

Summer Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation 2008

Transcultural Understanding

Deborah Wong

This seminar draws critical theory into conversation with historicized, site-specific case studies of improvisative practices across cultures and communities. We will attend to the nuances of specific musical and cultural practices by attending to how they relate within and between the communities in which they exist. Performativity theory is the theoretical bedrock of the seminar. If improvisation can forecast better ways of being-in-the-world, it can also enact dystopian disaster. We will explore materials ranging from Nor-tec to the Asian Pacific Performance Exchange, and from Asian American improvisation to testimonial theater. Readings are from cultural studies, Ethnic Studies, musicology, ethnomusicology, popular music studies, and performance studies.

Lecture 1

Tuesday, August 26

PERFORMATIVITY

READ: Stanyek, Chap. 1.

READ: Conquergood.

READ: *Narrative/Performance: Cross-Cultural Encounters at APPEX* (at

<http://www.wac.ucla.edu/cip/appexbook>), essays by Denise Uyehara and Karen Shimakawa.

EXPLORE: <http://www.crossingtheblvd.org/>. Be sure to click on the enter button! This site is bottomless. Flash 6 plugin required.

LISTEN: “Crossing Queens Boulevard,” “Universal Phenomenon,” and “Globalization,” from the album *Crossing the Blvd.*

WATCH: “Introductions,” “Collaborations,” and “Collaborations II” at <http://www.wac.ucla.edu/cip/salon/index.html>.

Lecture 2

Wednesday, August 27

BORDERS

READ: Kun

READ: Madrid.

READ: Slobin.

LISTEN: “Akai 47—Discovery Download” and “Polaris.”

LOOK THRU: *Paso del Nortec/This is Tijuana!*

EXPLORE: <http://www.nor-tec.org/>.

Lecture 3

Thursday, August 28

DECOLONIZATION

READ: Bhabha.

READ: Bohlman.

READ: Savigliano.

READ: McMichael.

LISTEN: *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*.

LISTEN: *Frozen Brass, Asia: Anthology of Brass Band Music #1*.

WATCH: Sheila Chandra, "Lament of McCrimmon/Song of the Banshee" at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgeJsR7iugA>.

Lecture 4

Friday, August 29

DYSTOPIAS

READ: Kondo.

READ: Chang.

READ: Middleton and Beebe, "The Racial Politics of Hybridity and 'Neo-eclecticism' in Contemporary Popular Music."

LISTEN: "Black Korea."

YOUTUBE: look up the music videos discussed in Middleton and Beebe.

Lecture 5

Saturday, August 30

UTOPIAS

READ: Both articles by Lewis.

READ: Wong.

READ: Stanyek, Chapter 5.

LISTEN: *Pachinko Dream Track 10*.

LISTEN: "Something Grand/Soran Bushi."

READINGS

Before September 25, all readings will be available through the U of Guelph library website. On the first day of our seminar, bring a flash drive and you can copy all the pdf files!

Bhabha, Homi. 1994. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." In *The Location of Culture*, 85-92. New York and London: Routledge.

Bohman, Philip V. 2002. Chapter 7, "Colonial Musics, Postcolonial Worlds, and the Globalization of World Music." In *World Music: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 130-150. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Chang, Jeff. 1993. "Race, Class, Conflict and Empowerment: On Ice Cube's 'Black Korea'." In *Los Angeles—Struggles toward Ethnic Community: Asian American, African American, and Latino Perspectives*, ed. Edward T. Chang and Russell C. Leong, 87-107. 2005. Chapter 15, "The Real Enemy: The Cultural Riot of Ice Cube's Death Certificate," in *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, 331-353. New York: Picador.

Conquergood, Dwight. 2002. "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research." *The Drama Review* 46 (2)(T174): 145-156.

- Kun, Josh. 2000. "The Aural Border." *Theatre Journal* 52: 1-12.
- Lewis, George E. 1996. "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives." *Black Music Research Journal* 16 (1): 91-122.
2005. "Gittin' to Know Y'all: Improvised Music, Interculturalism and the Racial Imagination." *Critical Studies in Improvisation / Études critiques en improvisation* [Online] 1:1. Available: <http://quasar.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/csieci/article/view/6/15>.
- Madrid, Alejandro. "Navigating Ideologies in 'In-between' Cultures: Signifying Practices in Nor-Tec Music." *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 24, No. 2. (Autumn -Winter, 2003), pp. 270-286.
- McMichael, Robert K. 1998. "We Insist-Freedom Now!": Black Moral Authority, Jazz, and the Changeable Shape of Whiteness." *American Music* 16 (4) (Winter, 1998): 375-416.
- Savigliano, Marta E. 1995. Chapter 6, "From Exoticism to Decolonization," in *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, 207-238. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Slobin, Mark. 1993. Chapter 4, "Interpolating the Interculture." In *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West*, 61-82. Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press.
- Stanyek, Jason. 2004. "Diasporic Improvisation and the Articulation of Intercultural Music." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego.
- Wong, Deborah. 2004. Chapter 12, "ImprovisAsians: Free Improvisation as Asian American Resistance." In *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music*, 275-298. New York and London: Routledge.

BOOKS

Buy these two books on the internet, or look at the copies I'll bring with me (Amazon lists inexpensive used copies of each). The U of Guelph library doesn't own them. You won't need to read them in their entirety: I suggest you spend an hour looking through each one to get a sense for the projects they represent.

Lehrer, Warren and Judith Sloan. 2003. *Crossing the BLVD: Strangers, Neighbors, Aliens in a New America*. W. W. Norton & Company.
Be sure to get the CD as well, or else purchase the individual tracks on the Crossing the BLVD website.

Valenzuela, Jose Manuel. 2004. *Paso del Nortec : This is Tijuana!* (DVD Included). México, D.F.: Trilce; Pap/DVD Bl edition.

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

All will be made available as mp3 files.

Crossing the BLVD: The Speech of Music, the Music of Speech. Scott Johnson, Judith Sloan, and Warren Lehrer. Earsay and Emotomat Music, 2003. Compact disc.

Frozen Brass, Asia: Anthology of Brass Band Music #1. PAN Records, 1993. Compact disc.

Asia Pacific Performance Exchange 2000. UCLA Center for Intercultural Performance/The Regents of the University of California, 2001. DVD.

Pachinko Dream Track 10. Album of free improvisation by Glenn Horiuchi, Francis Wong, and Joseph Jarman. Music and Arts, 1998. Compact disc.

We Insist! Freedom Now Suite. Max Roach. Candid Records, 1960. Compact disc reissue, 1988.