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Institute News

Jeffrey Taylor, Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

Fall 2013 represents our third electronic issue of *American Music Review*. I'm happy to report that the response to our move into cyberspace has generally been positive, and we have been delighted by the possibilities for multimedia use that have been opening up. Of course, we always welcome comments and suggestions (email or snail mail!). And I remind all our readers that hard copies are available on request, though these versions of course lack the Internet functionality of our online issues.

Along with this mainstay of HISAM's presence, we continue to offer a full slate of live events here at Brooklyn College. On 23 October, our Advisory Board member **Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr.** introduced his new book *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop* (California, 2013) with a discussion of jazz, Afro-modernism, and mental health, topics closely linked to Powell's life and career. On 5 November, **Arturo O'Farrill**, who is currently leading the Brooklyn College Jazz Ensembles, offered a presentation on Latin jazz that included a typically exhilarating piano performance. And on the same day, producer, journalist and scholar **Pat Thomas** gave a look at the subjects of his recent volume *Listen, Whitey!: The Sounds of Black Power 1965-1975* (Fantagraphics, 2012), a lavishly-illustrated treatment of a complex and turbulent period in African American history. The book, incidentally, is accompanied by a CD of rare music and spoken-word recordings, many unearthed by Thomas himself. Finally, on 13 November playwright and composer **Dan Shore**, Assistant Professor at Xavier University of Louisiana and CUNY Graduate Center alumnus, spoke on his opera *Freedom Ride: Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights Movement*. He discussed the complex process of composing an opera for an all-black cast from his vantage point as a white professor at a historically black college, and the reception to his opera thus far.

To paraphrase Garrison Keillor, it has been anything but a quiet term for the staff of the Institute. In November Senior Research Associate **Ray Allen** delivered a paper on Woody Guthrie's Jewish/Coney Island songs at the annual meeting of the American Studies Association. Research Associate **Stephanie Jensen-Moulton** had a busy fall of guest lectures and recitals. In September she gave the opening talk at Boston University's Musicology/Ethnomusicology series on the topic "Bodily Difference in Cirque du Soleil." In October she performed a lecture-recital on songs of Blind Tom Wiggins at Hollins University in Virginia, and in November she gave a paper titled "Music and Disability in the TV Series *Glee*" at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society. October also saw (hurray!) the publication of her A-R edition of Miriam Gideon's 1958 opera *Fortunato* in the *Recent Researches in American Music* series. In October our Graduate Assistant **Whitney George** presented a composition recital "Vignettes" at the CUNY Graduate Center, featuring electro-acoustic and chamber works performed by The Curiosity Cabinet (with Whitney at the podium). In addition she wrote original music for a theatrical production titled *A Hand in My Heart*, which in December enjoyed a five-day run at the Standard Toykraft in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. This fall season also marked Whitney's fourth year as artistic director and conductor of the Graduate Center's Contemporary Music Ensemble. Recently the group presented a concert titled *Music of the American Theater* that included Copland's "Music for the Theater," Seymour Shifrin's "Satires of Circumstance" and a new work by Graduate Center composer Sarah Curzi. Finally, in November Director **Jeff Taylor** was invited to join a panel on Theresa Bernstein, an unjustly neglected visual artist whose

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long life (she died in 2002, just two weeks shy of her 112th birthday!) was filled with imaginative work that cast a fascinating eye on New York's social and cultural scene. She was, for example, a lifelong fan of jazz and featured New York-based jazz musicians in many of her most important pieces. Her drawings and paintings are currently on view at the Graduate Center in an exhibit, curated by Distinguished Professor of Art History Gail Levin, that will tour a number of other US cities.

If an unfamiliar voice answers when you call the Institute, it is **Evan Moskowitz**, our new College Assistant. Evan, a student at the CUNY Graduate Center, joined the HISAM staff this fall, and his interests include history of the avant-garde, mysticism in the 20th century, musical and literary modernism, and the music of Giacinto Scelsi. Finally, we would like to welcome **Susan Tyler Hitchcock**, Wiley's daughter, as the newest member of our Advisory Board. I have already been in touch with Susan about future plans for the Institute, and I look forward to her continued support and enthusiasm!