

MUSIC FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO TODAY

UTSA MUSICOLOGISTS ARE LISTENING TO THE SOUNDS OF HISTORY.

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TODAY THE \$125 BILLION MUSIC INDUSTRY IS GOING THROUGH A MONUMENTAL SHIFT. THE MEDIUMS WE USE TO TRANSMIT, RECEIVE, AND PURCHASE MUSIC HAVE TRANSFORMED HOW WE EXPERIENCE MUSIC IN OUR DAILY LIVES AND HOW MUSIC'S CULTURAL VALUE HAS CHANGED OVER TIME. THE ONGOING RESEARCH OF THE MUSICOLOGISTS **WILLIAM SHERRILL, Ph.D, **DREW STEPHEN**, Ph.D, **MARK BRILL**, Ph.D, AND **ERIC SCHNEEMAN**, Ph.D, USES A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE TO PLACE THIS CHANGING INDUSTRY INTO A CULTURAL, HISTORICAL CONTEXT.**





THE WORK OF WILLIAM SHERRILL focuses on the emergence of musical notation in the 11th century. Though hundreds of years stand in between the Middle Ages and today, the problems still remain the same. Sherrill's research demonstrates that musical notation developed in various guises and under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church to ensure that the music of the Latin Mass remained the same from church to church and from country to country. In many ways, this is the first attempt to build a global music industry in Europe: Sherrill is examining manuscripts that were written in the Aquitanian region of France after receiving the music repertoire from Rome. According to Sherrill, though the notation may look kind of strange, "it's actually similar to our modern notation." The reason that musical notation developed in Europe was the need of Church leaders to create a musical system that transmitted the necessary information to performers in various regions. Sherrill's work shows us some of the earliest steps toward developing that system.



Whereas Sherrill looks at the influence of medieval European cultures upon each other,

MARK BRILL has dedicated his research to the cross-fertilization of European and indigenous musical practices during the colonization of Mexico and Latin America. The secondary

aim of Brill's research attempts to uncover the impact of globalization and Westernization on the music of the indigenous populations of the western hemisphere from the 17th to 19th centuries. His research has taken him to archives throughout Mexico, and in 1995, Brill uncovered a hitherto unknown treasure trove of music manuscripts at the Oaxaca Cathedral. His work has brought about a new repertoire for ensembles to perform for the public: recently the Austin Baroque Orchestra performed these rediscovered works at Mission Concepción in San Antonio. Currently he is working with UTSA music students and ensembles to perform a setting of the Catholic Mass by the 18th-century Mexican composer Manuel de Sumaya. As Brill notes, "my research is satisfying on many levels: bringing long-forgotten music back to life is one of the most gratifying (and useful) endeavors I can pursue as a musicologist. Additionally, exposing students to these traditions, and having them engage in the task of recreating this music is also rewarding. San Antonio, with its remarkable culture and history, is exactly the place where we should be exploring and performing Mexican and Latin-American music and culture." When he's not researching the music of Mexico, Brill also examines "exoticism" in the film music of Bernard Herrmann.



Musicologists research not only the scores and musical notation but also the development of instruments

themselves and how changes to instruments impact performance and compositional practices. **DREW STEPHEN** has made the history of the horn the central focus on his research. His examinations are twofold: on one level, his research examines the performance practices related to the natural horn compared to the modern

valve horn, which we're familiar with today. It's too complicated to explain the difference between the horns here, but you can watch Stephen's demonstration of the natural horn online at: <https://medialibrary.utsa.edu/Play/9637>. Furthermore, you can hear Stephen play the natural horn with the Austin Baroque Orchestra and other music organizations in the area.

On another level, Stephen's research draws the horn into larger cultural practices by examining the instrument's association with the hunt. We may think of the hunt as a solitary sport in which silence is key to stalking animals, but from its inception to the 19th century, the horn was an integral part of the hunting experience, as its rhythmic and melodic signals were used to bring organization to the hunting activities.

In his most recent publication, "The Wild Hunter, the Wandering Jew, and the Flying Dutchman: The Hunt In Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*" (Intersections Vol. 33, No. 2), Stephen shows how mystical legends of the Wild Hunter and the Wandering Jew informed the composer Richard Wagner's conception of the opera. By examining the cultural meanings of the hunt in the historical context of the 19th century, Stephen provides a richer context for understanding the opera for listeners today, who are largely unfamiliar with the hunting motif and unaware of its implications.

Stephen is currently working on a monograph about Johannes Brahms's Trio for Piano, Violin and Horn (Op. 40), which addresses the composer's unusual instrumentation and its broader cultural meaning in the context of late 19th-century modernization. Ultimately as Stephen sees the role of musicology as the study of "a collaborative effort that involves a large number of people and mediating factors. By connecting musical texts to their social contexts and seeking to

understand their creation and continued existence as a process of collective social activity, I further our understanding of musical works as cultural constructions that reflect societal beliefs and values through the medium of sound.”



It’s this cultural aspect of music history that fascinates and informs **ERIC SCHNEEMAN’S** current research projects. Focusing on the music and culture of 19th-century Germany, Schneeman has demonstrated the manner in which

politicians, writers, and historians have manipulated and appropriated the biographies of past composers to further their own political, aesthetic, and ideological agendas.

Using archival materials from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (The National Library in Berlin), his recent article, “Perceptions of Musical Cosmopolitanism in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century Europe: The Case of Christoph Gluck and Giacomo Meyerbeer” (Oxford Handbook Online), examines how 19th-century German critics used the biography of the 18th-century composer Gluck to justify the cosmopolitan career of the 19th-century German-Jewish composer Meyerbeer. In the end, his article upends current ideas of 19th-century German history, which have typically emphasized the growth of nationalism and nation building, showing instead that many 19th-century thinkers considered cosmopolitanism an important aspect of the German identity.

Schneeman also has an interest in the intersections of music and literature, and is currently finishing up an article about music and noise pollution in E. T. A. Hoffmann’s fiction and music criticism. Schneeman sees the 19th century as a time when music pervaded and intermingled with daily life — a

condition that mirrors our own experience. Additionally, Schneeman likes to analyze the sampling techniques in hip-hop music, having written on the biography and music of Curtis Jackson III, who performs under the name 50 Cent.

When they are not digging in archives or writing articles, UTSA’s musicologists are participating in San Antonio’s \$1.2 billion culture industry by performing in ensembles, writing concert notes, or providing pre-concert lectures. Stephen, for example, performs the natural horn with the Austin Baroque Orchestra, while Schneeman serves on the board of Music Offerings to help with repertoire selection and providing pre-concert lectures. In this manner, they can use their research to assist performing arts organizations address the cultural needs of their constituents. Musicologists also contribute to San Antonio and American culture industry by reviewing books, recordings, and films. Through our evaluations of these materials we help foster thoughtful considerations of music among the general public. Furthermore, their research is a vital part of the classroom experience as students assist in ongoing research projects and discover works from long-forgotten composers.

UTSA’S MUSICOLOGISTS ARE USING THEIR RESEARCH IN MUSIC HISTORY TO PROVIDE THEIR STUDENTS WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO ADAPT TO THE EVER-CHANGING FUTURE OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY.



BY CONNECTING MUSICAL TEXTS TO THEIR SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CREATION AND CONTINUED EXISTENCE AS A PROCESS OF COLLECTIVE SOCIAL ACTIVITY, I FURTHER OUR UNDERSTANDING OF MUSICAL WORKS AS CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS THAT REFLECT SOCIETAL BELIEFS AND VALUES THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF SOUND.

RESOURCES

[HTTP://MUSIC.UTSA.EDU](http://music.utsa.edu)
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