

Brian Robert Fairley

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EDUCATION

PhD, Ethnomusicology, New York University, 2023

Dissertation: “Dissected Listening: A Media History of Georgian Polyphony”

Advisor: J. Martin Daughtry

M.Phil., Music, New York University, 2021

M.A., Ethnomusicology, Wesleyan University, 2017

A.B., Classics (Greek), Harvard University, 2005

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Visiting Scholar, Amherst College Department of Music, 2023–2024

Instructor and Teaching Assistant, New York University Department of Music, 2018–2022

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Journal Articles

Forthcoming “The Texture of a Nation: Politics and Polyphony in the Caucasus.” *Theoria: Historical Aspects of Music Theory*, vol. 28.

Forthcoming “Singing at Your Own Funeral: Overdubbed Intimacy and the Persistence of Tradition in Soviet Georgia.” *Journal of Sonic Studies*. Accepted for publication.

2020 “Blackbirds in the Archive: Genealogy and Media in a Century of Georgian Folk Song.” *Ethnomusicology* 64 (2), 274–300. Reprinted in *Historical Trends in Georgian Traditional and Sacred Music: A Tribute to Anzor Erkomaishvili*, edited by Joseph Jordania and Rusudan Tsurtsunia. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023.

Book Chapters

Under review “Polyphony.” *Key Terms in Music Theory for Anti-Racist Scholars*, edited by Jade Conlee and Tatiana Koike. Manuscript under review.

Conference Proceedings

2022 “‘There Is No Dogma, but There Is a Frame’: Formulaic Improvisation in the Gurian Trio Song.” *Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony*, edited by Rusudan Tsurtsunia and Joseph Jordania, 272–82.

Web-Based Publications and Media Appearances

- 2023 “Polyphony.” Interview on the *High Theory* podcast. August 27, 2023. <https://hightheory.net/2023/08/27/polyphony/>
- 2023 “What Did Stravinsky Really Say about Georgian Music?” (In English and Georgian). *Georgian Folklore* magazine. August 7, 2023. <https://geofolk.ge/en/article/ra-tqva-stravinskim-sinamdvilesi-qartul-musikaze/109>
- 2020 “When Your Archive Is Telling You Something, You Should Pay Attention to It’: An Interview with Dr. Roger Mathew Grant.” *SEM Student News* Vol. 15, No. 2.
- 2019 “The Gurdjieff Movements: Hidden Dances and Archival Discoveries.” *SEM Student News* Vol. 15, No. 1.
- 2018 “Analogies of Political Structure in Ethnomusicological Writing.” *SEM Student News* Vol. 14, No. 1.
- 2017 “The Sense of a Feast: Capturing the Georgian *Supra*.” *SEM Student News*, Vol. 13, No. 2.
- 2016 “The Illuminated City of Memory: Double Edge Theatre in Jamaica Plain.” *Ethnomusicology Review (Sounding Board)*.
- 2011 “Adapting the Odyssey with Double Edge Theater.” *Valley Advocate*. May 23, 2011. <https://valleyadvocate.com/2011/05/23/adapting-the-odyssey-with-double-edge-theater/>

Archival Finding Aid

- 2018 Guide to the Julius Hemphill Papers MSS.542, Fales Library & Special Collections, New York University. http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/fales/mss_542/dsc.html. Accompanying website: https://wp.nyu.edu/library-hemphill_papers/

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, & AWARDS

- 2022 Paper Prize, Historical Ethnomusicology Section (for paper delivered at 2021 SEM)
- 2021 Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research
- 2021 Language Training Fellowship, NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia
- 2020 Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellow, Social Science Research Council
- 2020 Predoctoral Summer Fellowship, NYU Graduate School of Arts & Science
- 2020 Combined Research and Language Training Program, American Councils (declined)
- 2020 Global Research Initiative Fellow, NYU Prague (canceled due to COVID-19)
- 2019 Summer Research Grant, American Musicological Society

INVITED TALKS

- 2021 “Polyphony in Leningrad: On the Early Multi-Channel Recordings of E.V. Gippius.” Russian Academy of Sciences, “Sound in the Field” seminar, July 12, 2021.
- 2017 “Improvisation and Canon-Formation in Gurian Folk Singing.” Harriman Institute, Columbia University, January 25, 2017.
- 2014 “Devised Performance Dramaturgy.” Panel discussion. Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, Boston, MA. June 27, 2014.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Panels Organized

- 2021 “Carceral Geographies of Race, Music, and Media.” Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, October 28–31, 2021.

Selected Papers Presented

- 2023 “The Same Thing from Different Angles: Sonic Experimentation at the 1937 Dekada of Georgian Art.” Association for Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies. November 30–December 3, 2023.
- 2022 “The Birth of Multichannel Sound from the Spirit of Race Science.” Society for the History of Technology Annual Meeting, November 10–13, 2022.
- 2022 “Musical Form as Ethnonational Icon: Excavating Polyphony in the Caucasus.” Identity in Music Theory and History, pre-conference for AMS/SEM/SMT annual meeting, November 9, 2022.
- 2022 “World Polyphony and the Postcolonial Experience in Georgia: Scholarly Meetings across the Soviet Divide.” AMS Cold War Study Group meeting, AMS/SEM/SMT annual meeting, November 10–13, 2022.
- 2022 “Singing at Your Own Funeral: Overdubbed Intimacy and the Persistence of Tradition in Soviet Georgia.” AMS/SEM/SMT Annual Meeting, November 10–13, 2022.
- 2021 “Polyphony: Difference and Separability in Global Perspective.” Society for Music Theory Annual Meeting, November 4–7, 2021.
- 2021 “Polyphony in Isolation: Media Practices of Incarceration in the First World War.” Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, October 28–31, 2021.
- 2021 “Anatomy of Polyphony: Experiments in Sound Recording, Leningrad, 1935.” Field Sound Recordings, Institute for Ethnology and Anthropology RAS, October 5–8, 2021.
- 2020 “‘There Is No Dogma, But There Is a Frame’: Polyphonic Improvisation in the Gurian Trio Song.” Tenth International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony, Tbilisi Conservatory, October 22, 2020.
- 2019 “‘There Is No Dogma, But There Is a Frame’: Polyphonic Improvisation in the Gurian Trio Song.” American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, November 1, 2019.
- 2019 “Polyphony and Periphery: Polish Song Theatre and the Voice of European Identity.” The Multivalent Voice in Transcultural Music-Making. Istanbul Technical University, April 12, 2019.
- 2019 “Trembling Dervishes and Dubious Translations: Peter Brook and the Secret Gurdjieff Movements.” Harvard Graduate Music Forum Annual Conference, February 9, 2019.
- 2018 “Glenn Gould in Tbilisi: Sonic Montage, Cultural Critique, and the Ethnographic Trace in Ioseliani’s *There Once Was a Singing Blackbird*.” Music and the Moving Image. New York University, May 26, 2018.
- 2017 “‘Dead Media’ and the Concept of Canon in the Archive of Georgian Folk Song.” Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, October 29, 2017.
- 2017 “The Gurian Trio Song: Concepts of Frame and Variant in the Improvisatory Practice of Tristan Sikharulidze.” The Improvising Brain III: Cultural Variation and Analytical Approaches, Georgia State University, February 27, 2017.

UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

New York University

Music of New York (Summer 2022, original syllabus)

Teaching Assistant

New York University

Music Theory I (Spring 2019)

Expressive Culture: Sounds (Fall 2018)

Wesleyan University

Beginner and Advanced Javanese Gamelan (Fall 2016, Spring 2017)

Tonal Theory (Spring 2016)

Concert Choir, Accompanist and T. A. (Fall 2015–Spring 2017)

Amherst College

Making Opera, accompanist and T. A. (Spring 2010)

Music and Culture II, guest lecturer (Spring 2011)

Chamber Music, accompanist and coach (Fall 2010, Spring 2011)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2020 Research assistant for Brigid Cohen in preparation of book manuscript
- 2019 Research assistant for Michael Beckerman in preparation of book manuscript
- 2019 Research assistant for Christine Dang
- 2019 Research assistant for Mick Moloney
- 2018 Research assistant for Tamar Barzel and Marty Ehrlich, in preparation of Julius Hemphill Papers, Fales Library & Special Collections, New York University, and “Julius Hemphill: Composer” website: https://wp.nyu.edu/library-hemphill_papers/
- 2018 Research assistant for David Samuels

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

- Program committee co-chair, NYU Music Department conference “Un/Sounding the Relational City,” February 28–29, 2020
- Colloquium coordinator for NYU Music Department, 2019–2020
- Concert committee, Wesleyan University Center for the Arts, 2016–2017

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Student Director, American Research Institute of the South Caucasus, 2022–present
Editorial Board, *Georgian Folklore* magazine, 2022–present

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

Editor

English-language editing for translations of several Georgian ethnomusicological works, including books published by the Tbilisi Conservatoire and UNESCO (2017–present)

Library Assistant

Avery Fisher Center for Music and Media, Bobst Library, New York University (2018)
Music Library and Archives of World Music, Wesleyan University (2016–2017)

Selected Theatrical Work

- 2016 Sound and video designer, *The Grand Parade (of the 20th Century)*, Double Edge Theatre, various locations including PEAK Performances (2012–2016)
- 2016 Stage director, *Othello in the Seraglio: The Tragedy of Sümbül the Black Eunuch*, composed by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol, American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge, MA
- 2014 Music director, *A Disappearing Number*, Underground Railway Theatre, Cambridge, MA
- 2013 Music director and dramaturg, Double Edge Theatre, Ashfield, MA (2006–2013)
- 2008 Director, creator, and pianist, *The Unanswered Question (A Charles Ives Fantasy)*, Charlestown Working Theater, Boston, MA

LANGUAGES

French (advanced reading, advanced speaking)
Georgian (advanced reading, conversational speaking)
Russian (competent reading, basic speaking)
German (competent reading, basic speaking)
Ancient Greek (competent reading)
Latin (competent reading)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Ethnomusicology; American Musicological Society; American Anthropological Association; Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies; Society for the History of Technology; American Research Institute of the South Caucasus