

# AMERICAN MUSIC REVIEW

The H. Wiley Hitchcock Institute for Studies in American Music

*Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York*

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## Institute News

Brooklyn's Gowanus neighborhood, so named because it grew up around the famously murky Gowanus Canal, has traditionally been home to warehouses and coffin manufacturers. In the last decade, however, the area has seen the opening of trendy restaurants (including a popular rib joint), special event halls, and performance spaces. One of those venues, ShapeShifter Lab, has now partnered with Brooklyn College's Conservatory of Music and the Hitchcock Institute for a concert series in the fall and spring. The series, curated by Hitchcock Institute Research Associate **Arturo O'Farrill**, had its launch this term. The inaugural concert of the series on 11 September featured several Brooklyn College faculty and ensembles, including O'Farrill, **Prof. David Grubbs** on guitar, and **Prof. Marianne Gythfeldt** on clarinet. Other concerts in what became dubbed the BroCo MaSS series ("Brooklyn College Mondays at Shape Shifter") included presentations by students in the Sonic Arts and Media Scoring programs, the Composer's Collective, the conTEMPO new music ensemble, the College's jazz ensembles, and a variety of other Conservatory artists. The goal of bringing BC's talented students to new audiences, as well as fostering a sense of community among the many branches of the Conservatory of Music's programs, was an unqualified success. We look forward to more exciting events in the spring term.



*David Grubbs performs at ShapeShifter Lab during the September BroCo MaSS opening concert*

In addition to our symposium **Legacies of Pauline Oliveros**, presented in collaboration with the Computer Music Center (see David Grubb's article in this issue), HISAM featured three presentations that celebrated a wide range of music in the Americas. On 18 October, celebrated ethnomusicologist **Mark Slobin** investigated "Music in My Detroit: 1940s–1960s." **Kendall Williams's** "The Power and Glory of Steel Pan" on 25 October focused on the pan virtuoso's experiences as arranger and composer working in a variety of musical idioms here in New York. And helping us live up to our name as an institute for the study of *American* music, **Tamar Barzel's** fascinating presentation on the Mexico City-based improvisation collective *Atrás del Cosmos* (13 November) gave a reminder of the artistic gifts of the US's southern neighbor, and how imperative it is to celebrate this lively culture, rather than walling ourselves off from it.

## Institute News

This fall The Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music was notified of final State approval for our Masters in Global and Contemporary Jazz, and our first group of students are now enrolling. An idea hatched by Arturo O’Farrill (see his piece in our Fall 2016 issue), and planned around the table in the Institute’s office with Senior Research Associate **Ray Allen** and HISAM Director **Jeffrey Taylor**, the development of the program also enjoyed the support of Conservatory Director **Stephanie Jensen-Moulton**, Dean of Visual, Media and Performing Arts **Maria Conelli**, and many fellow colleagues. As a result our college now boasts a program of study unlike any in the country and is already attracting national and international attention. Stay tuned for further progress reports on this exciting new development.

Institute Director **Jeffrey Taylor**, along with HISAM Special Advisor **Randall Horton**, is working with the Brooklyn College TV and Radio department to create a program for CUNY TV (and some PBS affiliates) devoted to **Cornel West**’s visit and performance this past May. Taylor continues his research on jazz in Brooklyn, as well as a variety of other topics. Senior Research Advisor **Ray Allen** spent the fall as a Fellow at the Advanced Research Center (ARC) of the CUNY Graduate Center, where he participated in an interdisciplinary seminar on immigration and globalization and completed a draft of his manuscript on Caribbean Carnival music in New York City. College Assistant **Whitney George** has received an Elebash Award from the CUNY Graduate Center for dissertation work on Miriam Gideon’s *Fortunato*, which is scheduled for a world premiere performance in Fall of 2018. She also conducted New Camerata Opera’s production of Menotti’s *The Medium* at Brooklyn’s innovative House of Yes, and received a number of commissions for which we will be sure to provide updates.

—*J. T.*