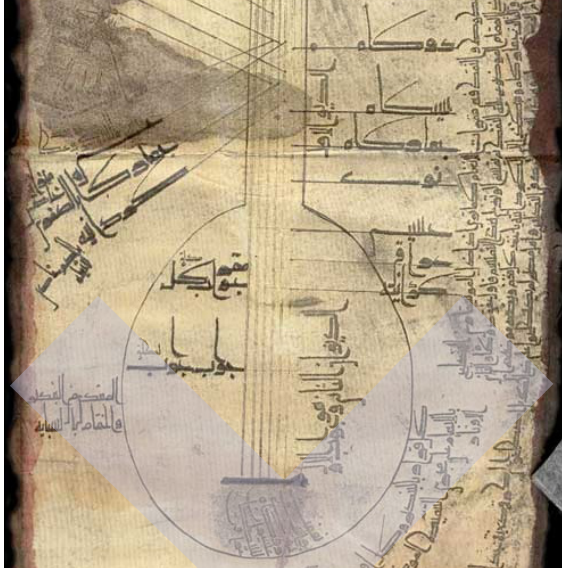




THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
NEUBAUER COLLEGIUM
FOR CULTURE & SOCIETY



Thinking Music

Prospects for Global Histories of Music Theory

June 13–14, 2025

The Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society
The University of Chicago

Friday, June 13

8:30 am

Coffee and Pastries

9:00

Welcome

Thomas Christensen

Avalon Foundation Professor of Music and the Humanities, University of Chicago

Elspeth Carruthers

Executive Director, Neubauer Collegium

9:05

Session 1: Music Theory, History, and the Global

Thomas Christensen (University of Chicago)

"A Global History of Music Theory: Prospects, Paths, and Pitfalls"

Carmel Raz (Cornell University)

Thinking Music: A Progress Report

10:00

Coffee Break

10:15

Session 2: Genealogies

Chair: Jennifer Iverson

(University of Chicago)

Nathan Martin (University of Michigan)

The Historiography of Music Theory, from Riemann to Now

Richard Widdess (University of London,

School of Oriental and African Studies)
Theories of Music in the Indian Subcontinent:
A Historical Overview

11:15

Coffee Break

11:30

Session 3: Comparisons

Chair: Haun Saussy
(University of Chicago)

Roger Grant (Wesleyan University)
Comparison and Coloniality in Modern Music Theory

Lester Hu (University of California, Berkeley)
A Newly Discovered Qing Manuscript and Its Case for Mythopoetic History

12:30 pm

Lunch

1:30

Session 4: Origin Myths

Chair: Dipesh Chakrabarty
(University of Chicago)

David Cohen (Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, Frankfurt, Germany)
Jubal, Pythagoras, and the Origins of Music

Jacob Olley (Cambridge University)
Islamicate Musical Thought Between Global and Planetary Histories

Andrew Hicks (Cornell University)
A Global Aetiology for Music Theory?

3:00

Coffee Break

3:15 – 4:30

Session 5: "Thinking Music" and the Digital Humanities

Chair: Carmel Raz
(Cornell University)

Miller Prosser (University of Chicago)
Beta presentation of *Thinking Music*

Caleb Mutch (Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, Frankfurt, Germany)
Global Histories of Music Theory and the Digital Humanities

Saturday, June 14

8:30 am

Coffee and Pastries

9:00

Session 6: Archaeology

Chair: Rob Provine

(University of Maryland)

Gabriela Currie (University of Minnesota)
Towards an Archaeology of Musical Thought:
The Kucheian Nexus

Danny Walden (Yale University)
Can the Instrument Speak? Some Thoughts on
Media Archaeology in the Global History
of Theory

10:00

Coffee Break

10:15

Session 7: Non-Discursive Sources

Chair: Steven Rings

(University of Chicago)

Donna Buchanan (University of Illinois)
Pastoral Auralities: Hearing Sound Worlds of
Bulgaria's Past Through the Ethnographic
Present

Liam Hynes-Tawa (Harvard University)
Cosmological Correspondences and Circles of
Fiths in Japanese Music Theory

11:15

Coffee Break

11:30

Session 8: Ethnography and Ethnotheory

Chair: Jessica Baker

(University of Chicago)

Kwasi Ampene (Tufts University)

Global Music Theories and Their Histories: The Akan Framework

Henry Stobart (Royal Holloway, University of London)

The Challenges of Constructing a History of Music Theory for Indigenous Oral Traditions of South America

Martin Scherzinger (New York University)

African Music in the History of Mathematics

Lunch

1:00 pm

2:00

Session 9: Global History

Chair: Travis Jackson

(University of Chicago)

Chi Feng (Indiana University)

Early Chinese Tuning Between Texts and Tools: Rethinking in a Global Frame

David Irving (Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies; Institució Milà y Fontanals de Recerca en Humanitats)

The (Re)production of "European" Music Theory in Colonial Societies: A Critical Conspectus

Alex Rehding (Harvard University)

The Rediscovery of Vicente Lusitano in the Age of Global History

3:30

Coffee Break

3:45 – 4:45

Roundtable Discussion


About the Conference

This conference explores the myriad of ways people from across the world and throughout history have thought about music and have used such thinking to make sense of their worlds. What insights emerge, we ask, when music theory is no longer treated as an insular and elite discipline of scholarship, but as culturally embedded ways of knowing, feeling, and world-making in both discursive and embodied forms? What methodological challenges must we confront in order to reconceptualize abstract notions of “music” and “theory” in an expanded epistemic as well as cultural landscape?

Organized by the Thinking Music research project at the Neubauer Collegium in partnership with the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics in Frankfurt, Germany.

About the Neubauer Collegium

The Neubauer Collegium cultivates communities of inquiry at the University of Chicago. Our faculty-led research projects bring together scholars and practitioners whose collaboration is required to address complex human challenges. Our Visiting Fellows program brings the best minds from around the world for collaboration, animating the intellectual and creative environment on campus. Our gallery presents art exhibitions in the context of academic research, and our public events invite broad engagement with the scholarly inquiries we support. The aim of these activities is to deepen knowledge about the world and our place in it.





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