

AMERICAN MUSIC REVIEW

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Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

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Institute News

Stephanie Jensen-Moulton

The decade's last installment of Institute News takes stock of HISAM's past and future. As Editor-in-Chief Jeff Taylor takes his well-deserved sabbatical leave, I am honored to step in as Interim Director of the Institute. While the Polycultural America Speaker Series and *American Music Review* still maintain their emphasis on American Music writ large, the editorial staff has agreed that the topic of American Music Pedagogy will be among the work we consider for each issue. In addition, given the broadening employment profiles of our contributors, we have decided to recognize our writers with bios at the end of the issue rather than with a single institutional affiliation. It's satisfying to read the brilliant work we've received from this wide spectrum of authors, and we look forward to reading more submissions for our first issue of the new twenties.

One great advantage of our location at Brooklyn College is the strength of our interdisciplinary programs. The events on our Polycultural America Speaker Series continue to draw upon these strengths. The series began 20 September with a Haitian Creole Jazz Symposium and Jam Session, co-sponsored by the CUNY Haitian Studies Institute (see Ray's report in this issue).

From 23 through 26 October, **Michelle Yom**, a Ph.D. student at the CUNY Graduate Center, led a three-day conference on the enigmatic Cecil Taylor, co-sponsored by the Hitchcock Institute and the Center for Humanities. The comprehensive symposium offered four nights of superb experimental performances, live poetry readings, and academic papers. Institute contributor **David Grubbs** vividly remembers the unusual commencement address given by Taylor at Brooklyn College in his contribution to this issue. Our Spring 2020 issue will share more of the wealth from this extraordinary event.



*Big Band Concert featuring the music of Cecil Taylor, lead by Karen Borca
photo by Robert I. Sutherland-Cohen*

We all celebrated with our HISAM colleague **Ray Allen** as he gave several book launches this fall, one of which made it on to our speaker series. His latest monograph, *Jump Up: Caribbean Carnival*

Institute News (cont.)

Music in New York City (Oxford, 2019) “traces the migration and transformation of Trinidadian calypso music in Harlem and Brooklyn through a diasporic transnational lens.” Ray spoke to a packed audience in Tanger Hall on 6 November, introducing soca (soul/calypso) arranger **Frankie McIntosh** and steel pan players **Garvin Blake** and **Winston Wellington**, three Brooklyn-based Carnival musicians who figured prominently in the book. McIntosh and Blake closed the presentation with a rousing performance of calypso jazz. Congratulations, Ray!

Our final speaker for the Fall 2019 series remembered performing in the old Gershwin Building when he was a Master’s student in 2009. **Carl Patrick Bolleia** has since earned his DMA from Rutgers and entered the historical performance program at The Juilliard School, but he was thrilled to return to his alma mater to perform his passion: American piano works. Carl performed on both harpsichord and piano to a lively audience of undergraduate music majors who were fascinated by his program of onomatopoeia in keyboard pieces dating all the way back to the eighteenth century.

As noted earlier, **Jeff Taylor** is on sabbatical this year. Thanks to a Tow Travel Grant, he has made trips to do archival research in Chicago and Berkeley for his book on Earl “Fatha” Hines and the Chicago jazz scene of the 1920s and 1930s. He is also rediscovering his love for the piano.

In addition to continuing with her work at RILM and HISAM, managing editor **Lindsey Eckenroth** spent the summer as a fellow at the Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP), where she assisted the curatorial director in researching and developing content for new exhibits. Lindsey also had the pleasure of playing flute in the summer 2019 premiere of **Whitney George**’s opera *Princess Maleine* at La Mama Experimental Theater Club, as well as performing in Concrete Timbre’s production of *Voyage de Ouf* in October.

Whitney George’s summer was overtaken with rehearsals and the premiere of her opera *Princess Maleine*, hailed as “an operatic gem” by *Opera Wire* and a “stunning new opera” by *Voce di Meche*.

Since completing my term as Director of the Conservatory of Music, I’ve kept busy. As a 2019–2021 Tow Professor, I will have the opportunity to complete several longstanding research projects in the area of American music and disability. Spring 2020 will bring a long-awaited Symposium on American Disability Arts to Brooklyn College. And look for more exciting news from the Hitchcock Institute as we look forward to our 50th Anniversary!

Yours truly,
Stephanie Jensen-Moulton