

## 2026 NABMSA Conference Abstracts

### **What Makes Who Beautiful? An Analysis of One Direction Fangirl Culture in the Age of Social Media**

*Lauren Adamow and Forrest Tucker*

“What Makes You Beautiful” dominated the U.S. and UK charts in early 2012, propelling the X-Factor-winning group, One Direction, into stardom. What followed was a revival of fascination with British culture in the U.S., which sparked new forms of fashion trends, literature, and music taste particularly among young women.

Fangirl culture has long existed before One Direction. “Lisztomania” surrounded Franz Liszt in the form of hysterical frenzy directed at the composer as he toured and performed love ballads throughout Europe. His young female fans would fight over his hair, piano strings, and coffee dregs, desperate to collect physical forms of devotion. “Beatlemania” also swept globally, similarly capturing young female fans in a sort of trance over their romantic lyrics. This image of “soft,” sentimental men seemed to draw women in, transcending borders over a shared desire to be desired.

This globalization of music has in recent years been aided by social media, in which fangirls can compare and commiserate their shared desires and devotion. Websites like Tumblr allowed fans to share their favorite lyrics, favorite pictures, and quirky clips of One Direction interacting with one another, personalizing the experience in an effort to “really know” the members. Fashion trends also responded to this popularization, with prints of the Union Jack on shirts and creation of “outfit inspo” for differing events with the band members (i.e. “movie date with Harry”). Social media also transformed the fangirl experience with creation of fanfiction (fan-written fiction surrounding popular figures), which further developed connections between the fans and their idols.

The globalization and interconnectivity of fangirl culture has inspired community-building (but also stigmatized) practices surrounding the desire for tender men. One Direction has been a main catalyst in this movement, creating connection between young women across the globe (or pond). This paper will seek to analyze lyrical formulation, influence of social media in the globalization of fangirl culture, and contextualize the stigmatization of female desire in popular culture.

### **Prayers for the Queen’s most excellent Majesty: Sacred Songs in Praise of Elizabeth I in Metrical Psalmbooks**

*Samantha Arten*

In the decades following the immense success of John Day’s *Whole Booke of Psalmes* (1562), which successfully (if fictionally) positioned itself as authorized by the monarch for use in Church of England services, a new genre of psalm harmonizations emerged. Eight printed collections of music were published between 1563 and 1599 by John Day, Thomas East, and William Barley, featuring vocal music in four to six parts (and in one case, lute accompaniment),

harmonizing *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*' tunes or introducing new "common tunes" set to the *WBP*'s metrical texts. These music books form a discrete genre within early modern English printing, with a shared body of content and with common features of format, paratext, and intended use. As my ongoing scholarship shows, continuing the work of Nicholas Temperley, Christopher Marsh, and others, these psalm harmonization collections were intended primarily as forms of domestic recreation. Yet most, following the example of the *WBP* itself, also included a number of metricized hymns and canticles for use in Church of England liturgies.

One little-discussed feature of this psalm harmonization genre is that many also contain a partsong celebrating Elizabeth I, all of which were titled (with only slight variations) "A prayer for the Queenes most excellent Maiestie." Despite the uniformity of titles, each has a different text, with music by different Tudor composers (John Bennet, William Daman, John Dowland, and William Parsons). This paper provides new editions of these largely previously un-edited pieces, analyzes the musical and textual features of these four- and five-part songs, and examines the ways in which they resonate with the original *WBP*'s claims to monarchical authorization for liturgical use, tacitly endorsed by Elizabeth herself; with the royal privilege that allowed for the exclusive printing of psalmbooks; and with the close relationship between Protestant faith, Church of England practice, and the monarch herself, understood even within the bounds of domestic spaces and private household performance in sixteenth-century England.

### **Minstrel or 'Marvelous Musical Prodigy'? American Piano Virtuoso Thomas 'Blind Tom' Wiggins Tours the British Isles**

*Connor Austell*

Thomas Green Wiggins was a visually impaired, neurodivergent American piano virtuoso born into slavery in 1849. Much has been written about Wiggins (or "Blind Tom" as he was known) in recent years, especially with regard to his performing career in the United States. Equally relevant yet largely absent from the literature is information concerning his post-Civil War tour of the British Isles. Reactions to his appearances, according to available documentation, were indicative of the dual nature of contemporary British attitudes towards race, i.e. alternately sympathetic to the plight of African Americans and yet highly receptive to debasing entertainment forms such as minstrelsy. It is illuminating to explore the British response to a musical figure who did not conform neatly either to the paradigms associated with the European classical tradition or to the farcical stereotypes propagated by minstrelsy. Wiggins' tour, which is estimated to have been witnessed by some 10,000 Britons, inevitably challenged local attitudes concerning Black musicians and may have helped lay the groundwork for the future acceptance of composers such as Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

In this session, the presenter will discuss Wiggins' reception in Britain by both audiences and musical elite and consider his place within the context of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Black performers active in the UK.

The presenter's prior engagement with this singular figure includes the article "Exploring the Compositions of Thomas 'Blind Tom' Wiggins" (due for fall 2026 publication in *American*

Musical Perspectives), which applies both theoretical analyses and broader musicological considerations to Wiggins' piano works.

**“I Am the Resurrection and the life saith the Lord”: An Explanation of “The Ordre for the buriall of the dead,” from *The Booke of Common Praier Noted (1550)*, by John Merbecke**  
*Davis Badaszewski*

With the introduction of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549, the newly fully independent Church of England created a book that combined previously separate Missals, Graduals, Breviaries, and Psalters into one single resource that could achieve the goals set forth in the 1549 Act of Uniformity, for all Anglicans to worship out of one Protestant book in English. Written primarily by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, the Prayerbook drew heavily on previous Sarum Rite liturgies, but also contained various newly composed or revised forms of worship. The greatest liturgical innovation in this book is the “Ordre for the buriall of the dead,” which replaced the traditional Requiem Mass with a combined Office and Communion Service. In 1550, John Merbecke, organist of the Chapel Royal at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle set much of Cranmer's new book to modified and slightly metricized plainsong, creating the first complete sung form of the Church of England's liturgies in English. In this paper, Merbecke's setting of the Burial Service will be analyzed and, where applicable, compared to the preceding Sarum Rite. Through his elegant simplicity and judicious use of preexisting Sarum material, Merbecke forms a bridge between the pre and post Reformation English musical world.

**“[T]heir deeds have rais'd a monument”: Ideas of Britishness in Musical Memorialization of the Terra Nova Expedition**  
*Kirsten Barker*

The fatal expedition of English Antarctic explorer Robert F. Scott (1868–1912) has been etched in the British psyche since his death. His doomed race to the South Pole with four other men inspired music, visual art, and stories as soon as news of their deaths reached London, and commemoration of the Terra Nova expedition continues to play an important role in perceptions of Antarctic heritage and Britishness. Paul Pelham and Lawrence Wright's popular song “'Tis a Story that Shall Live For Ever” (1913) is one such example. Though it hasn't been considered in scholarship, its text and music are particularly illuminating as to how Scott's story was instantly memorialized in ways that drew on his own writings and inextricably linked him to pre-1914 ideas of Britishness. The song was first recorded just two weeks after Scott's death was reported at home, and it was initially paired on a record with the Titanic memorial song “Be British,” which likewise emphasizes sacrifice, courage, and Britishness.

This paper highlights similarities between the two songs and shows that the musical commemoration of Scott's expedition in “'Tis a Story” captures the sentiments of the moment, some of which historian Max Jones addresses in his essay “‘Our King Upon His Knees’: The Public Commemoration of Captain Scott's Last Antarctic Expedition” (2000). The framing of the Terra Nova deaths as British heroism in “'Tis a Story” conflates Britishness and Englishness, and it is also representative of historic attitudes toward Antarctic exploration. Both of these

factors enabled the song to glorify the lost men as well as the achievements of Britain's South Atlantic conquests. This framing is something that has continued into the present with commemorations of Scott (and other explorers and expeditions) that are haunted by nationalistic sentiments

### **Pub Pedagogy and Participation: Cornish Folk Musicking at the Intersection of Celtic and British (Workshop)**

*Nicholas A. Booker*

Drawing on five years of ethnographic research in Cornwall in southwest Britain, this workshop presents participatory musicking as both a research method and a pedagogical tool. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to learn songs and dances from Cornish folk and traditional music communities, then collaborate to consider how the experience could inspire developments in their own projects. Observers are also welcome. All attendees will engage with Mantle Hood's "bimusicality" (1960), Clifford Geertz's "deep hanging out" (1988), and a range of methods taken from ethnomusicology and folklore studies as the group considers Cornish pub sessions and shouts (singing events) as models for expression, listening, and learning. Cornish folk and traditional music practitioners are at the center of the research on which this workshop is based, but it will also build on the work of scholars who have engaged with Cornish music, including Lea Hagmann, Merv Davey, Kate Neale, Bernard Deacon, Philip Payton, Peter Kennedy, and Alan Lomax.

Cornwall occupies a liminal cultural space as a Celtic community and a British county that includes a Duchy of the British monarchy. Though Cornwall has a less devolved government than Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the Cornish are recognized by the UK government as a Celtic people and a national minority group as part of the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. As Lea Hagmann suggests in her 2022 book *Celtic Music and Dance in Cornwall: Cornu-Copia*, this has led to attempts to navigate frequently competing and overlapping Celtic and British identities through music and dance. In her 2018 Ph.D. thesis, Kate Neale suggests that concepts of Cornish music are additionally complicated by ongoing developments in the Cornish diaspora. In that context, this workshop is intended not only to increase engagement with Cornish musical culture but also to encourage attendees to consider that intersectionality and hybridity may be best addressed through the cultivation of embodied knowledge that is used alongside the study of recordings, texts, and artifacts.

### **'Purgatory starts ten yards from the front line': *The Choral*, Elgar, and Religion in the First World War**

*Joanna Bullivant*

Nicholas Hytner's 2025 film *The Choral*, written by Alan Bennett, sees a small provincial choral society take on *The Dream of Gerontius* amid the vast practical and emotional challenges of 1916. With inadequate resources and cynicism of the work's religious content, the characters mount a truncated, topical *Gerontius* with Gerontius as wounded soldier and the Angel as nurse. The composer himself features only briefly to protest at the savaging of his work,

credulously defending both its sacred character and the British military leadership. While the particular perspective of the composer is different in each, *The Choral* shares with Ken Russell's *Elgar* (1962) the portrayal of the First World War as a moment of catastrophic loss of a faith that bundles together Victorian religious, imperial, and class conventional wisdoms. Yet as Rachel Cowgill has suggested in her analysis of *Spirit of England*, the ability of his music to resonate with both the wartime crisis and deeper questions of life and death was felt both by Elgar and wartime audiences. Moreover, far from echoing wartime Anglicanism, this resonance coincided with a transformation in British religious attitudes that encompassed both the readoption of Catholic practices jettisoned in the Reformation and the popularity of esotericism. This paper therefore explores the real practice of performing *Gerontius* and other works – notably Foulds' *World Requiem* – during and after World War One in a way that wrestled both with the precise nature of beliefs about life after death and the relationship of Christianity to other religious philosophies.

### **“A great master of counterpoint”: Bernard van Dieren's *Diaphony*, and its problematic premiere**

*David Byrne*

At the Wigmore Hall on February 20, 1917, an audience of curious music-lovers and critics heard two major works by Dutch-born composer Bernard van Dieren: *Diaphony* for baritone and 17 instruments, and an *Overture* for 16 instruments. This concert was van Dieren's introduction to the British musical public, organized by his two greatest champions: Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) and Cecil Gray, who promoted van Dieren as “a great leader... a great master of counterpoint”. But the concert failed abjectly. Critics were alienated by the sharply polemical tone of the program notes, which referred to the “effervescent saline” of Stravinsky, and the “mechanical imitations” of Franck and Brahms, likened to the “artistic efforts of the anthropoid ape known as the Unko”. On the music itself, the anonymous review in the *Musical Times* is representative: “we were so dazed by the new music that we cannot pretend to offer a criticism... at present, we are unconverted and inclined to blaspheme”.

*Diaphony* remains unpublished, and has had only two performances, the second a 1934 BBC broadcast led by Edward Clark. Nonetheless, it is repeatedly cited as one of van Dieren's most significant works. *Diaphony* contains five movements, of which three include settings of Shakespeare sonnets. After describing the entire work, I analyze the first movement, to explore why this music confounded its first audience. Its consistently thick texture states four recurring themes in invertible counterpoint, but with seeming disregard for harmonic unity, as in the atonal music of Schoenberg (with whom van Dieren briefly studied in 1912). At the same time, many of the vertical sonorities are familiar seventh and ninth chords, reminiscent of Wagner or Delius. This combination of dense counterpoint and sensuous chromatic harmony subverts our expectations for both idioms. The movement's formal structure demonstrates a rotational variation process, rather than clearly contrasting material; the absence of distinct formal divisions likely contributed to the impression of “brief, crabbed themes... that meander inconsequently throughout the work”. *Diaphony* remains a problematic work, but one which should be heard again before we can assess its significance within van Dieren's oeuvre, and within British music more broadly.

## **Between Popularity and Respectability: Orientalism in Liza Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden* (1896)**

*Lindsay Campbell*

In her 1918 autobiography, British composer Liza Lehmann reminisced upon the success of her song cycle *In a Persian Garden*, a setting of eleventh-century poetry by Omar Khayyam. “Those who have traveled in Persia,” she recalled, complimented her on musical phrases which were “like snatches of music they have heard in that country.” Although Lehmann documented this praise, she nevertheless asserted that she “made no conscious effort to reproduce [a Persian style],” a comment musicologist Sophie Fuller calls “disingenuous” (2007). Lehmann’s determination to repudiate claims of intentional imitation calls into question not only her motivations for dismissing the charge but, more broadly, the nature of Orientalist musical aesthetics in high Imperial England. In short, why would a composer distance herself from oriental tropes at a time when those techniques were overwhelmingly popular?

To address this question, I conduct a close reading of *In a Persian Garden* through the lens of musical exoticism, utilizing the frameworks of Martin Clayton (2007) and Nalini Ghuman (2014). By placing my musical analysis of *In a Persian Garden* in conversation with Lehmann’s other early work and popular exoticist works of the era, I show that the cycle occupies an ambiguous space between Orientalist pastiche and attempted authenticity. I posit that this ambiguity allowed Lehmann, an aspiring “serious” composer, to capitalize on the popularity of the Orientalist fad while separating herself from clichéd popular song, a genre associated with women composers of her generation. Moreover, by denying a purposeful evocation of Persian style, Lehmann’s response highlights the inherent contradictions within British Orientalist sensibilities, wherein the exotic fantasies evoked in *In a Persian Garden* could garner widespread popularity but, when named as such, breeched the boundary of respectability.

## **Private music academies in late 18th- and early 19th-century London: their role in amateur music making**

*Catherine Crisp*

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, instrumental teaching in London was largely the preserve of private teachers whose clientele was mostly wealthy gentlemen amateur musicians.

The majority of private instrumental teachers in London taught from their own homes or visited the houses of their pupils, however in a few isolated cases individual teachers formed their own private so-called music academies, offering lessons on a variety of instruments. The entrepreneurs who founded these academies, observing a gap in the market, provided lessons, rehearsal and concert facilities and solo and ensemble performance opportunities for their subscribers. These private music academies were therefore vital in encouraging the development of an amateur market of musicians in the capital at this time.

This paper will discuss these early iterations of private music academies, focusing on entrepreneurs such as Walter Clagget (1742-1798) and John Andrew Hoffman (fl. 1787-

1808) who opened their music academies in 1783 and 1788 respectively and offered gentlemen amateurs the opportunity to make a more serious study of their chosen instrument. At Clagget's academy, students were able to interact with, be inspired by, learn from and perform with some of the leading musicians of the day. Hoffman's comprehensive business model also extended to the selling or hiring out of instruments, new music and both solo and ensemble performance opportunities.

Drawing on a variety of contemporary source material, this paper seeks to address the following research questions:

- What did these private music academies offer amateur musicians?
- What was the impact of these academies in encouraging amateur music making?
- Is it possible to discover any information about the amateur musicians who engaged with the academies?
- Is there any evidence to suggest that female amateur musicians were welcomed at these academies?

In examining these questions, this paper will demonstrate the crucial role private music academies played in promoting and encouraging amateur music-making in London.

### **“Dreams that are true, yet enigmatical”:** sensing the divine in Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*

*Tavish Daly*

In St. John Henry Newman's poem *The Dream of Gerontius*, the Guardian Angel guiding Gerontius's soul through his transition to the afterlife describes how the soul's apprehension of the divine has changed: “[not sight,] Nor touch, nor taste, nor hearing hast thou now; Thou livest in a world of signs and types, The presentations of most holy truths, Living and strong, which now encompass thee.” The climax of Edward Elgar's oratorio of the same name is a purely instrumental representation of God's judgement of the “hero's” soul, drawing the audience into Gerontius's personal experience of judgement. While this experience is not elucidated with poetic commentary, the intention is clear. Gerontius sings “I go before my Judge,” and his Guardian Angel sings in praise of God, excising most of Newman's external description of judgement from the perspective of the angel, after which Elgar's Judgement theme builds to a crashing climax—unmistakably the moment of judgement itself. In this compositional decision, Elgar imposes a *sense* of God's judgement, inserting a dramatic device that Newman explicitly avoided in his poem. While Elgar agonized over this insertion and viewed the final product as an exercise of restraint, the departure from Newman's formulation of artistic beauty as it relates to theological truth is stark. An investigation into nineteenth-century theories of music and its relation to theology and the truths it seeks to clarify places Elgar into a camp that is at once Romanticist and theologically modernist—one in which profound mysticism of lay individuals is privileged above ecclesial authority in matters of clarifying theological truths. Combining methods of musical analysis with relevant theological and cultural study, I argue that Elgar appropriates Wagnerian compositional techniques (particularly *leitmotif*, in its supposed ability to directly represent objects and ideas) not necessarily in an act of decadent *Kunstreligion*, but as a

musical imagining of Newman's "Dreams that are true, yet enigmatical," perhaps moving his work of art closer to holy truths through musical signs and types.

### **Ephemeral Institutions: Precarious Woodwind Craft Knowledge Transmission in the British Early Music Movement**

*Patrick Connor Dittamo*

The general public is accustomed to thinking of institutions as entities unto themselves, concrete, permanent, and independent of the individuals that constitute them. However, history shows that most institutions are, in fact, emergent and ephemeral, delimited and apt to decay. In this paper, I examine three twentieth- and twenty-first-century British craft institutions (two defunct and one active) operating in support of the project of historically-informed performance and explore their impact on the field of woodwind instrument-making, particularly that of reed instruments. In so doing, I illustrate how precarious the transmission of craft knowledge has become in the modern era.

While some instrument-making traditions boast robust continuity and consistency, such as violin-making, which has hardly changed since the eighteenth century, others, such as wind instrument making, have changed radically as new design principles and technologies have been adopted. As a result, when the early music movement turned its attention to reed instruments in the mid-twentieth century, a significant gap had emerged between modern instrument-making praxis and that of its historical antecedents. In Britain, a coterie of autodidactic instrument makers in the 1960s reverse-engineered methods of reproducing early reed instruments. This rapidly emergent praxis soon found an institutional home within the London College of Furniture's nascent Musical Instrument Technology program, which offered a certificate after three years of coursework and came to nurture an entire generation of British instrument makers. Additional short-term intensive courses in woodwind instrument-making were later offered by West Dean College, which has since restricted its offerings to string instrument-making. The London College of Furniture's institutional successor, London Metropolitan University, eliminated its instrument-making program in 2015. Cambridge Woodwind Makers, established in 2012, now offers irregular weeklong courses on a smaller scale than its predecessors.

According to the Heritage Crafts Association, woodwind instrument making is an endangered craft in Great Britain today, a phenomenon which is not limited by national borders. While many factors in late-stage capitalist economic structures have impacted the viability of artisanal crafts as careers, it is nonetheless clear that the loss of institutional structures for knowledge transmission have inhibited the next generation of reed instrument craft-workers.

### **"Rescuing" British Modernism: Edward Sackville-West and the BBC 1943–47**

*Hilary Seraph Donaldson*

This paper examines Edward Sackville-West's role in shaping an audience for British modernism through his work in the BBC Features and Drama Departments during and after the

Second World War. A critic, producer, and commissioner of modernist artworks, Sackville-West occupied a pivotal position: He used radio not simply as a vehicle for dissemination, but as an active site for the creation, interpretation, and cultivation of modernist music and drama. Through commissions, scripting, and programme design, he helped cultivate audiences for new English works at a moment when questions of national culture, artistic responsibility, and international outlook were especially urgent.

Drawing on materials held at the BBC Written Archives Centre—including production scripts, programmes-as-broadcast, and internal documentation—I situate Sackville-West’s activities within a broader ecology of musical performance and mediation. By engaging responses to this work published in *The Listener* and the wider intellectual-critical context of the Bloomsbury group which he orbited, I assess how these programmes were framed for different kinds of listeners. Together, these sources illuminate the BBC’s role in shaping, rather than merely serving, listening publics in a crucial chapter of British cultural life. I will focus on two programmes produced by Sackville-West as case studies: *The Rescue* (1943, with script by Sackville-West and incidental music by Benjamin Britten) and *A Poet’s Christmas* (1944; a Christmas Eve feature interspersing modern poetry and newly-composed music by W.H. Auden and Benjamin Britten). Both examples foreground newly composed English music and verse, placed within deliberately modernist narrative and aesthetic frameworks. These broadcasts demonstrate how Sackville-West mobilised radio’s negotiation between high art and mass audiences, balancing accessibility with modernist artistic sensibility. While conceived for a domestic wartime listenership, such programmes also contributed to the circulation of British musical values and modernist aesthetics beyond national borders.

While Sackville-West was instrumental in amplifying the work of emerging British artists (Baade 2011; Baade, Potter, and Marvin 2020; Doctor, 2008, 1999; Hoyler 2016), he has not yet received sustained critical attention. As I ultimately argue, an examination of Sackville-West’s championing of these novel broadcast artworks can sharpen the emerging narrative on the development of English modernism.

## **Teaching and Performing Political Identity Through British Labour Songbooks in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

*Stewart Duncan*

The broad umbrella of the “left” wing of British politics in the early twentieth century included electoral parties, industrial unions and advocacy groups, and diverse ideologies spanning pacifists, Trotskyites, and utopian socialists. Activists spent significant time and energy developing a cultural apparatus to smooth over differences between these groups as the movement coalesced under the Labour Party banner. Music was so significant in these efforts that historian Stephen Yeo named it the “main cultural thrust” of the early British left.<sup>1</sup> By the time of Labour’s first real electoral success in 1923, supporters could point to decades of festivals, competitions, educational courses, criticism, and new musical works in support of progressive causes.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Yeo, “A New Life: The Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1883-1896,” *History Workshop Journal* no 4, 1977, 5-56.

This paper aims to highlight an overlooked component of that “cultural thrust” by explaining how the material culture of printed songbooks, song sheets, and periodicals contributed to the goals of the early British labour movement. I draw on fresh archival material from across the UK, including labour and socialist collections in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. From hymn books for “Socialist Sunday Schools”, periodical song sheets distributed by the Independent Labour Party, the “Left Song Book” produced by the Workers’ Music Association, and more, I show how these musical publications enabled the performance and teaching of political identities for veteran members and new recruits alike. Through their repertoire, dissemination, and applications, these books shaped the musical life of the labour movement. This argument enriches both musical and political studies of the period. It affirms the importance of culture in Yeo’s estimation and responds to other calls to focus on a “culture of labourism” that moves beyond party leaders and their speeches.<sup>2</sup> It also supports the current regional emphasis in British studies by comparing activities in centers across the U.K., not just in London. This variety offers a new perspective on the period.

### ***The English Hymnal and Musical Communities***

*Daniel Galbreath*

The musical significance of the 1906 *English Hymnal* is far greater than the modest scholarly attention it has received might suggest. With the exception of its 2006 centenary celebration *Strengthen for Service: One Hundred Years of the English Hymnal* (ed. Alan Luff), it tends to be glossed over, especially in writings on its musical editor, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958). Yet the hymnal exemplifies major social, theological, and artistic shifts occurring at the turn of the century. It set the stage for much of what was to come in British and Anglican music, by providing a laboratory for Vaughan Williams’ intertextual musical nationalism.

The rich artistic-political soil from which it emerged suggest some useful frameworks for reconsidering the hymnal as a communal, participatory, and egalitarian artwork that would influence British music in later decades. Its roots were in Christian Socialism, the Arts and Crafts movement, and the progressive ruralism of the growing folk-song movement in Britain. This paper will explore the hymnal through some of these lenses. It draws on the vernacular musical memory of its nation (Puri 2012), radically equalizing participatory, theological meaning-making through abundant intertextuality (Mawer 2014). Enlisting perspectives on how art contributes to national identity (especially Anderson 1983 and subsequent critiques), I will explore how the hymnal explores the formation of musical communities, laying the groundwork for Vaughan Williams’ vital musical leadership in twentieth-century Britain and beyond.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example John Street, Oskar Cox Jensen, and Alan Finlayson, *Our Subversive Voice: The History and Politics of English Protest Songs, 1600-2020* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2025); Keith Laybourn, *The Rise of Socialism in Britain, c. 1881-1951* (Sutton, 1997); John Marriott, *The Culture of Labourism: The East End between the Wars* (Edinburgh University Press, 1991); Ross McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Clarendon Press, 1990).

## **“Death Leaves a Heartache No One Can Heal:” Musical Subversion and Othering in the Irish *Caoineadh* Tradition**

*Charissa Garrigus*

The *caoineadh* (also known as a keen, or lament) was an extemporaneous performance that did not rely on or produce written music. Involving female attendees of a funeral performing a vocalized outpouring of grief, this practice existed in Ireland from the medieval ages until the early nineteenth century. Though keening music was created extempore, some transcriptions and reproduction recordings do exist. These examples, I contend, reveal the subversive, othered nature of the music itself. Reliance on ornamentation, a limited vocal range, and a decided resemblance to psalm-tone singing unite to solidify othering. Because psalm-tone singing was traditionally part of Christian services, its usage within a female-led pagan ritual makes a case for keening’s subversive place especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though the essence of this subversion changed as Ireland vacillated between Catholicism and Protestantism, the inherent subversion of the *caoineadh* remained constant throughout. The three sources considered in this paper include Alan Lomax’s 1951 recording of Kitty Gallagher, Samuel and Anna Hall’s 1841 transcription, and William Beauford’s 1791 transcriptions. Because keeners did not perform the *caoineadh* outside of the funeral setting, and they did not write down their music, scholars are limited as the music itself no longer exists. Furthermore, written transcriptions come from writers outside of the keening culture, in which case the music says more about the writers than the keeners themselves. However, it is important to utilize what resources are available in order to generate an understanding of what connects the style of this music and how subversion was enacted through the crafting of the music itself. In addition to these sources, I draw from the research of Angela Bourke and Patricia Lysaght in regard to the folkloric, historical, and feminist history of keening. Andrea Brady’s writings ponder the political and historical subversion common in keening texts, helping to build a framework of the feminist nature of keening. Martha Rampton’s work lays a foundation upon which I draw regarding pagan liminality in the ancient world.

## **“I Hear a Wizard Music Roll”: Musical Encounters with the Dead in Liza Lehmann’s *In Memoriam***

*Alison Gilbert*

*In Memoriam* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson is one of the most significant and oft-quoted poetic works of the Victorian era, portraying a non-linear journey from doubt to belief through subjective experience. Relatively few composers have chosen to engage with its text, and of those few, only one, Liza Lehmann, has taken on the challenge of writing a large-scale work that reflects the personal and spiritual journey of Tennyson’s text, embracing the work’s complexities and contradictions. Her text selection and music-compositional choices create a similar, but not identical, narrative, even as she uses only a small sampling of the text.

*In Memoriam* has attracted a broad and eclectic array of literary criticism, but most critics agree that the poem has a key turning point: a lyric in which the poet figure has a direct encounter with the dead friend whom he elegizes. This encounter allows the poet to move forward in faith that there is life after death. Notably, this encounter occurs through the medium of language, as

“word by word, and line by line, / The dead man touched me from the past.” Despite its literary centrality, Lehmann does not use this key moment from Tennyson’s text. Instead she repurposes other sections of the text and accomplishes a similar feat through musical imagery. This paper analyzes songs 5 and 6 from Lehmann’s cycle, showing how she achieves her own turning point in no. 6, brought about through the power of not language but music.

## **Performance or Participation? The Long History of Non-Professional Song**

*Oskar Cox Jensen*

We need a better word than ‘amateur’. Or ‘non-commercial’. Specifically, a vocabulary for singing that functions like work-song, when there is no work involved. A category of musical practice that encompasses singing for and by babies and children; in acts of ritual and worship and celebration; in support of sports teams and political causes; singing that is participatory, that performs an identity, that serves a base purpose. Usually the stuff of ethnomusicology, such forms of musicking are integral to all societies, not least those of Britain across the past five hundred years or so. They are as central to these islands’ cultural (and other types of) history as the commercial singing of bards and ballad-singers, actors and artists. The repertoire of these songs is taken from, and feeds back into, the world of commercial music – Seven Dials printers, west end theatres, parlour songwriters and music hall stars, pop, rock and the rest. As a practice, it is at least as significant as the parallel work of remunerated singers – and its study reveals a fundamental continuity across centuries that transcends such ruptures as the rise of harmony and the invention of recorded sound. Put simply, it’s really rather interesting.

In this virtual/remote paper, I wish to think a bit about this sort of singing, within the past five hundred years and the geographical confines of, in particular, England. Touching on lullabies, children’s song, worship song, carols, football chant, drinking song, and protest song, and focusing on two or three key examples, I seek to open up this transhistorical field, responding to the conference themes of performance and participation, and inviting conference attendees to consider whether this perspective has anything to offer, and how it might be approached, a generation after the pioneering work of Ruth Finnegan and others.

## **Share our Sounds: Exploring the Royal Northern College of Music’s newly-digitised archive of student recordings**

*Rachel Johnson*

This paper discusses findings from Share Our Sounds, my current research residency at the Royal Northern College of Music. I am investigating how the RNCM’s recently-digitised recording archive of student performances might be used in the college’s educational and public engagement activities. I am focusing in particular on how the collection (dating from about 1970 to about 1994) might be utilised by teaching staff and current students.

I will introduce the archive, its potential and its current limitations. It is an enormous resource, entirely freely and publicly available online. The sheer quantity of recordings is in itself a barrier. A substantial part of my residency has been spent exploring methods of navigating the

archive. Interviews and focus groups have illuminated the vastly different needs and expectations across programmes and schools of study in relation to student recordings. Connecting interested parties with relevant content remains a challenge.

This paper will focus on case studies involving flute recordings (including Rachel Brown's first ever public performance on a Baroque flute, and an incredible Boehm centenary concert coordinated by Trevor Wye), piano recordings, wind ensemble concerts (capturing pioneering work by Tim Reynish), and masterclass recordings (notably one in 1988 with Michael Tippett). My case studies inform my core finding, which is that these archives still require substantial mediation. It appears that, for this archive, insider information is essential and collaboration is key, but these facts then expose additional ethical challenges.

I hope this paper will invite engagement with the archive. I am seeking ideas and input regarding how this resource might be developed for future use.

### **Protest and Appropriation: Abolition Song in Britain and the US 1787-1830 (Keynote Address)**

*Berta Joncus*

If we hold something to be an inarguable truth, how do we argue for it? In particular, what arguments could we make to someone whose disbelief is seeded by lies and driven by self-interest? Should we deliver the truth in all its nakedness, even if this triggers a shocked rejection – or are we more likely to be successful if we appeal to our listener on their own terms, and address their existing structures of feeling, warped though these may be by their denial of the truth? Surely the latter course is more practical – but if we choose it, what are other believers in the truth to make of our equivocation with falsehood?

This is, roughly, the dilemma presented to us by 18th century Abolition song, a corpus of about 80 works brought to light by myself and the US-based scholar Julia Hamilton over the past decade. Abolition song was conceived in protest against the slave trade, which Britain dominated and eventually abolished in stages, in 1807 and 1833. Abolition song sought to move its auditors to social, political and economic action against the slave trade. Yet it perpetuated stereotypes of the African that conformed to imperial interests, overlaying them with sentimentalism and regulating them through polite music in a way that seemed to absolve its white listeners of the crimes of slavery.

This paper treats the emergence, workings, and types of Abolition song in Britain, its export to the United States and local manifestations there, and its use of sentimentality as a palliative to audiences' imperial self-understanding even as it sought radically progressive change against the most powerful interests of its day. I will conclude with some thoughts on how sensitive present-day performance of this work can, by embodying the convictions of its long-forgotten authors, redeem its representations from mere expropriation and allow audiences to hear again the passion for freedom with which much of this work was imbued.

## **Jane Austen's Music Collection: Impacts on Her Life and Literature (Lecture Recital)**

*Laura Klein*

This lecture recital will examine the impact of music on 19th-century British author Jane Austen during her lifetime, including works from her personal handwritten music manuscripts and a recently discovered volume of music inscribed with her signature. Furthermore, it will uncover fascinating connections between her collected music and her published novels.

The renown of Jane Austen continues to grow in both popular culture and academia. She is recognized as a leading feminine voice in English literature and history. As a woman in an era of entrenched patriarchal tradition, her success in describing the cultural norms of her time while subtly interweaving progressive ideologies sounded a voice largely suppressed for women of her era. Musical skill was a marker of true female accomplishment in Austen's era; this was no less true for the characters she created. Yet it is a method she uses to delicately defy social norms throughout her literary output. As a keen pianist, it is through personal experience and an intimate knowledge of the social and musical world in which Austen lived that gave her mastery of the subject.

Austen was active in collecting and playing music throughout her life, including the years she was actively publishing her writing. Compiled of works for keyboard, voice, and other instrumental configurations, Austen's personal music volumes are part of the larger Austen Family Music Books collection that spans approximately 70 years of British music and is representative of late 18th- and early 19th-century British music. While much of the music has been identified from other sources, many of the works are unique to the collection. As such, these volumes are a significant view into music of the era that has since become virtually unknown.

## **Tagore, Musical Hybridity, and the Transmutation of Opera**

*Anushka Kulkarni*

In 1881, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), leading poet-composer of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Bengal, wrote his first musical drama entitled *Valmiki Pratibha* ("The Genius of Valmiki"). The work dramatizes the origin story of its titular protagonist as he transforms from a dacoit leader to the revered poet-sage who would later author the Hindu epic *Ramayana*. Composed shortly after Rabindranath's first trip to England, the musical idiom of *Valmiki Pratibha* integrates aesthetics of European opera alongside Hindustani classical and Bengali folk traditions. Through the analysis of its libretto, swaralipi musical notation, and archival recordings, I demonstrate that his integration of these diverse influences is not a mere grafting of styles but rather an active forging of new cultural articulations shaped by British-Indian colonial encounter. Drawing on postcolonial frameworks of modernity (Chatterjee 1993; Chakrabarty 2000) and hybridity (Bhabha 1994), I theorize *Valmiki Pratibha*'s role in negotiating a distinctive Bengali subjectivity within colonial structures and contemplate how the intimate cultural relationship between British imperial power and its Indian subjects was mediated through musical drama. In doing so, this paper illuminates the "transmutation" of opera (Nicholson 2022) as it shifts in positionalities and performances of coloniality, ultimately centering "shadow opera

cultures” (André 2018) – marginalized works such as Valmiki Pratibha – in the narrativization of a global operatic history.

### **“Too Cosmopolitan”: Gerald Finzi, Antisemitism, and the English Musical Renaissance** *Zen Kuriyama*

The so-called English Musical Renaissance, whether fact or fictitious narrative, played a role in shaping the musical atmosphere of Britain between 1850 and 1950. Britannia’s embrace at the turn of the twentieth century included much of the globe; indeed, Britishness became synonymous with the Empire. But the farther the Pax Britannica extended, the greater the strain at home on national identity. If Britishness was ad extra, the project of Englishness was ad intra, echoing the pastoral refrains of William Blake and Rupert Brooke. The English Musical Renaissance, therefore, sought to establish a national school of music that was distinct from other hegemonic powers; to identify an “English sound.” But spurred by nationalism, this movement is forever destined to be fallible, as the engine’s parts were composed of feelings, rather than facts. Such ultra-nationalism led to xenophobia, including antisemitism. Gerald Finzi (1901–1956) composed English music of saccharine pastorality that represented the apotheosis of the EMR’s aesthetic aims. There was only one problem: this son of England’s green and pleasant land was a Jew. England in 1901, the year of Finzi’s birth, was an antisemitic place. As on the continent, Jews represented anti-national sensibilities; or, in the words of Cecil Spring Rice, one of the major proponents of the EMR, they were “too cosmopolitan.” Finzi’s Jewish background and the unmistakable Englishness of his music have made him one of the most complex figures in the English concert hall in the last century. For however non-Jewish he made himself, English nationalism precluded a composer from gaining recognition as a reputable composer if born, or intimately associated with, a “member of the tribe.” This paper analyzes the complexities of Finzi’s Jewishness and his contribution to an English sound against (and – even – with) the antisemitic tones of the English Musical Renaissance.

### **The Generification of Gilbert & Sullivan** *James Brooks Kuykendall*

*We are as world-known, & as much an institution as Westminster Abbey.* These oft-quoted words of W. S. Gilbert to Arthur Sullivan from early 1888 were not some idle boast, but an exhortation to keep doing what they were already so successfully doing. Their impresario, Richard D’Oyly Carte, had been spooked by the long-running success of Alfred Cellier’s rival piece *Dorothy* (1886, and ultimately to surpass the first production runs of any of the G&S works). Sensing they were too bound to their still-new Savoy Theatre and its audience’s expectations, Carte proposed a new venue and a fresh start. Gilbert was sure that their future success depended on more of the same. But exactly what was that?

Long before Anna Russell was lampooning a “vitamin pill” formula of writing Gilbert & Sullivan opera, or the D’Oyly Carte company was being criticized for its “Do-It-Again-Daddy-ism” productions, or even before Bright Young Things were writing spoofs exploiting the characteristic features of the Savoy operas, the collaborators themselves gradually became aware

of recurring elements of their works. Gilbert tended to view these as strengths—the roots of their popular success; Sullivan was self-conscious that he was constrained by the same compositional stimuli over and over again. The Savoy Operas were not just a repertory, but were becoming a distinct genre—becoming generic, even, in the way they were produced and circulated more widely with an eye to revenue from amateur productions. Such wider participation meant perpetuating into a hallowed tradition—a proper way to produce the works—that was to hold sway to the expiration of Gilbert’s copyright in 1961 and beyond.

Ultimately a global brand, D’Oyly Carte’s “Gilbert & Sullivan” was a victim of its own success. Christopher Scheer has compellingly argued that their last work, *The Grand Duke* (1896), “became an exercise in fulfilling the requirements of what was expected from a Savoy opera,” a web of intertextual strands not sufficient to hold the weight of the piece. That was not the creators’ original plan, but the trajectory was molded in a way to maximize profit, predictability, and national participation.

### **Learning from the Lilliputians: Child Performers and the Education of Eighteenth-Century London Audiences**

*Erica Levenson*

Beginning in 1727, a craze for theatrical and musical performances featuring “Lilliputians”—the eponymous miniature people of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726)—erupted on the London stage and continued to be performed throughout the eighteenth century. The Lilliputians were played by children, both from England and from abroad, who danced, sang, and acted in these productions. They performed entertainments from Shakespeare to pantomimes to *The Beggar’s Opera*, sometimes (as in the case of the latter), putting on their own “Lilliputian” versions of works originally performed by adults. In many ways, these performances were novelty acts, capitalizing on the recent popularity of Swift’s novel; however, “novelty” does not fully explain the unceasing relevance of the Lilliputian to British culture across the eighteenth century.

This paper excavates the cultural resonances of the Lilliputians from Swift’s novel to the London stage. In particular, I examine how the Lilliputians were represented musically and dramatically in popular pantomime entertainments, including *Harlequin’s Triumph* (1727) and *The Witches, or Harlequin Cherokee* (1762). My analysis is informed by eighteenth-century views surrounding childhood, especially as shaped by John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. I argue that the notion of childhood as a *tabula rasa*, or “blank slate,” became particularly potent in the case of theatrical performances where children could quickly assume new identities.

Through my analysis of the above works, I show how child performers often commented on the lessons they were meant to impart in the prologues and epilogues to their performances, offering metatheatrical commentary through their own ironic status as little “adults.” Such commentary continued in the ballad opera repertoire where authors repurposed popular dance tunes from Lilliputian pantomimes to advance covert critiques of contemporary social issues concerning children. Lilliputians were also utilized to instruct audiences about Britain’s expanding empire—its promises, responsibilities, and consequences—by rendering the wider world legible in

miniature. Taken together, the Lilliputian performances became a mirror to British society's shifting priorities across the eighteenth century; educating while entertaining, they delineated the boundaries of morality—often, paradoxically, by transgressing them.

### **The Troglodytes of Heddon Street: Music Meets Modernism at the Cave of the Golden Calf** *Matthew Madeley*

*The basement of Heddon Street: where art merged with architecture, cabaret performance, music, and dance in an exhilarating synthesis.* (Cork, 1985, 115)

Entered via a manhole from Heddon Street, a cul-de-sac off Regent's Street in the Soho area of London, the Cabaret Theatre Club, more evocatively known as the Cave of the Golden Calf, had a profound impact on the cultural life of London during the Edwardian twilight. Operating for 21 months from June 1912 to February 1914 under the auspices of the formidable Mme Frida Strindberg, widow of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg, the Cave of the Golden Calf represented the first real attempt to bring European Cabaret culture to Britain, following in the footsteps of Le Chat Noir in Paris and Cabaret Fledermaus in Vienna. With evocative paintings of huntsmen on horseback and crazed dancers adorning the walls, provided by the artists Percy Wyndham Lewis, Eric Gill, Charles Ginner, Spencer Gore and Jacob Epstein, the Cave of the Golden Calf attempted to remove any sense of the urban environment above. Here the modernist strands of European art flourished as the Vorticism of Wyndham Lewis collided with the Futurism of F.T. Marinetti.

Scholarship in art history and English literature has discussed the importance of the Cave of the Golden Calf as a centre where artistic modernism took hold in Britain (Peter Brooker 2007, Richard Cork 1985, Paul Edwards 2000 & Lisa Tickner 1997). However, music appears conspicuously absent from the discourse on the Cave of the Golden Calf, despite its centrality to the club's activities. Sir Granville Bantock organised the musical programme for the Cabaret Theatre Club and sat on the general committee. Furthermore, in the Preliminary Prospectus for the club the committee listed a selection of 'authors and composers under whose banners we range ourselves' which included Frederick Delius, Joseph Holbrooke, Florent Schmitt and Dalhousie Young. In this paper I will consider the musical activities of the Cave of the Golden Calf and discuss the profound influence this gathering of rebellious artists in a basement in Soho had on musical modernism in Britain.

### **Exploring a Concealed Rossetti Song Setting in the Music of Jane Joseph** *Kathleen McGowan*

Musical settings of Christina Rossetti's poetry have been popular for nearly as long as she has been a published poet, from Alice Mary Smith's 1864 setting of "When I am Dead, My Dearest," into the twenty-first century. English composer Jane Joseph set several of Rossetti's poems for singers, accompanied by piano and occasionally string quartet. As early compositions in her repertoire they showcase Joseph's thorough training in the Victorian popular song tradition; they also place her in a substantial cohort of composers—including George Macfarren (1868), Maude

Valérie White (1885), Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1904), and Liza Lehmann (1919)—who set Rossetti's poems. Joseph's renditions got their first hearings at meetings of the Society of Women Musicians (est. 1911); she exhibited sketches of *Mirage*, a five-movement song cycle with string quartet, before its debut performance in 1921. The piece is now rarely performed because it is considered unfinished. I propose a reconstruction of the two movements currently incomplete, informed by Joseph's other settings of Rossetti's poetry.

I have reconstructed the two movements using archival materials from the Royal College of Music, the British Library, and Rossetti's published texts together with Joseph's other settings of Rossetti's poetry and supplemented by the work of Seddon (2013) and Arseneau (2022). In this paper I will present my methods and analysis for reconstructing the piece, as well as my exploration of Joseph's settings of Rossetti's poetry. Her songs offer listeners her musical interpretation of Rossetti's poetry as well as insights into her immediate audience—the mostly-female members of the SWM. Furthermore, they offer opportunities for scholars to examine how a women composer re-interpreted and re-experienced pre-World War I poetry and musical forms in a modernist postwar world while staying true to her Victorian roots.

### **Tonic Sol-fa as Imperial Process: Control and Capital (Organized Panel)**

*Charles Edward McGuire, Panel Organizer*

The sight-signing notation tonic sol-fa was initially developed in the nineteenth century to teach congregational singing to British subjects. By 1914, tonic sol-fa notation was used by millions of people throughout the British Empire and beyond; at that time, it may have been the most frequently used Western music notation system. Tonic sol-fa also moved across the world, within and beyond missionary networks. This panel will explore both the manifestation and erasure of tonic sol-fa historiography and its proponents across colonial and early postcolonial contexts, as well as within the internal colonization of Britain itself. To its proponents, tonic sol-fa was always a means to an end: their vision of music was always meant to be in aid of something else, whether it be congregational psalmody, the temperance movement, or, increasingly throughout the nineteenth century, missionaries working at home or abroad. Yet while Tonic sol-fa was undoubtedly an important part of the musical fabric of the Anglophone world, official institutions – including the Royal College of Music as well as George Grove's *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1879- 1889) – worked towards its erasure. In this session, we will explore Tonic sol-fa and its legacy through investigating its three aspects (as a notation, as a philosophy, and a pedagogy). Together, these papers explore the notion of tonic sol-fa as an imperial process; one that was successful through the spread of colonialist forms of knowledge as well as being symbolic – through the early twentieth century – of the British Empire's decline. Locating tonic sol-fa as a form of cultural capital that extends through (and beyond) the singing body, this themed session examines tonic sol-fa as process of imperialism that exposes the longevity – and, ultimately, the limitations – of musical forms of colonial capital.

## Building a Better Subject: Tonic Sol-fa and the British Competition Festival

*Charles Edward McGuire*

The period when Tonic Sol-fa became a prominent music notation corresponded with the rise of the competition festival in Great Britain, and Tonic Sol-fa – singers, infrastructure, and even leaders – were an integral part of it. John Spencer Curwen even founded one of the earliest surviving English competition festivals at Stratford in 1882, which still exists to this day. Yet like so much of the notation’s history, the place of Tonic Sol-fa at the founding and flourishing of competition festivals has been systematically erased from the historical record. In this paper, we will explore Tonic Sol-fa’s unique and integral role in creating the competition festival movement. Instead of seeing competition festivals as a way to raise the amateur singer’s or audience member’s musical taste, Spencer Curwen hitched his vision of the competition festival to that of rational recreation. Consequently, in the pages of *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter* and its successor, *The Musical Herald*, Spencer Curwen promoted Tonic Sol-fa in tandem with the competition festival as a way of creating a better British subject: one who would be more moderate, more temperate, and above all, patriotic and able to serve the needs of their country and empire.

## Sounds of Incarceration: Tonic Sol-fa in the Colonial Concentration Camp

*Erin Johnson-Williams*

This paper considers the political implications of tonic sol-fa singing in the concentration camps of the South African War, 1899–1902. This era saw the first modern conflict that strategically used “encampment” as a disciplining force, both in terms of the concentration camps that were assembled within South Africa itself, and the prisoner of war camps that were spread across the British Empire. Indeed, the word “concentration” as applied to disciplinary spaces of encampment was first used by the British military during this conflict (Forth 2017; Stanley 2006). Within these spaces, spontaneous, communal hymn singing emerged as a form of ethnic and religious expression. Eyewitness accounts (diaries, medical and newspaper reports) of prison life in Afrikaner concentration camps reveal that the singing of Dutch psalm tunes and hymns occurred spontaneously at moments of personal and communal grief, as well as more formally in concentration camp funerals and prayer meetings. The texts were Calvinist, often providing parallels between the plight of the Afrikaner people and that of the Israelites. This sacred repertoire was in aesthetic and theological tension with the evangelical, English-language hymns (often in tonic sol-fa notation) that British soldiers and missionaries disseminated among the prisoners. Most common among British descriptions of inmate communal hymn signing, however, is an aesthetic and theological bewilderment—an intentional racial othering, perhaps—of the musical character of what they heard. Drawing on the themes of “sounding biopolitics,” “audible incarceration,” and “de-incarceration and liberation,” I propose that the experience of communal singing in the context of imperial incarceration created cultures of separatism in which the act of collective singing shaped expressions of both oppression and resistance. The place of tonic sol-fa singing as a reinforcement and negotiation of spatial separatism, I argue, worked as a means of sonic enclosure within carceral spaces.

## Tonic Sol-Fa as Interdisciplinary Process

*Sophie Iddles*

The nineteenth-century phenomenon of tonic sol-fa was more than a notation system; it was a global process about evangelisation and civilisation. Popularised by the Curwen family, who commodified and exported it through the Tonic Sol-Fa Association (JohnsonWilliams, 2023), tonic sol-fa was a solfege-based system of singing pedagogy that carried with it hierarchical associations of class, morality, and empire. Tonic sol-fa was, therefore, a vehicle and process for expanding British imperial values, including English-language literacy and vocal technique, Protestant hymnody, and a purported ‘civilising’ impact. In this paper, I suggest that understanding tonic sol-fa requires an interdisciplinary process that encompasses wider associations of gender and race, capitalism, ‘civilising missions’ (McGuire, 2009) and bodily ownership/discipline (Olwage, 2004). I will also explore tonic sol-fa as an ideological process and how this impacts the questions we ask when studying British imperialism in the archive.

Drawing on archival material from missionary archives and contemporary newspaper extracts surrounding tonic sol-fa in nineteenth-century New Zealand, I explore tonic sol-fa as a dynamic process of imperialism, malleable in its design yet used within local and hyper-local contexts for ends that did not always concur with the British-centred ideology upon which its popularisation was founded. I argue that this concept of process is essential, not only to approaching tonic sol-fa within its multi-faceted and rapidly expanding context, but also to how we approach music in the imperial archive.

## Nationalist Processes: Tonic Sol-fa and Chinese Musical Identity

*Ellan Lincoln-Hyde*

In this paper, I will suggest that the introduction of 唱名 (changming, or tonic sol-fa) to Mainland China served partly as a vehicle for translating Victorian moral ideals into early Chinese nationalism. Western colonisers, particularly missionaries, used tonic sol-fa not only as a tool for musical education but as part of a broader imperialist and evangelistic project (Gong 2020, 2018, 2017). Tonic sol-fa’s adaptability made it an effective means of mass musical instruction, utilised not only by missionaries but also by Chinese imperial, Republican, and Communist forces to advance competing ideological messages. However, its introduction also led to the obfuscation of existing Chinese musical notation systems such as 工尺 (gongche) and 簡譜 (jianpu).

By critically re-examining the historiography of tonic sol-fa in China, I will suggest that Euro-American Victorian moral frameworks were deeply embedded in the musical education of the period. This shaped not only perceptions of Western music but possibly also the trajectory of some aspects of Chinese nationalism. I will also highlight the erasure of women from this narrative, particularly the roles played by both white women engaging with Chinese musical traditions and Chinese women contributing to early Chinese nationalist movements. Through this paper, I aim to offer a conjunctural analysis to reevaluate the prevailing narratives surrounding tonic sol-fa’s lasting impact on Chinese musical and national identity.

## **Some Watery Miracles: Marshland Listening in Britten's *Curlew River* at Blythburgh (2024)**

*Imani Mosley*

In June 2024, the Aldeburgh Festival staged a performance of Benjamin Britten's church parable *Curlew River* in Holy Trinity Church, Blythburgh. Called the "cathedral of the marshes" due to how it emerges out of the surrounding marshland, Blythburgh was more than just a theatrical venue. The church and its surrounding landscape were used within the production to engage a specific historical, ecocritical, and liturgical mode of listening – both to those in the space and those watching the BBC film production later that fall. This paper examines how Britten situates place, space, and time within his sacred dramatic works, not just as a form of operatic storytelling but as a way to create and guide an informed listening.

*Curlew River*, an interpretation of the Nōh play *Sumidagawa*, tells the story of a madwoman raving throughout the fens, mourning the loss of her child. Britten situated the work within the Suffolk marshland, imbuing the score with sounds of local birds, lapping rivers, and reeds in the wind. This production puts place and place-listening at its center, with the opera beginning outside, as the singers chant while processing from out of the marshes into the church. Blythburgh here is as much the surrounding marshes as it is its cathedral. *Curlew River* is also time-bound, re-enacting the fifteenth-century English mystery play tradition: the opera's cast, dressed as monks, discard their robes for peasant clothes to portray the parable's characters. Using the performance, both the live production and the film version, I argue that Britten necessitates these modes of listening as a part of his compositional ethos around place. *Curlew River* wants its listeners to listen with an ear to the past, a past shaped by liturgical practices and spaces, and through Suffolk's deep ecomystical relationship with its landscape.

## **The Preservation Paradox: The Transformation of Scottish Traditional Music**

*Paul Moulton*

Over the course of three centuries, the traditional music of Scotland experienced a radical transformation. Ironically, some of the primary drivers of change were actually designed to preserve the music and protect it from change. Organic and naturally occurring traditions were initially collected and published in the eighteenth century. By the early nineteenth century, these collections underwent a process of rigid protectionism that narrowed the literature and sometimes became extremely prescriptive. This is especially true for bagpipe music—the most salient sonic signature of Scotland. This paper paints the larger picture of transformation, then focuses on the various engines that molded bagpipe music into its modern spectacle of kilted bands playing in strict formations. In particular, I will focus on the role of some early preservationist groups, including evidence from my archival research into the early histories of the Highland Society of London (1778) and the Royal Celtic Society of Edinburgh (1820). This original research is buttressed by the work of others, including bagpipe scholar William Donaldson. The catalysts of these societies and their prescriptive impulses were complex, but included politics and issues of class and nationalistic identity.

Based on the transformation of bagpipe music I propose a theory I call the preservation paradox. I then briefly explore a second Scottish model of this theory focusing on Highland dancing. In both bagpiping and Highland dancing examples, as organizations engaged in acts of preservation they inadvertently produced alteration.

### **The Commonwealth Comes to Cardiff: Music, Spectacle, and the 1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games**

*Trevor R. Nelson*

Spectacle and ceremony have long histories as tools for crafting and reifying forms of identity, with music and sound key components of these multi-sense events. For example, such scholars as Wendy Webster (2005), Nalini Ghuman (2014), and Sarah Kirby (2022) have analyzed how British colonial forces used music, spectacle, and ceremony to shape understandings of imperial order across the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, in both the metropole and the colonies. Ballooning in popularity at the same time were international sporting competitions; scholars point to contests like the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup as events where host nations work to craft narratives about their global image (Rolf 2023; Mitchell 2023). While Britain and their imperial holdings participated in these events, they also founded their own—The British Empire Games—to foster global British unity through friendly competition. How did sound and ceremony shape notions of Britishness at these games, particularly as the Empire experienced its labored decline across the mid-twentieth century?

I answer this question by analyzing the music used as part of ceremonial spectacles at the 1958 iteration of the games in Cardiff. This edition, planned collaboratively by the Welsh government, the city of Cardiff, and the Commonwealth Games Federation, featured many innovations as the games continued their rebranding as the British Empire and Commonwealth Games. Planners also sought greater Welsh representation, with these the first games held within Britain yet outside of England. Using Katie Day Good's framework for understanding spectacle as a pedagogical tool (2020), I focus on how planners used music as an instrument for shaping sonic Britishness. Drawing on archival materials from the National Library of Wales, as well as contemporary news reels, I analyze musical choices during opening, closing, and medal ceremonies. I argue that, through music, one hears Commonwealth leader's desires to shape a post-imperial identity in Britain's sonic shadow. This Commonwealth hegemony, however, was undermined by the promotion of uniquely Welsh music. By reframing spectacle from this vantage point, this project highlights how music can both support and undermine the crafting of identity via ceremony.

### **“Seems like a Nice Boy”: Nostalgia, *The Good Old Days*, and the Trappings of Respectability**

*Louis Niebur*

BBC Television's *The Good Old Days*, which ran for an astonishing 30 years spanning four decades, was on the surface a nostalgic reimagining of turn of the century British music hall culture. Each week audiences would dress in period costumes and be entertained by a live

orchestra and the alliterative assurance of Master of Ceremony Leonard Sachs. Filmed at the Victorian-era Leeds City Varieties theatre from the 1950s through the 1980s, the program featured thousands of performers both regional and international and achieved huge audiences. But while its BBC counterpart in variety, the nearly as long-running *Black and White Minstrel Show*, limited itself to musical performances of largely American songs, *The Good Old Days* was a true variety show, with magicians, acrobats, dog acts, and comedians alongside singers and bands. But under the guise of nostalgia, some of the most cutting-edge and progressive acts slipped through, acts that harkened back to the true roots of music hall as a working-class, rough and ready, and often risqué form of entertainment.

In this presentation, I will explore how *The Good Old Days*' version of music hall uses nostalgia as a shield for the portrayal of very contemporary sensibilities not often shown on television (or in mainstream theater). For example, comedian Larry Grayson's queer camp sensibility of the 1970s, homed in the rough workingmen's clubs of the North, finds itself safely protected by his Edwardian suit, allowing him to perform an inuendo-laden singalong to "Have Some Madeira My Dear," all the while flirting with men in the audience. Similarly, in 1972 Eartha Kitt's Victorian dress and hair deflects the danger of her shockingly sensual performance of Clarice Mayne's 1914 hit song "I Was a Good Little Girl 'Till I Met You," breathlessly crooned to a sweating Sachs. These kinds of performances reflected not the sanitized family-friendly version of music hall so clearly insisted upon by those desiring a return to "the good old days," but rather the concerns of a nation in flux, a realization that the present, despite the uncertainty of the future, was worth performing.

## **Sonic Cultural Identity in Thank Goodness You're Here!**

*Raynor Nugent*

When considering identity from a ludomusicological lens, previous work has looked at identities in terms of race and hip hop culture (Austin, 2018), queer identities (Summers, 2023) and class (Ivanescu, 2018). To begin to evolve this emerging area within ludomusicology, this paper will examine how regional British identity can be constructed, specifically by looking at Northern English identity in the 2024 game Thank Goodness You're Here!.

British identity has found itself at the heart of the music and game design. The game's use of sound is evocative of the sense of community and regional pride of the North through the instrumentation and sonic aesthetics it explores. This paper will explore the use of "brass band-esque" timbres, long embedded into the foundations of mining communities in the North through use and scholarship surrounding other media.

To further investigate how the particularly is effective through the medium of the video game, I will examine Iain Hart's ideas of performative play (Hart, 2014) exploring how the game allows the player to participate in the setting by not only building a comedic and warm atmosphere through music but allowing the player to ludically engage in the cultural specificities of the North the game constructs. The player is invited to interpret the comedic and sonic aspects of the game for themselves, heightening and incorporating the player into the community. Additionally, I will complete an evaluation and observation of streamer culture and online

reception to the game to help provide insights into how such a hyper-local story is able to reach international audiences. This raises questions of how we can delve further into the layers of interactivity in media to observe how topics of identity, culture and politics can be deeply explored and disseminated globally.

## **From Contest to Classroom: The Pedagogical Dynamics of British Brass Bands**

*Charlotte O'Neill*

Brass bands have been part of the musical culture of Britain for over 200 years, helping to shape a distinctive cultural identity which simultaneously reflects the past, present and looks to the future. Contest culture in banding has established pedagogical precedent within the bands themselves, their organisational structures and the communities in which they operate.

In this paper I look to explore the development of the pedagogical functions of brass bands alongside their musical evolution; arguing that the learning dynamics now visible within modern brass banding are inseparable from the historical development of the movement as a form of British music.

Using the work of Lave and Wenger on situational learning, I argue that the brass band rehearsal room is a legitimate pedagogical space where initiates are gradually upskilled and coached by more experienced players and directors. With changes in both leisure patterns and government culture policies, these learning spaces have become essential in filling the space between informal community based transmission and more formalised instruction in classroom setting rather than supplementing it.

Contesting culture, with its set technical, musical and expressive demands informs not only the specific requirements but also the pedagogical route which music be taken to reach the appropriate standards. I argue that the expansion of repertoire through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has enriched the pedagogical pathways within bands, whilst allowing the art form to remain undiluted.

I explore how apprenticeship style learning became thoroughly embedded in banding culture and how cultural shifts of the twentieth century not only reinforced the proximity based learning within bands but also strengthened and replaced the community ties which had previously come from workplace or civic pride.

As an identifiable British form of music-making, brass bands operate across many historical and cultural levels. They continue their nineteenth century traditions whilst adapting to current social, cultural and educational contexts. Understanding the evolution of pedagogy within the movement therefore offers insight into how brass bands have maintained their continuity, communities and contribution to the musical culture of the country.

## **Identity, Otherness, and the Supernatural in Delius's *Magic Fountain*: Florida, Paris, and Wexford**

*Alexander Pott*

In October 2025, Delius's 1894 opera received only its third staging, at the Wexford Opera Festival in Ireland. The work was unperformed in Delius's lifetime, but he conceived it as the start of an operatic trilogy focusing on minority groups: Native Americans in *The Magic Fountain*, African slaves in *Koanga*, and Gypsy communities in what would become *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. Although some of the themes in these works feel somewhat prescient, they inevitably have to be situated within the colonial and exoticizing norms of the late nineteenth-century operatic tradition.

This paper seeks to examine the tensions presented by staging a contemporary production of *The Magic Fountain*. The work has recently received some scholarly attention (Grimley, 2018 and Dibble, 2021) but issues of identity and otherness have been overshadowed by a greater focus on *Koanga* (e.g. Saylor, 2014). Building upon this work, I examine some of the sources which influenced Delius's plot: his experience running a citrus plantation in Florida, the literature of Chateaubriand and Longfellow, and his interest in the supernatural and the occult through his network of friends in Paris. The score's obvious Wagnerisms have distracted attention from a deeper influence of grand opera, and I will demonstrate a particular affinity with Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, with which it shares similar motivic and dramatic approaches to exoticization.

Situating Delius within the context of these influences allows for greater understanding of issues of identity and otherness within *The Magic Fountain*, and I propose a reading in which Delius's sympathetic approach to the supernatural links together ideas of nature, fairytale, and race that permeate much of Delius's music of the 1890s and beyond. I reflect upon the approach taken in the Wexford production, including the results of an interview with the opera's conductor, Francesco Cilluffo. By examining the complexities and nuances in understanding Delius's approach to identity, otherness, and the supernatural, I consider how the work might be situated historically in the late nineteenth century, and how contemporary society might engage with it at Wexford and beyond.

## **"Between two kingdoms the river flows": The Course of Britten and Plomer's *Curlew River* in the United States**

*Ryan M. Prendergast*

Reviewing the United States premiere of Benjamin Britten and William Plomer's *Curlew River* in 1966, Allan Hughes observed in the *New York Times* that "[this] is, as the composer knows, not a work to be taken up willy-nilly by concert and opera organizations in search of novelty." With its postmodern fusion of Noh and liturgical drama, the work's "novelty," like the rest of Britten's dramatic output, presented significant challenges for potential interpreters and their publics. Artists and audiences on the west side of the Atlantic, however, proved up to the task. Companies quickly took up *Curlew* and the other Church Parables, *The Burning Fiery Furnace* and *The Prodigal Son*, ambitiously tackling their substantial demands in performance and style and winning them new acolytes.

Over the last six decades, a legacy of performance traditions has linked subsequent productions of these works in the United States, a fascinating continuance of the generational inheritance of Noh and liturgical drama practices that inspired Britten and Plomer. Using the 2026 production of *Curlew River* at Pittsburgh Opera (PO) as a point of departure—the first performance of any Church Parable in the city—I trace the lineage of stateside productions of *Curlew* to examine broader resonances in the work’s reception. Interviews with PO’s General Director Christopher Hahn, a former associate of the premiere’s stage director Colin Graham, tenor Joseph Frank, who sang in Nathaniel Merrill’s seminal production of *Curlew* in New York City in 1973, and Logan Wagner, performer of the Madwoman in the 2026 PO production, expand the familiar contours of production historiography. In the process, *Curlew River* emerges as a dynamic work with enduring influence, still wending its captivating course through more and more figurative “kingdoms,” entrancing artists and audiences all the while.

**Agha Hashr Kashmiri’s *Safed Khoon* and the Urdu Musical Afterlife of *King Lear***  
*Anisha Srinivasan*

This paper examines how British theatrical tradition was musically reimagined in colonial India through *Safed Khoon* (1907), Agha Hashr Kashmiri’s (1879-1935) Urdu Parsi-theatre adaptation of Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. Existing scholarship on *Safed Khoon* and Kashmiri has primarily focused on translation, narrative adaptation, and dramatic form; however, it has largely overlooked the constitutive role of music in shaping dramatic meaning and moral significance. This paper argues that music operates as the narrative and ethical engine of this transformation, reshaping the affective and pedagogical force of Shakespeare’s tragedy and British canonical authority for colonial audiences.

Under British rule, Shakespeare functioned as both literary canon and moral pedagogy, with tragic silence and linguistic breakdown central to his prestige. *Safed Khoon* reworks this authority through musical forms that render suffering audible, interpretable, and socially legible. Drawing on detailed examination of Urdu editions, a Hindi transliteration, and staged performance recordings, the paper shows how music reorganizes narrative time, clarifies ethical meaning, and replaces tragedy with reformist resolution.

Close analysis of *ghazal* sequences demonstrates how lament is shaped through elongated melodic lines, ornamentation, and lyrical repetition. Rather than staging grief as tragic excess, these musical forms discipline emotional expression, transforming despair into reflective moral comprehension. Comic folk-style songs, marked by fast meters, short refrains, and exaggerated lyricism, further recalibrate moments of tension, redirecting tragic conflict toward humor, accessibility, and communal recognition. The paper also analyzes rhythmic (*chhand*) dialogue, showing how patterned speech blurs the boundary between song and speech. By musicalizing dialogue through metrical repetition and chant-like delivery, *Safed Khoon* replaces the tragic monologue’s isolation with collective audibility, reframing Shakespearean interiority as a shared moral experience. Performance recordings reveal how these strategies invite audience response through clapping and vocalization, making participation central to interpretive practice.

In doing so, the paper relocates Shakespeare within a native and popular performance culture. Engaging questions of cultural translation and vernacular performance in colonial modernity, it shows how Shakespearean adaptation in Parsi theatre neither simply transmitted nor rejected British theatrical tradition but reoriented it through musical form.

### **‘Musical Hunters after Novelty’: Critiques of Virtuosity in Avison and Burney**

*Tegan Sutherland*

Flamboyant performance practice was a hot-button topic in eighteenth-century Britain. From sermons to philosophical treatises to newspapers, many cultural critics delved into music criticism. A common complaint among non-musicians was that highly extravagant – and foreign – music was a plague upon modern British society, corrupting the youth and weakening morals. Yet music criticism was one of the few areas of musical discussion that included professional musicians. In particular, both pedagogy and music history used music criticism within their texts in a similar fashion: to prove the author’s value as an expert. Discussing an aspect of modern performance or compositional practice demonstrated the author’s sense of taste and knowledge. By engaging in criticism of modern styles, the author indicates that they are both an active member of the modern musical community, and can instruct the correct way to listen to or perform music. Virtuosity is a topic that was, naturally, discussed within professional circles, and with far more nuance than was granted by non-musicians.

To provide an overview of the professional musician approach to virtuosity, I will be comparing one of the writers of music history, Charles Burney, and one of the writers of pedagogy, Charles Avison. Both writers spoke deeply about performance practice from a position of experience and considered the true evil in virtuosic music to not be the ornamentation of a particular piece, but a lack of taste from those involved. Whether composer, performer or auditor with virtuosic expectations, a refined and restrained sense of modern taste was required and both Burney and Avison provided guidelines to achieve this.

### **Thomas F. Dunhill’s Impact on British Chamber Music**

*Matthew Swope*

“Chamber Music, if we accept the designation in its widest sense, must rightly include all music especially suitable for performance in a private room, and exclude all music designed for large masses of singers or players, all ecclesiastical, and all dramatic music.” Thus begins Thomas F. Dunhill’s *Chamber Music: A Treatise for Students*, first published in 1913. This seminal work became a standard text, influencing musicians for decades thereafter. Dunhill’s expertise led to lectures on the topic and further writings on the chamber music of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and others. In his varied roles as composer, professor, board examiner, lecturer, and writer on music, Dunhill brought a unique and thorough perspective to his engagement with the discipline. In 1924, his services to chamber music were recognized with the presentation of the first Cobbett Medal.

Dunhill was also an avid promoter of British composers, particularly their chamber music. In 1907, he launched the Thomas Dunhill Chamber Concerts, an annual three-concert series that ran for approximately a decade in London. Intended to provide a venue for second hearings of predominantly British chamber music, the concerts featured works by notable composers including Dunhill's teacher, Charles Villiers Stanford, as well as friends and former Royal College of Music classmates such as Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Gustav Holst, John Ireland, and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Drawing on the extensive archive at the Royal College of Music Library, including Dunhill's notes, diaries, and concert programmes, this paper assesses Dunhill's contributions to and impact on the British chamber music scene and evaluates his resulting legacy. The exploration focuses on two main areas of inquiry: 1) Dunhill's characterization of and appreciation for chamber music as articulated in his writings and 2) his promotion of British chamber music through the Thomas Dunhill Chamber Concerts. By surveying the makeup of these concerts alongside Dunhill's own reflections and contemporary accounts, and by examining his writings, this paper elucidates how Dunhill's triple role as a writer, concert organizer, and composer helped shape the British chamber music landscape of the early twentieth century.

### **'Her music never seemed so limitless, so universal': Ethel Smyth, Suffrage, and the Politics of Quotation**

*Kit Thickett*

The composer, writer, and suffragette Ethel Smyth (1858 – 1944) has been hailed as something of a feminist heroine in music scholarship and media for a public audience since the late twentieth century. Smyth was one of few composers in the early twentieth century to engage directly and vocally with organised feminist action, and one of few women to write for, and receive performances on, major concert and operatic platforms in Britain, continental Europe, and the United States. Perhaps most iconically, in 1911, she supplied an anthem, 'The March of the Women', for the Women's Social and Political Union, which she would go on to quote in art song and opera, as she shifted towards what she conceived of as a more populist aesthetic. Efforts to define Smyth's aesthetic politics have, however, struggled to situate her within and assimilate the influence of her mixed social networks, and her variable attitude towards other female musicians and the Society for Women Musicians. They have consequently neglected to consider the ambivalent movement of her music between public and private spaces, and its inflection along the intersections of national identity and social class, and, perhaps most importantly, particular interpersonal relationships, as well as gender.

This paper revisits the March to examine Smyth's derivation of this 'peculiarly English' anthem from an Italian folksong which first circulated among the English elite as a drawing room ballad. Following the melody from Smyth's encounter with it in the 1890s through to its reappearance in her art music of the 1910s, I question the politics of Smyth's practices of quotation and self-quotation. I ask what kinds of intertextual meanings they generated for her and her immediate circle, and thus how they might have circumscribed her audience, and implicitly her conceptions of English citizenship. Finally, I consider the anti/disciplinary agencies at play in the different

performance practices surrounding the March to evaluate the anthem as a vehicle for personal and political coalition and coordination within the suffrage movement.

### **Tunes, Verses, and Curses: The Pedagogy and Performance of Piety in Late 17<sup>th</sup>-Century English Women's Psalm Books**

*Vivian Teresa Tompkins*

In 1694, Agnes Veere wrote her name in a manuscript music book containing psalm tunes, anthems, and pedagogical material. A few years later, Bridget Derrey inscribed her name and two psalm verses declaring the goodness of singing to God inside her copy of John Playford's *Whole Book of Psalms* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., 1697). These two books reflect the influence of Protestant religious leaders who urged women to act as models of piety by choosing sacred music over worldly repertoires, and by demonstrating self-control and modesty in performance. Yet the piety which Agnes and Bridget performed in their books was not a straightforward enactment of religious leaders' prescriptions for female behavior. At the back of her book, for instance, Bridget turned from copying psalm verses to inscribing a playful curse which condemned anyone who stole her collection to Derby jail. Additionally, both Bridget and Agnes used their books as spaces in which to practice refined self-presentation through careful penmanship and cultivation of their musical skills. In this way, they subverted religious injunctions for modesty and restraint by creating opportunities for self-display and pleasure on the page and in performance.

My paper takes up these books as case studies of women's participation in the construction of female piety in early modern England. I first situate the books in the context of late seventeenth-century English discourses about women's music-making and their piety contained in conduct guides, singing manuals, religious treatises, and diaries. Next, I analyze the pedagogical materials, anthems, and psalm tunes in Agnes's manuscript book, showing how she used this repertoire both to perform piety and to push against gendered expectations for modesty in performance. I then examine the annotations in Bridget's psalm book to demonstrate how she represented herself as a pious psalm-singer while simultaneously focusing on her own pleasure as a book owner and performer. My analysis of these sources illustrates the central role of women's devotional music-making in affirming and contesting late seventeenth-century English Protestant ideals of female piety.

### **"Over the green sea, mavourneen, mavourneen": How Claribel's "Come Back to Erin" Became an Irish Song**

*Whitney Thompson*

By far, the most widely-remembered song out of 150-plus written by mid-Victorian superstar balladeer Charlotte Alington Barnard, AKA Claribel, is her (pseudo-)Irish ballad "Come Back to Erin," released at the beginning of 1866. Taken up by the Lancashire-native soprano Helen Lemmens-Sherrington as a "royalty ballad" and sung by her on a provincial tour spanning the first few months of 1866, "Come Back to Erin" had sold at least 9,000 copies within 10 months of hitting music stores (per *The Illustrated London News*, September 29, 1866). But neither Claribel herself nor Helen Lemmens-Sherrington are ultimately responsible for the song's

staying power: in fact, it got adopted as an Irish song, with its English origins eventually fading into relative obscurity. The 1951 Looney Tunes short “The Wearing of the Grin” used the song as background music, an auditory shorthand of sorts for Ireland, and the Hal-Leonard-published folio *The Big Book of Irish Songs* from 2003 simply credits it as “Traditional Irish Folksong.”

So how did this song, written and composed by a native Englishwoman who likely never set foot in Ireland, become so thoroughly Irish? How did it come to sit comfortably in the tenor John McCormack’s recorded repertoire, alongside plenty of songs with actual Irish composers like Balfe, Moore, and Lover? Drawing on the work of scholars in Irish music and nationalism (especially Timothy M. Love and Phil Eva) as well as Ireland’s broader 19th-century history, in this paper I will trace the reception history of “Come Back to Erin.” In particular, I will focus on the song’s use at Irish nationalist protests in the late 1860s and early 1870s, as a tool for advocating land rights and the release of Fenian political prisoners. While this paper is intended as a jumping-off point for a more detailed analysis, I nonetheless hope to add to the scholarship on not only Claribel herself, but also the broader relationship in the British isles between music and nationalism in the 19th century.

### **Pedagogy, Practice and Precarity: Reframing Approaches to Music Literacy in UK Higher Education**

*Rebecca Thumpston-Gallagher*

University music departments in the UK are facing increasing precarity with many departments, including my own, under threat. Responding to the current climate, questions necessarily arise about what the music degree of the future might look like: what repertoires that degree might focus on, and what skills that degree should, and could, develop. Responding to the conference theme, ‘Performance, Pedagogy, Participation’, this paper explores my research into one significant pedagogical challenge faced in music HE teaching: the widely differing student experience levels with notation and theory skills when entering degree programmes. Responding to the pedagogical challenge posed by this skills gap, my research is simultaneously investigating the possibility of developing non-notated music degree pathways (both practically and philosophically), while also identifying practical solutions for supporting first year music students at university to quickly and effectively develop advanced notation skills. As an academic whose teaching and research focuses primarily on twentieth-century British music repertoires, this paper explores these pedagogical challenges and possibilities in relation to works by composers including Edward Elgar, Ethel Smyth, Michael Tippett, and Julian Anderson.

### **“For she is as healthy and wholesome a specimen of English young womanhood as has ever crossed the water”:** Envisaging May Mukle’s “English” Concerts in the US

*Anastasia Zaponidou*

In January 1908 British cellist May Henrietta Mukle (1880-1963) embarked on a tour of the United States with American violin virtuosa Maud Powell, making her US debut at the Mendelssohn Hall, New York City, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January. The tour was highly successful, and

Mukle was heralded for her exceptional musical skill which took her “audience by storm” (Anon., *Musical America*, 7:15, February 1908, 8). This was to be the first of numerous US tours for Mukle, spanning across her lifetime, and one that made her known across the States as the “English ’cellist”.

This paper will examine Mukle’s early concertising activities within the US, spanning from 1908 to 1923. Using newspaper sources and concert ephemera, the paper will trace Mukle’s performances of works by contemporary British composers, as well as her collaborations with British *artistes* within the US. Furthermore, the paper will discuss Mukle’s portrayal in the American press, focusing on journalists’ fascination with her British identity. Evidence from newspaper articles of the time will reveal that Mukle’s British origin was heavily sensationalised, often being described as a justification for her “musical genius”. Finally, the paper will argue for the significance of Mukle’s US networks as tools for collaborative exchange. In this context, the paper will divulge that Mukle promoted British music and musicians in the US and vice versa by representing them in her concert programmes, thus acting as a mediator of musical exchange between American and British musical spheres.

### **Hindemith or Busoni? New Classicality and the Neoclassical Ideal in Alan Rawsthorne’s *Bagatelles* for piano (1938)**

*Chen Zhu*

In his 1999 monograph, John McCabe places Alan Rawsthorne’s music within a broad European context but suggests that Rawsthorne’s compositional idiom was most deeply shaped by the music of his German contemporaries, with Hindemith identified as the crucial figure. At the same time, McCabe suggests that Ferruccio Busoni may have exerted an equally significant influence on Rawsthorne, who studied for a period with the pianist Egon Petri (a devoted Busoni disciple). Nevertheless, McCabe does not pursue this connection in detail, merely noting certain shared neoclassical practices and hinting at Rawsthorne’s possible affinity with Busoni’s sombre temperament.

Rawsthorne’s *Bagatelles* for piano (1938) combine clarity of design with a harmonic language that resists conventional tonal-functional analysis. This paper both explores the harmonic and formal strategies of the *Bagatelles* and compares them with Busoni’s compositional aesthetics. If the *Bagatelles* appear, on the surface, to participate in the tradition of the multi-movement cycle, their thematic unity and harmonic–tonal continuity suggest an overarching structure that aligns Rawsthorne’s music with the Beethoven—Schumann—Brahms tradition of the ‘multi-piece’ (Dunsby 1983). Each movement explores contrasts in character, style, and harmonic direction within a rather unified overall framework.

Yet Rawsthorne’s harmonic language does not suggest any debt to this nineteenth-century German line but rather demonstrates notable affinities with Busoni’s so-called *Neue Klassizität*. In particular, both composers employ symmetrical interval cycles, chromatic and tritone relations, which produce progressions whose logic is linear rather than functional. Rehearing Rawsthorne’s music in this light offers a new perspective on British Busoni reception, something

much more 'mainstream' than the 'underground' narrative that passes from Van Dieren through Sorabji to John Ogden and Ronald Stevenson.