

A Preview of Ecomusicologies 2012 and Related Activities at the Joint Annual Meetings of the AMS, SEM and SMT

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Abstract:

As the co-editors of a volume entitled *Ecomusicology: A Field Guide*, we have searched widely for potential authors, interesting chapters, and new topics. And we will also scour the main AMS/SEM/SMT meeting in New Orleans looking for interesting work. This article constitutes both an overview of some of the ecomusicological activities that week as well as the preliminary list of papers and panels we'd like to hear. It's often hard to choose what to attend at a big joint conference like this year's event, but we hope to make some inroads on helping the ecomusicologically inclined. Before we provide the lists, however, three caveats are in order in compiling and presenting an ecomusicological dance card.

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Article:

*****Note: Full text of article below**

Previews

Upcoming Events

A Preview of Ecomusicologies 2012 and Related Activities at the Joint Annual Meetings of the AMS, SEM and SMT

By Aaron Allen and Kevin Dawe

As the co-editors of a volume entitled *Ecomusicology: A Field Guide*, we have searched widely for potential authors, interesting chapters, and new topics. And we will also scour the main AMS/SEM/SMT meeting in New Orleans looking for interesting work. This article constitutes both an overview of some of the ecomusicological activities that week as well as the preliminary list of papers and panels we'd like to hear. It's often hard to choose what to attend at a big joint conference like this year's event, but we hope to make some inroads on helping the ecomusicologically inclined. Before we provide the lists, however, three caveats are in order in compiling and presenting an ecomusicological dance card.

First, titles can be deceiving. For example, a paper like Craig Russell's "Seeds, Barbs, Rats, and Panthers: SDS, Weatherman, and Radical Re-Contextualization of Beatles' Songs" is actually about politics and protest (not plants and animals), while Steven Vande Moortele's, "The Traumatized Tonic: Murder and the Half-Diminished Seventh Chord in Schoenberg's *Song of the Wood Dove*" is an argument about tonality (but it does not, apparently, address the bird of the song title from *Gurrelieder*). Of

course, the next step in this caveat is that even abstracts can be deceiving!

Second, the currency of ecomusicology is not yet koine, and so there may be hidden gems out there that go undetected because not everyone explicitly references "ecomusicology" or "nature" or "sustainability" in their title. To a small degree, this is because of the complex nature of ecomusicology and its (appropriately?) poorly-defined borders.

A third caveat is that many ethnomusicological topics seem like they might be relevant to ecomusicology because they so often reference place. Teasing apart general referents to place and specifically ecomusicological ones can be quite a challenge.

Having outlined those caveats, we now offer a preview of the explicitly ecomusicological events followed by a thematic discussion of some papers, sessions, and meetings we plan to attend in New Orleans.

Finally, we'll provide a conference dance card, which outlines a schedule of the items discussed as well as a few others—too many others, alas, for us to be able to realistically attend.

The very first events of the week are ecomusicological: the

opening evening of the Ecomusicologies 2012 pre-conference will involve a soundwalk of Tulane University's uptown campus and seven papers delivered in a "paper jam" session (12-15 minutes each), some of which will be presented electronically (i.e. the authors will be in other cities and on other continents and will present and discuss their work with us via the Internet).

The program committee created the "paper jam" aspect of Ecomusicologies 2012 in order to increase involvement, experiment with new formats, and provide the opportunity to hear more about current work. Ecomusicologies 2012 received over seventy applications for what was initially projected to be 10-12 papers, but given the interest we expanded from Tuesday only into Monday evening. On Tuesday, panels include "Beyond Metaphor," "20th- & 21st-century Composers," "Contemporary Issues," "Ethnographic Approaches," and "Canadian Perspectives." To conclude we will experience an eco-improvisational performance for computers and amplified flutes entitled "Birding." The abstracts for all the papers are available at www.ecomusicologies.org/program.

...*Previews, continued from p.7*

Another pre-conference activity is of interest to the ecomusicologically inclined: the SEM is sponsoring a symposium entitled “Crisis and Creativity,” which will address musical responses to the crises that have afflicted New Orleans (Katrina, the BP oil spill, coastal erosion) and Haiti (the 2010 earthquake); the symposium will also include field trips to local areas of interest.

Like the SEM pre-conference symposium’s outings, the week in New Orleans includes a number of outings organized by the AMS Ecocriticism Study Group (ESG) and the SEM Ecomusicology Special Interest Group (ESIG). On Monday, before *Ecomusicologies 2012* begins, a group led by local activists will tour “Cancer Alley,” the corridor along River Road that connects communities impacted by the industrial facilities that dominate the Mississippi River. On Wednesday, an even larger group will tour the Honey Island Swamp, a wildlife area rich in biodiversity not far from New Orleans. This swamp tour is an upshot of the outing the ESG took in San Francisco, which included a soundwalk and visit to Lands End; participants agreed that the pre-conference tranquility was a welcome change to the usual hectic start of professional conferences. Honey Island is a perfect place to begin an encounter with New Orleans.

The ESG and ESIG also will offer a wind down of sorts by taking a hike to Barataria Preserve of Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve on Sunday

afternoon once all the conference events are over. The Preserve is a sampling of Louisiana’s disappearing wetlands.

But once the main meeting itself begins, the work of the ESG and ESIG is not over. Those groups are holding a joint business meeting on Thursday, and on Friday members of those groups are collaborating on the Ecomusicology Listening Room (ELR), a unique interactive exhibit and discussion organized by a wide-ranging team of scholars from other study and special interest groups as well. See ecosong.org for a preview of the ELR.

On Thursday evening, the ESG is sponsoring an evening panel with a music historian, music theorist, and ethnomusicologist (to represent the three coordinating professional societies of the meeting), each discussing three approaches to understanding music-nature connections: relations, awareness and knowledge.

There are also a few other meetings that promise some interesting connections with ecomusicological topics. Scholars involved with the SEM SIG for Applied Ethnomusicology have been very active in regard to issues of sustainability and those involved in the SEM SIG for Sound Studies have been developing new and interesting approaches to studying and understanding our sonic world. Scholarly papers from SMT members are unfortunately rarely engaged with ecomusicological

issues, although Benjamin R. Levy’s “A Theory about Shapes’: Clouds and Arborescence in the Music of Xenakis” hints teasingly! However, the SMT has been at the forefront of all the music societies in developing tangible guidelines regarding green issues, such as travel, waste, etc.

Now for a few thematic discussions of papers and panels. If we were to include all the papers that touched on space and place, we would wear out our dance shoes in New Orleans! Not only is there an entire panel dedicated to the topic, but there are numerous references to the importance of place and space in dozens of individual papers. This interesting conundrum, in fact, it relates to the critique that Nancy Guy leveled against ethnomusicology: “(Ethno)musicological studies of place have focused predominately on social perception and musical construction with far less attention being paid to environmental materiality, to the affective bonds with nonhuman elements (sentient or otherwise), or to the perception and experience of the physical environment.” (“Flowing Down Taiwan’s Tamsui River: Towards an Ecomusicology of the Environmental Imagination” (*Ethnomusicology* 53, no. 2 [2009]: 218–248.)

Nevertheless, there are a few papers that fit into this category of place that (might) touch on those elements that Guy would prefer.

...*Previews, continued from p.8*

Among the place-based papers is Helena Simonett's "Enchanted World: Sacred Ecology and Indigenous Music-Making in Northwest Mexico" and Kristina Nielsen "Flowers, Butterflies, Music, Death: The Extended Meanings of Floral Imagery in Nahua Songs."

Given the influence of applied ethnomusicology and Jeff Todd Titon's work on musical sustainability, that buzz word appears quite often. While many papers are specifically about cultural rather than environmental sustainability, a few do engage with environmental issues. These include Sally A. Treloyn & Matthew Dembal Martin's "Musical Analysis, Repatriation, and New Media: A New Strategy to Safeguard Endangered Aboriginal Australian Song Traditions," Klisala Harrison's "Staging Sustainability: Musical Performances of Loss and Survival in Indigenous Theatre," and Holly Wissler's "Andes and Amazon, Peru: The Sustainable Futures of the Music of the Quechua Q'eros and Harakmbut Wachiperi Groups."

Sound studies is another area that has made significant inroads in ethno/musicological scholarship, and many papers and entire panels exhibit this trend. Some of these include the panels "Acoustics and Experiences of the Limit," "The City is a Medium" and the intriguing "On Bells, Bugs, and Disintegrating Tape: Listening for Metaphysics in Ambient Sound."

Protest and nuclear issues (impacts of and opposition to) are

connected in a few papers, among them those of the panel "Music and Nuclear Experience," and Noriko Manabe's paper "Remixing the Revolution: A Typology of Intertextuality in Protest Songs, as Evidenced by Antinuclear Songs of Post-Fukushima Japan." A nice intersection of protest, place and environment is in Ronald Conner's "An Acoustemology of Struggle: Indigeneity, Land Conflict, and the Toré Ritual of the Brazilian Tapeba People."

There are a few tantalizing panels that do not explicitly touch on ecomusicology but we wish they would! Many panels address cultural issues of race, gender and class, and often the environment could be a part of those discussions. The SEM President's Roundtable, "Music and Power—Ethnomusicological Contributions to the Study of Politics and Culture," would be an ideal place for more fully developed ecomusicological ideas. Maybe next time. The panel "Envisioning a 'Relational Musicology'" addresses big issues facing interdisciplinary scholarship on music, and even though ecomusicology is not intended to be a part of it, we think that there is much to learn from the issues on the agenda for that panel. Various papers could provide insightful approaches for ecomusicology as well, such as Sam Cronk's "Reclaim Your Voice: Music and the Occupy Movements" which deals with music and protest.

There are numerous other papers that do and could touch on topics related to ecomusicology,

and we've listed those that we've noticed in the dance card below. We embarked on this preview to help organize our time, but we offer it up so that others might benefit as well. It also shows the great variety (and potential) of ecomusicologically-related work going on across our various fields of music scholarship. If you know of anything we've missed, or would like to critique anything here, we welcome your feedback!

AMS AMERICAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

the society for
ethnomusicology

SM
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ECOMUSICOLOGY DANCE CARD

SESSION	DAY	TIME	TYPE	AUTHOR	TITLE
	Mon	1200-1630	Outing		Cancer Alley / River Road Reality Tour
	Mon	1700-1800	Soundwalk	Tyler Kinnear	Environmental Listening and the Tulane Soundscape
	Tue	1900-2100	Ecomusicologies 2012		Paper Jam
		0830-2100	Ecomusicologies 2012		Panels: Beyond Metaphor, 20th & 21st-century Composers, Contemporary Issues, Ethnographic Approaches, Canadian Perspectives
	Wed	1200-1800	Outing		Honey Island Swamp Tour
I-10	Thu	0830-1030	Paper	Kristina Nielsen	"Flowers, Butterflies, Music, Death: The Extended Meanings of Floral Imagery in Nahua Songs"
I-1	Thu	0830-1030	Paper	Abigail Wood	"Sound, Aesthetics, and the Narration of Religious Space in Jerusalem's Old City"
	Thu	1230-1330	Meeting		SEM Sound Studies SIG
I-28	Thu	1345-1545	Paper	Ronald Conner	"An Acoustemology of Struggle: Indigeneity, Land Conflict, and the Toré Ritual of the Brazilian Tapeba People"
I-27	Thu	1345-1545	Paper	Noel Lobley	"Recording the Networks of Sound in the Central African Republic"
I-27	Thu	1345-1545	Paper	Sally A. Treloyn & Matthew Dembal Martin	"Musical Analysis, Repatriation, and New Media: A New Strategy to Safeguard Endangered Aboriginal Australian Song Traditions"
I-44	Thu	1530-1700	Panel		On Bells, Bugs, and Disintegrating Tape: Listening for Metaphysics in Ambient Sound
I-52	Thu	1600-1730	Paper	Kate Galloway	"Sounding and Composing the Harbour: Performing Landscape and Re-contextualizing the Soundscape of Place in the Harbour Symphony (St. John's, Newfoundland)"
I-52	Thu	1600-1730	Paper	Alison Furlong	"Sound, Space, and Social Practice in the Zionskirche"
I-49	Thu	1600-1730	Panel		The Lifecycles of Research: A Roundtable Reimagining of Field Recording, Publication, Preservation, and Access in the Digital Era
	Thu	1730-1830	Meeting		ESG & ESIG Joint Business Meeting
I-64	Thu	2000-2300	Panel		Music and Nature: Relations, Awareness, Knowledge

	Fri	0700-0830	Meeting		SMT Ad Hoc Sustainability Issues Committee
2-17	Fri	0900-1200	Panel		Ecomusicology Listening Room
2-25	Fri	1030-1200	Paper	Bonnie Gordon	"Mr. Jefferson's Ears"
2-28	Fri	1045-1215	Panel		SEM President's Roundtable: Music and Power—Ethnomusicological Contributions to the Study of Politics and Culture
	Fri	1230-1330	Meeting		SEM Applied Ethnomusicology SIG
2-46	Fri	1400-1700	Paper	Benjamin R. Levy	"A Theory about Shapes': Clouds and Arborescence in the Music of Xenakis"
2-56	Fri	2000-2300	Panel		Music and War
3-3	Sat	0830-1030	Paper	Helena Simonett	"Enchanted World: Sacred Ecology and Indigenous Music-Making in Northwest Mexico"
3-2	Sat	0830-1030	Paper	Elizabeth Macy	"Music and Cultural Tourism in Post-Disaster Economies"
3-2	Sat	0830-1030	Paper	Daniel Sharp	"Dithyrambalina: A Shantytown Sound Installation in Post-Katrina New Orleans"
3-2	Sat	0830-1030	Paper	Sherrilynn Colby-Bottel	"Authenticity Seekers: Music, Post-Tourists, and the Shifting Sound-Scapes of New Orleans"
3-4	Sat	0830-1030	Paper	Charlotte D'Evelyn	"Negotiating Otherness: Creation and Reception of the Mongolian 'Grassland Song' in China"
3-5	Sat	0830-1030	Panel		Music and Nuclear Experience
3-8	Sat	0830-1030	Paper	Noriko Manabe	"Remixing the Revolution: A Typology of Intertextuality in Protest Songs, as Evidenced by Antinuclear Songs of Post-Fukushima Japan"
3-16	Sat	0900-1200	Panel		Envisioning a "Relational Musicology"
3-33	Sat	1045-1215	Panel		Music and the Arctic Imagination
3-34	Sat	1045-1215	Paper	Sam Cronk	"Reclaim Your Voice: Music and the Occupy Movements"
3-48	Sat	1345-1545	Paper	William Bares	"Way Out East: Cowboys and Pioneer Women on Berlin's Jazz Frontier"
3-39	Sat	1345-1545	Panel		Acoustics and Experiences of the Limit
3-66	Sat	1600-1730	Paper	Klisala Harrison	"Staging Sustainability: Musical Performances of Loss and Survival in Indigenous Theatre"
4-31	Sun	0830-1030	Paper	Francesca R. Sborgi Lawson	"Has Ethnomusicology Met Its Calling? An Ethnomusicologist's Response to Biomusicology"
4-1	Sun	0830-1030	Panel		Applied Ethnomusicology and Sustainable Futures
4-1	Sun	0830-1030	Paper	Holly Wissler	"Andes and Amazon, Peru: The Sustainable Futures of the Music of the Quechua Q'eros and Harakmbut Wachiperi Groups"
4-16	Sun	0900-1200	Panel		The City is a Medium
4-35	Sun	1045-1215	Panel		Sounds and Space in New Orleans
	Sun	1400-1800	Outing		Barataria Preserve Hike