From the Editors

By the Editors

Whether you are reading these words on a computer monitor, tablet touchscreen, or good old-fashioned wood pulp, we welcome and thank you for being a part of the conversation in which this journal participates. Volume 19 marks the 30th anniversary of our first publication—meaning that this journal has been in print for longer than most of us have been alive. It is thus a great privilege to participate in this long lineage of ethnomusicological experimentation, and we hope that you enjoy what it has brought into the world this year.

This year's major experiment is decidedly old-school: for the first time in over a decade, we are making print copies of the journal volume. We also welcomed a new section to our Sounding Board, "Ecomusicology," in collaboration with the *Ecomusicology Newsletter*.

Commitment to Open Access

The addition of our print volume is an important next step along our path as an open access journal. Since joining the Directory of Open Access Journals in 2011, we have strengthened our commitment to making our work freely available to anyone. One unanticipated challenge to fulfilling this goal, however, was brought to our attention by none other than Dr. Bruno Nettl at last year's Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) meeting in Indianapolis. Walking by our table in the exhibit hall, and the shiny computer monitor showing off Volume 18, he generously took some time to take in a demonstration. When he asked us if we had anything he could actually hold and read, we were not able to answer affirmatively, and he left empty-handed.

Open access, in other words, means meeting our readers where they are, and making our work accessible to them. Having been fully web-based for the past few years, we have learned that Dr. Nettl is not the only scholar in our field who prefers to read print journals; open access publication, we believe, should also be open to them. As many of our peers in the music industry are learning, there is real value in the publication of physical texts, whether they be vinyl LPs or ink-on-paper journals. If you are reading this online, we hope that you seek out your own copy, either at our table at the 2014 Society for Ethnomusicology meeting in Pittsburgh, or through our print-on-demand provider, Lulu [1].

This new endeavor has also led to other productive surprises. For example, it has caused us to redouble our editorial efforts into meticulously designing all of our various interfaces. Special recognition should be given to Managing Editor Alyssa Mathias, who designed and laid out the print journal for Volume 19, and Technical Editor Mike D'Errico, who has maintained and improved our website edition and Sounding Board pages. In our view, the sleek print design, or the Sounding Board's elegant image slider, are essential to the openness and accessibility of our work.

The Sounding Board: Still Listening

One key element to the development of this goal has been our Sounding Board, which has continued to grow this year under the direction of Managing Editor Eric J. Schmidt. We have now been publishing book reviews, short-form scholarly essays, and multimedia projects on a weekly basis. Some highlights included:

> "It's a London Thing: Bringing the 'Caribbean' to the UK" by Deonte Harris, a photo- and video-rich document of the author's fieldwork among Caribbean immigrants in London
>
> "Going Public: The Challenges of Media Interviews and Representation in the Field" by Dave Wilson,

written from Macedonia, which explores the challenge of engaging with broadcast media as an ethnographer

"Ecology and Ethno/musicology: The Metaphorical, the Representational, and the Literal" by Marc Perlman offers a theoretically robust introduction to the field of ecomusicology, by way of considering music and ecology beyond metaphor

"Historical Narratives of the Akonting" by Scott Linford, a report, which includes video recordings of his fieldwork in The Gambia, on the narrative histories of the akonting—a West African lute that bears striking similarities to the banjo

"Doing it Backwards: My Unexpected Goldberg Variations" by Dan Tepfer, who explores how he came to record J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* after a long and successful career as a jazz improviser, and what Bach taught him in the process

This year, Editor In Chief Alex W. Rodriguez tells the story of the Sounding Board as part of a roundtable panel at the SEM meeting in Pittsburgh. As part of the panel "Ethnomusicological Perspectives On Open Access Publication," he is joined by James Cowdery, Wendy Hsu, Darren Mueller, Guthrie Ramsey, and Justin Schell. The six presenters' position papers are published here as this year's Sounding Board feature; you can also find them online in the Sounding Board subsection "What's Goin' On."

Volume 19: Manifesting Interdisciplinarity

We are also pleased to offer three compelling peer-reviewed articles that contribute important scholarly insights to our field. Each, in its own way, engages with key threads in ethnomusicological discourse while also taking them in unforeseen directions. David Cashman's thorough documentation of the practices and culture of cruise ship musicians uses the ethnographic method familiar to most ethnomusicologists, taking it off-land and into the complex, de-territorialized and re-spatialized world of commercial cruise lines. His work causes us to reexamine the ways in which people and cultures move, and how their musical practices create space and meaning amidst this movement. Drawing from cultural studies and media studies, James Gordon Williams offers an engaging and sympathetic close reading of T-Pain's "Can't Believe It," highlighting the ways in which T-Pain's "optic-sonic insurgency" resists stereotypes of blackness while imagining its virtual potentialities. Helga Zambrano examines the sonic-textual relationship through the lens of literary theory, particularly from the perspective of translation advocated by Jorge Luis Borges. She deftly applies this analysis to the poem "Sensemayá" by Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, and its symphonic offspring *Sensemayá*, penned by his friend, Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas.

It is also significant that all three authors come to us from outside of ethnomusicology's traditional home, the North American academic music department. Cashman is a lecturer in an Australian university department of Arts and Education, Williams is an Assistant Professor of African American Studies, and Zambrano is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature. Each brings a unique toolkit to the questions explored herein, and these have benefitted tremendously from the editorial exchange offered by our peer reviewers, all established North American academic music scholars. We have been in the unique position to witness this exchange as it unfolded throughout the editorial process, and can attest to its richness and vibrancy. Of course, it is not necessary to take our word for it: the scholarship speaks for itself, making clear that ethnomusicology's interdisciplinarity extends beyond the marriage of anthropology and musicology proposed by Alan Merriam 50 years ago.

The scholarly dialogue in which these pieces take part explores the ways in which people make sound and space through the production of texts—whether they be a modernist symphony, cruise ship stage routine, or a contemporary music video. These include essential visual and aural elements, and—true to ethnomusicological form—the sounds are considered in relationship with the visual cues, centering the role of sound without separating it unnecessarily from the sonic-visual interplay. In other words, to borrow Charles Seeger's useful dichotomy: this is speech-communication that takes music-communication seriously, considering both the aural and visual elements of both without arbitrarily privileging what we see over what we hear.

And as these words reach your eyes, we sincerely hope that you also open your ears to engage in the next phase of this dialogue. We welcome responses, critiques, and further questions in the comment sections attached to our pieces; also, check back at the Sounding Board for further commentaries on the articles by other scholars in our field. Thank you for helping us celebrate 30 years in the field—and here's to 30 more!

The Editors

Alex W. Rodriguez, Alyssa Mathias, Eric J. Schmidt, Mike D'Errico, Darci Sprengel, Rose Boomsma, Ben Cosgrove, Benjamin Doleac, AJ Kluth, and Kristina Nielsen

Source URL: https://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/19/piece/801

Links:
[1] http://www.lulu.com