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Feminist Scholarship as a Social Act: Remembering Adrienne Fried Block

By Ellie M. Hisama

I first encountered Adrienne Fried Block at a concert of music by women that she organized in the late 1980s at the CUNY Graduate Center. As a music student, I was struck by the absence of women throughout my training: they did not compose any of the pieces I played; their music was never programmed on concerts I attended; and they didn't appear anywhere in my music theory or history textbooks. Women never taught any of the undergraduate music courses I took. I was eager to learn what women had done in music and to have women as professors and mentors.

Adrienne was the preconcert lecturer that night, and I was excited to listen to her speak. Here was a woman who clearly knew her stuff, and she was a scholar of women composers at that. When I transferred to the Graduate Center's Ph.D. program in music theory in 1991, I thought I would be able to study with Adrienne, and was deeply disappointed to learn that she did not teach seminars or direct dissertations. Yet it happily turned out I was able to learn an enormous amount from her. She was as important to me and to many other students as any of the full-time faculty. Over the next twenty years, first as a student, then as an alumna, and finally as a professor, I would engage with her in frequent conversation on topics ranging from our research projects, to teaching imaginatively, to ways to set up a small New York apartment so that one could work.

She insisted that scholarly work mattered, and always had projects simmering or at full boil. From her, I learned that feminist scholarship is a fundamentally social act, one that brings together students, scholars, composers, and performers in conversation. It joins us in a common enterprise of recognizing the work of all women; of helping them find employment and secure tenure; and of chipping away at the hard shell of institutional power. Inspired by our sister-scholars in Boston, she decided to form a women-in-music-in-New York dinner group, and we took turns coordinating the meetings at restaurants across the city. A particularly memorable gathering was our group's attendance in 2007 at a concert performance of Ethel Smyth's opera *The Wreckers* and the subsequent dinner at Josephina's where we reveled in finally having heard an opera by a woman at Lincoln Center; we continued our discussions over a lively email exchange after the patronizing *New York Times* review appeared.

I remember my delight when I came across Adrienne's and Carol Neuls-Bates's 1979 reference work *Women in American Music: A Bibliography of Music and Literature* for the first time, a discovery that initiated my journey studying women in American music. When I entered graduate school in 1989, I wasn't able to study with any female music theory professors, but fortunately found a number of women scholars working in musicology who generously offered guidance. Writings by

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Adrienne Fried Block (ca.1995)

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Institute News

As promised in the Spring 2009 *AMR*, this issue is devoted to the life, work, and legacy of Adrienne Fried Block, who left us last year. Many of these reminiscences originated in a commemorative symposium, organized by Joseph Straus, at the CUNY Graduate Center on 30 September. Thanks go especially to Carol J. Oja and Judith Tick for encouragement during the production of this issue. It is impossible to sum up Adrienne's legacy in sixteen pages, but I know I speak for many when I say I count myself lucky to have benefited from her kindness, generosity, and keen insight. She will be sorely missed. Adrienne would no doubt be delighted by new developments in the Institute, especially the fact that our staff now boasts more women than men!

The past few months have been a time of exciting change for the Institute. Furniture has been moved, closets and files organized, and, most important, we have welcomed new staff. We are pleased that all the incoming members of the Institute family have strong interests in music of the United States. Our new College Assistant, **Sara Dougherty**, is currently finishing a Masters in vocal performance. She has been involved with the Young Artist Program of the Remarkable Theater Brigade, an opera company founded by Brooklyn College faculty member Monica Harte and Christian McLeer. She made her debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall with RTB's *Opera Shorts* in October 2009. This fall she performed in the world premiere of excerpts from Whitney George's opera *The Yellow Wallpaper*, which will be completed and presented in its entirety in Spring 2010 (I recently joked she should answer the Institute phone with the all-too-realistic insane cackle featured prominently in her role). With her strong interest in contemporary music, she has performed and recorded a variety of other new works by Brooklyn College composers, while keeping ties to more traditional repertory by singing the role of Marcellina in the College's recent production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Our new Graduate Fellow, **Rachael Brungard**, is a second-year doctoral student in musicology at the CUNY Graduate Center. She was recently elected as a student representative for the Greater New York Chapter of the American Musicological Society, and is also an assistant editor for the database *Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale* (RILM). She plans to write a dissertation on popular music, exploring the concept of "remix" and how it differs from "cover," "version," or "rap version." Our new Research Assistant **Whitney George**—a Masters student in composition here at BC—recently conducted excerpts from her above-mentioned opera, *The Yellow Wallpaper*. She has also self-produced a full-length opera titled *Alphabophobia: Something Goes Wrong Everyday*, which includes animation, dance, theater, and music. In addition to *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Whitney is currently at work on an original score for the 1928 American silent film *The Tell-Tale Heart*, based on the short story by Poe.

Despite continuing budget woes, the Institute presented a full slate of guest speakers for our "Music in Polycultural America" series. In October, Thomas Brothers of Duke University gave a fascinating talk about Louis Armstrong's early life in New

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Feminist Scholarship as a Social Act (continued)

Adrienne and by another Graduate Center alumna, Judith Tick, showed me that a distinguished history of scholarship on women and music had already taken root at CUNY, and that I could therefore write a dissertation on the music of two American women, a project that later became the foundation for my book *Gendering Musical Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), an analytical study of compositions by Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon.

As a graduate student, I organized a discussion group called the Study Group for Issues of Gender in Music, a gathering of students and faculty who wanted to explore the then emerging field of feminist and gender studies in music. Adrienne attended every meeting and participated in our lively evening discussions on everything from Milton Babbitt's twelve-tone articles, to Susan McClary's discussion of chromaticism in her then new book *Feminine Endings*, to John Zorn's representations of Asian women in his music and album covers. Even though no courses were offered at the time in the music program on women in music or on gender and music, this study group functioned like a seminar and allowed me and several other students to develop our research interests, with Adrienne and faculty advisor Joseph Straus as able guides into an exciting, uncharted, and sometimes wild intellectual terrain.

In May 2009, many of Adrienne's long-time friends and colleagues gathered in Greensboro, North Carolina at the tenth meeting of the Feminist Theory and Music conference to remember her friendship and to celebrate her work. I spoke with people who had known her for decades, some of whom I had never met even though I've been attending these conferences for eighteen years—such as the wide-ranging, international scholarly community Adrienne helped establish. Seated in a half circle in a large atrium surrounded by trees and filled with natural light, we alternated between prepared statements and impromptu remarks; the tributes to Adrienne brought her back vividly. One common strand that emerged at the gathering was her strong sense of what research should be done. She made it very clear what she wanted you to do, and you simply did it. Several people mentioned new projects and directions for current work undertaken at her urging. For a conference on Amy Beach she and Poundie Burstein organized at the Mannes College of Music in 1999, she asked me to give a paper on Beach's 1929 *Quartet for Strings*. I had recently moved from Ohio to New York and had just started a new job at Brooklyn College; writing a new paper that fall was probably the last thing on my "to do" list, but one wanted to be part of any project Adrienne dreamed up. And in the courses I've subsequently taught on women, gender, and music, I incorporate Beach's music because of her.

Adrienne attended several of the biannual Feminist Theory and Music conferences, including the very first one in Minneapolis in 1991. I remember her presence at the Rochester meeting in 1993 in particular. She participated in a panel on Lieder by women and men composers who set the same text. She and the other panelists (Joseph Straus and doctoral composition student Carol Matthews) examined song pairs by Clara Wieck

Schumann and Franz Schubert, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Schubert, and Amy Beach and Arthur Foote. We were treated to a fantastic performance by Adrienne at the piano and by Carol who is also a wonderful singer, a mini-recital that was all the more remarkable because Adrienne had recently injured her wrist—but one couldn't tell from her sensitive performance.

Adrienne's work will continue to resonate. She applied her prodigious skills to a number of projects focused on the status of women in her profession, including her work on Barbara Hampton Renton's statistically grounded report undertaken for the College Music Society titled *The Status of Women in College Music, 1976–77*. Adrienne would be delighted to know that at the conference in Greensboro, composer Linda Dusman's excellent paper titled "Why So Slow? The Advancement of American Women Composers" examined the presence in 2009 of women faculty and students in composition programs in colleges and universities in the U.S. and suggested possible reasons for why, in Dusman's words, "the field of music composition does not foster this fundamental act of music creation for women, ... an important source of talent [that] remains untapped in our profession."

Like the artist Louise Bourgeois, whose life is chronicled in the powerful documentary *Louise Bourgeois: The Spider, The Mistress and the Tangerine* (2008), directed by Marion Cajori and Amei Wallach, Adrienne experienced a full flowering of her career starting in her sixties. She worked during World War II rather than going to college at the traditional time, earned her Bachelor's degree in her thirties, began graduate school in her forties, and completed her Ph.D. in her fifties. After I shared this timeline in Greensboro with a largely female audience at the panel "Gendered Perspectives on American Music: A Session in Honor of Adrienne Fried Block," many women—some who were mothers, and some who had started graduate school in their thirties—came up to me to say that they found Adrienne's life story an inspiration, expressing relief that they were not too late after all in getting their careers and writing going. Adrienne had an active thirty-year career and managed to do so without the support of a university position for most of her life; she was honored by the Society for American Music in 2004 with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Through word and example, Adrienne taught countless women how to survive and thrive in male-dominated university settings. She firmly believed in the possibility of changing the world—or at least a piece of it. She succeeded in carving out a place at the CUNY Graduate Center in which she could help train several generations of graduate students, women and men, and could support young scholars while contributing to the well of scholarship. Adrienne deeply affected our lives and work through her sterling scholarship, her steadfast friendship, and her wise and generous mentorship, and we are the richer for having known her.

—Columbia University

On Friends, Mothers, and Scholarship: A Tribute to Adrienne Fried Block

By Carol J. Oja

My long and close relationship with Adrienne dated back to my arrival as a student in the CUNY Graduate Center's Ph.D. Program in Music in the late 1970s. The 10th floor at 33 West 42nd Street was our academic home, and Adrienne was then simultaneously completing both her dissertation on the early French parody noel and, together with Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in American Music: A Bibliography of Music and Literature* (Greenwood Press, 1979). In fact, I attended Adrienne's dissertation defense. She must have been well into her fifties at the time. But as a twenty-something I was fairly oblivious to where she stood in life's course, simply sensing that she was probably a contemporary of my own mother. Over the years, Adrienne remained a solid friend and mentor, always ready to discuss work and chip in ideas. Last February, which was one of the final times we talked alone, I had breakfast at her apartment. Even though she was dealing with the roller-coaster of chemotherapy, her usual standards of elegance were fully intact, with a bowl of fresh berries on the counter, ready to toss on our cereal. We talked about my current work on the early Broadway shows of Leonard Bernstein, and it turned out that Adrienne had seen *On the Town* after it opened in late 1944. She offered her usual volley of tough questions and provocative suggestions, and then she pulled out sheet music for some of the numbers.

I find it difficult to articulate the impact of this diminutive powerhouse on my own life and career. How to capture Adrienne in her many roles: conducting and caring, publishing and prodding, listening and leading? Parenting. Determinedly defying. All without conventional institutional support.

I became newly curious about Adrienne's relationship to Amy Beach—or, as Judith Tick recently put it, the relationship of A.F.B. and A.B.!—and I returned to her magnificent biography, *Amy Beach: Passionate Victorian* (Oxford University Press, 1998). Beach, as many readers well know, was the first American woman to compose large-scale musical works. As I re-read Adrienne's book, it unexpectedly connected with a recent title I have been savoring: *Thinking through the Mothers: Reimagining Women's Biographies*, written by yet another friend, Janet Beizer. So the scholarship of two women-colleagues joined hands.

In *Thinking through the Mothers*, Beizer undertakes an extended rumination about how we women often discover aspects of ourselves through our biographical subjects. "Each biographer has a mission to retrieve a lost woman's life," writes Beizer. "In many if not most cases," she continues, "the hope is to recover illustrious foremothers who might be shown to have mimed the success stories of their better-known male counterparts, or to have dared to carve out transgressive models" (25). Writing biography, then, can become a search to understand our own strategies for

bucking gendered cultural expectations in order to do the work that moves our souls—for finding models of how to breach the many boundaries that can contain us. A female biographer, Beizer observes, "cannot aspire to what her mother was—historical conditions prevent this—but rather [to] what her mother would have been" (34).

With these thoughts in mind, I found myself exploring Adrienne's Beach book afresh. After all, this child of Jewish heritage from New York City wasn't the most obvious match for a Yankee from late-nineteenth-century New Hampshire. Cultural affinity did not bind them. Rather, they shared a gift for music, a sense of human decency, and a whole lot of chutzpah. Time and again in writing about Beach, Adrienne elegantly articulates themes that seem equally resonant of Adrienne herself.

For example, she writes that Beach "helped demolish notions" of the range of possibilities for female musicians, that "she turned . . . defeat into triumph." She continues:

To women [Beach] was a heroine, not as glamorous as a diva perhaps, but all the more remarkable for having ventured into a field of composition thought to be the exclusive preserve of men—and having succeeded (vii).

How the passing of recent generations has altered the opportunities for women academics to enter that exclusive preserve! Those born in the 1920s—that is, Adrienne's generation—got a sense of their own potential during World War II before many became "homeward bound" in the 1950s, as historian Elaine May has articulated it. A few emerged as successes within the academic world as either the first tenured woman at an institution, or, as Adrienne did, by devising their own base of operation. Adrienne's long association at the CUNY Graduate Center was brilliantly self-styled: she brought in major grants, set up ambitious research projects, mentored scads of students, and produced high-profile conferences and publications. She gave and gave—all without a pension-accruing appointment. For the generation of women born in the 1940s, many more professional opportunities emerged than for those of Adrienne's age-group, yet they too have often peered through glass ceilings. And for my own cohorts born in the 1950s and 1960s, those ceilings have sometimes been pierced by a sun-roof, revealing open sky.

Adrienne could have powered down her computer. But no. She admired the "transgressive model" that she located in Beach, and she managed to offer that same code-defying inspiration to women around her. Here is another of Adrienne's observations about Beach:



Amy Beach

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On Music and Margins: Adrienne Fried Block and Miriam Gideon

By Stephanie Jensen-Moulton

I began by addressing her as Dr. Block and ended by calling her Adrienne. I can claim neither to have known her well enough, nor long enough, but her work and her presence, culminating in the force that was Adrienne, have deeply impacted my understanding of scholarship and personhood.

In May of 2007, I had the privilege of spending two hours with Adrienne under the guise of an interview for my dissertation research. But this interview immediately broke out of the question and answer mode, as though Adrienne did not like even that dichotomy to stand in the way of a good, deep conversation on topics of particular interest to her. Ostensibly, our exchange revolved around women in music, and specifically, women in the 1950s and the American composer Miriam Gideon, whom Adrienne had known. Adrienne's remarks provide a wonderful blend of retrospection and introspection that celebrate her life and her livelihood while simultaneously historicizing the era during which Gideon lived and worked in New York.

Towards the beginning of our conversation, I asked Adrienne what she was doing during the 1950s. She said "I was teaching at the Dalcroze School... and occasionally doing some accompanying work for dancers and singers... I was very limited, because that's when I had babies! So any work that I did was going to be part-time." I asked if she was essentially an adjunct teacher, to which Adrienne replied, "No, no, I was there permanently, but the pay was hourly and so it was something that I was very happy to be doing. I liked the work, it was fine, and it also worked with the rest of my life." At that point, I related that when I first had my daughter, I had a part-time job as a teaching artist. I said "I loved what I was doing, but there was always that sense of, well..." and Adrienne surprised me by finishing my sentence with "You're marginal."

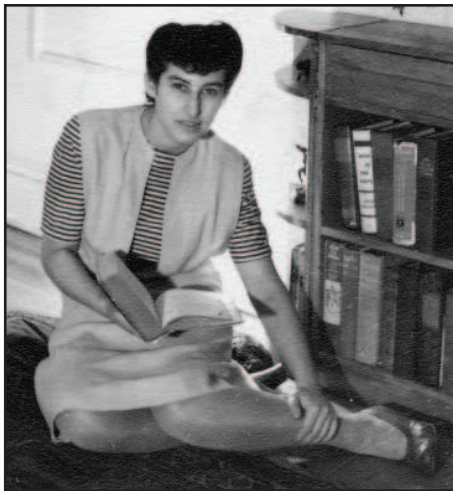
What does it mean to be marginal? The term appears frequently enough in academic writing that I find it useful to reference its meaning here: "An edge, a border; that part... which lies immediately within its boundary, especially when in some way marked off or distinguished from the rest...." In these bald terms, one might interpret the state of being marginal as occupying a space that is filled with possibility and movement; only through cultural indoctrination do we learn margins as the dark edges outside of the mainstream. Thus, placing marginal and female on the same plane erects a cultural barrier between the outside and the inside—that space often occupied by women composers in the past, and to some degree, in the present.

I asked Adrienne if she remembered ever hearing any music by a woman composer in the 1950s. Her immediate response was:

Nobody [had] heard of anything like that in the 1950s. The fifties were the time of Cheaper by the Dozen, and all women who had moved out of the home during the war years because they were needed were suddenly displaced by the men who came back, reclaiming their jobs, and in

general, women were told to go back to the kitchen. And this was just a powerful ideology.

I was curious how Adrienne thought this ideology had impacted women who had chosen academic careers. She gave me a wry smile. "Well, I think the general effect was to make them believe that they were a breed apart. They had made their decisions, and the choice was between marriage and work. And of course, work always offered very limited opportunities for women at that time, so that they may be able to get the coffee but they couldn't make the decisions." I thought this sounded a bit generalized (and I didn't mind saying so because Adrienne loved a spicy argument), so she elaborated:



A.F. Block (ca.1946)

Right, they felt that they had made the sacrifice and deserved the jobs, not that they weren't being discriminated against at work even if they had [them], because remember, in College Music Society they had a board, and the board consisted of all men except the secretary for the society. And she remained the secretary. Other people would move up and become available for higher positions.

Astonished, I brought up the incident of Ruth Crawford's exclusion from the first meeting of the New York Musicological Society. I wondered out loud, "What if Crawford had volunteered to take notes or shorthand?" Adrienne

laughed heartily, audibly slapping the table and exclaimed: "They would have let her in!"²²

Although Adrienne and Gideon did not meet until the 1970s, I was very interested in any direct contact between them—they were, after all, women involved with music in New York City and certainly crossed paths on numerous occasions. Adrienne smiled and said:

Well, I had known about [Gideon] of course because we had been in touch with her, as we had been with all living women composers to get lists of works and dates. And of course what we discovered was that [the composers] knew nothing about these things and were as vague as could be about it, and were the least responsible about this kind of thing very often. Mostly they didn't care, so we had to pin them down. It took a little doing!

With that, she gave another laugh and continued.

When my kids were at Central Synagogue, the woman who was in charge of music there was also in charge of music at Hunter High School where both were. And so we played a piece [of Gideon's], the three of us, Linda on flute, and Barbara on cello, and I played piano... I was [also] conducting a chorus, and we did a couple of her earlier works, the madrigals, which were lovely... Everybody loved the works.

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On Music and Margins (continued)

At this point I asked if the singers had taken well to the pieces, and she replied:

Yes, well particularly in this period—these were early pieces. And interestingly, I had to go to the American Composers Alliance to get them, because they were not available anywhere, and they were not published, and they were very, very hard to find. They had to give us copies. Is that what you've found?

This question had the effect of initiating me as a colleague, as a fellow seeker of undersung works by women; pieces that were difficult to find but wonderful to put into practice. At this point, we really began to speak about women and music, and some of the more troubling issues associated with this branch of musicological research. I warily asked if in her experience, Adrienne had encountered any situations where composers had essentially written themselves into the musical score. She didn't hesitate to answer:

Well, I found it was true with Beach. She herself said... that important experiences... go underground, in your psyche, and then come up in places where you don't even recognize it.³ And then I connected that with the piano concerto, because I felt that the piano was a loaded, loaded issue in her life, [because] she was prevented from becoming a concert artist... So that when she wrote a piano concerto it became what it becomes in many concertos, a contest between the pianist and the orchestra. And so I traced the way I thought it was a contest and what seemed to be happening in the music using her quotation about autobiography in music and the whole history that I knew of her relationship to the piano and the frustrations, although she always put a good face on things, you know. And like a lady, you don't whine and complain about things.

Adrienne's turn of phrase reminded me of the frank acceptance with which Gideon spoke about her opera, and specifically the fact that it was never produced. Gideon had noted in a 1979 interview, "It's many years since I composed a piece without knowing who would perform it, except for a short opera I wrote just because I felt like it. That was a reckless sparring with Fate. It hasn't as yet been produced."⁴ As Adrienne might have put it, Gideon wasn't whining or complaining that her opera had not fared as she had hoped; she simply accepted it as fate. Answers to sticky issues seemed always to emanate from someone among Adrienne's circle of colleagues, so she brought in the experience of composer and conductor Victoria Bond.

I'm thinking of my friend Victoria... She recently wrote an opera about Victoria Woodhall called *Mrs. Satan*... Now there was another [opera], New York City Opera did a reading... But to get an opera mounted, produced, is just extraordinarily difficult for anybody, let alone women. And unless you have a track record... So how do you get the track record? She spent a couple of years writing [the opera], and then she couldn't do other things, and here it sits. Unproduced... Well, and it also means that you don't write the next opera. The same thing can be said about symphonies. They're not as difficult to get readings of, but at the same time, when you invest in a large-scale work that involves an expensive production, either a symphony or an opera, and then you don't get a performance, then people say, well, she has a lightweight resume. One opera, one symphony, you know....

Later, Adrienne would allude to this moment in our conversation, emphasizing the importance of scholarly editions of works by women.

Finally, I sensed that I had taken up a great deal of Adrienne's time, so I asked if she had anything more for the record, whereupon she laughed and said:

No, I just wanted to go back to the issue that troubled me so much, of women not wanting to be identified as women composers... I had my own experience with it. I was doing some choral conducting and I, somehow I got the idea that when I'm up there conducting that gender has nothing to do with it. And then one day I realized that I'm the only one in the world who looks at me and sees that [i.e., doesn't see a woman conductor].

I said, "Because you're the only one who sees you from the inside out." Adrienne continued, "Yeah. And... that this is my relationship to music. It's not my relationship to my husband or my children, but it's my relationship to music and it has nothing to do with gender. And I thought, 'Oh!'" I wondered if that had been a kind of epiphany for her in her writing, as well, and Adrienne said:

It was, in a way, although having been involved with the bibliography, *Women in American Music*, I was thoroughly aware of the issue... Maybe not at a personal level, but also, what I was aware of is that some women did not want to be included in the bibliography, because they didn't want to be identified as just one of all these women....

I related that Gideon had expressed similar misgivings in her writings, and Adrienne replied:

Well, there's a complication; it wasn't just the case of society seeing women as second rate, but women saw it, that they were second rate, and it somehow became a self-fulfilling prophecy for a while. I don't know, but I have a feeling that a very significant change is taking place.

As I reflect on these comments now, it seems that the dismantling of margins must happen on both sides of the line, from within and without. A final definition of "margin" presents just this kind of forward-looking idea: "A region or point of transition between states, epochs... ; a moment in time when some change or occurrence is imminent."⁵ Adrienne had it right all along.

—Brooklyn College

Notes

¹ "margin, n." OED Online. September 2009. Oxford University Press. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/>> accessed 17 September 2009.

² For a full account of Crawford's perspective on that meeting, see Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 122.

³ Block was paraphrasing Beach, quoted in Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian: The Life and Works of an American Composer 1867-1944* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 132.

⁴ Bernard and Deena Rosenberg, *The Music Makers* (Columbia University Press, 1979), 67.

⁵ "margin, n." OED Online.

Music in Gotham

By John Graziano

For the past eight years, *Music in Gotham* has been the main thrust of my work with Adrienne. The project grew and changed direction several times, though our basic goal—to document musical events in Manhattan for a thirteen-year period, from Fall 1862 through August 1875—never veered from our original plan.

Music in Gotham was originally a continuation of Vera Brodsky Lawrence's two massive volumes on the music of nineteenth-century New York up to 1862. In the fall of 1999, I offered a doctoral seminar on music in New York from 1860 to 1880. During the first half of the semester, the students, using a single newspaper as their source, would produce a chronology that listed all musical events that were mentioned, in ads, announcements, and reviews, in the paper for their assigned year. As I was planning the seminar, I was acutely aware that there were many lacunae in my knowledge of this period. One day I mentioned my concern to Adrienne, who volunteered to prepare a few lectures. As I described the structure of the class, she decided that she would like to participate in the entire seminar, and we agreed that she would co-teach the course, unofficially, since she was not yet a member of the graduate faculty.

By the end of the semester, we had chronologies for all but two of the years. The following semester, one of our students, Christopher Bruhn, researched the two missing years. At that point, Adrienne and I began to plot how these interesting chronologies could be turned into the continuation of Vera's decades-long project. Adrienne received a National Endowment for the Humanities Scholars grant, and as she was beginning her research, she was approached by Mary Simonson, a Rutgers undergraduate, who wished to work for her as an intern. Mary was assigned the job of transcribing the diaries of George Templeton Strong and several other musical figures held at the New York Historical Society.

By Fall 2001, Adrienne was a faculty member here at the Graduate Center, and we realized we needed to examine other New York newspapers to have a fuller understanding of the musical scene. From 2002 to 2007, supported by the NEH, research assistants ferreted out the ads, articles, announcements, and reviews from the New York Public Library. We started with four newspapers and *Dwight's Journal of Music*, but found there were other sources, including the daily French and German papers, that contained unique information.

Over these past eight years, even in its incomplete state, the data we've collected provided Adrienne and me with an abundance of topics to write about. Her last published paper, "Matinee Madness," is derived almost entirely from our data. For our projected narrative, we split the genres between us. I concentrated on opera, minstrelsy, vaudeville, and musical theater, and Adrienne worked on symphonic, chamber, and choral music, as well as ethnicity and gender issues. *Music in Gotham's* data have been an important source for some of our research assistants as well; two dissertations, Jill Van Nostrand's on minstrelsy and Javier Albo's

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Always Reaching for More: Dr. Block and Life-Long Learning

By Jonas Westover

Adrienne Fried Block never stopped. This was one of her most impressive qualities as scholar and also as teacher, the two ways I knew her best. Dr. Block was always interested in researching new topics and ideas, as well as delving further into areas she already understood. Her dedication to her work provided a scholarly model for the rest of my life. Somewhat to my chagrin, this means I will never retire. As Dr. Block was fond of saying, there is always more to learn.

I was introduced to Dr. Block by the CUNY Graduate Center's Administrative Assistant Peg Rivers in the Fall 2004. By this time, Dr. Block and John Graziano were hard at work in the offices of *Music in Gotham*, and, purely by chance, they were looking for a German translator for the nineteenth-century newspaper, the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*. My knowledge of German was sufficient to do translation, but when Dr. Block first showed me the pages of the paper, I was surprised to see what appeared to be nearly microscopic-sized lettering in the old German font, Fraktur. I had never worked with German under these circumstances, and I almost immediately declined the offer of a job on that basis. However, I knew scholarship is rarely easy, or convenient, and I decided that however terrified I was of working with the materials, the opportunity to work for *Gotham* was too important to pass up. I could quickly tell that both Dr. Block and Dr. Graziano were eager to get to work on the German materials, and at that point, nobody really knew what the *Staats-Zeitung* would offer.

Only a few weeks into my work it became apparent that this newspaper was valuable; not only would it be one of the most important sources for commentary on the musical life of all New York, but, quite simply, the material from the *Staats-Zeitung* increased the total chronology for each month that the project covered by nearly half. It appears that the German musicians were possibly the most prolific in New York at the time, and it was they who changed the musical life of the city forever, especially when it came to the inclusion of—as Dr. Block was fond of saying—“serious music” at various venues throughout the area. Especially key for the Germans were the countless *Gesangvereins* and *Männerchors* based in all parts of New York City, including outer boroughs such as Brooklyn. Performances by these mostly all-male choruses represented a significant portion of the concerts Germans gave. The annual *Sängerfest*, a gigantic singing event held in various cities during the *Gotham* period, always provided plenty of pomp and spectacle, including shooting contests and huge give-aways. Dr. Block planned to specialize in choral music and its activities for the final narrative of *Gotham*, and so she was especially fond of hearing about any related material emerging from the *Staats-Zeitung*.

It was during these moments of sharing information that I not only learned a great deal from Dr. Block, but was able to see how an experienced scholar reacted to information that was either unexpected or new. She took in every grain of information like it was a precious jewel; the look in her eyes when any of the researchers reported new findings was similar to an archaeologist finding a new artifact that helps clarify the cultural puzzle of the time. These instances, which I fondly refer to as “Indiana Jones” moments, are what being a scholar is all about, and at *Music in Gotham* they could happen several times a week, sometimes even many times a day. I would email Dr. Block whenever I found a complete concert program that was particularly interesting or an event containing an unexpected type of performance. One of the most memorable occasions was the discovery of an extensive list of music teachers in New York who were advertising their services, their locations (which were sometimes private residences), their specialties, and even sometimes their prices. Among those listed were William Mason, Carl Bergmann, and the ever-present Theodore Thomas, all offering services as teachers as well as participating in the busy concert life of New York. Their advertisements were all in German, and made clear that the German community boasted some of the most serious students of classical music. After all, they were some of the best musicians themselves, and would not have wasted their time on purely amateur performers.

This significant find was one of many that excited Dr. Block about the project and what it could offer music scholarship in general; without the exhaustive analysis *Gotham* provided, such an important document like this list may have never come to light.

There were times when Dr. Block arrived at 9 am and stayed until 6 pm or later, simply because she was engaged in a thoughtful conversation about an important musicological subject. It was usually here that she imparted wise comments to those of us who were *Gotham* researchers. She always made time in her life to look at and comment on a student's paper for a conference or a final paper for a seminar. She was never overly blunt in her teaching and was sensitive to a student's needs and abilities. Her gentle guidance facilitated and accelerated the learning process.

Dr. Block's age never impacted her work ethic or output. Even though she was of my grandmother's generation, a fact she did not like to be reminded of, her devotion to her projects showed no signs of aging or stagnating. The thing that was important was the scholarship itself—the idea that learning never ended, no matter what your stage in life. The pure joy she experienced while discovering new information and new



A.F. Block (ca.1942)

Sage Counselor and Advisor

By Jennifer CHJ Wilson

Petite in stature, but formidable in historical gaze, Dr. Block was influential in my academic journey at the CUNY Graduate Center. During my tenure as a research assistant at *Music in Gotham*, she was incredibly generous with her time and would often read and comment on graduate students' papers. In one of my first courses, a seminar on blackface minstrelsy taught by *Gotham* co-director John Graziano, I incorporated the detail and depth of their research methodology. With an index of performances in Lynchburg, Virginia as my guide, I combed the newspapers of the southern city where I grew up in search of any and all minstrel shows. I knew that I would find something, but I was unprepared for how it would impact me as a developing scholar and researcher.

The result was a paper on blackface minstrelsy in the southern U.S. titled "(Re)Establishing Southern Patriotism: Professional and Amateur Minstrelsy in Lynchburg, VA."¹ None of my other research interests resonated on such a personal level. Of course, minstrelsy had been widely popular in Lynchburg, but the degree to which I could still identify racist elements in the community took me by surprise.

Coming from a biracial background, my first memories of racial confusion occurred when we moved to Lynchburg during my middle-school years. I remember being in the guidance counselor's office when my mother was registering me for the seventh grade. The African-American counselor asked my Chinese mother how to "classify" me. "Caucasian?" she asked, and my mom agreed. At the time, I was neither savvy enough, nor really bothered enough by this designation to question the choice because the term had the word "Asian" within it. I just erroneously surmised that it referred to my ethnic mix. I soon came to understand the distinctions in the categories, and since then I have checked the blank for "Other" and written in "Amerasian." Although devastating racial slights did not jade my teenage years, I was not immune from them, and when I left for college, I understood the difference between being from some place, and a product of some place.

In researching blackface minstrelsy, I had not anticipated this aspect of scholarship—one that tweaked a close and deep nerve. I knew that being a scholar meant having a personal stake in one's topic, but not to the extent I was experiencing. Social advocacy had not made it into my

realm of scholarly possibility. Taken aback by my intense response to this research subject, I asked myself, "How do I write about this when I have lived in the community of this experience?" The dark, lingering strains of racial bias in the southern city where I was raised were haunting. Furthermore, my parents still lived in Lynchburg, and I did not want to vilify the place where I knew positive social forces existed.

I took my anxieties to Dr. Block. She read my paper, and listened to me agonize over how to write objectively about this material. In her usual Socratic manner, Dr. Block proceeded to probe my issues. The ensuing frank conversation was key to processing the material. I came to understand where I could insert or remove myself from the prose so I could feel confident in my relationship with the work and not exposed and raw.



A.F. Block (ca.1971)

Dr. Block shared with me her own research journey with Amy Beach. While meticulously examining the world of the "Passionate Victorian," Dr. Block encountered evidence of anti-Semitism and misogyny permeating the culture of the time. I remember her succinctly saying these issues would take generations to be expunged from society because they were "bred in the bone."

We discussed methods of writing that would let the material speak for itself, exposing the argument for the reader. This elegant, straightforward approach exemplified Dr. Block.

With her sage counsel and astute advice, Dr. Block helped me realize that by revealing the unpleasant aspects of our historical research, we as scholars can expose, account for, and move beyond them.

—The Graduate Center, CUNY

Notes

¹ Forthcoming as "(Re)Establishing Southern Patriotism: Professional and Amateur Minstrelsy in Lynchburg, Virginia," in *Music, American Made: Essays in Honor of John Graziano*, co-edited by John Koegel and Jonas Westover (Harmonie Park Press, 2010).

California Polyphony and Identity

The first two words of the title *California Polyphony: Ethnic Voices, Musical Crossroads* (University of Illinois Press, 2008) capture both the subject and the approach of Mina Yang's compelling new study that features the many musics of California and their histories. A combination of perspectives from musicology, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies results in a series of vignettes of several sub-cultural musical communities. As Yang traces their development, these groups and their musics become intertwined in a polyphonous history. In its 139 pages the book contains no images of people as representative of the state's music-making. Instead, Yang subtly challenges her readers to consider just text with a few musical examples to envision their own image of California's musical identity.

The first chapter presents California's fraught history from the gold rush in the mid-nineteenth century, to the state's response to Asian and Mexican immigration in the early-twentieth century, and the emergence of an elite California musical aesthetic in the first half of the twentieth century. As a counterpoint to the mainstream culture presented in this opening section, each subsequent chapter offers a snapshot of a musical subculture. Though the case studies are arranged in roughly chronological order, the overlap among them captures the multifarious California musical landscape. One of Yang's strengths is her ability to situate multiple artistic influences in the tangled web of California's musical identity without overwhelming the reader.

The first case study features four California composers: Henry Cowell, John Cage, Lou Harrison, and Harry Partch. Drawing on the frontier aspect of California's identity, the relationship among marginalized aspects of these composers and their musics—ultra-modern, homosexual, Californian, “Oriental”—are shown to align. Music scholars will find pleasure in Yang's close reading of each composer's music. Her analysis of Cage and Harrison's collaborative work *Double Music* (1941), for example, demonstrates the flexibility with which ultramodern composers use Asian music to assert their California identity. In this piece, both composers contribute two melodic lines resulting in a four-voiced polyphony. Each uses the same Asian instrumentation but their respective melodies remain independent; Cage states a two-measure motif and deconstructs it, while Harrison utilizes a short figure as an ostinato. The differences among these composers are the focus of Yang's interest. Citing Edward Said, she notes that “orientalist practices ultimately reveal more about the Western individual than any essential truths about the Orient.”

It is troubling that violence characterizes so much of the contact among the communities of this study. The theme of policing, introduced in the third chapter, joins up with later chapters to fully flesh out the history of violent events among race communities and how it played out in their music. Here, Yang draws a connec-

tion between the rise of the LAPD and the fall of Central Avenue, a Los Angeles street once lined with jazz clubs where African-American music thrived and people from across the race divide came to mingle in the 1940s. Of particular interest is the view “from the ground” by musicians such as Jimmy Witherspoon, a blues singer who performed at Club Alabam in the 1950s, and Miles Davis, who also played the Central Avenue area. Their perspectives paint a vibrant picture of a place where music once lived but has sadly since been silenced.

As a remedy for the dearth of female representation in the first two case studies, the next chapter addresses the link between the use of music in Hollywood-produced film noir and female moral transgressions. Using three films, *Double Indemnity* (1944), *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946), and *The Blue Gardenia* (1953), African-American music and portrayals of morality are shown to be connected. The strength of these examples lies in the opposition of classical and jazz music, and the variety of musical languages deployed to convey characters' personalities and intentions. In *Double Indemnity*, Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* is an inspiration for Miklós Rózsa's film score. As a counterpoint to the European Romanticism of the score, an African-American swing version of “Tangerine” depicts the true character of the seductress, Phyllis. Here, music proves a crucial aspect of exaggerated binaries—black/white, evil/good, female/male—that define the film noir genre.

As Yang acknowledges, the women in these films are exclusively white. Moreover, though the representation of women forms a central subject in this chapter, it also highlights their absence as participants in the music-making of the sub-cultural communities in this study. This book shows that minority populations play a key role in California's multi-layered identity. So where do women, especially minority women, fit into this concept?

The momentum generated from the previous material culminates in the final two chapters in which physical contact between communities once again brings forth artistic change. The penultimate chapter addresses the role of music in an evolving Chicano identity and differing perspectives on the mission myth. The romanticism of the text in Charles Lummis's transcriptions of the late nineteenth-century *corrido* (a form of Mexican ballad) stands in relief against the realism in those of Guillermo Hernández. In this story, the *corrido* becomes a musical manifestation of conflicting perspectives on the encounter between indigenous peoples and Europeans in late nineteenth-century California. Later, in the twentieth century, Eastside Rock testifies as a musical outlet for Chicano adolescent angst from the 1950s to the 1970s. Notably, this chapter makes no mention of mariachi or Latin popular music



Tiger JK, frontman for the the Korean-American Rap Group, Drunken Tiger

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Exploring Joni Mitchell's "Musical Toolkit"

Popular music scholars are finding that the gap in their literature lies not in biographic territories but in studies addressing the *music*. In this, we are at something of a disadvantage compared to our classically focused colleagues, who have the opportunity to build their work on that of past theorists and historians. The fledgling state of popular music studies may seem a hindrance, but it gives those of us inspired by the field's opportunities to plant our scholarly flags in fresh territory. Lloyd Whitesell's book *The Music of Joni Mitchell* (Oxford University Press, 2008) is the first work to tackle the poetic and musical aspects of Mitchell's oeuvre from a musicological perspective. He gives us the means to understand Mitchell's music, shows us her innovation, and provides several methodological options that can be combined or used separately for musical analysis.

In the Introduction, Whitesell packs in general information about Mitchell's writing style. He discusses the thorny undertaking of studying her work, given her predilection for stylistic experimentation over the decades of her musical output. Mitchell embraces an art song mentality one moment by implementing complex harmonic structures and careful vocal and instrumental techniques; at other times she uses rustic, folkish facility alongside simple harmonic structures. One text reads like carefully constructed poetic verse, another like a blue-collar conversation set in a dive bar. Whitesell refuses to privilege any approach over another, explicitly pledging not to make style-based judgment calls, and carrying out his promise by examining all of Mitchell's work with care and respect. He identifies qualities commonly associated with art and popular music and exposes how Mitchell's music rarely falls comfortably within either category. This revelation about the faux-boundaries and artificial hierarchies invites us to consider its ramifications for all popular music studies.

Whitesell's main chapters—"Sound and Style," "Voices and Personae," "Thematic Threads," "Harmonic Palette," "Melodic Turns," and "Collections and Cycles"—are meant to explore what he describes as Mitchell's "musical toolkit" and can be read in any order. A table harmonically categorizing the 152 songs Mitchell released between 1968 and 1998, along with an extensive bibliography, discography, and filmography, underscore the book's usefulness as a tool for those interested in further Mitchell research. Recordings are used as the primary texts for analysis, a decision based on the lack of manuscript materials because works are so often composed in the recording studio without sheet music.

Whitesell's one-subject approach has the benefit of teasing out individual characteristics of Mitchell's songs, permitting scholars exclusively interested in one feature of her music to locate pertinent information quickly. This organization loses the advantage of tracing Mitchell's artistic tools chronologically, but Whitesell points out that Mitchell constantly transformed her musical style, making an atemporal musical study appropriate.

Each of Whitesell's chapters is similarly arranged; he offers a few opening paragraphs explaining the purpose of isolating whichever aspect of Mitchell's songs he's chosen to investigate. By contrast, in "Voices and Personae," he explains terminology used later in the chapter, with definitions for words like mode, lyric, and political, as they pertain to poetry. Since *The Music of Joni Mitchell* is an interdisciplinary work—combining musicology with music theory and literary scholarship—this tactic will be much appreciated by scholars unfamiliar with any of the disciplines he accesses in his methodology. In other chapters, Whitesell divvies up main topics into subcategories depicted in Mitchell's music. For example, his chapter "Thematic Threads" identifies traps, quests, bohemia, talent, and flight as prominent themes in Mitchell's collective works. Each of these categories is given an explanation followed by pertinent examples of songs from different points in Mitchell's career. Whenever relevant, Whitesell also provides musical examples with analyses as comprehensible as his prose. His analytical methodologies are appropriately tailored to each piece depending largely on the tonal or modal systems within which the pieces are situated, and he avoids using Roman numerals. This approach prevents mistakenly assigning inadequate or false functionalities to harmonic progressions and melodies.



Joni Mitchell

The Music of Joni Mitchell is something of a primer on which further Mitchell scholarship can be built. It will prove valuable to popular music scholars looking for an example of how to approach analysis of artists who go through multiple stylistic phases (i.e., Cher, Madonna, and Michael Jackson) or artists who evade traditional categorization (i.e., Björk and Radiohead). Well-organized chapters, unpretentious writing, and avoidance of unnecessary academic jargon make the book accessible to undergraduate music students while innovative poetic and musical analyses are useful for advanced music scholars. This should be a must read for anyone teaching a class on twentieth-century U.S. popular music.

—Rachael C. Brungard
The Graduate Center, CUNY

Breathing Life into Biography

Because the scholarship available on Pauline Oliveros has not paralleled the impact of her work, Martha Mockus's *Sounding Out: Pauline Oliveros and Lesbian Musicality* (Routledge Press, 2008) is an essential addition to those seeking an in-depth analysis of the pieces and details of the composer's biography. These contributions in and of themselves should be celebrated; but the creative, non-positivist approach that Mockus applies chips away at one of the major myths of musicological inquiry: that a composer's biography and her music must always be separate entities when it comes to analysis.

Mockus employs a kind of respiratory form in her book, enabling the reader to intellectually inhale and exhale throughout the activity of reading, and paralleling the meditative state upon which Oliveros places so much importance in her own writing. Chapters one through five possess titles that sound like incantations: "Intonation," which transforms to "Amplification," followed by "Meditation," "Respiration," and "Conversation." When combined, these chapters follow a woman-centered routine that might be the format of a meeting by Oliveros's women-only ensemble at UCLA. Although the naming of the chapters is but the tip of the theoretical iceberg, it is indicative of the author's primary intention: to "sound out" the place of lesbian sexuality, community and emotion in analysis of Oliveros's life and works. As Oliveros herself states, "Mockus's insights provide previously unknown connections to my music, and she probes the feeling level in music that theorists often leave untouched" (i). The form of the book includes "echoes" of repeated text, reflecting the circular nature of Oliveros's compositions and spheres of personal and professional influence.

Using a feminist mode of inquiry throughout the book, Mockus relies not on chronology, but rather on the detailing of emotional events to breathe life into the biographical details and analyses. Early on, Mockus invites us into an intimate conversation with Oliveros about sexual awakenings, which foregrounds sexuality as a key to the theoretical basis of the book. Shortly thereafter, the author outlines a theory of "lesbian musicality" that will frame her close readings of the pieces touched on in subsequent chapters: "My approach to conceptualizing the relationship between sexuality and composition explores how lesbian subjectivity functions for Oliveros as a productive source of energy, ideas, creativity, and possibility" (9). Mockus also references Terry Castle's work on lesbian embodiment as apparition, and Suzanne Cusick's writing on queer modes of listening.

Thus, the first chapter, "Intonation," literally sets the theoretical tone for the rest of the book, outlining the methodology and, in essence, coming out of the writerly closet about the straightforwardly lesbian approach Mockus has taken to her exploration of Oliveros as person and composer. The following chapter, "Amplification," delves deeply into three electronic pieces from the 1960s: *Time Perspectives*, *Bye Bye Butterfly*, and *I of IV*. Mockus intertwines interviews with archival materials, close readings, and feminist literature in order

to fully unpack the pieces she has selected for analysis from among Oliveros's large oeuvre of electronic works. Oliveros's personal comments regarding her fascination with radio static and sounds outside the normal range of hearing provide a sonic framework for understanding and listening to these works. While Mockus's discussions of *Time Perspectives* and *Bye Bye Butterfly* are enlightening and amply contextualized, it is within her detailed and multivalent analysis of *I of IV* that the theoretical framework she has established in Chapter One becomes inseparable from any coherent reading of the piece. We need to understand Oliveros to fully grasp the musical text, and Mockus helps us along the way.



Pauline Oliveros

The 1970s found Oliveros making improvised music among women in settings both personal and political. Chapter Three, "Meditation," explores the relationships and activism associated with some of Oliveros's best-known works from the *Sonic Meditations* (1971-74). Far from a repetition of Oliveros's own writings on these pieces, Mockus's chapter amplifies Oliveros's text with snippets of archival research, including specific notes from rehearsals of the all-female ensemble that first performed the pieces, and letters about the ensemble and Oliveros's intentions for it. Mockus links the consciousness-raising groups of early second wave feminism with the women's improvisation group that Oliveros ran for graduate students at UCLA. Yet Oliveros concedes in her letters that, in spite of her UCLA ensemble, she did not belong to a professional women's music collective or group of any kind, and felt like an outsider of that particular movement by virtue of her musical "differences."

In the fourth chapter, "Respiration," Mockus selects a number of pieces that she labels "musical valentines," all of which are works that Oliveros composed in connection with particular romantic relationships. This is the most personal of the chapters, delving into difficult beginnings and endings of affairs; but Mockus skillfully writes about pieces—works spanning from 1975 to 1985—which insist on the disclosure of biographical detail. In keeping with the respiratory form of the book, we as readers need to have inhaled the previous chapters in order to breath our way through Mockus's in-depth analyses of these understudied pieces.

The final chapter, "Conversations," provides a varied and contrapuntal array of interviews, letters, and emails, all essential primary sources for further research on Oliveros and her pieces. Though Mockus did not attempt to write an exhaustive biography or analyze each and every work by this composer, what she has produced provides a much-needed theoretical framework for further study, while inextricably linking Oliveros's biography with her musical output.

—Stephanie Jensen-Moulton
Brooklyn College

Institute News

(continued)

Orleans. In November the Institute's own Ray Allen gave us a tantalizing glimpse of what to expect from his book *Gone to the Country: The New Lost City Ramblers and the Urban Folk Music Revival*, due out in 2010 from University of Illinois Press. And in December, Guthrie P. Ramsey of the University of Pennsylvania (and Institute Advisory Board member) offered a book preview of his work *In Walked Bud: Earl "Bud" Powell and the Modern Jazz Challenge*, forthcoming from University of California Press. My one regret about this talk is that we didn't have a piano available for Dr. Ramsey to offer up a few choruses of "Tempus Fugue-it"!

Finally, for the second year running the Institute has received a generous grant from the CUNY Office of Recruitment and Diversity to support a collaboration with the Central Brooklyn Jazz Consortium, as part of their annual Brooklyn Jazz Festival. Composer, saxophonist, and scholar Fred Ho will be leading his ensemble in works by legendary Brooklyn trumpeter and composer Cal Massey. Ho's ensemble will be joined by the Brooklyn College Jazz Band, under the directorship of our own Salim Washington. They will perform Massey's epic work, *The Black Liberation Suite* (1972).

—J.T.

Music in Gotham

(continued)

on the reception of Chopin in New York, have mined our data. Between 2004 and 2008, *Music in Gotham* sponsored four conferences; expanded versions of the papers from our first conference, which I edited, were published as *European Music and Musicians in New York City, 1850-1900* (University of Rochester Press, 2006). A second book, derived from our January 2008 conference, which includes articles by both of us, is currently being edited by John Spitzer; we hope it will be published by the end of 2010.

Over the years, we have championed the uniqueness of this project. We were the first to document musical events in such detail; in fact, some scholars in other disciplines have claimed that *Music in Gotham* is amassing too much data—that such depth is not needed to reach an understanding of a historical period. But Adrienne would have none of that. As she explained, with that well-known twinkle in her eyes and trademark excitement in her voice, we were changing the way scholars will view history. Most importantly, the database, now limited to chronicling Manhattan, was a model that would be used to document musical events in multiple urban centers across the country, and perhaps even in Europe, leading to a wider contextual understanding of how music, musicians, and audiences were part of the cultural fabric of Western music.

—The Graduate Center, CUNY

Friends, Mothers, and Scholarship

(continued)

She was a warm, giving person, much concerned about others, and particularly involved in helping younger women musicians through their organizations and directly as a loving friend (x).

And yet another:

What made the last few years of her life more than bearable—indeed joyful—were the many friends who visited with her, joined her for lunch or dinner, for concerts and theater, or just to talk, a social schedule that continued the pattern established long before. It was a rare day when she was alone (291).

Those excerpts scarcely require comment. Adrienne's friends and colleagues gained much from those same qualities from her energetic capacity to cultivate old friendships and generate new ones.

And finally, here are Adrienne's reflections on her relationship to Beach:

This biographer hopes she has neither diminished Amy Beach nor blown her up to superwoman size but rather shown her as a fallible girl and woman who exhibited courage in the face of obstacles, the possessor of enough strength to tackle the most challenging musical tasks (298).

This final segment couldn't provide a better epitaph for Adrienne herself.

Janet Beizer writes of how women, as biographers of women, tell "a double story"—that they are "...implicated in the biography," that "...they create alter-egos." Indeed, Adrienne built an intensely close relationship to Amy Beach at the same time as she approached the task with critical acumen and as an activist, seeking to claim for Beach the respectful position in narratives of music history that this gifted composer had earned but been denied.

Perhaps I am most grateful for the example she provided of treating one's professional and personal life as an intensely integrated organism—of achieving synchronicity between one's relationships with family and friends and the work that brings such deep satisfaction. Adrienne embodied "Wissenschaft," a German term well-known to musicologists, denoting scientific rigor. She was also a model of grace as a writer, of loving good sense as a mother, and of loyalty as a friend. I said those things to her in various ways over the years. Yet, as can so often be the case while life races by, I wish I had done so more often. I feel certain, though, that she knew the degree to which her high standards and sheer gumption helped pave the way for women of my generation—and those younger than me—to reach for the stars.

—Harvard University

Remembering Our Singing Scholars

Over the summer of 2009 the discipline of American music lost two of its favorite sons, Horace Boyer and Mike Seeger. At first glance they appeared to travel very different roads. One was black, the other white. One became a champion of African-American gospel music, the other of Appalachian mountain traditions. One worked his way through the academy to establish himself as a leader in the field of African-American music studies; the other rejected his parents' academic pedigree, leaving college to pursue a career as a folk musician. But both were among America's most eminent singing scholars, sharing a common mission to bring recognition and appreciation to southern vernacular music.

Horace Clarence Boyer was born on 28 July 1935 in Winter Park, Florida, where his father was pastor of the Faith Holy Temple Church of God in Christ. As a teenager he and his older brother James formed a gospel group, the Boyer Brothers, and together they enjoyed a successful career touring and recording in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1952 the duo recorded Horace's original piece, "Step by Step." Featuring the seventeen-year-old's soaring tenor, the song has endured as a gospel favorite (check it out on YouTube.com).

Boyer went on to earn a BA degree from Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida, and a Doctorate from the Eastman School of Music, where he wrote one of the first scholarly treatments of black gospel music for his dissertation. Embarking on a career as a music educator, he taught at Albany State College in Georgia and the University of Central Florida at Orlando before joining the faculty at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1973 where he remained until his retirement in 1999. Through his teaching, writing, and choral demonstrations, Boyer became a pioneer in the study and promotion of black church music, receiving many honors, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for American Music shortly before his passing. His most important work, *How Sweet the Sound: The Golden Age of Gospel* (Elliot and Clark Publishing Co., 1995), remains the most thorough scholarly survey of post-War gospel music written from an insider's perspective.

In 1992 Boyer was invited to spend a semester teaching and writing as a Senior Research Fellow at Brooklyn College's Institute for Studies in American Music. In 1994, shortly after I arrived at Brooklyn College, Boyer returned to host a gospel festival. I was bowled over by the man's energy and charisma. On stage or in the classroom his passion for the music was infectious. All present were immediately part of Dr. Boyer's gospel choir—it didn't matter if you were black or white; a conservatory student or vocal novice; a Christian, Jew, or agnostic. He made everyone feel welcome.

Even an angst-ridden, lapsed Presbyterian like me couldn't help beaming after leaving a gospel presentation by Horace Boyer.

~ ~ ~

Born in New York City on 15 August 1933, **Michael Seeger** was a member of the clan that would eventually be christened America's first family of folk music. His father Charles was one of the most prominent musicologists of his generation; his mother Ruth Crawford Seeger a leading ultra-modernist composer and folk music scholar; his half-brother Pete an iconic figure of the urban folk music revival; and his sister Peggy an influential writer and performer of women's folk song. Although he had no direct



Mike Seeger (ca.1958), Photo by John Cohen

contact with southern music or culture as a youngster, he and his sisters grew up immersed in the folk music field recordings that his parents were transcribing for the renowned collector Alan Lomax. These early childhood experiences left an indelible mark on young Seeger. He dropped out of George Washington University, taught himself to play guitar, banjo, fiddle, mandolin, and autoharp, and embarked on a life-long journey to document and perform the folk music of the southern Appalachians.

As a soloist and member of the popular folk trio the New Lost City Ramblers, Seeger recorded more than thirty LPs and CDs, five of which were nominated for Grammy Awards. But just as important, he compiled several dozen documentary recordings of southern vocal and instrumental music, each accompanied by meticulous liner notes about the musicians, music style, and historical sources for the material. His 1997 Folkways release, *Close to Home*, serves as a superb introduction to southern folk music and features many of the artists he located and helped promote, including

Maybelle Carter, the Stoneman Family, Elizabeth Cotton, Clarence Tom Ashley, Dock Boggs, Eck Robertson, and the trio Arthur Smith and the McGee Brothers. Seeger was made a Lifetime Member of the Society for American Music in 2003, and won the 2009 National Endowment for the Arts Bess Lomax Hawes Award in recognition of his contributions to the preservation and awareness of cultural heritage. He lectured and performed at numerous colleges, and was Artist-in-Residence at the College of William and Mary in 2003.

I first met Seeger in the fall of 2001, at a conference honoring Ruth Crawford Seeger that Ellie Hisama and I organized for the Hitchcock Institute and the CUNY Graduate Center. I was immediately struck by the intensity of his advocacy for traditional music, a cause he had been pursuing for nearly half a century. Over the next eight years we developed a close working friendship as I researched and wrote a book about the New Lost City Ramblers. I made many visits to his rambling farm house outside of Lexington,

Our Singing Scholars

(continued)

Virginia, where I would have to tear him away from practicing or working on his latest documentary project to talk about his life and music. I quickly came to appreciate why his old friend and colleague Ralph Rinzler characterized him as “a guided missile with a missionary zeal for traditional music.” Bob Dylan put it another way in his 2004 memoir *Chronicles Volume One*. After hearing Seeger play so many instruments and master a dizzying array of traditional styles in the early 1960s, young Dylan concluded: “The thought occurred to me that I’d have to write my own folk songs, ones that Mike didn’t know.”

Despite their devotion to southern music, I don’t think Boyer and Seeger ever collaborated, and I don’t know if their paths ever crossed. But I do believe that if there is any singing going on “Over Yonder,” as an old spiritual promised, you can bet these two singing scholars have joined the band.

—R.A.

California Polyphony and Identity

(continued)

forms, leaving room for future contributions with respect to other musical genres.

The final chapter assesses the contact between African-American and Korean-American communities in California. Though this case study centers on the musical exchange that comes out from inter-ethnic conflict, the discussion includes a diversity of source material. Music in Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing* and quotations from internet forums on the authenticity of Korean-American hip-hop artist Jamez and Korean-American rap group Drunken Tiger reveal that musical aspects of identity can be facilitated through non-musical means. These two final chapters account for multiple points of contact between cultures and the ensuing tension from the cultural and physical push and pull among groups.

None of these case studies seeks to answer all of the questions one might ask about California’s musical communities. There are no neatly wrapped conclusions; loose ends are left untied. Their unfinished nature, however, reflects the impossibility of studying identity within the clean boundaries of a book chapter and inspires future work on these communities and the issues raised by their case studies. Ultimately, Yang successfully demonstrates that many elements can and must be taken into account when addressing the formation of any modern musical identity. Though the book’s subject matter is not always hopeful, Yang concludes with a call for action—*California Polyphony* should be read as a challenge to take up complicated issues of musical identity in our future scholarship.

—Lucille Mok
Harvard University

Catherine Parsons Smith

(1933-2009)

Professor Emerita at the University of Nevada, Reno, author of influential books and articles on music in the United States, and accomplished flutist, Catherine Parsons Smith passed away on 1 September 2009 after a struggle with cancer.

After focusing primarily on French flute music of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, Smith turned her attention to music in the U.S. She published books and articles on composers Mary Carr Moore and William Grant Still, providing the impetus for her broader, groundbreaking study of music in Los Angeles from the 1880s to the 1940s. Four important books resulted from this work: *Mary Carr Moore, American Composer* (coauthored with Cynthia S. Richardson, University of Michigan Press, 1987), *William Grant Still: A Study in Contradictions* (University of California Press, 2000), *William Grant Still* (University of Illinois Press, 2008), and most importantly *Making Music in Los Angeles: Transforming the Popular* (University of California Press, 2007). In this last work she not only brought together the major strands of her research over more than two decades, but also placed music in the context of the social, political, and economic tensions of a rapidly growing young metropolis.

Smith will be sorely missed by our community of American music scholars. She served as a model through her dedication to scholarship and teaching, her enthusiasm for new ideas, her respect and support for the work of others, and her overriding decency and kindness. She is survived by a loving family as well, including popular music historian Paul Charosh, her partner of ten years; three children by her marriage to Ross Smith; and five grandchildren.

—Leta Miller
University of California, Santa Cruz

Life-Long Learning

(continued)

ways of thinking—even if she did not agree with others’ particular thoughts—remains an inspiration for me. I am truly honored to have known Dr. Block—her fastidiousness, her tenacity, and the great happiness she received from learning throughout her life are elements I will try to keep alive in my own work. She would, I hope, feel that continuing to do work that is held to the utmost standards of scholarship is one of the highest honors a student can offer a teacher.

—The Graduate Center, CUNY

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Horace Clarence Boyer, 1935-2009

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