

Introduction to the Special Issue on Global Musical Modernisms

GAVIN S. K. LEE¹ AND CHRISTOPHER J. MILLER²

¹ Soochow University, China

² Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA

Global Musical Modernisms – the formulation heralds expansion into new arenas of music research.¹ For while certain pairings of the component terms are familiar enough, the concatenation of all three is novel. In music studies, the most notable trend is the flurry of activity around global music history, with study groups in two societies historically focused on Western musics, and one focused on ethnomusicology.² Global music history derives strength and in turn strengthens movement towards disciplinary convergence, or at least greater interaction – an important precondition for the study of global musical modernisms.³ There has also been renewed interest in musical modernism, though not so much, at least at first glance, in the direction of the global, and with less interdisciplinary synergy. By contrast, the global figures very prominently in what has been termed the ‘new modernist studies’, a field that coalesced in the late 1990s.⁴ As one indication, its global turn had gathered enough momentum for Oxford University Press to publish a handbook on ‘Global Modernisms’ in 2013, just three years after its handbook on ‘Modernisms’.⁵ Despite aspirations to coverage of modernism in all its forms, the field is populated predominantly by literary scholars, with minimal attention to music.

This special issue thus represents a first in proclaiming explicitly a focus on global musical modernisms. In this introduction, we outline what we believe the development of an adequately global perspective on musical modernism entails, taking a cue from the title of the flagship journal of new modernist studies, *Modernism/Modernity*, and the call from one of

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- 1 The formulation stems from Lee’s work with the Society for Music Theory’s Global Interculturalism and Musical Peripheries interest group from 2017 to 2020, and in particular the seminar he convened on the topic in 2019. Out of this seminar, contributions by Tomoko Deguchi and Ya-Hui Cheng on avant-garde and rock music were published as posts on Lee’s *Global Musical Modernisms* website. Gavin Lee, ed., *Global Musical Modernisms*, <https://globalmusicalmodernisms.hcommons.org/> (accessed on 23 July 2022).
 - 2 Study groups on global music history exist in the American Musicological Society, the International Musicological Society, and the International Council for Traditional Music.
 - 3 For a landmark publication, see Reinhard Strohm, ed., *Studies on a Global History of Music: A Balzan Musicology Project* (New York: Routledge, 2018).
 - 4 Key milestones are the launch of the journal *Modernism/Modernity* in 1994 and the founding of the Modernist Studies Association in 1999. For a retrospective assessment, see Douglas Mao, *The New Modernist Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
 - 5 Peter Brooker, *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

its leading figures, Susan Stanford Friedman, to ‘interrogate the slash’.⁶ In our view, the relationship between the two terms constitutes one of the central problematics for the larger project this special issue initiates. Another is the persistence of disconnection within music studies: between a musicology that embraces the notion of modernism, but rarely looks beyond its manifestations in Western art music, and an ethnomusicology that pretty much only looks beyond Western art music and rarely considers modernism (and almost never by name). Before introducing the issue proper, we explore these issues through a survey of what work has been done, in tandem with some more theoretical reflections on how to move forward. We link the late emergence of research on global musical modernisms with the disciplinary divide between musicology and ethnomusicology. This divide is blurred in this issue with the conjunction of key terms from both sides – linking ‘global’ with ‘modernism’ – with younger scholars pursuing related studies across conventionally modernist as well as tonal, vernacular, and ‘traditional’ musics. The genre expansion leads to what seems to be a fundamental contradiction – can such musics be ‘modernist’? – thereby precipitating a broader discussion on the conceptual genealogy and transformation of musical ‘modernism’ in its interrelated Western as well as global forms. Finally, in introducing the articles, we articulate how authors address BIPOC music-makers’ agency while bearing in mind the colonial structures that have shaped musical modernism in the past, and continue to shape it in the present, whether in its Western or global iterations.

Terminological complications and disciplinary dispositions

While there is little existing scholarship that neatly fits the rubric of global musical modernisms, gauging the full extent of interest in the topic is complicated by terminological choices. On the one hand, there is scholarship that explicitly embraces the term ‘modernism’. In the past decade, this body of musicological study has expanded considerably. At one point, Adornian studies of modernism seemed to be overly focused on a narrow ‘concert’ repertoire by European and North American composers. For Alastair Williams in his 1995 monograph, an ‘expanded understanding’ of modernism involved extending the term to John Cage and György Ligeti, alongside Pierre Boulez and the ‘high modernism’ of post-war Europe.⁷ However, later work has moved definitively in a number of different directions. Departing from the necessary but ultimately limited critique of instrumental reason,⁸ research on musical modernism has encompassed historical studies of post-1945 music in a Cold War geopolitical framework,⁹ as well as a series of edited collections that aimed at rethinking modernism.¹⁰ These latter include examinations not only of

6 Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 52.

7 Alastair Williams, *New Music and the Claims of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2016 [1995]), ix.

8 Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006 [1949]).

9 See, for example, Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Adrian Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

10 Laura Tunbridge, Gianmario Borio, Peter Franklin, Christopher Chowrimootoo, Alastair Williams, Arman Schwartz, and Christopher Ballantine, ‘Round Table: Modernism and its Others’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139/1 (2014). Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson, eds., *Transformations of Musical Modernism* (Cambridge:

a broader range of composers, but also of the institutions that support modernism as it is usually understood, the work of composers in theorizing communication, and topics such as performance, opera staging, and sound art. In spite of the self-conscious attempt to remake musical modernism, however, these collections are largely focused on activity in the Western art music tradition taking place in Europe (primarily) and North America, with the few notable exceptions of contributions considering modernism and popular music, and modernism's 'global diffusion'.¹¹ This focus is equally evident in an eclectic collection of articles staking out a middle ground between modernism's champions and detractors, and also in an anthology of sources with extensive commentary.¹² In spite of efforts at expanding the conversation in this scholarship, including consideration of the 'middlebrow' and composers once dismissed as conservative, and even 'gay Darmstadt',¹³ the tendency towards a canonical modernist aesthetic, even if not canonical figures themselves, is palpable.¹⁴ This tendency holds true even when we consider the modest geographic expansion in modernist studies, including work on European-US musical cosmopolitanism,¹⁵ comparative global studies,¹⁶ and research on the conundrums of how composers envoice themselves within globalization (straddling nationalist identity expression and resistance towards exotic stereotypes).¹⁷

On the other hand, there is music scholarship that focuses on repertoire proximal to that examined in the previously cited publications, but that avoids the term 'modernism' itself. In some cases, the focus is on 'musical *modernity*' either within the European sphere, or between Europe and East Asia, entailing the examination of a broader historical timeframe beyond the twentieth century that is associated with modernism.¹⁸ Other studies adopt the terminology

Cambridge University Press, 2016). Björn Heile and Charles Wilson, eds., *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

- 11 Björn Heile, 'Musical Modernism, Global: Comparative Observations', in Heile and Wilson eds., *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism*.
- 12 For an approach balancing musical modernism's supporters and detractors, see Arved Ashby, *The Pleasure of Modernist Music: Listening, Meaning, Intention, Ideology* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004). For an anthology of sources on musical modernism, see Daniel Albright, ed., *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
- 13 David Osmond-Smith and Paul Attinello, 'Gay Darmstadt: Flamboyance and Rigour at the Summer Courses for New Music', *Contemporary Music Review* 26 (2007).
- 14 An example of the continued focus on Western modernism is David Metzger, *Musical Modernism at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For a re-evaluation of a 'conservative' composer, see J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar, Modernist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). On consideration of the middlebrow, see Christopher Chowrimootoo, 'Reviving the Middlebrow, or: Deconstructing Modernism from the Inside', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139/1 (2014).
- 15 See Björn Heile, 'Erik Bergman, Cosmopolitanism, and the Transformation of Musical Geography', in *Transformations*, ed. Guldbrandsen and Johnson. Brigid Cohen, 'Limits of National History: Yoko Ono, Stefan Wolpe, and the Dilemmas of Cosmopolitanism', *The Musical Quarterly* 97/2 (2014).
- 16 Heile, 'Musical Modernism, Global'.
- 17 Christian Utz, *Musical Composition in the Context of Globalization: New Perspectives on Music History of the 20th and 21st Centuries*, trans. Lawrence Willis (Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript, 2020).
- 18 Julian Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Tobias Janz and Chien-Chang Yang, *Decentering Musical Modernity: Perspectives on East Asian and European Music History* (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2019).

surrounding and generated by the musicians in question, as in American ‘experimentalism’.¹⁹ Of particular interest is the notable presence of global cases in studies that signal their musical affiliation to modernism through usage of terms such as ‘experimental’ or ‘avant-garde’. One finds collections and monographs on ‘experimentalisms’ in Latin America, the ‘Arab avant-garde’, or the ‘radical traditions’ of ‘Balinese contemporary music’.²⁰ Similar language also appears within studies of Japanese Noise, and of South African *kwaito*.²¹ ‘Cosmopolitanism’ has also been used as a marker of what we in this issue would consider under the framework of global musical modernisms, as in Steven Feld’s work on jazz in Accra, with its inventive experimentation.²² These studies have been conducted through ethnography²³ and/or have focused on complex global socialities²⁴ that exceed the negotiation of canonical musical modernism. Topically, this work ranges from detailed reception studies,²⁵ to elite society,²⁶ to (what we might call) ‘indigenous’ musical modernisms that are rooted in locally originating practices (such as experimentalist gamelan), and much more. This new work reaches beyond the geographic expansion to a broadly ‘East Asian’ concert modernism established around the turn of the millennium,²⁷ with a disproportionate number of studies focusing on a small group of composers who have migrated to Europe and the United States – and thus highlighting the paradoxical exclusion, until quite recently, of the

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- 19 Benjamin Piekut, *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011). Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).
- 20 Ana R. Alonso-Minutti, Eduardo Herrera, and Alejandro L. Madrid, eds., *Experimentalisms in Practice: Music Perspectives from Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Thomas Burkhalter, Kay Dickinson, and Benjamin J. Harbert, eds., *The Arab Avant-Garde: Music, Politics, Modernity* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013). Andrew Clay McGraw, *Radical Traditions: Reimagining Culture in Balinese Contemporary Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 27–8.
- 21 Gavin Steingo, *Kwaito’s Promise: Music and the Aesthetics of Freedom in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
- 22 Steven Feld, *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).
- 23 Such studies include Bonnie C. Wade, *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014) and Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995).
- 24 Michael Tenzer, ‘José Maceda and the Paradoxes of Modern Composition in Southeast Asia’, *Ethnomusicology* 47/1 (2003). See also, Utz, *Musical Composition in the Context of Globalization*.
- 25 Alejandro L. Madrid, *In Search of Julián Carrillo and Sonido 13* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 26 Eduardo Herrera, *Elite Art Worlds: Philanthropy, Latin Americanism, and Avant-Garde Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).
- 27 Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau, eds., *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004). Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung: The Life and Work of a Contemporary Chinese-Born American Composer* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006). Eric Lai, *The Music of Chou Wen-Chung* (Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009). Hilary Vanessa Finchum-Sung, ed., ‘Aesthetics of Interculturality in East Asian Contemporary Music’, *The World of Music* 6/1 (2017). Edward Green, ed., ‘China and the West: The Birth of a New Music’, *Contemporary Music Review* 26/5–6 (2007). Mary Arlin and Mark Radice, eds., *Polycultural Synthesis in the Music of Chou Wen-chung* (New York: Routledge, 2018). Barbara Mittler, *Dangerous Tunes: The Politics of Chinese Music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People’s Republic of China since 1949* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 1997).

rest of the world. The new work thus moves towards a more fully global picture of musical modernism, even if it has not understood itself in those terms.

Reconciling this disconnect is not merely a matter of terminology. It must also take into account disciplinary dispositions and divides, the most pressing for our project being the different status of the term 'modernism' within the subdisciplines of musicology and ethnomusicology. For musicology, as Heile and Wilson note in pithily commenting on modernism's 'fall from grace', it is as if, 'styled first as a breaker then as a maker of taboos', modernism 'had itself become taboo'.²⁸ It came to be regarded as 'academic, authoritarian, intolerant, chauvinistic and colonialist', as Gianmario Borio notes in summing up the more explicit and strident critiques from so-called 'new musicologists';²⁹ there is ample evidence to support such a charge, with Boulez's spectacular pronouncements about non-serial composers being 'USELESS'³⁰ and 'Oriental music' being 'dead'³¹ constituting exhibit A. Even within the 'ultra-heterodox climate' that came to prevail in art music composition since at least the 1970s with the advent of what has been called musical 'postmodernism', interest in canonically modernist styles and techniques has persisted.³² It might be the case that the continued salience of modernism to music studies might have persuaded even strong critics such as Susan McClary of its relevance. Though McClary famously led the charge against modernism with her article 'Terminal Prestige', she later struck a relatively sympathetic note when revisiting the ongoing 'modernist project'.³³

Ethnomusicology, for its part, has never paid modernism in this specific, canonical sense any significant attention. In large part, this follows from the nearly total omission of Western art music from its purview, although it is compounded by canonical modernism's association with elitism. Ethnomusicology professes an agnostic stance with respect to aesthetic value, emphasizing the ways the music holds value for different communities instead.³⁴ At least this is the ideal; in practice, ethnomusicology too has tended to be oriented towards specific musics and thus particular musical sounds. While having negotiated the problematic of 'authentic' traditional music (which does not exist) and engaged in hybridity studies, ethnomusicology continues to be significantly shaped by a focus on the participatory in music, and

28 Heile and Wilson, *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism*, 1.

29 Gianmario Borio, 'Musical Communication and the Process of Modernity', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139/1 (2014), 178.

30 Quoted in Jonathan Goldman, 'Boulez and the Spectralists between Descartes and Rameau: Who Said What about Whom?' *Perspectives of New Music* 48/2 (2010), 214.

31 Pierre Boulez, *Orientations: Collected Writings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 421.

32 Metzger, *Musical Modernism at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century*. On musical postmodernism, see Judith Lochhead and Joseph Auner, eds., *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

33 Susan McClary, 'Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition', *Cultural Critique* 12 (1989). Susan McClary, 'The Lure of the Sublime: Revisiting the Modernist Project', in *Transformations*, ed. Guldbrandsen and Johnson. McClary clarifies in the latter that she was 'not attacking modernist music per se but only some of the ideologies that had upheld its hegemony' (21).

34 A case of the ethnomusicological emphasis on musical egalitarianism that avoids hierarchies of taste relates is one of our co-editor Christopher J. Miller's own graduate school experience. That one should, as an ethnomusicologist, suspend one's own aesthetic judgement, was made quite clear to him at Wesleyan University.

by the notion of resistance – specifically, resistance to the hegemony of Western art music within academia (see Lee’s article in this issue). Thus, generally speaking, ethnomusicologists have, when venturing beyond traditional musics, turned most often to popular and hybrid musics.

The disconnect between the two camps of musicology and ethnomusicology largely holds true. Yet there are instances of deliberate bridge building;³⁵ of scholars who make a point of traversing this and other divides, such as that between ‘art’ and ‘pop’;³⁶ and of others whose work functions as stepping stones, not just between musicology and ethnomusicology, but also to and from other disciplines involved in the study of music.³⁷ With its commitment to examining music in relation to broader cultural, social, and – crucially – musical forces, this interdisciplinary and inter-genre scholarship denies priority to any given body of music.³⁸ Interestingly, much of this work has involved music that invites the labels ‘avant-garde’ and ‘experimental’, including the early and influential example of Georgina Born’s ethnography of IRCAM.³⁹

Returning to the question of terminology, there are other intricacies to be noted, and several ways to deal with them. It is of course important to pay close attention to the various ways different terms have been used, at different times, in different places and languages, and for different objects.⁴⁰ It is, for instance, worth spending some time to disentangle ‘avant-garde’ and ‘experimental’, which are somewhat interchangeable⁴¹ (we leave the elaboration of the relation of the two terms to ‘modernism’ for later, as the latter’s complexities require more space to unfold). ‘Avant-garde’ music is conventionally identified, through its association with the related art movements of Surrealism, Dadaism, and Futurism, in terms of an anti-establishment attack on art institutions, involving incomprehensible juxtapositions, nonsense, violence, and war. In the same vein, it might be argued that avant-garde music is a sharper version of a modernism that generally reflects modernity, but in a non- or less transgressive way.⁴² Because the avant-garde retains the connotation of resistance, it has

35 See, e.g., Everett and Lau, eds., *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*.

36 The work of Alejandro L. Madrid exemplifies the inter-genre approach. See Alejandro L. Madrid, *Nor-Tec Rifa! Electronic Dance Music from Tijuana to the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Alejandro L. Madrid, *Sounds of the Modern Nation: Music, Culture, and Ideas in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2009). Alejandro L. Madrid and Robin Dale Moore, *Danzón: Circum-Caribbean Dialogues in Music and Dance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Madrid, *In Search of Julián Carrillo and Sonido 13*. Alejandro L. Madrid, *Tania León’s Stride: A Polyhythmic Life* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2022).

37 Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

38 See Benjamin Piekut, ed., *Tomorrow is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2014). Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968–1981* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011).

39 Born, *Rationalizing Culture*.

40 Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987). Per Bäckström, ‘One Earth, Four or Five Words. The Peripheral Concept of ‘Avant-Garde’’, *Nordlit* 21 (2007).

41 Piekut, *Experimentalism Otherwise*, 14

42 See Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1984).

become a privileged and contested term with quasi-ethical overtones. But in anglophone music studies, the term ‘avant-garde’ is used to refer to the European modernist musical establishment, against which US experimentalists have come to be portrayed as renegades.⁴³ For our purposes, what is notable is that the fine distinction between avant-gardism and experimentalism has historically appealed to those writing about music in the West, rather than elsewhere. The narrowness of a good portion of the avant-garde versus experimental music debate comes into focus when we turn to recent research on global avant-gardes, musical (as mentioned earlier) or otherwise, which has expanded beyond the US-Europe nexus and considered a wider range of issues. For example, in art history, Mike Sell’s examination of the entwinement of global avant-gardes with racism, war, and intolerance points to the critical consciousness of avant-garde practitioners who situated their art against the past – but note that given such entwinements, *critical* is not synonymous with *ethical*.⁴⁴

There is also something to be said for avoiding loaded terms such as modernism, avant-garde, and experimental. This might have informed Feld’s preference for ‘cosmopolitanism’; Tim Rutherford-Johnson more studiously avoids any single label of his survey of ‘modern composition’ since 1989.⁴⁵ In this issue, we are especially inspired, both conceptually and methodologically, by a different sort of strategy exemplified by Benjamin Piekut’s ‘new provisional concept of the vernacular avant-garde’. By introducing the modifier ‘vernacular’ – which he employs ‘both carefully and irresponsibly’ – Piekut wrests the terms ‘avant-garde’ and ‘modernism’ from their canonical associations, applying them instead to convention-defying music-making in non-elite realms. He builds up the concept of the vernacular avant-garde ‘just enough . . . to wobble out into the world and cause trouble’.⁴⁶ His irreverential stance aligns with Paul Saint-Amour’s argument in favour of ‘weak theory’, which views the weakening of the key term ‘modernism’ as a positive development.⁴⁷ Our formulation, global musical modernisms, has less trouble-making potential, and should not, one hopes, be troublesome in less desirable ways. It does, nonetheless, demand significant intervention, beyond a simple integration of the diverse literature surveyed earlier, or a declaration by fiat that all that that literature covers is in fact modernist. In the vein of Piekut’s vernacular avant-garde, we regard global musical modernisms as unsettled and unsettling. We regard the term ‘global’ as signalling a redefinition of the concept of modernism itself, and a broader conceptualization of modernism’s relationship to modernity.

Redefining musical modernism

Our special issue is informed by the kind of genre- and discipline-bending work surveyed earlier, work that has both engaged with and extended beyond canonical modernism. The

43 Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music: The Avant Garde since 1945* (New York: G. Braziller, 1981). Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For further discussion, see Alonso-Minutti et al., eds., *Experimentalisms in Practice*, 4.

44 See Mike Sell, *The Avant-Garde: Race, Religion, War* (New York: Seagull Books, 2012).

45 Tim Rutherford-Johnson, *Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture after 1989* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2017).

46 Benjamin Piekut, *Henry Cow: The World Is a Problem* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 387, 406.

47 Paul K. Saint-Amour, ‘Weak Theory, Weak Modernism’, *Modernism/Modernity* 25/3 (2018).

possibilities contained within this dynamic research prompts us towards a redefinition of 'modernism' as *a critical framework that is firmly embedded in the global*. Because 'modernism' is less used outside of what, especially from a global perspective, is the narrow frame of Western art music, we argue that the term actually becomes *more* available for a general redefinition. Global modernisms facilitate engaging with what film scholar Miriam Hansen, in an influential article that introduced 'vernacular' to the discussion, characterized as a 'dislodging' of modernism from 'any single-logic genealogy' – the example for music being the one that runs 'from Arnold Schoenberg to Karlheinz Stockhausen'. Hansen instead argues for understanding modernism 'as a much wider, more diverse phenomenon', whose manifestations in different parts of the world 'vary according to their social and geopolitical locations, often configured along the axis of post/coloniality, and according to the specific subcultural and indigenous traditions to which they responded'.⁴⁸

In terms of what music to include, it is clear that global musical modernisms imply global iterations of experimental or avant-garde music. However, a broader conception of modernism as the 'music of modernity' presents the intriguing possibility of an expanded repertoire purview, cases of which we can first survey without jumping to conclusions about the relation between 'modernism' and 'modernity'. One intriguing candidate for global musical modernisms is tonal music in the Classic and Romantic styles by Chinese composers, which uses 'Western instrumental and compositional techniques' that are just as 'new to China' as those more readily recognizable as 'modernist'.⁴⁹ Other parallel cases include African new music animated by the dominant 'protestant tonal legacy';⁵⁰ *modanizumu*, the new culture of a Tokyo rebuilt after the 1923 Kantō earthquake, which musically mostly took the form of jazz;⁵¹ and what Tsitsi Ella Jaji terms 'stereomodernism', which relates to what popular African American musics, as 'an expression of the experience born of industrial and financial capitalism, rapid urbanization, and new, postcolonial systems of governance', have meant to Africans and their own 'experience of being "modern" in Africa over the course of the long twentieth century'.⁵²

These instances go well beyond conventional understandings of musical modernism, which demonstrates that simply expanding the category of modernism to include global instances of experimental and avant-garde music proximal to their canonical counterparts is not enough. An adequately global understanding of musical modernism cannot simply take its most canonical form as a universal measure and then proceed to arrange that which more or

48 Miriam Hansen, 'The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism', *Modernism/Modernity* 6/2 (1999), 59–60. Building on Hansen as well as Foucault's ideas about the 'attitude of modernity', Brigid Cohen offers a 'retheorizing' of 'musical modernism' geared towards the case of émigré composer Stefan Wolpe. Brigid Cohen, *Stefan Wolpe and the Avant-Garde Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Michel Foucault, 'What Is Enlightenment?', in *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984*, Vol. 1, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1997).

49 Mittler, *Dangerous Tunes*, 8.

50 Kofi Agawu, 'The Challenge of African Art Music', *Circuit* 21/2 (2011), 55.

51 E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 100–3.

52 Tsitsi Ella Jaji, *Africa in Stereo: Modernism, Music, and Pan-African Solidarity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3, 14.

less resembles it accordingly by geography. An adequate understanding of musical modernism as a global phenomenon must instead operate in a more conceptual register. It must, as mentioned earlier, approach modernism as critical framework rather than as genre. Modernism ought to be understood much more broadly in relation to modernity, and just as one can recognize multiple, or ‘alternative’, modernities,⁵³ so should one recognize multiple musical modernisms. Relating global modernisms/modernities compels us to pay close attention to the interrelation of music, on the one hand, and the processes, characteristics, and expression of global modernities, on the other, including cosmopolitanism, the invention of national and racial histories, the invention of ‘tradition’,⁵⁴ in addition to the phenomenon of ‘concert’ modernism. The various facets of modernity are refractions of the complex of coloniality, capitalism, and industrialization,⁵⁵ giving rise to global contact, nationalism, racialization, and the ‘Volk’,⁵⁶ with the resultant rapid transformation and heterogeneity of modernity being related in diverse ways to modernism as a form of aesthetic expression.⁵⁷

While recognizing the agency of global peoples, our view of global modernisms/modernities is inflected with a keen understanding of the key factor of coloniality as the dark side of modernity: the recognition that social, political, and scientific progress in the West was predicated on the exercise of inhumane oppression abroad.⁵⁸ (Madrid points out that *postmodernity* in the West – arising in the wake of neoliberal offshoring and union busting, combined with scepticism about progressive modernist development – is a delayed revelation of the economic and social inequalities that have always existed in the colonies.⁵⁹) A large body of mainly ethnomusicological work on musical ‘modernities’ could come to be seen in a different light if read through the lens of coloniality that we apply in our conception of global musical modernisms.⁶⁰

One of our conceptual linchpins for this issue is found in an extensive book-length exploration by Susan Stanford Friedman, who, as mentioned, implores us to ‘interrogate the slash!’ of modernism/modernity. Noting the common assumption that ‘modernism mirrors, reflects, reacts, or responds to modernity – as if the historical condition of modernity precedes

53 Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, ed. *Alternative Modernities* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

54 Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier, ‘Sonic Transculturation, Epistemologies of Purification and the Aural Public Sphere in Latin America’, *Social Identities* 12 (2006).

55 Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Option*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 4–6.

56 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983), 67–8.

57 Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, ‘On Alternative Modernities’, in *Alternative Modernities*, ed. Gaonkar.

58 See Anibal Quijano, ‘Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality’, *Cultural Studies* 21/2–3 (2007).

59 Madrid, *Nor-Tec Rifa!*, 21.

60 See, e.g., Victoria Lindsay Levine and Dylan Robinson, eds., *Music and Modernity among First Peoples of North America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2019). James Smethurst, *Brick City Vanguard: Amiri Baraka, Black Music, Black Modernity* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020). Veit Erlmann, *Music, Modernity, and the Global Imagination: South Africa and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Joel Dinerstein, *Swinging the Machine: Modernity, Technology, and African American Culture between the World* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

the aesthetic response to it', Friedman suggests instead that modernism be understood as 'the domain of creative expressivity within modernity's dynamic of rapid change, a domain that interacts with the other arenas of rupture such as technology, trade, migration, state formation, societal institutions, and so forth'.⁶¹ Exploring case studies such as the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) in China and the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1517 CE), Friedman posits modernism as 'a loosely configured set of conditions that share a core meaning of accelerated change but articulate differently on the global map of human history'.⁶² With the broader concept of modernism as the music 'of' modernity in mind, we are better equipped to navigate the aforementioned terminological discrepancy between 'modernism', 'avant-garde', and 'experimental'. The two latter terms, unlike 'modernism' in this special issue, are much less ambiguous in that they refer to twentieth-century musical practices – whereas, following Friedman, 'modern' music might conceivably include works from the Tang dynasty.

Friedman articulates a clear aim to 'unthink' the 'West's idea of itself as the Ur-modernity by rethinking modernity on a planetary scale'.⁶³ However, the inherent complexity of engaging the global through modernism/modernity is made apparent already within Friedman's work, as the definition of modernity as accelerated change cannot be completely cut off from Western modernity as a historical epoch. For many music scholars, 'modernity' and 'modernism' are most closely associated with Adorno's writings, in which he interpreted music as being overrun with modern instrumental rationality, which while originally applied to capitalist economics and bureaucratic governmental administration, came to determine sonata form and 12-tone music.⁶⁴ Adorno in fact goes against the grain of many other writers, for whom the arts of past centuries from the Romantics onwards were a resistive force against a rational modernity bent on social and economic progress. In the arts, a drab, bureaucratic, economically oriented modern life of 'improvements' was countered with the valorization of precisely the transitory quality – characteristic of an age defined by change – that now takes the form of an aesthetics of fragmentation and novelty, as articulated by Baudelaire.⁶⁵ In this light, the music that is conventionally known as 'modernist' can be seen as a reflection of Baudelaire's aesthetics,⁶⁶ with modern-*ism* understood as the aesthetic expression of transitory modernity. Along these lines, Piekut defines modernism as that which 'translates the experience of modernity – transitory, fugitive, contingent – into aesthetic terms'.⁶⁷

Following Friedman's geographic and temporal expansion of modernism, the nature of modernity as identified by Piekut – 'transitory, fugitive, contingent' – can arguably be found in a wide variety of musics from varied geographies. Here, we offer some relatively unusual examples from the West and beyond as food for thought. First, following the line

61 Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, 52.

62 Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, 94.

63 Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, 3–4.

64 See Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 24, 73.

65 Gaonkar, 'On Alternative Modernities', 4.

66 See Peter Franklin, 'Modernismus and the Philistines', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139/1 (2014), 184.

67 Tamara Levitz and Benjamin Piekut, 'The Vernacular Avant-Garde: A Speculation', *ASAP Journal*, 3 September 2020, <https://asapjournal.com/the-vernacular-avant-garde-a-speculation-tamara-levitz-and-benjamin-piekut/>.

of thought from the previous paragraph, Romantic music, with its cycles of fleeting piano and vocal miniatures, fit well with the aesthetics of Baudelaire, who is frequently mentioned in discourses of both Romanticism and modernism. Is Romantic music then ‘modernist’? The incorporation of tonal repertoire from earlier periods of Western art music into modernism may seem idiosyncratic to some readers, but this actually helps us to counter the prejudice against global musical expressions of modernity that may employ either vernacular or twentieth-century tonal concert idioms (that are deemed backwards or anachronistic in a progressivist Western music historiography that regards modernism in the narrow sense as a teleological end point). Another case of ‘transitory’ (modernist) musical culture was precipitated by European coloniality, when global musics were banned, stereotyped, and also hybridized with Western musics (including military band music, Christian hymns, and US public school songs that were used across the world in music lessons). Whether or not the already-transitory colonial centuries of global musics are regarded as ‘modernist’, this case study highlights how in music studies, terms such as modernism and Romanticism have always been understood as simultaneously aesthetic and sociohistorical. A final case comes from further back in history. The concept of ‘early modernity’⁶⁸ as applied to Chinese music history can be understood in terms of systemic change – namely, the flourishing of the music of the urban class beginning in the tenth century, leading eventually to hundreds of musical genres, accompanied by increasing sophistication and complexity of music. This widening and deepening of musical activity was fuelled by a general rise in living standards outside of the narrowest elite circles, spurring the development of music which requires literary and musical finesse to perform and appreciate. In China, musical genres such as Suzhou *tanci* and *kunqu* opera are governed by elaborate rules of versification and can be long-form works. A *tanci* narrative may be completed over several months of daily song performances while the most famous *kunqu* opera *The Peony Pavilion* lasts longer than the entire *Ring* cycle. There are over 100 varieties of narrative songs such as *tanci* and over 350 varieties of opera in China.

Aside from Friedman, another conceptual anchor for our project relates to the emancipatory vein of resistive modernity enabled by historical awareness, as articulated by Gaonkar for ‘alternative’ modernities. Following Foucault, Gaonkar argues that critical consciousness enables self-shaping in reaction to one’s historical position in transitory, oppressive modernity, entangled with coloniality, capitalism, and (we would add) cisheteropatriarchy.⁶⁹ What we refer to as *critical modernity* applies not just to music-makers’ practices that are conventionally recognized as modernist, but also in *conceptual and historiographic* interventions in a range of topics from global modernist composers in the narrow sense to jazz hybridities, constructions of blackness in music, Latin American cosmopolitanism, and discourses of the co-constitutive terms ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’. ‘Global musical modernisms’ is itself a product of critical modernity, in the same manner as Adorno’s studies of modernity (that critique instrumental rationality) and Gaonkar’s alternative modernities (that resist the West).

68 David Porter, ed., *Comparative Early Modernities, 1100–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 4.

69 Gaonkar, ‘On Alternative Modernities’, 12–13.

Overview of the issue

The articles in this special issue explore multiple facets of global musical modernisms, extending far beyond the canonical Western repertoire associated with the term ‘modernism’. In fact, only one article focuses on an unambiguously modernist case in this narrower sense of the term – that of Brigid Cohen on Michiko Toyama, the earliest foreign-born visiting composer at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. Chelsea Burns takes up the case of the better known but more stylistically heterogeneous Carlos Chávez, deliberately focusing on one of his fully tonal works. Given that so many music scholars have difficulty naming more than a handful of global modernist composers, the ‘global’ plays a critical role in the disrupting the centrality of the West in musical modernism as it figures in music research, music curricula, and performance repertoires. Yet the disruption needs to go further, to problematize our understanding of musical modernism itself. As Burns also reminds us, global musical modernisms should not limit itself to the mere anthologization of ever more global composers, which we see as reflecting a colonial ‘plantation’ logic of orderly integration modelled on the systematic cultivation of land.⁷⁰ Another critical problem is that global composers may themselves subscribe to modernist ideology as an *acculturated* colonial attitude. Such composers cannot be the exclusive purview of global musical modernisms, but neither can they be erased. With that in mind, we argue that our complex historical responsibility lies in taking a critical stance towards global music-makers of all stripes, from concert modernism to jazz, without treating them as if they are ‘dead’ – vampiric loudspeakers for colonial ideology without a mind of their own, a modernist twist on Boulez’s pronouncement that ‘oriental’ music is ‘dead’.

The majority of articles in this special issue intervene in the discourse on global musical modernisms by venturing outside of concert modernism, presenting new conceptual frameworks. Because it may not be immediately apparent to readers how much of the music covered can also be ‘modernist’, we as co-editors emphasized the importance of carefully laying a conceptual foundation to articulate the relation of authors’ specific musical and music-historiographic inquiries to the term ‘modernism’. Indeed, a major contribution of this special issue is the transformation of modernism through new connectivities with tonal, vernacular, and ‘traditional’ musics. We suggested that authors could ‘write with and/or against’ the term ‘modernism’ with all its baggage, encouraging them to consider the decentering of canonical modernisms within the historical context of modernity in its full complexity, including ‘coloniality, capitalism, industrialization, global contact, racialization, and nationalism’.⁷¹

The authors in this special issue, many of whom participated in a Society of Ethnomusicology conference panel in 2020 chaired by Gavin Lee, comprise a mixture of scholars at different career stages and from different disciplinary backgrounds: musicology (Cohen), ethnomusicology (Miller), music theory (Burns), a mix of music disciplines (Lee, Ospina Romero), and history (Thurman). Disciplinarity is far from fully determinate – our

⁷⁰ Deborah Thomas, *Political Life in the Wake of the Plantation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

⁷¹ Email communication from co-editors to authors in June/July 2021.

authors' contributions reflect equally their individual theoretical orientations and methodological approaches, the particular cases they examine, and of course their lived and research experience in different parts of the world.

In the first article, Christopher J. Miller, examines a case from Indonesia, which would seem to be an exemplary instance of global musical modernism. The strikingly inventive music of a circle of gamelan composers affiliated with the performing arts academy ASKI/STSI/ISI Surakarta invites comparison with canonical examples of musical modernism. Intriguingly, this is despite no substantial connection, their new approach to composition instead motivated by modernist ideas transmitted through non-musical channels. Though the label 'modernist' is thus apt, closer ethnographic inquiry reveals a good deal of ambivalence, especially pronounced in the case of Rahayu Supanggah, a leading figure in that circle. It is important for us as scholars to recognize Supanggah's music as modernist, not just because of its aesthetics but more fundamentally for its relationship to modernity. It is no less important, however, to register that for Supanggah himself labels such as modernist were problematic, imposing as they do a distinction between the modern and the traditional that for him did not exist. The case serves as a reminder that modernism is not always welcome as a point of reference – that while it might be useful as an analytical framework, and is certainly worthy of examination as a discursive construct, we should not blindly impose it as a value-laden category.

Kira Thurman's article examines Black re-writings of Western music history during the Harlem Renaissance, focusing especially on the figure of Black Beethoven. She brings together the fields of Black internationalism and music historiography to argue that this re-writing by the first generation of university-trained Black musicologists were important to the cause of countering the Eurocentric notion that Blacks have 'no history'. In the vein of what we have called critical modernity (historically self-aware resistance against one's sociohistorical condition within modernity), Black musicologists embarked on the project of history as a means to modern subjecthood, paralleling global composers who use music for the same ends.

Sergio Ospina Romero in his article revises US-centric jazz historiography through the critical historiographic framework (cf. Thurman) of vernacular modernism. Specifically, he examines the dawn of the jazz age in the Caribbean, showing how 'jazz was constituted as a symbol of social modernity', the two producing each other in a 'transnational scenario' that linked locations such as Havana, Cuba, and New York City. Jazz was 'an altogether different modern formation in its own right', one that rested on Afrodiasporic networks and circulations that have long defined the experience of modernity in the Caribbean. And while the global dissemination of jazz had much to do with the imperial hegemony of the United States and its consumer culture, its development in a circum-Caribbean in which New Orleans was but one node led to 'an altogether different modern formation in its own right', one that rested on Afrodiasporic networks and circulations. Vernacular modernism in this sense belies the American exceptionalism pervasive in jazz historiography.

Chelsea Burns's article examines how the concept and practice of global musical modernisms is freighted with power relationships. Rather than serving to decolonize, global musical modernisms have the potential to reinscribe Euro- and US-centric values and terms, allowing

marginal inclusion while effectively maintaining existing hierarchies. This article examines the case of Mexican composer Carlos Chávez's *La paloma azul*, written for a series of 1940 concerts at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Tasked with appealing to a US audience, Chávez wove together three folk songs and presented the result as an arrangement of a single pre-existing Mexican song. In this composition – as in his US work more broadly – he both participates in global modernism's enlightened, cosmopolitan omnivorousness, and demonstrates its othering and exoticism. With an eye on the possibility of an uncritical interpretation of global musical modernisms, as the simple gathering of ever more modernist works by BIPOC composers, Burns cautions against an 'anodyne project of expanding [modernist] canons to the point where they no longer do anything politically'.

Brigid Cohen employs archival work to retrieve Michiko Toyama's voice, which had been erased from the history of the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, while also extolling Toyama's undeniable creativity that led her to be even more modernist than her white male counterparts. Cohen's article critiques modernist ideology while making sure that Toyama does not suffer a second erasure through a purist anti-modernist lens that disposes of all canonical as well as BIPOC modernists. In Cohen's words, 'canons of musical modernism have side-lined Michiko Toyama from their developmental narratives of progress; yet Michiko Toyama was an archetypal modernist who "imagined otherwise" within a force field of social, economic, and political change across three continents'.⁷²

Following on Cohen's article, both in sequence and in spirit, Gavin Lee in the final article examines the decolonial potential of global musical modernisms while recognizing its indisputable colonial echoes. On the one hand, global musical modernisms decolonize Western musical modernism by expanding and bursting the latter's spatial (geographic), vertical (high–low genres), and temporal boundaries. With this expansion, important case studies come into view, such as the decolonial Christian hymn 'Plea for Africa' by black South African composer John Knox Bokwe, and the Argentina-born avant-gardist Ezequiel Menalled who incorporates decolonial texts in his music. Global musical modernisms open up the possibility of a transcolonial mapping of how global musicians exercised their agency within the umbrella structure of the colonial musical assemblage that ranges far and wide over time and space, and across myriad sounds. However, modernism cannot be completely severed from coloniality. In Lee's reconceptualization of music historiography, modernism is redefined as *all* of musical soundings in global sites under 'modernity/coloniality',⁷³ that is, modernity as a colonial project, both terms defined by disruption. The prized disruptiveness of the new applies equally to modernist ideology (in the narrow twentieth-century sense) as to the acquisition of the 'New World'. In modernism, disruption takes the form of a *tabula rasa* mentality to music-making, involving the rejection of tonal history and listeners of mass music; in colonial thought, disruption of indigenous lives is enabled by *terra nullius*, or the doctrine of 'nobody's land' used to justify settler colonization of the

72 On the gendering of modernism, see Ellie Hisama, *Gendering Musical Modernism: The Music of Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

73 Quijano, 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality'.

Americas. From this point of view, modernism in the narrow sense is the belated musical expression of the disruptive logic that commenced since the sixteenth century in the Americas with the imposition of Spanish polyphony and banning of indigenous musics. Ultimately, purist dichotomous conceptions of global musical modernisms as either colonial or decolonial may be rooted in authors' specific counterhegemonic stances as both positions, one pointing out oppression and the other resisting oppression, are pertinent to critical modernity. It is by naming oppression that we articulate a basis for resistance, often through appropriating the very colonial forms that have become ubiquitous and thus available for reinvention.

All of the articles in this issue foreground the central problems of power and coloniality. While we have not arrived at a consensus on the definition, uses, and politics of global musical modernisms, we all examine issues of privilege, centre and periphery, exoticism and identity, and agency and oppression, as music-makers struggle against a colonial soundscape laden with privileged Western sounds, exercising their agency even in contexts of multi-layered marginalities. Ultimately the transformation of musical modernisms through its encounter with the global should *not* be what Lee has in another context described as 'a Kantian hang-over', referring to the moral universalism (categorical imperative) that paradoxically inheres in attempts to define 'queer'.⁷⁴ Just as queer denotes an incessant movement away from norms, the decentring of canonical modernisms is unlikely to take one path, with different tactics being suited for different localized contexts of resistance, whether the aim is to counter the erasure of global modernists, to critique the persistence of modernist ideology in global contexts, or to intervene in colonial music historiography, or all of the above. We offer this special issue, with all its counterpoint between different perspectives, not as a definitive statement, and certainly not as the last word, but rather an opening, with the hope of spurring an even broader inquiry.

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74 Gavin Lee, 'Introduction: Queer Ear', in *Queer Ear: Remaking Music Theory*, ed. Gavin Lee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 7.

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