

Editorial Introduction

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Recently, I attended a theatrical performance created by a Montreal-based band, Stars. Titled *Stars: Together*, it grapples with the question of how older bands can fit into a new artistic environment, one that has undergone profound economic, geographical, and political changes brought about by globalization and of course the digital revolution. At a meta-moment in the show, one of the front persons of the band, Torquil Campbell, states that he would rather do theatrical shows to survive than become a Spotify house band. His bandmates listen to his passionate punk diatribe, not captivated, or convinced, by such sentiments. The play discusses this tactical conundrum alongside connected issues such as gentrification and its effects on their access to affordable rehearsal space. Montreal's indie scene thrived on cheap rent; it is how Stars and other bands such as Wolf Parade and Arcade Fire got established. The re-creation of their practice-space Mount Zoomer — the inspiration for their theatrical set — was famously used by both bands.

For Stars, the dilemma is whether to stagnate, change venues or accept offerings of kale chips and coconut water at Spotify headquarters as they perform for exposure. But the problem for Stars doesn't necessarily end with where and how to perform, but also, with how to maintain their relevance as artists working together. Hence, at a key point in the scripted performance, one of the band members exclaims, "We can never start again." You see, Stars has been together for almost twenty years and its members have known each other much longer than that. In fact, Stars know each other so well — their internal dramas are so over-rehearsed — that they wonder if they are now on autopilot. Are they on a never-ending loop of conversations that they have already had with each other?

The gulf between performing a rebellious sentiment and living one seems especially timely and is as relevant to IASPM as it is to indie rock music like that of Stars. Like Stars, we at IASPM have our never-ending loop of debates, and as academics, it is important to gut those conversations to reflect, reassess and reboot in a new era. The script of *Stars: Together* also resonated with me as I enjoy collaborative renovation projects and *IASPM Journal* has undergone some renovations of its own. This is the first issue with our new editorial board team fully in effect under our new name *IASPM Journal* (the "@" leaves but the work continues). We have a new logo, contributed by editorial board member, Melissa

Avdeeff, to reflect the modification. Avdeeff and Jon Stewart also set up our twitter account that they are handling alongside Gina Arnold.

In reflecting on where we have been as an organization, Xavier Villanueva and I invited our International Advisory Board to submit branch reports addressing the state of popular music studies in their regions. Reports from representatives of Benelux, D.A.CH, Japan and Turkey are available in this issue and document crucial contexts for IASPM as an organization. They address the infrastructure that has created and sustained the field and some of the prominent concerns and debates that echo throughout the research. Hillegonda Rietveld, as Editor, and Martha Ulhôa, as Special Issue Editor (who is also the Founder and first editor of *IASPM@Journal*), offered similar surveys of the field in Volume 2 of the journal in 2011.

Ali C. Gedik and Levent Ergun provide an update of Gedik's (2011) article about Turkey in that publication. We asked other Advisory Board members to address branch infrastructures and these overviews dovetail well with emerging theorization about expanded notions of popular music infrastructures such as Kyle Devine and Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier's forthcoming anthology *Audible Infrastructures: Music, Sound, Media* and Devine's (2019) monograph, *Decomposed: The Political Ecology of Music*.

Considering the infrastructures of IASPM as an organization, Simon Frith (2019) recalls the role music educators played in the formation of popular music studies. Some of the earliest publications in the field included Graham Vulliamy and Edward Lee's (1982) *Popular Music: A Teacher's Guide and Pop, Rock and Ethnic Music in School*. John Shepherd organized one of the first panels on popular music education in Canada. (He has just joined our International Advisory Board representing IASPM-Canada and replacing Line Grenier who has done some translation work for this issue.) As Jody Berland and Nikolas Kompridis (1986) have pointed out, early conversations about popular music in education were, at times, unfocused. Lucy Green's (2002) research on how popular musicians learn was a turning point. Subsequently, there has been a growing concentration of research in the *Journal of Popular Music Education*, as well as in the ever-expanding subfield of hip hop pedagogy (fuelled by education, history and dance departments rather than music departments). For example, Imani Kai Johnson's mostly biennial academic hip hop conference, Show & Prove, has brought practitioners, music and dance scholars, and activists together in productive conversation with hip hop educators working in community settings and schools. Johnson has curated conversations bent on inclusivity and an uncompromising insistence on rigour. This raises questions for me about all of the successful collaborations on musical practices that take place outside any significant intersection with the field of popular music studies. How has our field fallen short in the past where radical revamping of curriculum is the aim? Do critical and radical pedagogies exist in the practice of popular music education?

This issue begins with two articles about music education that address this potential. The first article deepens a growing conversation about hip hop pedagogy with original research into hip hop educational practices in 'mainstream' public schools from two education scholars. Lauren Leigh Kelly and Donald C. Sawyer provide a critical reflection of their challenges in connecting with students through models of 'critical pedagogy' often championed in hip hop education. Yuri Prado, the author of the issue's second article, considers Rio de Janeiro's samba schools, arguing the schools are a far cry from 'radical pedagogy,' and, through interviews, Prado suggests the underpinnings of participant involvement follows capitalist logics. Both articles seem to extend Frith's (2019) recent arguments about the

failures of popular music studies to music education itself, suggesting that even the most radical aims of pedagogy are not necessarily successful. In assessing 'success,' Robin D. G. Kelley offers some perspective: "Unfortunately, too often our standards for evaluating social movements pivot around whether or not they 'succeeded' in realizing their visions rather than on the merits or power of the visions themselves" (2002: ix); this is a reassuring reflection to apply to questions about radical pedagogy. (He also wrote the forward for the 2000 edition of Cedric J. Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*.)

When it comes to popular music pedagogies, however, success is clearly within reach in both local and national contexts. For example, almost every year, I make the trip to Montreal to attend Bancroft Elementary School's musical. Their last one, *The Little Mermaid* (2019), directed by François Lukawecki, had a cast of 225 children from the ages of four and up, making the scale of the production breathtaking. Behind the scenes efforts of volunteers (usually parents) and faculty, alongside the musicals' leads, demonstrate what music means for bringing neighborhood communities together with educators around a shared aim. On an even larger scale, across Canada, CBC Music and MusiCounts run a competition called the "Canadian Music Class Challenge." Fifteen popular songs are selected and schools across Canada can sign up to compete. In 2019 popular music songs included, among others, Arcade Fire's "Reflektor," Shopé's "Come Wid It," Joni Mitchell's "River," Shawn Mendes' "In My Blood," and Buffy Sainte-Marie with Tanya Tagaq's "You Got to Run (Spirit of the Wind)." Participants film their live classroom performance of the song and the CBC then chooses winners for different categories usually based on age. (Bancroft Elementary, unsurprisingly, made it to the top 10 of two different categories in 2019.) The judges include artists from a range of genres from opera, to folk, to hip hop who are also foregrounded through the competition website.

These two examples demonstrate in no uncertain terms that collaborative activities are an especially important component of popular music education, a conclusion bolstered by our researchers. Christopher Charles, in his article for this issue, considers the significance of crews in underground music scenes arguing for the massive impact that small groups of people working together can have at shaping the structure of professionalized music scenes and industries. In Canadian Universities at least, small group activities for educational purposes were championed in 1990s with the *Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education's* focus on student-centred learning. As Bernard W. Andrews (1993: 96) suggested, "Cooperation, however, is not a panacea for competitions, as it has its own problems." Although he was discussing music education broadly defined, Andrews suggested that students largely preferred group work. Looking at music education from the other way around, Emma Winston and Laurence Saywood's article in this issue introduces a new musical genre on the internet, Lofi Hip Hop, which often positions itself as "music to study to". They suggest this genre offers the possibility to study with others virtually through sharing experiences online of backgrounded music.

Behind the scenes conversations in the making of this first issue with the expanded editorial team reveal the political commitments of our IASPM membership. For example, during the making of this issue, one of our translation editors at *IASPM Journal*, Laura Jordán González, was protesting alongside members of her music department against police brutality in Chile that has left many dead and brutally wounded and the Executive Committee of the Chilean Musicological Society just released a statement about the purchase and potential use of acoustic weapons by the Chilean police(1). At the same time, Xavier

Villanueva, one of our new Assistant Editors was taking part in the Catalan protests on the streets of Barcelona in between bouts of correspondence with our International Advisory Board, authors and peer reviewers. His participation in the protests is inspired not only by the democratic principles of such protests, but also by the intersectionality of these actions, which include an international solidarity with protestors representing Chile, Bolivia and Lebanon, feminism (with an inspiring generation of young feminists mobilizing the protests), environmentalism and anti-fascism. Villanueva's own PhD research is examining the history of IASPM as an organization.

Our other new Assistant Editor, Serouj Aprahamian, is similarly balancing his activism with his research. He is developing a radical historiography of hip hop dance—insistent that practitioners' accounts are centred in the conversation – while continuing his activist commitment to Armenian movements and protests similarly led by youth. K. E. Goldschmitt (2019), from our editorial board, has also just released a monograph demonstrating how racial stereotypes shape the reception of music from Brazil in its transnational circulations in ways that have serious consequences for the lives of artists and audiences.

In this same vein, both Beate Flath and Melanie Schiller's branch reports in this issue indicate efforts of IASPM members working together to respond to the rise of right-wing populism and subsequent attacks on fields such as popular music studies. By reflecting on our own logics of practice, *IASPM Journal* will continue to strive for relevance in academia and beyond. How we bring researchers studying popular music into conversation through our organization's outputs is a process we are unpacking behind the scenes of the journal as we 'renovate.' To that end, our new Associate Editor Gina Arnold and I have agreed to produce one special issue and one open issue yearly, in order to entice our members to submit original research while maintaining some emphasis on focused topics by groups of individuals coming together in print.

Endnotes

(1) See the statement here: <http://www.schm.cl/noticias/comunicado-sobre-el-uso-de-armas-acusticas> [Accessed December 13th, 2019]

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