

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
• OF THE •
AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Fall Meeting

October 10, 2026

California State University, Fullerton

Program

All events held in Clayer Performing Arts Center, Room 254

8:30am–9:15am Registration / Breakfast Reception

9:15am–10:15am **Session I – Politics and Intermedia Creativity in Latin America**
Chair: TBD

“Gabriela Montero’s Creative Dissent Improvisations on Venezuela: Promoting Human Rights and Democracy in the Digital Age”

*Hermann Hudde (University of California, Riverside,
and California State University, Fullerton)*

“Two Salvadoran Requiems Across Two Media”

Cesar Favila (University of California, Los Angeles)

10:15am–10:30am **Break**

10:30am–11:45am **Keynote Lecture**

“Mapping the Terrain: Ibero-American Musicology Then, Now, and Always”

Walter Aaron Clark (University of California, Riverside)

Introduced by John Koegel (California State University, Fullerton)

11:45am–12:45pm Lunch Break

12:45pm–2:15pm **Session II – The People’s Voice in the Colony and Nation**
Chair: TBD

“Beethoven Visits Padre Soler: Leo Brouwer's *Sonata No. 1* and the Unfinished Argument of Ariel”

Gabe Bustamante (University of California, Irvine)

"In Search of Antero: California Indian Agency, Mission Santa Bárbara, and Mexican California, 1821–1846"

Bernard Gordillo Brockmann (University of California, Riverside)

"'Everybody's Doin' It Now': The Yiddish Operetta and Jewish Cultural Nationalism"

Daniela Smolov Levy (Occidental College and University of California, Los Angeles)

2:15pm–2:30pm **Break**

2:30pm–3:30pm **Session III – What the Kids Want to Hear?**

Chair: TBD

"What is 'Hyperpop?': Spotify and The Commodification of a Musical Genre"

Lily Shababi (University of California, Los Angeles)

"Humorous Sonic Performance and Dissonant Audience Address in Children's Video Game Let's Plays"

Molly Hennig (University of California, Los Angeles)

3:30pm–4:30pm **Session IV – The Meanings of Guitar Sounds**

Chair: Stephen S. Hudson (Occidental College)

"You Will Be Sound: Guitar Timbre, Techniques, and Technology in *Dear Evan Hansen*"

Andrew Ginzel (University of Southern California)

"Surface *Texxtures*: Queer Identification and Material Traces at the Body-Instrument Border"

Erin Fitzpatrick (California State University, Northridge)

4:30pm–5:00pm Business meeting (all PSC-AMS members are invited to attend)

5:00pm–6:00pm Reception

Chapter Officers

Joel Haney – President Stephen S. Hudson – Vice President

João Martins – Secretary John Koegel – Treasurer

Jessica Getman – Faculty Representative to the AMS Council (2025–27)

Andrew Ginzel – Student Representative to the AMS Council (2026–28)

Kate Hamori – Student Representative to the AMS Council (2025–27)

A special thanks to the California State University, Fullerton for hosting our meeting, and to Randall Goldberg and Vivianne Asturizaga (CSUF) who have organized local arrangements.

Abstracts

Abstracts are listed in the order that they appear on the program.

"Gabriela Montero's Creative Dissent Improvisations on Venezuela: Promoting Human Rights and Democracy in the Digital Age"

Hermann Hudde (University of California, Riverside, and California State University, Fullerton)

Gabriela Montero is a world-renowned pianist and political activist who has revisited and revitalized the art of improvisation in Western art music. While the Internet contains videos of Montero improvisations for audiences all over the world, depicting a variety of musical styles or themes, such as the "Harry Potter Theme," or "Amazing Grace," there is a completely different selection of improvisations focusing on the political situation in Venezuela. Montero, who belongs to a group of musicians who have been engaged in human rights activism, has displayed an active persona as a political activist during the dictatorship initiated by Hugo Chávez (1951-2013) and maintained by Nicolás Maduro (1962). As such, Montero has actively utilized social media platforms including *YouTube*, *Facebook*, and *X* (former *Twitter*) to record and distribute her improvisations concerning the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis. Montero's improvisations represent a discourse about ethics, human rights, democracy, and freedom. Throughout this article, I aim to demonstrate Montero's use of cultural activism, glossing, intertextuality, and dialogism in her improvisations to articulate a political discourse in cyberspace. In the same manner, this article explores how Montero's improvisations on Venezuela function as a healing ritual for her and her followers in cyberspace. In summary, this article examines Gabriela Montero's musical construction of symbolic meaning as a discourse and maintains a sense of belonging and memory to Venezuela by reimagining the art of improvisation and transforming it into a political discourse about human rights and democracy in Venezuela.

"Two Salvadoran Requiems Across Two Media"

Cesar Favila (University of California, Los Angeles)

Carlos Colón's musical compositions and the visual artwork of Guadalupe Maravilla respond directly to the violence that these artists fled from their native El Salvador during the 1980s civil war. This paper brings their work to broader scholarly attention using oral history, including interviews with both artists, music performance and analysis of Colón's "Requiem: Las Lamentaciones de Rufina Amaya" (dedicated to one of the few survivors of the massacre at El Mozote), and by drawing on the iconography of Maravilla's "Requiem for My Border Crossing." Although both artists work across very different art forms, both took inspiration from the Roman Catholic Mass for the dead, the requiem. Nonetheless, through artistic eclecticism, both artists transcend liturgical paradigms in their respective requiems. Instead, through careful harnessing of sound, inspiration from ancient traditions, memoir, and ritual practice, the two requiems across two media considered in this study make erudite, theological claims of resistance and resilience that must resound to overcome the troubles of the civil war that continue to echo in the plight of current Salvadoran immigrants and the broader Central American diaspora.

"Beethoven Visits Padre Soler: Leo Brouwer's *Sonata No. 1* and the Unfinished Argument of Ariel"

Gabe Bustamante (University of California, Irvine)

In 1971, writing from Havana, Roberto Fernández Retamar answered a seventy-year-old argument: "our symbol is not Ariel, as Rodó thought, but Caliban" (Fernández Retamar 1971). José Enrique Rodó had proposed the opposite: that Latin America should claim the European high tradition as its patrimony, against a North American utilitarianism he cast as Caliban (Rodó 1900). Both refuse the metropole; neither is capitulation. But they measure differently — Rodó by cultivation, Retamar by position in the colonial relation, holding that to rank by cultivation is already to accept Prospero's hierarchy. The quarrel began over Cuba in the aftermath of 1898; Retamar answered it as editor of the journal of Casa de las

Américas, from inside the cultural apparatus the Revolution had built. Leo Brouwer returned from New York to Havana in 1960 and by 1969 directed the Grupo de Experimentación Sonora at the film institute the Revolution founded in its first months. Both spent the years after 1959 deciding what a Cuban art answerable to the Revolution should inherit.

This paper examines Brouwer's *Sonata No. 1* (1990), the first of eight, commissioned by Julian Bream. Brouwer names his European antecedents directly in the score — Beethoven visits Padre Soler at the recapitulation — and these markings have been read, where they have been read at all, as homage or as evidence of a late tonal turn. I argue they will not support a one-sided reading. Placed against Carpentier's history of the material Brouwer summons (Carpentier 1946), and against the quarrel Rodó and Retamar left open, these inscribed encounters sustain opposite and equally defensible constructions — with consequences for the project as a whole. Treating postcolonial form as unsettled rather than synthetic offers an alternative to the nationalism/cosmopolitanism binary through which Latin American modernism is too often interpreted.

“In Search of Antero: California Indian Agency, Mission Santa Bárbara, and Mexican California, 1821–1846”

Bernard Gordillo Brockmann (University of California, Riverside)

On July 8, 1839, a Chumash man named Antero wrote to William Hartnell, an English merchant and educator turned Mexican inspector general of the Alta California missions. Hartnell had recently arrived at Mission Santa Bárbara, one of five Franciscan-established Catholic missions in Chumash Indian territory, in Northern Mexico. Writing in Spanish to Hartnell, Antero listed various reasons for his letter, noting that he represented the entire Native community at Mission Santa Bárbara. “We were born at this mission,” he opened, “and we live as Christians, children of God.” Antero went on to detail their regrets over electing the Indian official Jacinto to serve as a mission alcalde. Indian alcaldes once functioned as proxy voices of the Franciscans, typically relaying instructions. Following mission secularization in the late 1820s, they now did much the same, but for non-religious mission administrators appointed by the Mexican government. Since his election, Jacinto had lost favor with the Native community. Arriving at his point, Antero charged, “we have become unbaptized because this alcalde does not want people to pray...and that is the most we desire.” Hartnell later ordered Jacinto’s removal as alcalde. Using sources from archives in California, this paper situates the social and cultural context of Antero’s letter, arguing for his unspoken identity as an Indian musician trained in the European tradition. It builds upon the work of scholars who have long studied Native voices and agency, including men and women in mission music programs, in California from 1769–1846. This paper also argues that, far from being sites of European and Euro-American colonization, the California missions were forceful “Native spaces,” a concept developed by historians Damon Akins, William Bauer, Lisbeth Haas, and Martin Rizzo-Martinez, among others. This paper contributes to broader histories of Indigenous religiosities and spiritualities, and European newcomers’ long struggle “to understand and control the ancient worlds” of Indigenous making, in the Americas.

“‘Everybody’s Doin’ It Now’: The Yiddish Operetta and Jewish Cultural Nationalism”

Daniela Smolov Levy (Occidental College and University of California, Los Angeles)

Although Irving Berlin’s 1911 hit song “Everybody’s Doin’ It Now” ostensibly referred to the ragtime dance craze, there was something else that practically everybody had been doing for the past century: being swept up in the nationalist fervor that had taken Europe by storm. Music’s role, especially that of opera, in the evolution of nationalism in European countries has been widely studied. Scholars such as Loeffler and Móricz have also considered art music’s involvement in the Jewish cultural nationalism promoted by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century intellectuals, who viewed Jews as a nation bound by a shared heritage and culture, albeit conspicuously lacking a geographic home.

Flourishing alongside this elite-driven “official” nationalism, was another, arguably much more influential form of Jewish cultural nationalism that has, however, remained under the scholarly radar. This “popular” nationalism was evident in the massively successful Yiddish operettas whose commercialism led elites to exclude them from their nationalist project. This bias has led to a significant misunderstanding about the scope and nature of Jewish cultural nationalism. In fact, the core value animating much of these elites’ activity – the search for musical expression of a true Jewish essence as a way of affirming a distinctively Jewish nation – was the same one motivating creators of the Yiddish theater.

Drawing on scholarship from nationalism studies and theater studies, I argue that the Yiddish operetta was a powerful expression of early twentieth-century diaspora Jewish cultural nationalism. The Yiddish operetta’s function for Jews on both sides of the Atlantic was thus analogous to opera’s function in European countries as a form of nation-building. Using as case studies three tremendously popular works by New York-based composer Joseph Rumshinsky, *Shir Hashirim* (1911), *Dos Tsubrokhene fidele* (1916), and *Di Khaznte* (1918), I show how recurring plot themes about home, love, family, and tradition, in conjunction with “marked” (vs. “unmarked”) musical idioms, reveal how individual characters reflected a collective national Jewish consciousness. This research also fills a gap in our understanding of the Broadway musical by showing how its focus on the theme of national identity (Knapp 2005) can be traced to the Yiddish theater.

“What is ‘Hyperpop?’: Spotify and The Commodification of a Musical Genre” *Lily Shababi (University of California, Los Angeles)*

Between 2014 and 2024, the term “hyperpop” evolved from online jargon to a subcultural-music social network, to a tech company’s metadata-tagging tool, to a curated playlist on a streaming platform. Only then did “hyperpop” become a mainstream genre. In the 2010s, the rise of low-bar-of-entry DAW software inspired musicians such as PC Music’s founders A.G. Cook and Danny L Harle, as well as Dylan Brady and Laura Les of 100 gecs, to experiment with software synthesizers and audio effects. Collaborating with PC Music, artists such as SOPHIE and Charli XCX gained an audience amongst queer and trans subcultures, where listeners associated their non-normative personal experiences with the expansive sound of digitally produced music. Picking up on this development in electronic music’s history, Spotify identified the two most commercially successful styles, authored by PC Music and 100 gecs, and created the “hyperpop” playlist to monetize this growing trend.

This paper examines how hyperpop, as a subculture, came to be constructed as a mainstream musical genre through Spotify’s metadata indexing and playlist curation. I analyze the metadata from former Spotify employee Glen McDonald’s open-source website everynoise.com, several iterations of the hyperpop playlist (from 2019 to the present day), and marketing language by Lizzy Szabo, Spotify’s curator for the hyperpop playlist. I then contextualize this data with recent scholarship that combines Science and Technology Studies (STS) and musicology by investigating the ways in which dominant streaming platforms use algorithmic representations, rather than actual music communities, to categorize artists and create genres (Johnson 2020; Hodgson 2021; Pelly 2025). Using community-based marketing language, futuristic imagery in playlist cover images, and a variety of guest-curated hyperpop playlists (including those by artists Yaeji, Bladee, Rebecca Black, Ericdoa, and Glaive), Spotify employees mask the vast influence of their algorithms—what are in fact doing much of the work to “discover” seemingly hyperpop-affiliated musicians. Critical study of the data categorization that undergirds curated playlists is important because, in the case of “hyperpop,” such a playlist ultimately fails to give credit to the queer and trans music subcultures in which the genre’s experimental vocal processing and software-based music production originated.

"Humorous Sonic Performance and Dissonant Audience Address in Children's Video Game Let's Plays"

Molly Hennig (*University of California, Los Angeles*)

The online entertainment genre known as the "Let's Play," in which internet personalities record themselves playing a video game alongside their own voiced commentary, has swelled in popularity for the past twenty years and has established a library of Let's Play (LP) subgenres as a result. One Let's Play subgenre involves adult players recording their commentary while playing game titles aimed for child audiences at the preschool and early elementary levels. Reasons for this emergent practice have varied, but most imply a comedic purpose due to the players often vocally exaggerating the dissonance between the game's intended child audience and the actual adult audience playing the game. To highlight this audience dissonance, players will specifically perform alongside these games' soundscapes, most often by verbally assessing the soundscape's ludic and/or aesthetic "quality," by imitating or mocking the games' dialogue, or by manipulating the game's soundtrack. The practice of children's game Let's Plays might imply a general habit to affirm adultist understandings of children's media – particularly, that adults have superior aesthetic sense to children and that children's media is aesthetically unrefined or ludicrous compared to adult media. (Maloy 2020) However, my observations of several children's game Let's Plays complicates this assumption for me to instead argue that performative play with children's games will not only "make fun of" the games and their intended audiences, but also "make fun out of" (Isherwood 1999) children's games, holding affection and a duty of care for the games' sound, mechanics, and hypothetical child audiences. I propose that children's game Let's Plays – particularly their humorous performances that sonify the dissonance between the games' intended and actual audiences – have a twofold purpose. One purpose is to externalize the discomfort of engaging in media addressed "for children and children only" and reestablish separation between adult and child, while the other is to take on the role of the hypothetical child-addressee (Wall 1991) and identify with the games' intended audience, thus erasing the social boundaries between child and adult by uniting their respective ludic and aesthetic experiences.

"You Will Be Sound: Guitar Timbre, Techniques, and Technology in *Dear Evan Hansen*"

Andrew Ginzel (*University of Southern California*)

The Broadway musical *Dear Evan Hansen* is often understood as a product of the social and technological conditions of the 2010s. Scholars have examined how its on-stage projected text messages, social-media-driven plot, and Generation Z characters situate the musical within the cultural moment of its premiere. Less attention has been paid to how the guitar arrangements support this aesthetic by giving the score a contemporary sound. The score and orchestrations incorporate alternate tunings, open-string voicings, digital amplifier simulations, and ambient volume swells, drawing on guitar sounds and production practices prevalent in popular music of the period.

Songs such as "Anybody Have a Map?," "Requiem," and "For Forever" use capos and alternate tunings that allow open strings and suspended pitches to ring as fretted chord shapes change. In "Requiem," a root-and-tenth voicing reproduces the guitar textures common in pop arrangements. Both guitar books also prescribe settings for digital effect simulations, including in "For Forever" and "A Few Words." By specifying reverb, delay, and pitch effects, the score treats digitally processed guitar tones as part of the written orchestration.

Herbst's research on guitar-profiling technology supports my examination of digitally constructed tones, while Théberge's "The Sound of Nowhere" informs my analysis of the sonic spaces produced through reverb and ambient effects. Kaminsky and Lyons's "Chords of Inquiry" provides a model for studying how alternate tunings produce chord shapes and pitch relationships unavailable in standard tuning. Koozin's "Guitar Voicing in Pop-Rock Music" supports my analysis of the harmonic and timbral effects of ringing open strings. I use De Souza's concepts of affordance, meaning the musical actions an instrument makes available, and idiomaticity, meaning a gesture's compatibility with established playing methods, from his book *Music at Hand* to explain how these techniques alter the guitarist's sonic possibilities.

Through analysis of selected songs and their guitar parts, I examine how the books use affordances, idiomaticity, and digital processing to make guitar timbre a written component of composition and orchestration. *Dear Evan Hansen* offers a case study of how contemporary guitar performance techniques, tones, and production technologies were codified within a musical-theater score.

"Surface Texxtures: Queer Identification and Material Traces at the Body-Instrument Border"
Erin Fitzpatrick (California State University, Northridge)

This paper proposes "surface *texxtures*"—the residues and imprints left behind in the wake of performance—as a valuable lens through which to interpret the intimate relationship between musicians and their instruments. Building on Renu Bora's (1997) concept of "*texxture*" as the "stuff-ness of material structure" and Eve Sedgwick's (2003) understanding of *texxture* as material that reveals how something "came into being," I argue that traces such as sweat, blood, dust, and calluses constitute valuable archives of queer use and embodied creativity. Although such residues are often dismissed as dirt, waste, or excess for their abject position in relation to "the instrument itself," they nonetheless document the laborious processes through which bodies and instruments shape one another (Douglas 1966).

As a case study, I perform an autoethnographic reading of Annie Clark's (St. Vincent's) recording of the guitar solo in "Rattlesnake" (2014). Clark's queer decision to perform the solo entirely on a single string with one finger produced a cut that left both physical and affective traces on the performance. I show how these traces amplify the affective intensity of the recording, revealing the struggles, impractical techniques, and creative negotiations embedded within the musical act (Ngai 2011). I also situate the solo's queer affective and physical contours within a broader critique of hegemonic virtuosity, contrasting dominant values of efficiency, precision, and "economy of motion" with queer approaches that may instead privilege excess, imperfection, failure, and embodied vulnerability.

My analysis demonstrates an affectively and phenomenologically dense method I call "vampiric performance": a form of sensory ethnography in which a musician recreates the conditions of another performance to approximate the sensations that may have accompanied the original performance. "Vampiric" here refers to Diana Fuss' (1992) observation that vampirism queerly merges identification with desire. By drawing on my own attempts to replicate Clark's solo technique, I show how reenactment enables a form of desirous identification which may be consummated by the reenactor's creation of their own surface *texxtures*. These *texxtures* offer tangible evidence of sensation after it has occurred, archiving otherwise ephemeral and private expressions of queer fandom, creativity, and affect (Muñoz 2009).