



The Society of Graduate Students in Music
Presents

The 27th Annual
Western University Graduate Symposium on Music

August 21-22, 2026

Keynote: Dr. Stephanie Lind
Queen's University

Welcome to WUGSOM 2026!

For this year's conference, we wanted to highlight contributions from graduate musicians in all areas of diversity. Our conference is dedicated to exploring how music can serve as a powerful catalyst for building equality and fostering community within the academic sphere and beyond.

Thank you so much for attending and I hope you enjoy your time at our 27th WUGSOM!

McKenna Sheeley-Jennings, Chair of SOGSIM, WUGSOM Coordinator
Sarah Brown, Vice-Chair of SOGSIM, WUGSOM Coordinator

WUGSOM 2026 is generously supported by:



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A Special Thank You To...

Dr. Stephanie Lind for graciously accepting our keynote invitation!

The Society of Graduate Students

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Audrey Yardley-Jones (Graduate Program Assistant), Rachel Condie (Communications and Marketing Manager), and Graham Cherwaty (Digital Content Specialist) for their time, assistance, and guidance

Dr. Kevin Mooney (Associate Dean, Graduate Studies) for his enthusiasm, time, and support.

Friday, August 21, 2026

Music Building 254, Don Wright Faculty of Music

AND

[Zoom](#)

8:30 - 9:00

Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

9:00 - 11:00 Session 1

Session Chair: McKenna Sheeley-Jennings

Mohammad Tonkaboni (Western University), Combinatorial Harmony and Philosophical Form: Translating Omar Khayyam's Binomial Thought into Musical Structure

John Sweenie (McGill University), Melodic Segmentation in the Improvisations of Charlie Parker

Leon Fei (Western University), Musical Texture in *My Name is Amanda Todd* (2016) by Jocelyn Morlock

Cameron Bennett (Dalhousie University), From Secretaries to Sex Workers: Reframing Women's Labour in Dolly Parton's 9 to 5 and Odd Jobs

11:00 - 11:10 Break

11:10 - 12:10 Session 2

Session Chair: Sarah Brown

Leqing Wang (Boston University), Butterfly Lovers Reimagined: Bridging Cultures through Yue Opera, Chinese Instrumental Aesthetics, and Violin Performance in the *Liang Zhu Concerto* (*online recital*)

12:15 - 1:15 Lunch Break

1:15 - 3:15 Session 3

Session Chair: McKenna Sheeley-Jennings

Seong Eun Park (Boston University), A Multicultural Music Curriculum for Grade Seven at Boston Public Schools (*online*)

Niloofar Ejraei (Western University), From Ideological Control to Musical Refusal: Iranian Music Education and the Limits of Discipline (*online*)

Yun Hao (Boston University), Reimagining Graduate Music Curriculum: Compassionate Teaching and Clarity in Assessment (*online*)

Siyuan Carter-Patkau (Western University), The Embodied Voice: Trauma-Informed Vocal Pedagogy

3:15 - 3:30 Break

3:30 - 4:30 Session 4

Session Chair: Sarah Brown

Western University Postdoctoral Fellows: Natalie Miller, Alyssa Cottle, Kristin Franseen, Rena Roussin, and Alberto Acquilino, Navigating the Hidden Curriculum: Tools and Frameworks for Professional Development in Graduate School

Saturday, August 22, 2026

(All times are in EST)

8:30 - 9:00

Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

Music Building 254, Don Wright Faculty of Music

AND

[Zoom](#)

9:00 - 10:00 Session 1

Session Chair: Sarah Brown

Ting-Ting Yang (Indiana University), From Analysis to Interpretation: Collaborative Pianism in Jane Vignery's *Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 7* (*online*)

Rajan Panchal (Boston University), *Historical Keywork and 3D Printing: An Integrated Approach to Oboe Ergonomics* (*online*)

10:00 - 10:10 Break

10:10 - 11:40 Session 2 - MB 114

Session Chair: McKenna Sheeley-Jennings

Matthew Carlson (McGill University), Finding Her Voice: Ornamentation in the Art Songs of Maria Malibran

Autumn Zhao (Western University), Training Resonator Configuration for Mandarin Speakers Learning Bel Canto (*recital*)

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch Break

1:00 - 2:00 Keynote

Session Chair: Sarah Brown

Dr. Stephanie Lind (Queen's University), Game Function and Authenticity: An Analytical Approach to Understanding Player Experiences in Video Games through Sound

2:00 - 2:10 Break

2:10 - 3:10 Session 3

Session Chair: McKenna Sheeley-Jennings

Nicholas Ma (McGill University), Composing for the Platform-Conditioned Ear:
Structuring Internet Culture in Contemporary Mixed-Media Practice (*online*)

Murray Nielsen (University of Ottawa), From Vegas to Kolob: Latter-Day Saint Influence &
The Killers' *Pressure Machine*

3:10 - 3:20 Break

3:20 - 4:20 Session 4 - *Moscovich Recital Hall*

Session Chair: Sarah Brown

Ryan Baxter (Western University), *Dibike Giizis Nagamonan* (Moon Songs): A Newly
Commissioned Cycle of Piano Pieces by Composer Beverley Mckiver (*recital*)

4:30 - 5:00 Closing Remarks and Student Presenter Awards

Abstracts & Presenter Biographies

Combinatorial Harmony and Philosophical Form: Translating Omar Khayyam's Binomial Thought into Musical Structure

Omar Khayyam's legacy unites poetic skepticism and mathematical inquiry, most notably in his work on binomial expansion: $(a+b)^n$. Beyond mathematics, his quatrains articulate philosophical tensions concerning creation, identity, contingency, and dissolution. This project began with a close analytical study of these themes, guiding the selection of quatrains whose concerns could be translated into structural musical processes rather than expressive illustration.

The paper examines a recently premiered chamber work (Western University, 2026), *A Shadow of Doubt*, that transforms Khayyam's combinatorial thought into perceptible musical structure. The binomial expansion functions as a generative framework across harmonic, formal, and spectral domains.

At the harmonic level, a four-voice texture is organized according to the binomial distribution (1–4–6–4–1), realized as a smooth progression of proportional “colour” saturation ($k = 0 \rightarrow 4$). A core pitch set serves as referential identity, while a complementary colour set introduces chromatic tension. As k increases, modal clarity dissolves into maximal destabilization, reinforced by intensification of texture, register, and dynamics. The return to $k = 0$ produces a perceptible structural reset.

Formally, the macro-structure derives from the seventh row of Pascal's triangle (1–7–21–35–35–21–7–1), which is expanded based on the binomial expansion, with recursive decompositions preserving its generative logic across hierarchical levels. Spectral framing further translates combinatorial growth into harmonic colour through a deterministic digit-based overtone indexing procedure applied to distinct fundamentals at the opening and closing.

By integrating philosophical inquiry, recursive proportion, and perceptually reinforced harmonic processes, the project positions composition as analytical research, demonstrating how Khayyam's mathematical and philosophical thought can function as structural engines within contemporary practice.

Mohammad Tonkaboni...

Melodic Segmentation in the Improvisations of Charlie Parker

While researchers in the field of jazz improvisation have made attempts to quantify a working grammar for improvisation, the results have fallen short of accurately representing musical conventions. Using software developed with Music21 in conjunction with concordance analysis tools, I sought to find and codify the smallest meaningful musical units in the improvised works of Charlie Parker.

Replicating the general methodology used by Dr. Martin Norgaard, I used a recursive Music21 script to convert a corpus of Charlie Parker solos from 1940–47 into text lists of integers representing intervallic change, with an n-gram tool generating lists of “words” at various lengths. The overlapping “sliding-window” nature of this n-gram analysis generated a list of common patterns but did not reveal any preferred method of segmentation, suggesting the need for an explicit segmentation strategy to resolve the redundancy introduced by overlapping patterns.

I developed two methods of segmentation using Music21 scripts, resulting in several derived representations of the corpus functioning as sub-corpora. The first forces a segmentation at beats 1 and 3, including the interval leading into the subsequent pattern; this segments streams of eighth notes into separate tokens, eliminating overlap and producing a smaller wordlist. Sub-corpora were generated with forced segmentations at three other eighth-note positions to compare pattern frequency as a function of rhythmic position. The second method uses musical factors under the improviser’s control, rather than meter alone, to determine segment boundaries. Informed by grouping preference rules and subsequent research in music perception, recordings were used to manually place accents in the corpus, with a script forcing segmentation immediately following accent detection.

Findings suggest that many four-interval patterns correspond to rhythmic placement. Patterns prevalent at downbeat positions tend to be more prevalent at other downbeat positions than at offbeat positions, with the converse holding for offbeat patterns. The manually segmented corpus addresses positional bias by allowing variable segment lengths, yielding wordlists and frequency distributions distinct from those produced by automatic segmentation. Treating melodic segments as analytically comparable units enables systematic, corpus-based investigation of improvisational practice, suggesting new tools for computational modeling, jazz education, and music research.

John Sweeney...

Musical Texture in *My Name is Amanda Todd* (2016) by Jocelyn Morlock

Jocelyn Morlock (1969-2023) wrote *My Name is Amanda Todd* in 2016, as part of a larger project by the National Arts Center titled “life reflected”. Amanda Todd was a young girl who took her own life at age 15, after enduring many years of cyberbullying. A month before her death, she posted a video on YouTube, sharing her experiences and raising awareness about the issue. Morlock’s piece about Amanda Todd won a Juno in 2018 for classical composition of the year. It has since been performed by many youth orchestras, such as the Chicago Youth Orchestra (CYO) in 2022 and the National Arts Center Youth Orchestra (NACYO) in 2023. Throughout the piece, Morlock uses musical texture to portray social media’s dual nature – as a fragmenting, negative force that can be used to bully and harm, and as a unifying, positive force that can initiate social change. For example, she uses short chirping motifs to mimic the sound of “tweeting.” These motifs proliferate and become overwhelming as more instruments join in. However, sustained major chords in the brass eventually break through, unifying the orchestra and giving a sense of hope.

My analysis of this work will identify the various textures in this piece and use them to understand the music’s programmatic relation with Amanda Todd’s story. This will contribute to ongoing scholarship on how musical texture can represent types of social interactions and serve as a vehicle for musical narrative. This type of interaction-development can be shown using the score, but also texture-space graphs and networks based on onset synchrony. These tools help identify the defining characteristics of each texture and track changes in orchestral interaction over time. Finally, I will also discuss the potential for music to enact social change and how embodying different roles within the orchestra can support the development of empathy and awareness of others.

Leon Fei is a classical pianist, music teacher, theorist, and composer from Surrey, BC. He currently resides in London, ON, where he is a doctoral student in piano performance at Western University, studying with Leslie Kinton. He holds a BMus in composition and theory from the University of Victoria, an MMus in piano performance and an MA in music theory from Western University. He enjoys performing solo, vocal and chamber repertoire from all eras, including contemporary music. His current research interests include musical texture, contemporary music analysis and the music of Jocelyn Morlock, with a broader focus on the relationship between performance, theory, and interpretation.

From Secretaries to Sex Workers: Reframing Women's Labour in Dolly Parton's 9 to 5 and Odd Jobs

This paper examines Dolly Parton's 9 to 5 and Odd Jobs (1980) as a concept album that reframes women's labour as a central site of cultural and political meaning. While the album is most often discussed through the commercial success of its title track, I argue that it operates more broadly as a thematically unified exploration of feminized labour across a range of social positions. Situating the album within the contested landscape of late second-wave feminism, this paper demonstrates how Parton's work engages debates surrounding workplace inequality, "pink-collar" labour, and the ideological divisions shaping feminist discourse at the end of the 1970s.

Drawing on theories of gender performativity and musical persona, I suggest that Parton's artistic voice functions not as autobiographical expression but as a mediated form of empathetic narration. Through this persona, she articulates the lived experiences of workers whose labour is structurally undervalued or socially marginalized. Focusing on two central tracks, I read "9 to 5" alongside Parton's cover of "The House of the Rising Sun" as complementary case studies. The former constructs a collective voice of clerical workers, aligning with contemporary feminist activism that framed workplace inequality as systemic rather than individual. The latter extends the album's labour politics into the realm of sex work, challenging moralizing interpretations by positioning it as labour shaped by economic constraint and social stigma.

By placing these songs in dialogue, I argue that 9 to 5 and Odd Jobs constructs a continuum of women's work that destabilizes distinctions between "respectable" and stigmatized forms of labour. In doing so, Parton resists both the romanticization of working-class life in country music and the limitations of dominant feminist discourse. Rather than advancing an explicit political platform, the album mobilizes narrative, affect, and performance to render structural inequalities legible within popular music.

Cameron Bennett is a candidate in the Master of Arts in Musicology program at Dalhousie University. His research examines the intersections of popular music, gender, sexuality, and celebrity culture, with a particular focus on queer reception and gender in country music. His thesis, *"I'd Be a Drag Queen": Dolly Parton, Queer Reception, and the Performance of Gender*, explores how Dolly Parton's public persona has become a site of queer identification and performance. Cameron has presented his research at the American Musicological Society Annual Meeting and is a contributing author to the forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to Dolly Parton*. Beyond academic life, Cameron is also an avid choral singer and an active member of Halifax's arts community.

**Butterfly Lovers Reimagined:
Bridging Cultures through Yue Opera, Chinese Instrumental Aesthetics,
and Violin Performance in the *Liang Zhu Concerto***

Composed in 1959 by He Zhanhao and Chen Gang, the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto (Liang Zhu)* occupies a distinctive place in twentieth-century music as a work that bridges Chinese and Western musical traditions. Based on the legend of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai, the concerto is widely admired for its lyricism and emotional immediacy, yet its deeper significance lies in the way it transforms the violin into a vehicle for intercultural expression. This lecture-recital examines how the concerto constructs a hybrid musical language through formal design, Yue Opera influence, and the adaptation of traditional Chinese instrumental gestures to violin performance.

The presentation first considers the concerto's single-movement, programmatic structure, divided into the three narrative sections of Love, Protest, and Transfiguration. While these sections follow the dramatic arc of the folktale, they also suggest an adaptation of sonata principles, demonstrating how Chinese narrative content is articulated through a Western formal framework. It then traces several important melodic ideas to Yue Opera, showing how vocal inflection, phrase design, and lamenting gesture shape the concerto's thematic language. Particular attention will be given to passages associated with the introduction, the Love Theme, and "Meeting in the Parlor." Finally, the lecture-recital explores how the violin evokes the sonic world of the Erhu, Guzheng, and Pipa through techniques such as varied portamento, tremolo-like bowing, short articulated strokes, and forceful chordal attack.

Live performance excerpts will demonstrate how these techniques function not merely as local color, but as central expressive devices that reshape violin interpretation. By combining analysis and performance, this lecture-recital argues that *Liang Zhu* expands the expressive possibilities of the violin concerto and offers a compelling model of cross-cultural music making in the modern concert repertory.

Leqing Wang...

A Multicultural Music Curriculum for Grade Seven at Boston Public Schools

The immigrant percentage has been increasing annually in the Boston area, and the Asian American population is reported for the fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States. In this circumstance, the school district and educators should respond by teaching an inclusive repertoire; however, music education is still rooted in the White culture and Western-centered music curriculum. Thus, this paper aims to reveal the need for a multicultural music curriculum in Boston Public Schools and offer curricular content for music educators' detailed instructions. Ultimately, this study seeks to explore effective ways to help diverse students discover their cultural identities in the whole music education field, beyond the Boston area. This aim can be achieved through reconstructionist philosophy and Social Emotional Learning in terms of interacting within diverse cultures socially and emotionally through multicultural music.

The curriculum is designed for grade seven general music and comprises three trimesters. Each trimester will focus on one ethnic music genre. The units in each trimester will be guided by the anchor standards and the essential questions, which were contained in the National Core Arts Standards. The specific ethnic music genres, Asian and Hispanic, were selected based on the population of Boston Public Schools, which recorded a high percentage of Hispanic students and a comparatively low, but increasing percentage of Asian students. Students will learn about each ethnic music piece and musical style, and create music based on the ethnic music's characteristics during one trimester. This curriculum served three ethnic groups -- Korean, Chinese, and Hispanic -- for one academic year, with each group requiring one trimester. Each trimester would be divided into three sections, which contain appreciation, composing, and performing sections. This curriculum will be a scaffold for students to think about social issues related to ethnic diversity, as well as to foster students' social-emotional learning and help them discover their genuine cultural identity.

Seong Eun Park is an incoming doctoral student in Music Education at Boston University. Her research focuses on the correlation between music education and students' social-emotional development. Specifically, she examines how music education helps students discover their cultural identity, cultivate self-esteem, and foster social skills within musical contexts. She earned her Master's degree in Music Education from Boston University in January 2026, with full financial support from Jeollanamdo Province, South Korea. Recently, she presented her poster, "A Multicultural Music Curriculum for Grade Seven at Boston Public Schools," at the 5th AFME International Conference 2026.

The Embodied Voice: Trauma-informed Vocal Pedagogy

Musicians are athletes, whose bodies are their instruments. This is especially true for singers, who carry their instruments around inside them day in and day out. Most voice teachers, being singers themselves, understand the inherent embodiment of what singers do; however, there is a disconnect between this understanding of embodiment and the ability to work with the bodies that actually present in the studio. Everyone has a physical history, ranging from what was eaten for lunch three hours ago to the bone that was broken during childhood, and singers are no exception. Seeing as the body “keeps the score,” it is important for voice teachers to understand the ways in which trauma can impact the singing body and how to provide a trauma-informed studio space. This is doubly true for teachers working in collegiate settings, where the subculture of the conservatory can present as a form of trauma itself due to its ableist, invalidating, and otherwise prejudicial structures. Trauma-informed teaching benefits everyone in the room.

A widely-accepted guideline for trauma-informed care is to follow the 4 Rs: Realization, Recognition, Response, and Resist Re-traumatization. The ultimate objective of a trauma-informed approach is to minimize negative health and behavioural outcomes by empowering individuals and fostering resilience. In most studio settings, the master-apprentice model is the primary mode of instruction. Due to the power dynamic involved, it can be difficult for students to feel like they can say “no” to their teacher, and although the studio is not an inherently threatening environment, it can still produce feelings of fear and uncertainty. In applying principles from the 4 Rs, the teacher both fosters safety within the studio and trust with the student. Once the student feels safe in their environment, they can then begin to feel safe in their body, which will in turn enable them to sing with their full, free, and authentic voice.

Siyuan Carter-Patkau (she/they) is a soprano currently based in London, ON, where she is working towards her Doctor of Musical Arts degree. She particularly enjoys singing early and contemporary music. They are interested in intersectional research around music, culture, and musician's wellness. Previous research projects include a study on the parallels between athletes and musicians and the facets of culture, personality, and pedagogy that may contribute to the development of disordered eating in these populations, supervised by Drs. Elizabeth Mitchell and Jill Tracey. In addition to singing, Siyuan has played violin since age 4 and maintains a private teaching studio.

From Ideological Control to Musical Refusal: Iranian Music Education and the Limits of Discipline.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian music education system, like other educational institutions, underwent a radical transformation. It shifted from nurturing creativity and pedagogical development to functioning as an instrument of ideological enforcement. Universities were purged, curricula were rewritten to emphasize revolutionary values, and admission and assessment practices were reshaped to privilege religiously sanctioned repertoires while marginalizing musical forms associated with “Western influence.” Previous scholarship has documented censorship, restrictions on women’s performance, and the suppression of artistic expression; however, much of this work has focused primarily on mechanisms of control. This study extends the discussion by examining not only how ideological constraints were institutionalized but also why they ultimately failed to fully govern the musical identities and practices of younger generations.

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of cultural capital, field, and habitus, the study explores how post-revolutionary Iran sought to reconfigure musicians’ educational trajectories and symbolic hierarchies, shifting authority from artists and educators to cultural officials. Basil Bernstein’s theory of the pedagogic device further illuminates how ideology entered the educational system through the selection of permissible knowledge, its recontextualization into Islamicized curricula, and its transmission through ideologically vetted teachers. Yet, alongside these mechanisms of control, the study highlights emerging spaces of negotiation, adaptation, and resistance.

The analysis demonstrates that while formal institutions attempted to discipline musical practice, alternative learning communities, private studios, informal pedagogies, and later digital cultural networks enabled young musicians to cultivate creative agency beyond state regulation. Paradoxically, ideological restriction contributed not only to the revival of Iranian classical music but also to the strengthening of musical subjectivities formed through negotiation rather than submission.

Positioning Iranian music education as a political and cultural field rather than a neutral pedagogical domain, this study illustrates both the power and the limits of state control. Ultimately, it argues that while ideological systems may restructure education, they cannot fully contain the evolving musical identities of new generations.

Niloofar Ejraei is a santoor performer and music educator with a Bachelor's degree in Iranian Classical Music from the University of Tehran, College of Fine Arts. She is currently completing a Master of Music Education at Western University. Her research interests span the sociology of music education and improvisation pedagogy in Persian classical music, exploring how cultural and social contexts shape the transmission of traditional musical knowledge. Her scholarly work is closely informed by her experience as both a performer and educator.

Reimagining Graduate Music Curriculum: Compassionate Teaching and Clarity in Assessment

“Knowing ourselves and our students in terms of musical experiences, ethnic and religious backgrounds, social class, and family circumstances informs pedagogical decisions, either implicitly or explicitly. Our goal...is to increase our awareness so that explicit pedagogical decisions have a greater influence in our work than the implicit ones” (Lamb, 2010). This paper argues that such awareness is essential for engaging with the evolving educational and cultural needs of contemporary graduate music programs. Traditional curricula—often shaped by implicit expectations, Western-centered epistemologies, and opaque assessment practices—can unintentionally limit curiosity, reinforce exclusion, and disengage students.

Drawing on *Compassionate Music Teaching: A Framework for Motivation and Engagement in the 21st Century* by Karin S. Hendricks, this paper proposes a reexamination of graduate music instruction grounded in compassion, clarity, and student-centered pedagogy. It advocates an approach that balances outcome-oriented, exam-based curricula with compassionate teaching practices, particularly through the use of clear and transparent assessment designed to support learning.

Central to this inquiry is a reconsideration of the “common ground” assumptions that have long shaped university music curricula. Through a comparative examination of six East Coast universities of varying sizes (presented anonymously), considering both past and current (or revised) curricular models, this paper investigates how foundational knowledge can be redefined to balance breadth and depth while remaining relevant to students’ diverse musical experiences and future professional pathways. It further explores how flexible analytical frameworks and multiple interpretive approaches can be integrated into music study, challenging the expectation of a single authoritative interpretation.

In this context, the paper also examines how assessment formats—especially examinations—can be revised to better align with evolving curricular goals and students’ learning needs. Clear and transparent assessment is presented as a cornerstone of compassionate pedagogy. Explicit learning objectives, articulated evaluative criteria, and formative feedback practices are discussed as mechanisms for supporting diverse learners while maintaining student engagement and motivation. By making expectations visible, assessment becomes a tool for equity, enabling students from varied musical backgrounds to engage confidently with unfamiliar materials and analytical approaches.

Born in Beijing, China, **Yun Hao** is an accomplished piano soloist and chamber musician who has performed in China, Australia, the United States, Finland, and Croatia. She is highly praised by famous piano pedagogue Dr. Arkady Aronov for her truthful pianistic expressions and deep understanding of music as a pianist who plays with great sensitivity, strong conviction, and sincerity. Ms. Hao is currently pursuing her DMA degree

working with Prof. Pavel Nersessian at Boston University, College of Fine Arts. Her recent performances include solo and chamber performances in Quad State Convention at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire, Beacon New Music Festival in Boston, and BU Tanglewood Institute in Lenox, MA.

Navigating the Hidden Curriculum: Tools and Frameworks for Professional Development in Graduate School

While presenting many rewarding opportunities to develop skills as a researcher and/or performer, graduate school and academia often present numerous challenges. Frameworks like the “hidden curriculum” (Smith 2013; Calarco 2020; Gable 2022) make explicit the unspoken, often implicit expectations and norms within academia. This panel seeks to support students as they navigate the hidden curriculum by offering processes and tools to enhance scholarly and personal development throughout graduate school.

In a roundtable format, current and recent Don Wright Faculty of Music postdocs will offer strategies for navigating the hidden curriculum. The panelists will discuss their own experiences to answer questions from conference attendees, in order to unpack topics such as (but not limited to) writing and research strategies, mentor-mentee relationships, developing professional networks, and applying for academic positions.

Alberto Acquilino is a researcher working at the intersection of music education, technology, and inclusive design. Trained as both a musician and engineer, he has studied and conducted research in Italy, France, Switzerland, and Canada. His research explores how AI, digital technologies, and disability-led design can expand access to music learning and participation.

Alyssa Cottle is a musicologist who specializes in twentieth- and twenty-first century Latin America. Her book project, *Music, Memory, and the Democratic Path to Socialism in Chile, 1967–1973*, examines music and sound in and beyond Chile in the years leading up to and during Salvador Allende’s Popular Unity government (1970–73). She earned a Ph.D. in Historical Musicology from Harvard University in 2025 and is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Don Wright Faculty of Music at Western University.

Kristin M. Franseen is a postdoctoral research associate in musicology at Western University, where she explores the intersections of fact and fiction in Antonio Salieri’s reception history. Her other research interests include queer and feminist musicological methods, women in the histories of musicology and music theory, and fiction on musical subjects. Kristin’s book *Imagining Musical Pasts: The Queer Literary Musicology of Vernon Lee, Rosa Newmarch, and Edward Prime-Stevenson* was published by Clemson University Press in 2023. She has also published in *Music & Letters*, *19th-Century Music*, and the *Journal of Musicological Research*, and contributed the expanded article on Constanze Mozart to *Grove Music Online’s Women, Gender, and Sexuality Update Project*. In addition to a new book tentatively entitled *The Intriguing Afterlives of Antonio Salieri: Gossip, Fiction, and the Post-Truth in Musical Biography*, she is in the preliminary stages of a new project on gender and “tech hype” in early metronome advertising.

Natalie P. Miller is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Don Wright Faculty of Music at Western University. Before coming to Western, she earned her PhD in Musicology from Princeton University in 2025. Combining theoretical inquiry and empirical methodologies, her work fosters dialogue between music theory, music cognition, and media studies to

shed light on music's role in shaping experience across audiovisual contexts like TikTok, live concerts of video game music, film, and television. In addition to her research, she founded and directed the Princeton Music Mentoring Program, which connected undergraduate mentees with graduate mentors, hosted community-building events, and provided professional development opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

Rena Roussin is a scholar of classical ("art") music's relationships to concepts of equity, embodiment, and social justice in historic and current contexts. She has particular research expertise on changing concepts of disability and gender in eighteenth-century Austro-German music, as well as Indigenous-led classical music initiatives in twenty-first century North America. She holds a doctorate in musicology from the University of Toronto, and is currently a postdoctoral associate at Western University, where she is working on her first book project, *Identities, Indigeneities, Intersectionalities: Positioning Contemporary Opera in Canada*. A committed public musicologist, Rena serves as musicologist-in-residence for the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and on the Canadian Opera Company's Circle of Artists.

Historical Keywork and 3D Printing:

An Integrated Approach to Oboe Ergonomics

While the acoustic design of Western wind instruments has achieved a high level of standardization, the physical interface (the keywork and weight distribution) often remains rooted in manufacturing limitations of the 19th and early 20th centuries. This slower trajectory is especially visible in the oboe, whose interface has undergone only modest modification since the adoption of the Triébert 6bis system in 1906. Later changes have tended to refine the bore or adjust individual mechanisms rather than rethink the overall key layout, hand posture, or load distribution. Modern instruments have increased in weight in response to larger orchestras and performance spaces, and musicians now routinely play these heavier instruments for extended rehearsals and concerts under significant technical and musical demands, leading to increased performance-related injuries.

This presentation proposes a methodology for modernizing instrument construction by synthesizing historical analysis with contemporary material science. By examining historic oboe key systems held in collections such as the National Music Museum, Rijksmuseum, and others, we can identify alternative fingering mechanics that were not discarded for lack of musical or ergonomic value, but rather because they were victims of the manufacturing limitations and reliability issues of their time. These solutions, when reconsidered alongside the expertise and precision of today's instrument makers and the possibilities of modern redesign, could meaningfully aid performers.

Furthermore, this research analyzes repertoire to determine the frequency of specific key utilization. By mapping key usage against the ergonomic cost of actuating those keys, we can redesign instruments to prioritize the comfort of the most-used movements. The integration of modern technologies, such as additive manufacturing and the use of lightweight composites, allows for a significant reduction in overall instrument weight and the implementation of these optimized, ergonomically friendly key configurations. The result is a proposed instrument design that maintains the timbral integrity of traditional models while significantly improving playability and reducing physical strain on the musician.

Rajan Panchal is an oboist, teacher, and academic. Originally from the California Bay Area, Rajan is currently a doctoral candidate in Oboe Performance at Boston University, where he is conducting research on how to improve the ergonomics of the oboe using additive manufacturing. He hopes his work will benefit all double reed players, especially those with performance injuries and disabilities.

In addition to his research, Rajan is an avid performer who has freelanced and toured extensively with orchestras and chamber groups throughout the U.S. and Europe. Recent highlights include recording Leonard Slatkin's *The Raven* for Naxos, with Slatkin conducting and actor Alec Baldwin narrating. He currently studies with Boston Symphony Principal Oboist John Ferrillo at BU. Rajan previously attended New England Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, and New York University, where he studied with members of the BSO and New York Philharmonic.

From Analysis to Interpretation: Collaborative Pianism in Jane Vignery's Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 7

Jane Vignery's *Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 7* (1942) represents a sophisticated synthesis of German romantic structural rigor and French impressionistic harmonic fluidity. While a staple of the horn repertoire, the work has received limited scholarly attention from a keyboard perspective, leaving a gap in the literature regarding its collaborative intricacies and interpretive demands. This paper addresses that void by demonstrating how a detailed theoretical analysis of the sonata's formal and harmonic language directly informs concrete performance strategies.

The analysis reveals that Vignery utilizes specific scalar and harmonic tools—including pentatonic and whole-tone scales, enharmonic common-tone modulations, and fuzzy transpositions—to unify diverse musical materials into a cohesive structure. By examining these elements, the performer can move beyond intuitive musicality to a rigorous, strategically grounded execution. The study identifies three primary areas where theoretical findings dictate interpretive choices: sound and balance, harmony and color, and rhythm and ensemble.

For example, an understanding of the "outer shell" voicing in Vignery's frequent added sixth chords in the piano part allows for a transparent texture that supports the horn's middle-low register without overwhelming it. Furthermore, identifying the transition of the whole-tone scale from a coloristic device to a structural bass skeleton provides a necessary metric anchor for navigating complex rhythmic displacements.

Ultimately, this paper argues that the most effective solutions to ensemble challenges are found through a comprehensive theoretical understanding of the score. By bridging the gap between abstract analysis and practical application, performers can unlock the full expressive potential of underrepresented masterpieces. This methodology offers a replicable framework for advocating for the place of neglected gems within the chamber music canon.

Ting-Ting Yang is a collaborative pianist and multigenre composer from Taiwan whose artistry spans performance, composition, and education. Effective fall 2026, she will join the University of Iowa as the Jo Benda and Charles Platz Assistant Professor of Collaborative Piano. Previously, she served as a visiting assistant professor of collaborative piano at Virginia Tech (2025–26). She holds a Doctor of Music in Collaborative Piano from Indiana University and a Master of Music in Piano Chamber Music and Accompanying from Rice University.

An internationally invited pianist, Yang's expansive performance portfolio includes appearances at the American Viola Society Festival, Western Kentucky University, and Austin Peay State University. She frequently collaborates with world-class musicians from major global orchestras. As a festival artist, she serves as a collaborative pianist for the Thailand International Trombone Festival, Bass Around Asia Festival, and the Indiana University Summer String Academy, performing alongside such artists as trombonists Joseph Alessi, Brian Hecht, and Martin Schippers and double bassist Artem Chirkov, among others.

As a composer, Yang earned her Bachelor of Music in Composition with highest distinction from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music (Singapore). Her award-winning orchestral work *Portal* (2019) was premiered by East Carolina University. Often inspired by Taiwanese culture, her music has been premiered and performed across Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States.

Finding Her Voice: Ornamentation in the Art Songs of Maria Malibran

When the operatic diva Maria Malibran died, her obituary in *The Globe* read, "It is as it were but yesterday that we heard her silvery tones, and we can hardly reconcile it to ourselves that *they* have passed away for ever." (emphasis mine) This reduction of Malibran to her voice continues to this day. However, Malibran was more than just a passive singer. Through her performing experience, she became an authority on *bel canto* ornamentation; contemporaries like Gioachino Rossini and Manuel Garcia, Jr. noted her breadth of knowledge and musical intelligence. Malibran's talent extended beyond the realm of performance into her own compositions—dozens of romances and duets in various languages. But despite Malibran's prolific compositional output and the centrality of ornamentation to her artistry, ornamentation has never been discussed in the context of her art songs.

This paper analyzes Malibran's compositions, discovering ornaments written into her scores as well as speculating what unwritten ornaments might have sounded like. Ornamenting Malibran's art songs has value for the historically informed performer, as ornamentation was expected in art songs during Malibran's time. It also has value for students, who can practice ornamentation with Malibran's songs, later transferring those ornaments to their operatic repertoire when they are ready. However, the most interesting implications are those regarding Malibran's personal life.

As a woman in the 19th century, Maria Malibran held a unique position as both singer and composer. At first glance, these identities seem to be at odds with one another. On one hand, Malibran was a virtuosic singer who used the full extent of her voice to dramatic effect; on the other, she was a composer who sought publication in a market that valued music for at-home performance by amateurs. However, through ornamentation, Malibran's music transcended the "salon music" genre that women composers of the 19th century have often been relegated to. In addition, this paper highlights similarities between Malibran's ornamentation of her original compositions and her operatic repertoire, showing how Malibran might have reconciled her dual identity as composer and performer. In the space between these two identities, we can find Malibran's voice.

From Brooklyn, New York, **Matthew Carlson** is a baritone and second-year MM student pursuing a degree in voice and opera at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University in Montreal, Québec, where he studies with baritone Brett Polegato. He has a BM in Vocal Performance and a BA in Linguistics from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, where he studied with soprano Estelí Gomez. Alongside Dr. Cayla Rosché, he is an author of *Icelandic Art Song Lyric Diction and Repertoire: A Modern Approach for Teachers and Singers*, which has been published in the November/December 2025 edition of the *Journal of Singing*. Outside of research, he is also an avid performer, having appeared in Opera McGill's *Trouble in Tahiti*, and playing Tommy McIntyre in Opera McGill's production of *Fellow Travelers* this upcoming fall.

Training Resonator Configuration for Mandarin Speakers Learning Bel Canto

Bel Canto singing developed in close relationship with the phonetic and aesthetic qualities of the Italian language, whose open vowels, balanced consonants, and relatively consistent stress patterns support legato phrasing, chiaroscuro tonal balance, and resonance efficiency. For Mandarin-speaking singers, the acquisition of Bel Canto technique presents specific challenges related to differences in phonology, articulation habits, and resonance strategies. Mandarin is a tonal language in which pitch contour conveys lexical meaning, while Bel Canto singing relies on stable vowel production, coordinated breath management, and consistent resonance tuning in order to achieve vocal continuity and expressive nuance. These differences may influence how singers coordinate the vocal tract, particularly in relation to vowel modification, passaggio negotiation, and the development of the singer's formant.

This lecture recital investigates how linguistic structure influences resonator configuration in Bel Canto singing. Drawing on historical treatises, modern voice science, and comparative phonetics, the presentation examines how vocal tract shaping contributes to the characteristic sound associated with Italian vocal tradition. Musical examples from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries illustrate the historical development of legato singing, chiaroscuro tonal balance, messa di voce, and expressive phrasing. Comparisons between Italian repertoire and Mandarin-language art song demonstrate how differences in vowel systems, consonant articulation, and prosodic structure influence resonance strategies and vocal coordination.

Through performance and commentary, the lecture recital proposes pedagogical approaches that assist Mandarin-speaking singers in developing efficient resonance strategies while preserving stylistic authenticity. The project contributes to interdisciplinary research connecting vocal pedagogy, linguistics, and performance practice, emphasizing that Bel Canto is not only a historical style but also a living artistic tradition shaped by cultural context and embodied knowledge. In an era in which digital technologies and artificial intelligence can generate artistic products rapidly, the continued practice of Bel Canto highlights the value of slow, intentional cultivation of vocal skill. Like traditional painting practices that persist despite technological innovation, Bel Canto singing represents a form of artistic preservation that affirms the enduring significance of human expression, historical continuity, and disciplined craft.

Autumn Zhao (Junmeng), a soprano, was born in Beijing, China. She graduated and obtained a Bachelor of Music from the University of Toronto. After her graduation, she worked as an assistant conductor with the Asia Philharmonic Orchestra. She finished her Master of Music degree at Western University. Currently, she is a 3rd-year DMA candidate at Western, and her research primarily focuses on vocal pedagogy and languages. She held several recitals in both Canada and China and played leading roles at the Western opera company. Autumn is an ambitious person who hopes to contribute to the field she loves.

Game Function and Authenticity: An Analytical Approach to Understanding Player Experiences in Video Games through Sound

Among players, conversations around whether a game is ‘good’ frequently refer to games’ ability to engage and entertain their players on a variety of levels. Realism is one criterion sometimes cited, but there are certainly ‘unrealistic’ games (and, in fact, entire game genres) that keep their players’ attention despite not being grounded in reality. At other times, players cite more nebulous features that contribute to their enjoyment: that they wish to increase their sense of immersion, keep up an emotional engagement with the game’s narrative and characters, or to stay ‘in the game’ without disruption. These conversations around the game’s ability to engage with the player often incorporate the term ‘authenticity’. However, this is a tricky term since players understand and apply it in a multitude of different ways.

In *Authenticity in the Music of Video Games* (published 2023 by Lexington Books), Stephanie Lind (Queen’s University) explores how music analysis can provide insights into these questions through topics as wide-ranging as Leitmotif, tropes, nostalgia in retro gaming, and gameworld. In this keynote presentation, she will summarize some of the books’ guiding principles, read a few selected excerpts, and then present case studies from three video games that demonstrate players’ various understandings of the term *authenticity* through a blend of musicological and music-analytic approaches. These examples will prompt a discussion of how games effectively communicate to players through three different modes of authenticity – objective (historical recreation or realism), constructive (player expectations and projections), and existential (player emotions), structuring player engagement and pushing them towards particular choices through sound.

Dr. Stephanie Lind is an Associate Professor who teaches a variety of courses in music theory, analysis, and musicology. Her research interests include video game music, transformational theory, and contemporary Canadian art music. In addition to being one of the current Associate Editors at the *Journal of Sound and Music in Games*, her research contributions include articles in *Intersections*, *The Soundtrack*, *Music Theory Online*, *Perspectives of New Music*, presentations at numerous conferences, several book chapters, and the book *Authenticity in the Music of Video Games*, published by Lexington Press in 2023. She currently holds a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant focusing on the intersection of musical structure and instrumentation with gameplay narrative.

Composing for the Platform-Conditioned Ear: Structuring Internet Culture in Contemporary Mixed-Media Practice

As digital media environments reshape everyday patterns of attention, contemporary audiences increasingly arrive at concerts with existing perceptual habits shaped by algorithmically curated feeds, rapid shifts of focus, and networked soundscapes. This presentation examines how composers can respond to these conditions by embedding recognition and play within rigorous structured musical processes. Culturally codified sounds, recognizable as familiar digital signifiers, function as compositional resources that structure expectation and direct attention while articulating musical form.

Building on gesture theory and media studies, I situate these actions within a framework of mediated recognition, in which sonic events carry perceptible traces of technological shaping. For example, the sampling and transformation of familiar internet-culture sounds, temporally repeated or truncated fragments, and glitch-like disruptions. These moments function both sonically and semiotically, producing perceptually salient cues that invite recognition while simultaneously destabilizing conventional expectations of continuity and formal trajectory.

This framework is explored through selected mixed-media repertoire alongside my ongoing composition *For You (but not really for You)* for saxophone quartet and electronics. Internet derived sonic artifacts serve as structural thresholds of recognition that momentarily stabilize the listening field before undergoing transformation. Recognition functions both as playful reference and as a rigorous mechanism for shaping or subverting expectation and projecting formal trajectory.

Situating these techniques within a broader media-ecological perspective, the presentation proposes a compositional strategy for engaging listeners whose expectations and habits of recognition are increasingly shaped by platform-mediated listening environments. Culturally circulating sounds therefore provide a practical means of addressing those listening conditions within concert-music contexts.

The presentation demonstrates that culturally saturated materials can serve both expressive and structural functions. Play and rigor operate in a dialectic, where playful references gain impact from compositional discipline, while rigor is renewed through structure and perceptual disruption. Internet-informed recognition thus emerges as a central compositional parameter for contemporary mixed-media practice.

Nicholas Ma is a pianist-composer whose music explores a dialogue between rhythmic vitality, playfulness, and contemplative rigor. Some of his recent accolades include four SOCAN Foundation Young Composer Awards, McGill's Luba Zuk Piano Duo Composition Competition Prize, commissions from Esprit Orchestra and the Coalition for Music Education in Canada, and composer-in-residence positions with McGill's Schulich Singers, Chamber Music Area, and Saxophone Quartet.

He has served as the President of the McGill Association of Student Composers, is on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Composers Orchestra, and was the composer for the

2022/23 Music Monday program—an event where his commissioned work was sung by hundreds of thousands of children and youth in schools and communities across Canada. Additionally, he has served on the Vivier InterUniversitaire Committee, the NextGen Advisory Council, as a Composition Area Representative for the McGill Music Graduate Students' Society, and co-founded the Off-Topic Ensemble's Mentorship Program in 2024.

Nicholas holds a Bachelor's degree from McGill University, where he double-majored in Piano Performance and Composition with a minor in Music Theory. His primary teachers include Marina Mdivani for piano and Eliot Britton, Jean Lesage, Chris Paul Harman, and Melissa Hui for composition. He is currently pursuing a Master's in Composition at McGill with a full scholarship from the university.

From Vegas to Kolob: Latter-Day Saint Influence & The Killers' *Pressure Machine*

With their 2021 album *Pressure Machine*, The Killers' period of relative stealth Mormonism came to an end. The band's religious affiliation had not been kept a complete secret though many secular fans were surprised, a sentiment encapsulated by Audrey Vieira's article "Fans Horrified to Learn The Killers Tricked Them Into Enjoying Mormon Rock," (2022). Hailing from Las Vegas, Nevada in the early 2000s, their early and mid career albums featured upbeat tracks void of profanity while *Pressure Machine* alternatively, as a concept album, features graphic themes and spoken dialogue. The song "West Hills (III)" is a traditional SATB choral arrangement and features a melody akin to "If I Could Hie to Kolob;" one of the most popular hymns in the Latter-Day Saint's hymnal.

Mormonism is one of the fastest growing religious sects in America. The Utah Legislature consists primarily of Mormons with upwards of 86% of sitting members active in the church, while the state's congressional seats and statewide political offices are 100% Mormon (Davidson, 2021). In a state where only 60% of the general population identify as Mormon these numbers represent how prominent and influential the Mormon church is with global population projections predicted of 265 million by the year 2080 (Stark, 2014).

Did The Killers intentionally deceive fans? Would their audiences have been as keen to support the group had they known a percentage of ticket and album sales would be given to a church with deeply entrenched views of bigotry, racism and misogyny through tithe? Incorporating Linden's (2016) methodology of insistence for lyrical analysis this paper explores The Killers' discography, examining the band's use of LDS themes, the manner in which the band straddled secular and religious genres, and how the convergence of religion, political power and music led to their success.

Murray Nielson...

Dibike Giizis Nagamonan (Moon Songs):

A Newly Commissioned Cycle of Piano Pieces by Composer Beverley McKiver

Introduction

In 2025 I commissioned a new cycle of piano pieces from Anishinaabe composer Beverley McKiver. This collection of twelve songs, called *Dibike Giizis Nagamonan*, is inspired by the seasonal activities of the Anishinaabeg (Ojibway people). The word “giizis” in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway language) refers to the sun. “Dibike giizis” specifies the “night sun” or moon. “Moon” is used in this sense to describe the cycle of lunar phases which roughly equates to one month in the Gregorian calendar. The “moons” may vary among communities, depending on local customs, landscapes, and climate. The work explores Ojibway language, contemporary Indigenous realities, as well as traditional practices. This lecture-recital will include discussion of the commissioning and collaborative writing process, the role of the performer, the integration of diverse cultural and generational ideas, and the contextual relevance of Truth and Reconciliation to this project. This will be followed by a complete performance of the set.

Lecture

This lecture first outlines the process and significance of commissioning new music. Commissioning is often the first step in bringing new music to life, and initiates an artistic partnership between composer and performer, requiring reflection on questions of artistic responsibility, and in this context, truth and reconciliation. Second, the practical realities of funding highlights the roles of arts councils. While these organizations provide essential support, funding is competitive and requires navigating specific application processes and language. Third, the collaborative relationship is the heart of commissioning. For this project, collaboration was an engaging process of feedback, revision, and shared artistic growth, extending even into the performance space. Lastly, this lecture also considers the performer’s role in presenting new music and engaging audiences, particularly within intercultural contexts. This project has integrated diverse perspectives, creating a shared space for musical and cultural understanding for both its collaborators and listeners.

Performance

Dibike Giizis Nagamonan (Moon Songs) (2025/6)

Mnidoo-Giizis (Spirit Moon – January)

Mkwa-Giizis (Bear Moon – February)

Naabdin-Giizis (Snowcrust Moon – March)

Ziisbaakdoke-Giizis (Maple Sugar Moon – April)

Namebine-Giizis (Sucker Fish Moon – May)

Waabgonii-Giizis (Flowering Moon – June)

Miin-Giizis (Berry Moon – July)

Manoomini-Giizis (Grain Moon – August)

Waababagaa-Giizis (Changing Leaves Moon – September)

Binaakwe-Giizis (Falling Leaves Moon – October)

Baashkaakodin-Giizis (Freezing Moon – November)
Mnidoo-Giisoonhs (Little Spirit Moon – December)

Ryan Baxter is a candidate in the Doctor of Musical Arts program at Western University, studying solo piano performance. His academic background includes piano and organ performance, instructional design in distance education, and Indigenous studies. His research has focused on contemporary Australian chamber music, music related to environment and climate change, and commissioning new piano works by Indigenous composers. Beyond academic life, Ryan serves as Music Director and Organist at Rowntree Memorial United Church in London, Ontario. He has worked as a graduate assistant, marker/grader, choral and instrumental accompanist, in-classroom tutor for mathematics, online course facilitator, private music instructor, and English teacher in Thailand. When Ryan is not practicing, writing, or working, he can be found walking outside, reading, cooking, baking, and applying to more programs. He is happy to be part of WUGSOM's Annual Graduate Symposium again this year!