Sponsored by the Music and Sound Interest Group (MSIG) of the American Anthropological Association and the Society for Ethnomusicology

Program Committee:

Lila Ellen Gray (Dickinson College), MSIG Convener (2013-2015) and Forum Program Committee Co-Chair

David Novak (University of California, Santa Barbara), MSIG Founder, SEM Liaison to the AAA, and Forum Program Committee Co-Chair

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Amanda Minks (University of Oklahoma), MSIG Convener (2012-2014) and Forum Program Committee Member

Olabode Omojula (Mount Holyoke College), SEM 2016 Program Committee Member and Liaison to Forum Program Committee

<u>Program</u>

8:30-10:30 am

Roundtable 1: Acoustic Methodologies

Chair: David Novak

8:30-8:40
David Novak (University of California, Santa Barbara)
Opening Remarks, Introduction to Roundtable 1

8:40-8:50
Erik DeLuca (University of Virginia)
"Listening Against Natural Sound in Law"

8:50-9:00
Jennifer Hsieh (Stanford University)

"The Environmental and the Technological: Noise as Recorded Object and Recording Object"

9:00-9:10
David VanderHamm (UNC Chapel-Hill)
"Historical Phenomenology and the Lived Experience of Mediated Virtuosity"

9:10-9:20
Michael Young (Indiana University)
"Hi-Fi Heritage: Constructing the Past in Contemporary Recordings of the Polish Folk Music Revival"

9:20-9:50
Discussants

Alexandra Lippman (University of California, Davis)
Nick Seaver (Tufts University)
Shayna Silverstein (Northwestern University)

9:50-10:30
Open Discussion w/Participants and Audience

10:45 am-12:15 pm

Keynote 1

Chair: Daniel Fisher (University of California, Berkeley)

Laura Kunreuther (Bard College)
"Sounding Democracy: Performance, Protest, and Political Subjectivity"

12:15-1:45 pm

Lunch Break

1:45-3:45 pm

Roundtable 2: Histories, Transformations and Techniques of Sound

Chair: Amanda Minks (University of Oklahoma)

1:45-1:55
Amanda Minks

Remarks, Introduction to Roundtable 2

1:55-2:10
Alex Dent (George Washington University)
"Temporality and Awareness in Musical Practice"

2:10-2:25
Kate Galloway (Memorial University Newfoundland)
"Listening to and Sounding Discard: Locating the Sonic Traces of Discard Studies in Science and Technology Studies"

2:25-2:40
Anthony Kwame Harrison, (Virginia Tech)
"Sonic Stratigraphy and the Archaeology of Hip Hop Voicing"

2:40-2:55
Miriam Kolar (Amherst College)
"Archaeological Auralization as Reconstructive Performance Practice"

2:55-3:10
Matt Rahaim (University of Minnesota)
"Vocal Ethnography Between the Ontic and the Ontological"

3:10-3:25
Amanda Weidman (Bryn Mawr College)
"From Music to Voice to Sound: Listening to the Goddess in South India"

3:25-3:45
Roundtable Discussion w/Participants and Audience

4:00-5:30 pm

Keynote 2

Chair: Lila Ellen Gray (Dickinson College)

Christine Yano (University of Hawai'i)
"The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Disciplinary Listening Regimes amid Vulgar Sounds"

5:30-7:30

Dinner Break

Abstracts

Erik DeLuca, University of Virginia
Listening Against Natural Sound in Law

National Park Service (NPS) resource management aims to conserve, preserve, and manage "natural quiet" and the "natural sounds" associated with their physical and biological resources. While the concept of nature is ideologically malleable and ultimately based on values which are both culturally constructed and embedded, how does the NPS identify what a natural sound is? Where does it locate natural in the shifting schema of transformation and stasis against historical precedence and antiquated wilderness ideology? Building on the theories of anthropologist Tim Ingold, I will explore the contours of this issue and argue for the importance of establishing acoustic methodologies that understand the soundscape as a phenomenon of experience, rather than—as anthropologist Stefan Helmreich calls it—"something in the world waiting to be tuned into." To delineate the boundaries between natural and unnatural (often defined as human) sound in each park, the NPS uses acoustic monitoring of sound sources, sound pressure level, and sound frequency. Determining how loud a human-produced sound is relative to other sounds defined as non-human, they then seek to limit those noises deemed human or other to the natural experience. Like composer R. Murray Schafer, this method of quantification understands the soundscape as an objectification of sound and neglects the perceptions of individual listeners in parks as important components of that soundscape. Emerging from the author's five years of field research in the NPS, the theoretical framework of this research challenges the role of acoustic ecology—a field that researches the relationship, through sound, between living beings and their environment—as the scientific justification behind the preservation of nature and argues for its extension to include environmental history, cultural theory, and notions of listening against the soundscape.

Alex Dent (Anthropology, Georgetown)
Temporality and Awareness in Musical Practice

What challenges does the practice of music present for theories of performance in anthropology and ethnomusicology? Theories of performance frequently argue for the orientation of a given text (a score, a solo, or even a persona) towards an audience which evaluates that act of orientation. The emergent dialogue frequently results in transformations of identity, social category, and subject position. However, as has frequently been noted in the social science of music, musical performance troubles the temporalities associated with these sorts of assumptions. This paper will analyze the ways in which the horizons of awareness of current performers, listeners, and other sorts of musical practitioners are simultaneously oriented towards ephemerality/ durability, circulatory legitimacy/illegitimacy, and monovocality/mutuality. Some of these orientations are wrapped up with contemporary modes of digital textuality and

circulation. Finally, the paper will problematize customary approaches to emergence in musical performance, which frequently privilege face-to-face conversation, as well as call-and-response.

Kate Galloway, Wesleyan University

Listening to and Sounding Discard: Locating the Sonic Traces of Discard Studies in Science and Technology Studies

How do listeners hear, listen to, and perceive the residue of our everyday material world? As environmental and energy issues become increasingly prominent in everyday discourse, ethnographic soundworkers explore modes of expressing the material, microscopic, and sometimes intangible environmental degradation that is not apocalyptic in scope and visibility, but equally toxic. These are the plastic pollutions and toxic residues from fossil fuel production and consumption, and non-decomposable materials dumped in landfills and littered across landscapes and waterways. How does sound studies contribute to the field of discard studies as it explores the materiality of environmental waste and debris? Sound studies, discard studies, science and technology studies, and anthropology of the senses interface in the study and creation of soundwork that engages environmental and energy issues. I address how contemporary music practices and communities creatively articulate the materiality of waste, pollution, and externalities through ethnographic soundwork. Derek Charke, for instance, listens ethnographically with his field recorder to the auditory world to represent the rich sonic coloration and social tensions connected to energy production and use. Works such as *Transient Energies* (2010), *Tangled in Plastic Currents* (2014), and *Dear Creator* (2014), musicalize invisible, harmful phenomena, like slow disasters (Nixon 2011), toxic leakage from plastics, and the sonic and physical discard of energy production. Sound artists participate in the aesthetic and material politics of "artful waste" (Liboiron 2013; 2012) through artistic interpretations of ethnographic sound, forms of energy production, the transnational circulation of plastics and chemical pollutants, and the oil industry.

Anthony Kwame Harrison, Virginia Tech

Sonic Stratigraphy and the Archaeology of Hip Hop Voicing

Despite the centrality of the deejay, and later producer, in crafting hip hop's musical soundscapes, the genre's popular rise has been largely predicated on showcasing the talents of emcees. While qualities of voice have been considered one of several elements in emcees' performative repertoires—often viewed as secondary to poetic abilities such as rhyming, use of metaphor, and rhythmic delivery (i.e. flow)—in an era of post-flow hip hop lyricism the voice has become central. Drawing on archaeological principles, I examine processes of hip hop voicing within the context of music recording studios. Specifically, I focus on how practices of textured layering (between multiple vocal tracks as well as between vocals and instrumentals) are used to produce the sonic continuities and disjunctures that mark hip hop's distinctive, post-industrial Black aesthetic. Starting

from a recognition of the sonorous, affective, and material properties of voices as captured through the recording process, I attend to the various ways in which technological mediation—including such things as equalization, compression, and post-processing effects—produces meaningful sonic textures. Through isolating, analyzing, and re-situating these in-studio performances, I demonstrate ways in which an archaeology of hip hop voicing contributes to our understanding of the music's enduring Blackness.

Jennifer Hsieh, Stanford University

The Environmental and the Technological: Noise as Recorded Object and Recording Object

How do audio recordings capture noise—sounds that are meant to be filtered out—and how might recordings of noise resituate our understanding of sound, noise, and signal? I examine my own and others' recording practices within the context of environmental noise control. Drawing from sixteen months of fieldwork with noise inspectors, acoustic engineers, and urban residents in Taipei, Taiwan, I examine the contact zone through which noise, as a perceived, environmental problem, collapses with the technological, built-in noise of audio recorders. I use ethnographic methods to understand urban residents' efforts to record noise through smart phones, laptop computers, and digital camcorders. Rather than capturing the desired sounds, recordings of an upstairs neighbors' footsteps or the low hum of a restaurant air conditioning unit are rendered unintelligible, subsumed by the ambient, technological noise that is interlaced within recording technologies. In other instances, efforts to obtain a clear signal of noise becomes subsumed by a number of different audible interruptions throughout the course of an environmental noise recording. In an urban setting, layers of sound are stacked on top of one another in such a way that the possibility of a recording is put into question. What is the role of a recording when trying to capture noise? What are the limits of recordings when the recorded object is elusive? As much an anthropology in sound as it is about sound, my project demonstrates how expectations for a noiseless environment among urban subjects is both cultivated and subverted through audio recordings.

Miriam A. Kolar, Ph.D., Five College Associate, School for Advanced Research (SAR) Weatherhead Fellow 2016-17

Archaeological Auralization as Reconstructive Performance Practice

Auralization is most commonly understood to be the computational rendering of sound for listeners. A foundational tool for archaeoacoustical and archaeomusicological research, sonic reconstruction—whether generated computationally and/or performed by humans—allows testing and measurement of spatial and instrumental acoustics, and potentially their perceptual evaluation. Methodologically, auralization is both process and product: the specification and physical sounding of something that otherwise exists only

as concept. Sonic reconstructions for archaeological purposes similarly require contextual specification and audible production. Both require production choices and are contingent upon techne. In archaeological research, computational tools and analyses frequently enmesh with human performance of sound to produce or enact reconstructions. Any process of archaeological "re-sounding" might be considered at once auralization and performance practice: a tool with great responsive potential; a process of creating sonic products that include experience, but reach beyond abstracted presentations of "how something sounds". Considering auralizations from my own integrative archaeoacoustics research, and seeking examples from the work of other sonic specialists across disciplines, I pose a framework for understanding archaeological auralization as research tool fused with performance practice. Relevant questions include: What paradigms does computational auralization work impose on sonic reconstruction practice in archaeology? How might ideas around performance practice and contextual responsiveness drive innovations in auralization across fields? Understanding archaeological auralization as reconstructive performance practice enables us to address concerns of interpretative transparency in archaeological knowledge production while expanding its sensory scope.

Laura Kunreuther, Bard College

Sounding Democracy: Performance, Protest, and Political Subjectivity

What does democracy sound like? Democracy is typically associated with various forms of voicing - political speeches, public gatherings of shouting protesters, filibusters in the halls of the U.S. Congress, or heated debates in teashops, salons, newspaper debates around the world. But "sounding democracy" also always involves non-discursive acoustic events, such as the orchestrated sounds of a crowd, musical processions, spontaneous eruptions of noise, or theatrically enacted silence, at times intended to indicate the failure of other modes of voice. I explore the diverse uses of sound in Kathmandu, as street protesters bang pots and pans in protest, or honk in support to create deafening noise across the city, and where broadcasts of crying and silence define the most famous political work of recent performance art. These are all examples of "*āwāj uthāune"* (raising voice) that Nepalis associate with democratic practice. While the Nepali term *āwāj* echoes global discourses of voice, it also refers to materially textured "non-human" sounds that fall outside of spoken discourse. The nexus of meanings around *āwāj*, embracing sound, noise, and voice, invites us to take seriously the complex role of sound in constructing political subjectivity, particularly when urban sounds are under scrutiny as "noise" in need of regulation. By exploring the many dimensions of *āwāj*, this paper seeks to address the affective and sensory dimensions of political subjectivity in Kathmandu, and to situate these under-recognized features within prevailing theories about liberal democracy.

Matt Rahaim, University of Minnesota

Vocal Ethnography Between the Ontic and the Ontological

Protesters fill downtown Oakland with chanting (as an expression of political will), a producer in a recording studio calls for more reverb to thicken a vocal track (as a sonic object), a national politician struggles to muster a proper local accent (as an index of belonging.) Ethnographers of voice encounter singing and speaking as situated practices. Local senses of voice (as expression, as object, as sign, etc.) emerge unpredictably from local ontologies and social relations. And yet a robust anthropology of voice would seem to require the predication of a prior, transcendental voice-as-such (embodied, semiotic, political, material, etc.) which then must be somehow placed "in context." This presentation explores this analytic tension, drawing on fieldwork among a wide range of vocalists in South Asia. It surveys several vocal situations that yield very different ontologies of voice: reforming a voice-as-moral-subject; diagnosing a broken voice-as-mechanism; receiving a voice-as-blessing. These situations, and their attendant practices of listening, disclose radically different vocal worlds in turn, but never all at once, never "voice" as a transcendental unity. Can these situations make sense ethnographically without a prior, comprehensive ontics of voice? Are there local universalisms that work to discursively bind these diverse practices together? These vocal encounters offer us occasions to move between the ontic and the ontological: between powerful, vivid, locally real voices and the situations that disclose them.

David VanderHamm, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Historical Phenomenology, Sound Media, and the Lived Experience of Virtuosity

The philosophical tradition of phenomenology has had a substantial impact in ethnomusicology and anthropology, but scholars in both fields have primarily applied phenomenological approaches to the living present of fieldwork. Similarly, the topic of musical virtuosity has been treated within studies of music as a phenomenon manifested through the body's skillful display in live performance, which is only dimly reflected in media iterations. This paper works to destabilize these presentist assumptions by drawing on phenomenological work from within ethnomusicology, sociocultural anthropology, archeology, and literary studies in order to theorize a historical phenomenology of sound media and its role in the lived experience of virtuosity. Working primarily from radio transcription discs of early country music—recordings never intended as objects of preservation— I use the phenomenological concepts of intercorporeality and apperception to show how listeners identified musicians on "the other side" of media object as subjects "like me," and how this identification informed the lived meanings of mediated sound. Many listeners continued to value music during the age of recorded media not as an independent "sonorous object," but as a particular type of human labor undertaken by musicians who exemplified culturally specific notions of agency and subjectivity. These audiences rejected anything like the cultural practice of "acousmatic listening" by insisting on focusing on the source of the sound—hearing the agency behind the sound—even as that sound became spatially and temporally removed from its source.

Christine Yano (University of Hawai'i)

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Listening Regimes and Vulgar Sounds

This talk takes a case study from language and extends it to other sound phenomena that might be thought of as "listening regimes" -- that is, states of order built around disciplinary practices of aurality. Those states of order are built upon a confluence of morality and aesthetics such that "being good" and "sounding good" overlap. More importantly, what disciplinary listening regimes police are vulgar sounds, defined here as sonic phenomena considered of a lower moral and aesthetic order. In this case study, I analyze English standard schools in Hawai`i, a governmental program from 1924 to 1960 that used language as a basis of racial stratification. Through archival documents and interviews with former students, I examine ways by which listening for language use became a social and political gauge of achievement. "Speaking Good" thus codifies "Speaking American," arguing for the critical importance of aurality in building a corpus of "goodness" expressed in moral, political, and aesthetic terms. Those terms extend more overtly to the aesthetic when applied to other sound phenomena, such as music. I will thus use the template built up through the language case study to address disciplinary listening regimes in popular musics of Japan and Hawai`i. In these and other sound phenomena, listening regimes reshape the vulgar into the refined. Ultimately, it is the process of refinement -- beginning with careful listening -- that elevates these sounds and their markers into iconic states of achievement.

Michael Young, Indiana University Bloomington

Hi-Fi Heritage: Constructing the Past in Contemporary Recordings of the Polish Folk Music Revival

Exploring archival and contemporary commercial musical recordings, this presentation situates sound recordings as a primary object in the study of intangible cultural heritage and central method for its contemporary transmission in the Polish revival of traditional music. Revivalists rely on a host of recorded sound objects--pre-World War II archival recordings, amateur field recordings of the last forty years, and contemporary revivalist bands' studio albums--to learn and popularize traditional repertoires and musical techniques that became endangered in the communist period. These sound objects have shaped the development of post-communist heritage discourse by influencing popular opinion of what performance techniques sound sufficiently "of the past" and are thus worthy of preservation as national heritage for the future. As mobile commodities that circulate within the twenty-first-century Polish economy, recently recorded albums capture the vocal and instrumental techniques revivalists learned from archival recordings. On contemporary albums, revivalist artists even use digital production to imitate auditory distortions present on archival and field recordings. The presentation seeks to spark discussion on the role of sound recordings in constructing and proliferating intangible culture heritage, starting with the following questions: What is the significance of revivalists' use of sound recordings to embody past voices and traditions in popular transmission methods? What are the implications for living traditions when archival

sound recordings are used or imitated in constructing intangible heritage at the level of official discourse?