Call for Papers

Contested Frequencies: Sonic Representation in the Digital Age

University of Richmond, Virginia

February 22-24 2019

Description:

*I can only recognize myself recognized by the other to the extent that this recognition of the other alters me...* -Jean-Luc Nancy

*Contested Frequencies* is a part of a yearlong festival hosted by the University of Richmond Music Department, entitled *Beyond Exoticism*. The conference will extend the festival’s focus on issues of aesthetic decolonization, appropriation, borrowing, and influence within the context of contemporary music, broadly conceived. This multidisciplinary meeting will feature scholarly and creative contributions in the form of research presentations, performances, and new commissions.

The larger festival intends to investigate expression across difference and to recognize the ethical ambiguity and aesthetic complexity this entails. The series views Said’s critique of orientalism as its intellectual ancestor while looking beyond both the spatial and temporal boundaries of the “orient” to recognize similar processes in global aesthetic networks. As described by Said, orientalism refers to the western borrowing of non-western cultures. Traversing the history of colonial power imbalances, orientalism involved forms of appropriation, misunderstanding and distortion, as well as aesthetic inspiration and cultural growth. Late-twentieth century reappraisals of orientalism often juxtaposed “source” traditions alongside nineteenth century orientalist expressions. This “corrective” imagined non-western cultures as traditional, static, and authentic in contrast to a modern, dynamic, and changing west. The series will highlight the dynamic and cosmopolitan histories of the global cultures with which western orientalists were enamored and expand its geographic scope beyond those cultures.

We recognize that exotifying representations of the other are almost always tied to constructions of race, class, gender, sexuality and the like. In addition to reconsidering Debussy’s engagement with Indonesian music, for example, we will examine the ways in which contemporary artists maintain, resist, reject and critique the exoticizing and self-exoticizing impulse. Further, we ask how exoticism may be multiply directed through, for instance, the valorization of Western classical music in contemporary China. The larger festival will focus on new, emerging voices through a series of original commissions, featuring a major work for chorus and symphony orchestra by Reena Esmail. A full calendar of events can be found here.

As the site of the festival’s conference, Richmond Virginia is a highly contested space. The historic capital of the confederacy, home to more confederate monuments than any other American city, it also hosts a new museum of the confederacy dedicated to “reckoning with America’s sins and trauma,” according to museum director Christy Coleman. While wrestling with the persistent legacy of Jim Crow policies, the city has cultivated a thriving experimental arts and music scene. Recent demographic diversification and gentrification have catalyzed frank discussions about Richmond’s (and America’s) unhealed history. Richmond is an apposite venue for the discussion, critique and creative response to issues of race, gender, appropriation and representation in music.

Proposed topics for the Contested Frequencies conference may include but are not limited to:
• Decolonization in musicology, ethnomusicology, and performance studies
• The aural/visual spectacle of otherness
• Intersections of race and gender in exoticism and orientalism
• Sonic representation of race and gender in digital media
• Sonic representation of race and gender in contemporary opera
• Self-othering and strategic (anti-) essentialism
• Sonic representation of Indigeneity
• Global representations of racial difference
• Otherness, copyright, and ownership
• Representation and economies of popular music
• Ethics of influence and borrowing

**Paper Proposals:**

We invite paper proposals for twenty-minute research presentations related to the conference themes. Please submit the title of your proposed paper, a 250-word abstract and contact details to: lfairtil@richmond.edu with the subject line “Contested Frequencies Scholarly Abstract Submission.” Presentations should be a maximum of twenty-minutes in length.

**Commission Proposals:**

In the interest of fostering emerging creative voices, the festival is commissioning two original creative responses to the conference themes. These may be in the form of score-based, electronic, or multi-media works. Artists will present either live performances or recordings of performances as part of the conference meeting. Two selected artists will each receive $2,000 in commissioning fees plus funding for travel to and housing at the conference.

Please submit a 250-word creative proposal that directly responds to the conference themes, and contact details to: lfairtil@richmond.edu with the subject line “Contested Frequencies Creative Proposal Submission.” Presentation of creative work, including all media and discussion, should be a maximum of twenty-minutes in length.

**Featured Performance:**

Richmond Symphony Orchestra concert including new works by composers Reena Esmail and Shirish Korde.

**Keynote Speaker:**


**Confirmed Speakers:**

Dr. Dylan Robinson (Queen’s University): *On Decolonial Listening*
Dr. Michelle Habell-Pallán (University of Washington): *Feminista Hip Hop/Futurismo Feminista: Sumak Kawsai/Buen Vivir/Living Right in the Americas/La Abya Lalya.*

Dr. Andy McGraw (University of Richmond): *Mapping the Sonic Geography of Social Change in Richmond Virginia*

**Submission Deadline:**

Friday September 14th 2018, 5:00 pm EST.

You will be notified by Monday, October 1 2018 whether or not your proposal has been accepted.

**Conference Fees:**

There are no registration fees. All activities are free and open to the public.

**Conference Committee:**

Professor Andy McGraw (University of Richmond)
Professor Dylan Robinson (Queen’s University)
Professor Joanna Love (University of Richmond)
Professor Jessie Fillerup (University of Richmond / Aarhus University)
Professor Benjamin Broening (University of Richmond)