

AMS Annual Meeting Model Submission Abstracts Roundtables

Proposal Title: After the Post-Soviet: Mapping Transformations in Baltic and Ukrainian Music

Topics: Popular Music, 1900–Present, Global / Transnational Studies

Keywords: postcolonial, Eastern Europe, Cold War

As Latvian art historian Ieva Astahovska has argued, the transition from nationally driven postsocialist to transnationally oriented capitalist societies has defined the social, political, and cultural landscapes of newly democratic states in northeastern Europe over the past decades. This roundtable seeks to explore the complex and sometimes paradoxical nature of these transformations, in order to understand issues of memory, identity and belonging in the formerly Soviet Baltic and Ukrainian nations. Does the past “continue to structure and hold captive our present,” as the philosopher Jānis Taurens suggests? What *is* (or what *was*) the post-Soviet condition in these ethnically diverse countries? How do they create and re-create their identities in music? And are they now—or will they ever be—post-post Soviet states?

Each of the presentations in this roundtable highlights cultural and musical developments specific to one country in this region since 1991. [Redacted] parses the role of mythologized pro-independence figures of the 1980s Soviet Lithuanian popular music in relation to the contemporary perception of rock as a patriotic genre and the contentious reception of Soviet symbols in contemporary Lithuanian culture. [Redacted] examines the popularity of sacred music reflecting both religious and national sentiments in 1990s Ukraine, alongside the present perception of such music as a marker of European tradition. [Redacted] considers the durability of traditional musical elements versus unmarked, post-national sounds in the Estonian popular music scene and streaming platforms.

[Redacted] responds, surfacing and considering questions raised by the presenters. Has the post-Soviet period ended? If so, what comes next? What does it mean for scholars of the region’s music to move beyond the Soviet/post-Soviet binary in their work? Furthermore, in the present moment, when the legacy of Russian and Soviet imperialism once again dominates the world’s stage, what practical barriers and ethical baggage attend to musicological efforts to transcend the Cold War logic that so often (still and again) defines discourse on the region, its cultures and its music?

Proposal Title: European Music and Caribbean Slavery in the Eighteenth Century

Topics: 1650–1800, African American / Black Studies, Race / Ethnicity / Social Justice

Keywords: Caribbean, Slavery, Colonialism

Recent years have witnessed a growth in new research addressing the connections between European music, broadly defined, and the centuries-long enslavement of Africans and their

descendants in America. Whether examining the colonial financing of metropolitan concert institutions, the theatrical interchanges between France and Saint Domingue, the working lives of Black musicians in Europe, or the experiences of enslaved performers in the Caribbean and Latin America, such scholarship draws attention to the deep—and previously under-explored—entanglements between race, artistic categorization, and the economies of music and slavery in the early-modern Atlantic world. In this roundtable, panelists will discuss examples from their own research that challenge simplistic understandings of racialization and music-making in the eighteenth century.

This roundtable will prioritize conversation between participants and audience. In the first half of the session, each panelist will give a lightning talk of five minutes; the rest of the session will be devoted to dialogue. Rebecca Geoffroy-Schwinden will present archival work on the Galbaud du Fort family, arguing that plantation slavery supported musical consumption in mid-eighteenth-century Nantes, and that musical consumers were acutely aware of the violent circumstances that underwrote their leisure. Julia Doe will investigate the music collection of Jean-Baptiste Médor, a formerly enslaved man from Saint Domingue who worked as a dance teacher in pre-revolutionary Normandy. Mary Caton Lingold's contribution troubles the very categories of "European" and "African" music in this period, locating such distinctions in the logics of plantation slavery. Maria Ryan will discuss how enslaved African soldiers in Britain's West India Regiments interacted with military music. Henry Stoll will consider how, and why, the future people of Haiti used French music to signal their revolutionary ambitions. Wayne Weaver will explore the context of "non-white" subscription to the publication of European sacred music in 1770s Kingston, Jamaica. Finally, Aimee Gonzalez will examine the ways in which colonial Latin American sacred music is understood and performed in contemporary Cuba, focusing on how this repertory has been both racialized and unracialized since the 1990s. Taken together, these case studies underscore the complex negotiations of race, freedom and unfreedom, and music-making in the eighteenth century.