbia University

"Telephone, Vacuum Cleaner, Couch: Senses and Sounds of the Everyday in Postwar Japan," Miki

Kaneda, Boston University

Discussant: Benjamin Tausig, Stony Brook University

SUNDAY, November 16

8:30 – 10:30 am

Birmingham Room

Session: *Regulating Space, Regulating Sound: Musical Practice and Institutional Mediation in São Paulo, Brazil*

**Sponsored by the Latin American and Caribbean Section*

"Music under Control? São Paulo's Anti-Noise Agency in Action," Leonardo Cardoso, University of Texas at Austin

"Music Producers in São Paulo's Cultural Policy Worlds," Daniel Gough, University of Chicago

"'Small Universes': The Creation of Social Intimacy through Aesthetic Infrastructures in São Paulo's Underground," Shannon Garland, Columbia University

Discussant, Morgan Lurker, Reed College

Heinz Room

"Hear What You Want: Sonic Politics, Blackness, and Racism-Canceling Headphones," Alex Blue, University of California, Santa Barbara

Alleghany Room

"Sound and Silence in Festivals of the French Revolution: Sonic Analysis in History," Rebecca D. Geoffroy-Schwinden, Duke University

10:45 am – 12:15 pm

Liberty Room

Session: *Sounding Nations*

"Building the Future through the Past: The Revival Movement in Iranian Classical Music and the Reconstruction of National Identity in the 1960s and the 1970s," Hadi Milanloo, Memorial University of Newfoundland

"Sounding Citizenship in Southern Africa: Malawian Musicians and the Social Worlds of Recording Studios and Music Education Centers," Richard M. Deja, University of Illinois

"Unity in (Spice of) Diversity: Tensions and Contradictions in Performing Surinamese National Identity," Corinna S. Campbell, Williams College



"Music" by Flickr user Rich McPeck, CC BY-NC 2.0