**Global Musical Modernisms—2104QCM**

Chris Stover, Convenor and Lecturer

Office: S1 3.16

Email: c.stover@griffith.edu.au

*“The aim of this [course] is to imagine musical modernism as a global phenomenon, beyond the largely unquestioned Euro-centrism of dominant accounts. This undertaking proves both impossible and necessary.”*

*(B. Heile)*

Why is it both impossible and necessary to develop a conception of musical modernism as a properly global phenomenon? For one, the concept is complicated enough under conventional understandings, as a largely European and Euro-diasporic constellation of orientation, ambitions, and practices. When did modernism emerge? When did it end? Did it end? Have we, as philosopher Bruno Latour suggests, “never been modern”? What counts as a modernist expression, for whom, for what reasons, and with what implications? All of these questions and many more haunt any effort to pin down even a provisional definition.

The conceit of this course is that modernism is indeed a global phenomenon, that lines of influence move continuously in multiple directions, that there are different conjunctural modes that run the gamut of ethical valences, that military, economic, and cultural imperialism and colonialism have been and remain intensely destructive forces and that musical practices continue to be sites of resistance and recuperation, that epistemological relativism is real, and that music and other art practices function as forms of knowledge production. We’ll discuss all of these in detail as the course unfolds, and everyone is encouraged to think about the particular ways in which they operate in any given context. Each week we’ll engage a topic, a series of readings and listenings, and one or more ‘case studies’: close engagement with an artist or collective that exemplifies either the main topic, one of the readings, or both.

About seven overarching themes animate this course:

1. Contesting the singular term “modernism” from the perspective of time, place, function, and effect; instead, considering modern*isms* as a complex network of interwoven streams and multidirectional causal trajectories.
2. In this way we will strive to resist conventional “global diffusion” frameworks where modernism is born in the European or “Western” or “Global Northern” metropole.
3. Considering different ways in which “traditional” musical resources have been deployed, and different rationales for doing so.
4. Following from this, working to understand power relations: who coopts what, for what reason, with what ethical consequences.
5. Resisting the urge to fix “modernism” as a genre or time/place-specific concept. Among other things, this means assuming, following philosopher Jacques Rancière, that there was no “postmodern turn.”
6. Therefore thinking carefully and creatively about what it means to “be modern” as an artistic expression/perspective/motivation. This means contesting the art/popular distinction and, following musician and scholar George E. Lewis, considering different “logics” of experimentalism and, therefore, of knowledge production.
7. Working to decenter composers and compositions in consideration of a diverse range of music-making practices.

Course Schedule

**Week 1.** Entangled modernisms

Reading: Heile; Milin

Case studies: Alberto Williams; Ljubica Marić; Phew

**Week 2.** Uses of tradition 1: imperialism, colonization, and the hegemony of Western aesthetics

Reading: Chen; Nuss; Deguchi

Case studies: Toshiro Hosokawa; Jo Kondo; Ushio Torikai

**Week 3.** Fugitivity, provincialization, and epistemological relativism

Reading: Rusert; Chakrabarty; Moten and Harney; Lewis

Case studies: Charlie Parker, Cecil Taylor, and Black experimentalism

**Week 4.** Uses of tradition 2: resistances and redeployments

Reading: Andrade; Harney and Philips; Veloso

Case study: Antropofágio, Tropicália, and deimperialist identity

**Week 5.** Tradition and modernity: a false dichotomy?

Reading: Stover; Bodenheimer; McGraw

Case studies: Tom Ze’s samba; Los Muñequitos de Matanzas’s timba; I Wayan Sadra’s gamelan

**Week 6.** Music as performative knowledge

Reading: Cordova; Little Bear; Welch

Case studies: Tanya Tagaq’s timespaces, Matana Roberts’s historiography

**Week 7.** Australian modernisms

Readings: Campbell; Harris

Case studies: John Antill and ‘primitivism’; the *Aboriginal Theatre* (1970)

**Week 8.** Ecocide and epistemicide

Readings: Brynjolson; Domenici; Varma

Case studies: Raven Chacon and remapping spacetimes; samba de roda and cultural tourism; Raga Miann Ki Malhar

**Week 9.** Afro-modernisms

Readings: Agawu, Jaji; Harney

Case studies: Mapfumo and Marley as modernists; *le Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres* and Pan-Africanism

**Week 10.** Afro- and indigenous futurisms

Readings/listenings: Eshun; Dillon, Cornum et al.; Miranda

Case study: Moor Mother and ‘Black Quantum Futurism’

**Week 11.** Presentations

**Week 12.** Presentations

*(Assessments and course policies to come)*

Bibliography

Kofi Agawu. 2003. *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions*. Routledge.

Oswald de Andrade. 1991. “Cannibalist Manifesto,” trans. Leslie Bary. *Latin American Literary Review* 19 no. 3: 38–47.

Rebecca Bodenheimer. 2015. *Geographies of Cubanidad: Place, Race, and Musical Performance in Contemporary Cuba*. University Press of Mississippi.

Noni Brynjolson. 2022. “Ripple Effects: New Frameworks for Learning in Postcommodity’s Sound Art.” In *Postdigital Ecopedagogies*, ed. Petar Jandrić and Derek Ford. Springer, 247–260.

Rachel Campbell. 2022. “Primitivism and Settler Primitivism in Music: The Case of John Antill’s Corroboree.” *The Musical Quarterly* 105 no. 1–2: 190–234.

Chen Kuan Sing. 2010. *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*. Duke University Press.

V.C. Cordova. “Ethics: from an Artist’s Point of View.” In *American Indian Thought*, ed. Anne Watters. Blackwell Publishing, 250–255.

Tomoko Deguchi. 2020. “The Appeal of the Foreign in Toshio Hosokawa’s Opera *Matsukaze*.” *Global Musical Modernisms* Humanities Commons Site, ed. Gavin Lee. <https://globalmusicalmodernisms.hcommons.org/2020/11/>

Grace Dillon, Lou Cornum et al. 2019. “Looking Towards the Future: Indigenous Futurism in Literature, Music, Film, and Fashion.” *Unreserved*. https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/looking-towards-the-future-indigenous-futurism-in-literature-music-film-and-fashion-1.5036479

Eloisa Domenici. 2021. “Samba de roda and the Threat of Epistemicide on the North Coast of Bahia.” *MUSICultures* 48: 142–167.

Kodwo Eshun. 1998. *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction*. Quartet Books.

Elizabeth Harney. 2004. *In Senghor’s Shadow: Art, Politics, and the Avant-Garde in Senegal, 1960–1995*. Duke University Press.

Amanda Harris. 2020. *Representing Australian Aboriginal Music and Dance 1930–1970*. Bloomsbury.

Björn Heile. 2019. “Musical Modernism, Global.” In *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. Björn Heile and Charles Wilson. Routledge.

Tsitsi Ella Jaji. 2014. *Africa in Stereo: Modernism, Music, and Pan-African Solidarity*. Oxford University Press.

George E. Lewis. 1996. “Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological

Perspectives.” *Black Music Research Journal* 16/1, 91–122.

Leroy Little Bear. 2015. “Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science.” *The Banff Centre: Inspiring Creativity*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJSJ28eEUjI>

Andrew Clay McGraw. 2009. “Radical Tradition: Balinese Musik Kontemporer.” *Ethnomusicology* 53 no. 1: 115–141.

Melita Milin. 2008. “Musical Modernism in the ‘Agrarian Countries of South Eastern Europe’: the Changed Function of Folk Music in the Twentieth Century.” In *Rethinking Musical Modernism*, ed. Dejan Despić and Melita Milin. Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 121–130.

Beatriz Miranda. 2020. “‘The Way I Am is an Outrage’: the Indigenous Brazilian Musicians Taking Back a Burning Country.” *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/oct/26/brazil-music-indigenous-tribes-environment-bolsonaro>

Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. 2013. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Minor Compositions.

Steven Nuss. 2004. “The Politics of Toshiro Mayzumi’s Essay for String Orchestra.” In *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music,* ed. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau. Wesleyan University Press.

Britt Rusert. *Fugitive Science: Empiricism and Freedom in Early African American Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2017.

Edward Said. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage Books.

Chris Stover. 2018. “Tatuando o samba / Tattooing the samba.” <https://www.chrisstovermusic.com/tatuando>

Avi Varma. “Unjust Intonations.” In *Monsoon [+ Other] Grounds*, ed. Lindsay Bremner and John Cook. Monsoon Assemblages, 215–222.

Shay Welch. 2019. *The Phenomenology of a Performative Knowledge System: Dancing with Native American Epistemology*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Tom Zé (2003), *Tropicalista lenta luta*. Publifolha. (Excerpts translated by Chris Stover)