



NEWSLETTER

of

The American Musical Instrument Society

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AMIS 2025

The 2025 AMIS meeting will be held in beautiful and historic Savannah, Georgia, at Georgia Southern University, June 3–7, 2025. Georgia Southern is home to the Fred and Dinah Gretsch Instrument, Artifact, and Document Collection, comprising thousands of unique instruments, music industry artifacts, and company records within and across collections and three exhibitions in Savannah and Statesboro, Georgia. Most notably, Georgia Southern’s “That Great Gretsch Sound!” Museum is a featured attraction at Plant Riverside District, Savannah’s premier riverfront entertainment center. As part of the Georgia Southern Museum, the Gretsch Collection supports the University’s mission of teaching, research, and service specifically through collections, exhibits, and educational outreach.



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NEWSLETTER of the
American Musical Instrument Society

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The Newsletter is published three times per year for members of the American Musical Instrument Society (AMIS). News items, photographs, and short articles or announcements are invited, as well as any other information of interest to AMIS members.

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News from the Editor's Desk

Dear colleagues,

I'm pleased to be the new editor of the *Newsletter of the American Musical Instrument Society*. Many thanks to Sarah Deters for her years of service in this role and especially for her wonderfully detailed reports on AMIS meetings.

This *Newsletter* contains information about the 2025 meeting, to be held at Georgia Southern University in Savannah, GA, home of the Gretsch Collection. I hope to see you there! The issue also provides reminiscences of the 2024 meeting at MIM, with a report by Núria Bonet and photos by Aurelia Hartenberger.

You'll also find here two articles to enjoy: a report on an important cello, the ex "Amaryllis Fleming," now settled in a permanent home at the MET, and a print version of Gregg Miner's amazing tale of moving his instrument collection cross country, presented as a poster at the 2024 meeting. There is a book review, reports on the MIRCAt project and the new JAMIS Online Archive, news of members, and profiles of four of our twelve 2024 Gribbon scholars. AMIS is a very lively organization!



Newsletter Editor & AMIS past president Janet K. Page. Photo: AH

As always, I welcome short submissions (maximum 500 words) as well as short articles (maximum 2,500 words) and news. Email all submissions and suggestions to: amisnewsletter@gmail.com.

✉ Janet K. Page
Editor

President's Message

It was good to see many members and guests at our well-attended meeting at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, during May 15–18. Thanks to all involved in the planning and execution of the conference, including our host Matthew Zeller.

Our **2025 AMIS meeting** is planned for June 3–7 in Savannah, hosted by the Fred & Dinah Gretsch School of Music of Georgia Southern University. In 2021, the Gretsch Collection of historic guitars, drums, and company archives was pledged to the university. Matthew Hill, the curator and a longtime AMIS member, is busy cataloging and displaying the collection in two exhibits in Savannah and a third in the main GSU campus in Statesboro. Further details will follow as plans are made.

Now available to AMIS individual members is a **digital subscription option**, which will appeal to overseas members who have recently faced delivery fees imposed by their national post offices, as well as to individual members who prefer to organize their reading materials digitally. On the online AMIS Membership Form for your 2025 dues, there is now a box to check if you wish to receive a pdf copy of our journal, rather than a paper copy. (For delivery of the 2024 journal, we'll send an email allowing individual members to opt in for pdf delivery only of the 2024 volume.)

We now have access to an **online archive of past issues of JAMIS**, our fifty-year-old journal, through a link on the Journal page at amis.org. The digitization was a volunteer effort by John Watson, who deserves enduring thanks from current and future AMIS members. Please see John's article on the online archive elsewhere in this issue.

Would you like to have an influence on how our Society does things? Join a committee now! Write to me at j5kopp@aol.com, and we'll discuss the possibilities. Thanks!

✉ James Kopp



AMIS President Jim Kopp and other delegates at the 2024 meeting.
Photo: Aurelia Hartenberger



Meeting attendees at AMIS 2024 at MIM
Photo: Nate Nise

AMIS at MIM 2024

Núria Bonet

The Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) in Phoenix, Arizona was the setting for AMIS's 53rd Annual Meeting this year (15–18 May). It had been thirteen years since AMIS last met there (in 2011); long-time delegates were eager to see how the museum had evolved, while many more experienced the museum for the first time. All were welcomed at the Wednesday evening reception in the lobby of the MIM, which was accompanied by some enjoyable guitar playing. The bar offered an interesting selection of local beers—including a Prickly Pear Pale Ale—as well as a range of wine and soft drinks, and a delicious buffet. Conversations between old friends and new acquaintances were flowing and delegates met this year's Gribbon Scholars cohort: Abigail Byrd, Hippocrates Cheng, Patrick Connor Dittamo, Devanney Haruta, Trinity Howell, Patrick Huang, Christopher A. Miller, Tùng Nguyễn, Arianna Rigamonti, Marta Salvatori, Arantza Sánchez Lira,

and Chet Stussy. After the reception, the Board of Governors retreated for their board meeting.

Day 1

The conference began bright and early the next morning, as pastries and coffee were provided before we entered the stunning MIM Theater. Annett C. Richter delivered the first paper, which considered the iconography of self-portraits of Italian Renaissance Women playing keyboards. Richter drew our attention to the representation of gender and class in these paintings, but also sought to identify the keyboards shown, which repertoire they might have played, and whether the hand positions were realistic. She was followed by a panel on a rather different topic: the innovation and commercialization of electronic musical instruments. These papers provided insight into marketing strategies for

novel electronic instruments such as the theremin and Moog synthesizers, and they provoked much interest and occasional surprise among the delegates. Catherine Provenzano was unfortunately unable to present her paper because of an injury; we wish her well. Clara Latham characterized the theremin as a commercial failure that was marketed as an easy instrument to play, which may surprise anyone who has tried to produce a precise pitch from one. It was also intended to re-create “old” music, rather than to provide new sounds, as exemplified by theremin virtuosa Clara Rockmore’s legendary performance of “The Swan” by Camille Saint-Saëns. Finally, Ted Gordon surveyed marketing materials of the 1960s for Moog synthesizers, which were sold as “magic organs” that required no skills or practice to perform. Both papers demonstrated that capitalist and liberal economic thinking influenced the success (or failure) of novel electronic instruments.

After the coffee break, we returned for a session on Vietnamese instruments. The first two papers focused on the *đàn bầu* monochord and were pleasingly complementary. First, Hippocrates Cheng provided an overview of the instrument’s design and harmonic possibilities, before delving into electronic developments of the *đàn bầu*. This was followed by a practical demonstration on his instrument. Lisa Beebe’s paper drew on the ethnographic research she carried out with the Vietnamese musicians Mr. Chí and Ms. Bích in Vancouver, which was supported by a JAMIS Publication Grant. She considered the invention of the fretted *đàn bầu* in its historical context but also as an avenue for new creative explorations of the instrument. We look forward to reading more about it in JAMIS! The session concluded with Tùng Nguyễn’s paper on the *đàn nguyệt* lute, which pro-

vided a thorough account of the historical context and iconography of the instrument.

Delegates headed for lunch at the museum’s Café Allegro, which featured a varied food and drink menu to suit every taste. Some took the opportunity to visit one of the museum’s galleries and take in the sheer number of instruments on display. Sadly, no guided tour was provided but delegates shared their knowledge with each other as they crossed paths in the galleries. After the lunch break, we attended a fascinating demonstration by representatives of Sennheiser—Renato Sergio Pellegrini, Brian Glasscock, and Lorenz Adler—who presented the new audio guide system soon to be rolled out at the

MIM. The Guide Port system will make use of augmented reality as it tracks the visitor’s location and plays relevant sound files while also allowing for interaction between visitors and providing greater ergonomic comfort. The system has been developed on the back of extensive research in the museum, and it promises to further improve the visitor experience. While we cannot reveal too much technical information about the product at this point, delegates were for-

tunate to be able to try the new audio guides first hand.

The last session of the day included four varied and thought-provoking papers. The first paper addressed a novel topic: the instruments played by Miss America participants in the “talent” section of the competition. Allison Alcorn, Trinity Howell, and Keziah Cobden argued that we can learn much about the ideals of womanhood in American society from the instruments featured in the pageant. William E. Hettrick discussed the career of the piano maker John Valentine Steger, also revealing valuable insights on the American Dream through the



Hippocrates Cheng demonstrates the *đàn bầu*
Photo: Aurelia Hartenberger

lens of piano making. The third paper was given by Joyce Tang, who introduced us to the pianos exhibited at the Chicago Exhibition in 1893. The instruments chosen for this exhibition revealed attitudes towards the piano, as did the jury reports. The final paper of the day was Abigail Byrd's talk on "The String Instrument Industry and the Triple Bottom Line." This thought-provoking paper encouraged us to consider issues of sustainability in the string instrument industry. 30% of the world's violin production is currently concentrated in the Chinese city of Huangqiao. Most of these instruments are discarded after an average of fifteen years; at the same time, the production of artisanal violins has a much larger environmental footprint and raises important questions of accessibility. Therefore, what makes a "good" violin? Byrd proposed John Elkington's "theory of the triple bottom line" as a framework for considering ethical and sustainable practices in the string instrument industry. This paper won the 2024 Frederick R. Selch Award for best student paper; congratulations, Abigail!

Day 2

The second day of the conference opened with another four-paper session for early risers. Maya Brown-Boateng critically considered the banjo's history through the biography of the banjo player Dr. Joan Dickerson. Maya skilfully unpicked complex is-



Maya Brown-Boateng. Photo: AH

issues of race, gender, and class as they pertain to the banjo, and suggested how it can be reclaimed as a tool to empower communities. The next paper delved into the fascination with Hawaiian culture

of the 1910s and 20s, which brought with it a craze for the ukulele. Chet Stussy introduced us to the rare Stroh Ukulele and explained the historical and technological developments which led to it. William

Shull presented a very comprehensive overview of pianos by Chickering and Sons held at the Piano Museum and the Chickering Foundation. The time allocated only allowed us to take in some of the information presented, but there is plenty more to be gathered from William about Chickering Pianos. The final paper of the session was of a more philosophical nature, as Christopher A. Miller considered academic discussions in organology with a focus on Actor-Network Theory. We look forward to reading his ideas in written form in order to digest and understand his forward-thinking arguments.



Núria Bonet & Albert Fontelles-Ramonet. Photo: AH

After a welcome coffee break, the delegates once again gathered in the MIM Theater for a session on woodwinds of the world (invented or real). The MIM's Curator for Asia and Oceania, Eddie Chia-Hao Hsu, presented a paper on the Chinese *xiao* flute. He provided a historical overview of the instrument and its improvement, beginning in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), through extensive iconography and reference to instruments in museum collections. I was particularly taken by a porcelain *xiao*, dated approximately 1440. The second paper also treated the question of improved instruments, albeit in Barcelona during the 1920s and 30s. Núria Bonet and Albert Fontelles-Ramonet reported on their recent discovery of the *barítona*, a baritone sibling to the Catalan *tible* and *tenora* shawms. They expanded on the historical and musical context which encouraged the invention of this novel double-reed instrument, of which only one example exists; after many decades of obsolescence, it



Patrick Connor Dittamo. Photo: AH

was rediscovered in 2023. Patrick Connor Dittamo delivered a highly entertaining and mind-bending paper on medieval instruments and fake news. He introduced us to the *Schandflöte* (shame flute) that has become popular on the internet; in European medieval towns, “shame flutes” were supposedly

attached around sinners’ necks to punish them for their ill deeds. As Patrick convincingly argued, there is no evidence that these existed at the time, as all copies of this instrument are “reproductions.” This does not stop some museums, television shows, and internet pages (including Classic FM) from perpetuating this myth, which is profitable for those involved in the dark tourism industry.

After the lunch break, delegates gathered in Event Room 2 for the AMIS Business Meeting and Curt Sachs Award presentation. The meeting included reports on the election results, financial accounts, and the MIRCAt initiative. The Curt Sachs Award presentation was unusual this year, as it did not take place during the banquet. The award was exceptionally awarded posthumously to Patrizio Barbieri, who sadly passed away on 31 January 2024, after the award decision had been made. A fitting tribute was provided by Massimiliano Guido, who pre-recorded a video to honor Patrizio’s life and work. He painted a touching picture of a passionate scholar dedicated to hard work, which resulted in many important publications in organology.

The seventh session of the conference took us to Asia. Cassandre Balosso-Bardin presented research about bagpipes that she had carried out during her stint as a Senior Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The *sruti upanga* is an extinct Indian bagpipe on which little material survives, but Cassandre was able to retrace its existence and musical role. It

seems that the instrument’s function as a drone was replaced by the *tanbura*, then the shruti box, and now even mobile apps. Marta Salvatori introduced us to her ethnographic work on the *Sgra-snyan* (horse-headed lute) of Tibet, an unfretted lute with three strings. Interestingly, it can be found in schools in the Indian Himalayas, where it is taught to exiled Tibetan children. The final paper explored the construction and playing of the *Idakka* drum of India. Colin Harte’s ethnographic research revealed the complicated cultural and social context in which the instrument exists, for example due to the Indian caste system. Despite being used in Hindu rituals, the drum’s membrane is made of cow’s skin and the musicians are assigned a lower social position.

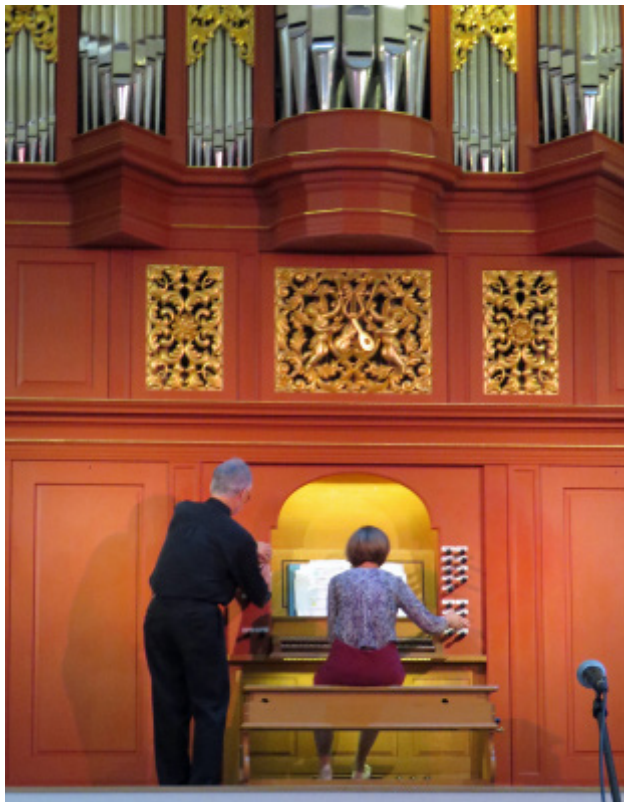
The final session of the day was a poster session, in which presenters displayed their research and were at hand to answer questions. This was a lively session, as a variety of topics were represented on five posters. Stewart Carter and Zhiyu Zhang presented instruments of the Tang dynasty (618–907). (A second scheduled poster on Chinese instruments was omitted, as Fangying Wang was unable to attend.) Robert Apple’s poster described his latest discoveries in the world of keyed trumpet repertoire. Lidia Chang introduced us to a mysterious “Woman Clavichord” at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, which raised a myriad of questions (Is it an instrument? Is it furniture? Why is it in the shape of a woman?). It is a sizeable piece of furniture in the shape of an alluring woman, which features a pull-out clavichord in her dress, and which teaches us something about perceptions of women and commodities in eighteenth-century Germany. Stella Smith drew our attention to the written bow inventory of the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co., which was acquired by the Library of Congress in 2022 and will provide valuable insights to interested scholars. Finally, Gregg Miner’s poster told the story of the move of his private collection of plucked string instruments from California to Connecticut, which makes moving house look like a walk in the park. Think issues with packing hundreds of rare instruments, finding a suitable moving company, choosing routes according to environmental temperature changes, the price of it all, and many more issues besides. We congratulate him on the completion of this gargantuan task! You can read more about Gregg’s cross-country move in this issue of the Newsletter.

Day 3

The final day of the conference began with another early start, as delegates travelled to Arizona State University on air-conditioned buses. The ASU School of Music is housed in a building apparently affectionately known as the “Birthday Cake Building,” which contains an impressive number of concert halls, studios, and so on. We congregated in the Organ Hall, where we would later hear an Italian 1742 Traeri organ and a 1991 Fritts organ. Before that, we heard Arianna Rigamonti’s paper on Arabesque motifs on sixteenth century Venetian keyboards. She traced the origin of these

decorations to needlework pattern books found in Venice and discussed the great popularity of such decorations in Renaissance Italy. Then, Fanny Magaña and Jimena Palacios reported on their fascinating discovery of the “Ixtaltepec piano,” perhaps the oldest piano in Mexico! Located in the diocese of Oaxaca, this instrument has been kept in the isolated community’s church despite falling into disuse after being extensively played. Fanny and Jimena painstakingly documented the instrument in difficult conditions, as there was no electric light in the church, for instance, and pictures had to be taken in daylight. The paper reminded us that instruments are sometimes embedded in their communities and cannot be considered in a vacuum.

After a short break, we were privileged to hear Kimberly Marshall introduce the hall’s two organs and play specially selected repertoire on each. Kimberly is an illustrious organist who holds the



Kimberly Marshall at the Paul Fritts & Co. organ (op. 12, 1991) in the ASU Organ Hall. Photo: AH



Organ by Domenico Traeri (1742) in the ASU Organ Hall. Photo: AH

Patricia and Leonard Goldman Endowed Professorship in Organ at Arizona State University. Her enthusiasm and deep appreciation for the instruments and their music shone in her performance, as did her passionate speech on the importance of musical education. After returning to the MIM on the buses, delegates enjoyed a lunch break before attacking the final afternoon of the conference.

Session 10 began with a paper by Christopher Ellis Reyes Montes, who presented his research on the introduction of the pipe and tabor in Latin America. Despite the conventional narrative that the instru-

ments were introduced to the continent by Spanish colonizers, Ellis showed iconography which challenged this view. Jacob D. Goldwasser brought a precious saxophone to show us for his talk on the “No. 1 C.G.C.” instrument, the first American saxophone by Conn. During his search for this instrument, Jacob discovered that he in fact owned and had been playing that very one! After the session, the artefact understandably drew much attention from interested delegates. Plenty more sleuthing was unveiled in the third paper by Sebastian Kirsch, who discussed the practice of using recycled paper (binder’s waste) to repair lutes between the sixteenth century and nineteenth. He not only transcribed entire passages of books, but also identified the books some of the cuttings were from. This fascinating session ended with Daniel Fishkin’s paper on the

Arbrasson, a friction block instrument produced by a single maker in France. Like Ellis and Jacob, Daniel brought an instrument for demonstration, which invited many questions and a passionate discussion.

A themed panel on the birth, life stories, and afterlife of instruments closed the academic part of the meeting. Annie Kim revisited the theremin through the lens of otherness, as the instrument's timbre has often been used to symbolize novelty and the extra-terrestrial. She effectively used the 1949 record "The Secret Music of China" to demonstrate how the theremin's synthesized sound has often been used to create a sense of exoticism. Emily Dolan's paper discussed the idea of aging in relation to instruments, as perceptions of them are constantly in flux. Finally, Devanney Haruta reported on her ongoing experiment with a decomposing piano which has purposefully been left outdoors.

The final event of the Annual Meeting is, of course, the much-awaited banquet, which is a final opportunity for delegates to socialize. We helped ourselves to a delicious buffet featuring Southwestern cuisine, accompanied by the local beverages. An excellent band provided Latin rhythms and a joyous atmosphere, and we even witnessed some skilled dancing from some of our delegates! The banquet concluded with the AMIS awards. The Frederick R. Selch Prize for best student paper was awarded to Abigail Byrd for her innovative contribution on "The String Instrument Industry and the Triple Bottom Line." The Frances Densmore Prize was awarded to a delegate in the room: John Watson, for his paper "A Small Upright Piano from Pennsylvania: Relic from the Origins of the Piano and Made by John Clemm(?)," published in the 2022 volume of the



Jacob D. Goldwasser. Photo: AH

Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society. The Nicholas Bessaraboff Prize for best book was awarded to Tom Beghin for *Beethoven's French Piano: A Tale of Ambition and Frustration*, written in collaboration with Robin Blanton, Chris Maene, Michael Pecak, and Tilman Skowronek (University of Chicago Press, 2022). Finally, the Curt Sachs Award was posthumously awarded to Patrizio Barbieri. As the evening drew to a close, some delegates continued their goodbyes at local bars. We enjoyed another successful and fascinating AMIS Annual Meeting, for which we congratulate Matthew Zeller and his team at the MIM.



Jimena Palacios and Diego Bautista on the dance floor

Meet the 2024 Gribbon Scholars

The William E. Gribbon Award enables undergraduate and graduate students to attend the Society's annual meeting. This year AMIS sponsored twelve students (stars denote those who presented at the meeting). They are: *Abigail Byrd (Indiana University), *Hippocrates Cheng (Indiana University), *Patrick Connor Dittamo (University of Chicago), *Devanney Haruta (Brown University), *Trinity Howell (Illinois University), Patrick Huang (Western University, London, Ontario), *Christopher A. Miller (Northumbria University), *Tùng Nguyễn (University of Oregon), *Arianna Rigamonti (Royal College of Music,

London), *Marta Salvatori (UniPiams Milano), Arantza Sánchez Lira (Escuela de Laudéria, Querétaro, Mexico), and *Chet Stussy (University of California, Santa Barbara).

If you would like to donate to the Gribbon Fund to support next year's students you may do so at <https://www.amis.org/donate-now>, specifying Gribbon Fund in "Leave us a comment."

Four of this year's awardees are profiled here; you will meet the others in the next issue.



Trinity Howell is a graduate viola performance student at Illinois State University. She writes: "my musical interests started since I was ten years old, after seeing a guitar club offered at my school. Then, I could not read music, but I loved the sounds that I could create with my friends. Throughout school, other instruments came and went, but the viola seemed to stick. As I finish my master's degree, I plan to teach privately in the Carolinas, where the communities that nurtured my musical interests are found. I also want to continue learning and researching how race and gender are influenced or influence the musical world and musical instruments."



Christopher A. Miller is in the first year of a three-year post-graduate research position leading to the PhD under the supervision of Dr. Rachael Durkin at Northumbria University. He writes: "my PhD project (working title: 'Organology Is Object-Oriented: New Tools for Analysis and Expanded Lexicon for the Study of Musical Instruments') explores the application of object-oriented philosophy in coordination with technical art history materials analysis tools for the study of musical instruments. The work unifies the field of organology, realist theoretical frameworks (specifically Object-Oriented Ontology), and the working practices of technical art history to investigate musical instruments in new ways. The three primary goals of the project are: to explore the ben-

efits of a theoretical approach that is explicitly anthro(de)centric; to reveal more of musical instruments as they are with new tools of practice; and to draw a more critical reading of what has been useful in the diffracting applications of Actor Network Theory among our colleagues in the social sciences.”



Tùng Nguyễn is currently a candidate for the DMA in Piano Performance at the University of Oregon, specializing in piano pedagogy and historical performance practice. He writes: “among the instruments of Western music, the keyboard instruments have gone through a very rapid development process. Through my practical experience performing on different pianos and harpsichords, I learned about the differences between the instruments in terms of origin, design, and sound, and how music was composed for those instruments. My knowledge of organology combined with study of performance practice treatises allows me to deliver an informed interpretation of the keyboard repertoire of Western music. My research interests also include exploring Vietnamese traditional music and instruments. Vietnam has a variety of traditional musical genres featuring different instruments, and these instruments are always developing depending on historical and socio-economic situations. Understanding the development of traditional instruments will open doors for future studies and research in historical performance practice in Vietnamese traditional music.”



Devanney Haruta is in her fourth year of the Musicology & Ethnomusicology PhD program at Brown University, where she has been focusing her research on musical instruments, sound studies, and the relationships between humans, technology, and environment. She explored some of these themes in her MA paper about soundscapes of Japanese gardens in the United States, a version of which she presented at the 2023 AMIS conference. Her presentation at this year’s meeting featured her ongoing project “Piano (de)composition,” an outdoor installation of a piano, which the Brown Music Department was going to otherwise discard, that was placed outside to weather in the elements and that invites public interaction. Writes Devanney, “this project has raised interesting questions about the ways that people attribute qualities of life and death to musical instruments or develop emotional connections to instruments. Pursuing these questions has led me to the topic of my dissertation: the relationships between people and their musical instruments, and how someone’s connection to an instrument may differ depending on their role, whether instrument maker, performer, or museum curator, for example. Within these relationships, I am particularly interested in cases when instruments are personified or attributed agency, and what leads to these understandings of instrument vitality. As my research develops, I hope to continue to discuss these themes and to share my findings at future AMIS meetings. Many thanks to the Gribbon committee for the travel award this year; I had a wonderful time in Phoenix and am grateful for the opportunity to attend!” Devanney is the new AMIS Registrar.

A New Home for the Ex “Amaryllis Fleming” Cello

Bradley Strauchen-Scherer

The Department of Musical Instruments at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is pleased to announce the acquisition of the ex “Amaryllis Fleming,” a five-string cello made by the Brothers Amati. Exceptional as an early example of a cello, its rarity is heightened by the fact that it survives in playing condition. The ex “Amaryllis Fleming” joins violins by Andrea Amati and Nicolo Amati at the Museum, bringing together the work of three generations of this seminal dynasty of luthiers. With the three Stradivari violins held by the Met, these instruments by the Amati family join forces to present a powerful representation of the work of the Cremonese school, regarded as the most prestigious and influential tradition of violin making.

The ex “Amaryllis Fleming” dates from the embryonic period of the cello’s history, when innovative makers like the Amati family experimented with a wider range of violin-family instruments than later became standard, including various sizes of cellos and violas. Cellos are more scarce than violins because fewer were produced by makers and their larger size makes them less likely to survive intact. While thirty-seven violins made by the Brothers Amati are known today, only seven of their cellos are thought to survive, in addition to three or four by their father, Andrea Amati. Of these, this is the only example of the rare, smaller-sized cello—often called a piccolo cello—that existed alongside the larger and more common form of the instrument. By dint of this smaller size, the ex “Amaryllis Fleming” survives in substantially original condition and has escaped the fate of the larger cellos made by the Brothers Amati, all of which were cut down to reduce their length to modern standards. Sheltered from the predations of the marketplace and the rigors of orchestral playing, this cello also retains an unusual abundance of the Amati family’s famed varnish on its body and scroll.



Cello, Brothers Amati, Cremona, Italy, ca. 1610, MMA 2023.331. Purchase, 2020 Benefit Fund, Amati Gifts, in honor of Sally B. Brown, and Robert Alonzo Lehman Bequest, 2023.

In addition to body length, early experimentation also extended to the number of strings on the cello, with some examples having

as few as three strings and others upwards of five. Although four strings became standard, five-string cellos like this have endured because they accommodate an extended high range and make the playing of arpeggios more natural. For these reasons, Johann Sebastian Bach famously called for the five-string instrument in his solo Cello Suite no. 6 (BWV 1012). He also wrote for it in several cantatas.

With its additional strings and a beamy upper bout to support them, the closest kin of the ex “Amaryllis Fleming” is the Brothers Amati bass viol in the Ashmolean Museum. Each of these instruments exhibits characteristics that would later come to be firmly associated with either the viol or the violin family.

They predate the term “violoncello,” originating from a time when instruments of this type were referred to by a variety of appellations including *basso viola da braccio*, *viola da braccio*, and numerous variants of *violone*. As such, the ex “Amaryllis Fleming” and the Brothers Amati bass viol in the Ashmolean speak to the liminal world of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century bass members of the bowed string families and reveal the awkwardness of later desires to firmly distinguish different types.

The survival of the ex “Amaryllis Fleming” in robust playing condition affords performers, listeners, and researchers an opportunity to experience this nuanced and lesser considered realm of the history of the cello. This is a fitting continuation of the path forged by Amaryllis Fleming (1925–99), the most recent owner of this cello, who was a pioneer of the early music movement. She used this instrument to illuminate the little-explored world of the Baroque five-string cello and rose to fame as the first in modern times to play Bach’s cello suites on the instrument that best fulfilled the specifications of his music. Also internationally cel-

ebrated as a chamber musician, Fleming was a long-time and distinguished member of the teaching staff of the Royal College of Music.

Fleming’s relationship with this instrument began in 1971, when it came to auction at Sotheby’s in London. Charles Beare recognized it as a masterpiece of the Amati family. By this time, one of its peg holes had been blanked off and the instrument was set up as a four-string cello. Beare knew Fleming and tipped her off about the auction. Fleming purchased the cello and engaged the Beare shop to restore the instrument to its original five-string configuration. The instrument remains as it was set up for Fleming.

Brought to public notice through Fleming’s career, this

cello has continued to attract attention from performers and scholars. Following her death in 1999, it was displayed at the Royal Academy of Music for a number of years and featured in an exhibition of Amati instruments held there in 2015. It was also exhibited in Cremona at the Museo del Violino beginning in 2019. The instrument was the subject of an article by John Dilworth in *The Strad* magazine in February 2008 (vol. 119, issue 1414, pp. 30–35), which included a set of measured drawings for instrument makers. As a result, the ex “Amaryllis Fleming” has spawned scores of copies that are now in the hands of Baroque cellists across the globe. With such an important link to the world of historical string performance practice, this cello is in keeping with the position of the Met’s musical instrument collection at the vanguard of the early music movement in America, which reaches back to the groundbreaking concerts on instruments from the collection organized by Emmanuel Winternitz and Paul Hindemith in the 1940s. The arrival of the ex “Amaryllis Fleming” at the Met marks a continuation of this important work.

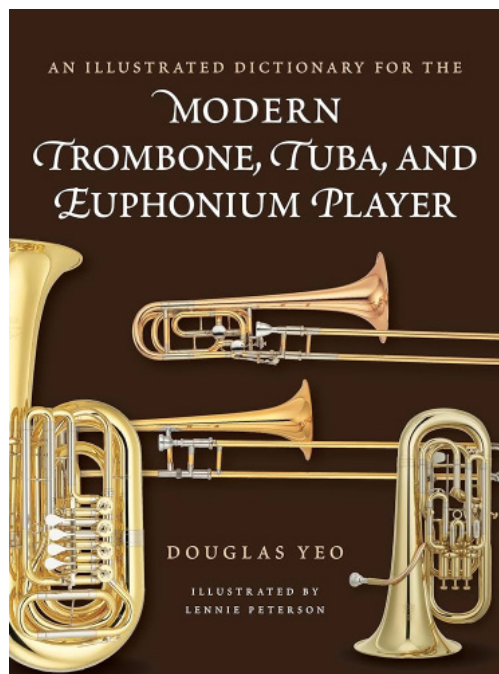


Scroll of the ex “Amaryllis Fleming” cello, Brothers Amati, Cremona, Italy, ca. 1610, MMA 2023.331

BOOK REVIEW

Douglas Yeo. *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player*. Illustrated by Lennie Peterson. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2021. Hardback, paperback, and eBook versions available from the publisher's website.

April Legatt



This book is part of a series called “Dictionaries for the Modern Musician.” According to the publisher, the series aims to “offer both the novice and advanced artist lists of key terms designed to fully cover the field of study and performance for major instruments, as well as the workings of musicians in areas from composing to conducting.”

This is a tall order for any book, especially one under 200 pages. Establishing criteria for inclusion is important since the list of performers in America alone would be enough for many books. Nevertheless, the author has done a great job compiling the many different terms in an easy-to-read and understandable format. Douglas Yeo is recognized by low brass players throughout the country through his work as a teacher, performer, and scholar. In the book's introduction, Yeo writes that “individuals will be considered for inclusion for a stand-alone entry if they *significantly changed the path* of the instrument's performance, pedagogy, repertoire, research, or manufacturing” (p. 2). While a multitude

of names and brands have been included, there are many more that are not mentioned. Two examples that were excluded were the manufacturers Besson and Boosey. These companies were instrumental in the development and use of the compensating systems that are used today on the modern euphonium. Regardless of this, this book still provides an excellent starting point for anyone pursuing information regarding low brass.

Yeo's dictionary also includes various slang words that performers use when talking about their instrument or playing. These types of words are usually not included in resources, as they are informal, but they provide crucial information for the modern brass player. To my surprise and delight, there was an entry for the term “pea shooter”: “a slang expression used to describe a small-bore brass instrument, especially trombones with a bore of .500” or smaller” (p. 104). This particular descriptor is not included in sources such as Grove Music Online but is a perfect addition in this dictionary.

Included with many of the definitions are beautiful and clear illustrations by Lennie Peterson, who is both an artist and musician. These black-and-white drawings help to illustrate many of the terms and describe instruments and their features in a clearer way than photographs alone could.

Overall, *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player* is a relatively thorough dictionary that encompasses many different terms that professionals and amateurs of music will enjoy and use. The definitions are informative, but short, giving the main points without going into detailed depth. The modern musician will find this book to be valuable to their library, as it is a great way to quickly look up information from a trusted source.

April Legatt, MM, is a Minnesota K–12 music educator and independent organologist.

How to Move an Antique Plucked String Musical Instrument Collection Cross-Country

Gregg Miner

(From his poster, presented at the 2024 AMIS meeting)

Well, as I wrote for my poster subtitle: “Here’s a tip: Don’t!”

I’m not kidding. But if you have to—and I did—here are some highlights of the adventure (and by “adventure” I mean two years of *unrelenting exhaustion and stress*).

It was my wife Jaci’s idea to move out of Los Angeles.

I would never have moved. Not that I was against the idea; I just couldn’t seriously fathom moving *everything I owned* - - - not even across town. And this was almost as far as you could go and still stay in the U.S.—Connecticut!



We found a bigger house for her and a separate empty 1,200 sq ft garage (the “barn”) for me. I had already retired, she had another year to go. So I flew back and forth for two years to start our many projects. The story of how I lucked onto a contractor who would take on my crazy “turn this giant empty



The “barn” before

workshop into a five-room museum” project—and on a tiny budget is one I’ll tell you over drinks when you come visit ...

Meanwhile, our first trial run with a moving company was for a self-packed full load of household goods and our 4,000 books. Frustrated with what we were finding (horror story reviews), we chose the *most* expensive company to make sure they could handle it flawlessly (“We Move President” Movers). Not even close. They lost two boxes of heirlooms and flipped giant, heavy “This Way Up!” crates of fragile Christmas ornaments upside down at delivery.

Six months later, Jaci was recovering from knee surgery so I packed up the collectibles, including several hundred rare Disney ceramics and the museum-style butterfly/insect collection. I also

loaded the two “Zippy Shell” pods myself. This pod type is a large steel cage inside a pod that then gets fork-lifted out, wrapped, and loaded into a semi for the trip. A lot of rigmarole and miscommunication there, but it wasn’t too terrible, and 99% of everything arrived *intact*. Not bad!

It was now the fall of our second transitional year and I was back in L.A. to tackle the musical instruments. My staff? Just me. I walked into the room, where my first thought was “I remember each one of these coming into the collection - - - *one at a time*. I could deal with *that*, and shipping out the occasional vintage harp guitar. But now having to handle them *all*, knowing what that entails? Just kill me now.

I'll now split this story into two waking nightmares: Movers and Packing. Believe it or not, packing was the easiest, so let's start there: Obviously, I now regretted getting rid of my harp trunk and other big shipping crates! I never did find any used harp trunks, and shippers wanted two grand to build just one. So, I was looking at the cost of lumber and time to build my own crates, while also buying any used large guitar cases I could find. (If you haven't guessed, 80% of these old instruments came without a case of any kind). Then one day I stumbled on a *road case*. And then another. You know, like when the rock band's semi backs into the venue and all their amps and guitars and equipment roll out in those big metal-clad wood boxes. Over the next two months, I managed to score a bunch of used ones on Facebook Marketplace (17 total for about \$2k). I even found a giant rolling motorcycle crate that fit the two giant harps and two small ones!

I couldn't begin packing without a place to stage everything; that's also why we had to do those first two loads. Much of the house was now empty, and I ran humidifiers the entire time as I packed and staged. The process, step by step, was:

- Trace the instrument onto heavy paper (for eventual wall mockups in the new space).
- Put any in cases that had them (a couple dozen) and pile those up in corner.
- Wrap in cotton sheet or pillowcase (to protect finish) then bubble-wrap. No "moving company overkill" was necessary. I knew the nature of each, and "Tetris'd" into the various-sized and -shaped road cases quite easily, with only a few additional cardboard dividers here and there.

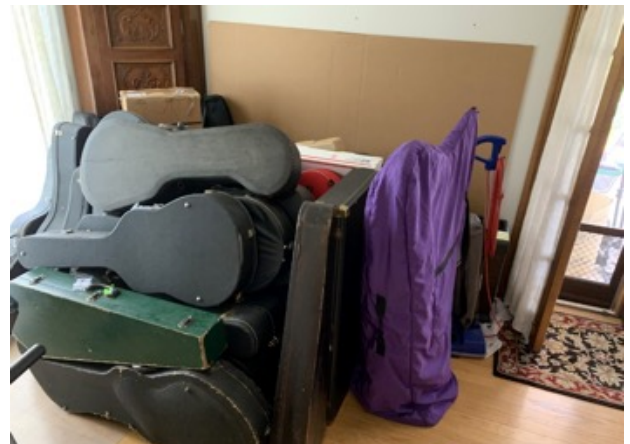


Gregg and his collection

- I didn't want movers handling any of the individual cases, so all those were padded and stacked within giant cardboard boxes.

After six weeks of daily packing, they were ready!

Meanwhile ... how to get it there? Jaci had lots of Fine Art Shipper contacts from Paramount. *No one* wanted this job because A) they wanted to pack it themselves and B) they refused to give us a dedicated truck. Meanwhile, we're still packing the rest of the



Instruments in their cases piled in the corner



The cases packed in boxes

house, including furniture and a hundred-plus office boxes. I was still hoping for fast and temperature-controlled, but no one could give us that option. The biggest issue: I wanted to see this loaded and unloaded. And a cross-country semi-trailer could not get into our destination driveway or park anywhere on the street (that's why the smaller shuttle trucks on each end caused problems with the extra loading on and off twice!).

By accident, we stumbled upon a high-end piano dealer in Hollywood, who suggested ... piano movers! He gave us several names, and most of them had never heard of such a project, but one was willing to do it (but just the instruments, no other personal stuff). Great—how could it go wrong?! Except ... they flaked. They simply would not/could not give us a date, nor any approximation, even after I had to book my plane trip out in two weeks. And so, the most stressful two weeks of our lives as we beat the bushes for options. We finally had to just throw a dart and pick what seemed to be our last and only option. And it only finally coalesced when I dealt one-on-

one with the company's owner. It was too good to be true. Reasonable cost, a 7–10-day trip, and we were promised a temp-controlled dedicated truck! A week later: It was now noon, and half my instruments were out on the sidewalk starting to bake. The truck finally shows ... and it was a metal box with no temp-control. After an hour screaming on the phone I had them put everything back inside and leave. Those legendary climate-controlled 26-foot trucks? *They were a myth.* The piano movers might have actually had one, but otherwise, no, only full-size semi rigs were available. My contact had been lied to by his own truck fleet manager.

I was stuck, but the mover was bending over backwards. So we brainstormed and postponed for a week while the weather (nationwide) calmed down, he mapped out a more northerly (cooler) route, and most importantly, he threw in a second driver so that they could drive almost day and night. By the time the truck's innards were heating up, they'd be in the dark and it would cool down for the next day. I had only a bucket of soaked sponges for a bit of moisture.

I managed the entire load process with a great (and heavily tipped) crew, watched them tie everything down and put my lock on the gate (we lucked out with the truck, as the young independent driver



Packed "road cases" ready to go

had purchased it recently, and the heavy duty air ride cylinders were like new!).

I should mention here that I had recently switched from Anderson Insurance (they did the musical instruments only and I appraised all my own items) to Collectibles Insurance Services and a blanket no-appraisals policy for *all the collections we own*. I was able to put their “agreed-upon value at time of loss” policy to the test when the first mover lost a bin of books. I had taken contents inventory photos of all, and could thus list that bin’s books with current nominal prices I could locate on Amazon, Alibris, etc. They fairly quickly paid my asking price, so I felt I was in pretty safe hands for the instruments, covered in transit without any extra \$).

I soon kissed Jaci goodbye, flew to Connecticut to greet my contractor (who had just put the finishing touches on the place, so I kissed him as well), and settled in for the longest wait of my career. On the fourth morning, the truck pulled up, I removed my lock, and we slowly raised the door to discover ...



The truck opened after the journey

Nothing had shifted a single micron. A new crew followed my precise instructions unloading into the house garage, where no inventory count was needed, as this was my own dedicated truck—no muss no fuss! Ironically, it was all about the same price as the piano mover quoted, but here, they also moved everything—furniture, glass shelves, file boxes by the hundreds, the works! Two friends had driven down from Massachusetts, and we spent the next two days carefully unwrapping and moving everything into the now-fully-climate-controlled Miner Museum. (Oh, and I later managed to re-sell every empty road case.)

With the displays stacked precariously in the new space like so much priceless cordwood, I’ve now been chipping away at the them since September 2023. Facebook friends have seen a lot of this progress—all in a totally new and very different setting (unfortunately, there *will* be dusting).

Needless to say, this all remains a labor of love ... and passion bordering on fixated obsession, a trait I wouldn’t necessarily wish on anyone! (*Postscript:* I did receive a few good tips from AMIS members during my poster session, but it was all a bit late!) I hope to have the instruments done by year’s end; two other rooms have already been stuffed to the gills, and others will follow. This is not a “mancave,” it is a veritable *nerd-cave*. The museum is not open to the public (as we’re zoned residential), but you are all nevertheless invited. Stop by on your next trip through gorgeous New England!



A selection from the collection in the new space



Second garage outbuilding “as found”



New walls, full wrap-around base with storage over cinderblocks, floating floor, and vinyl, and lighting



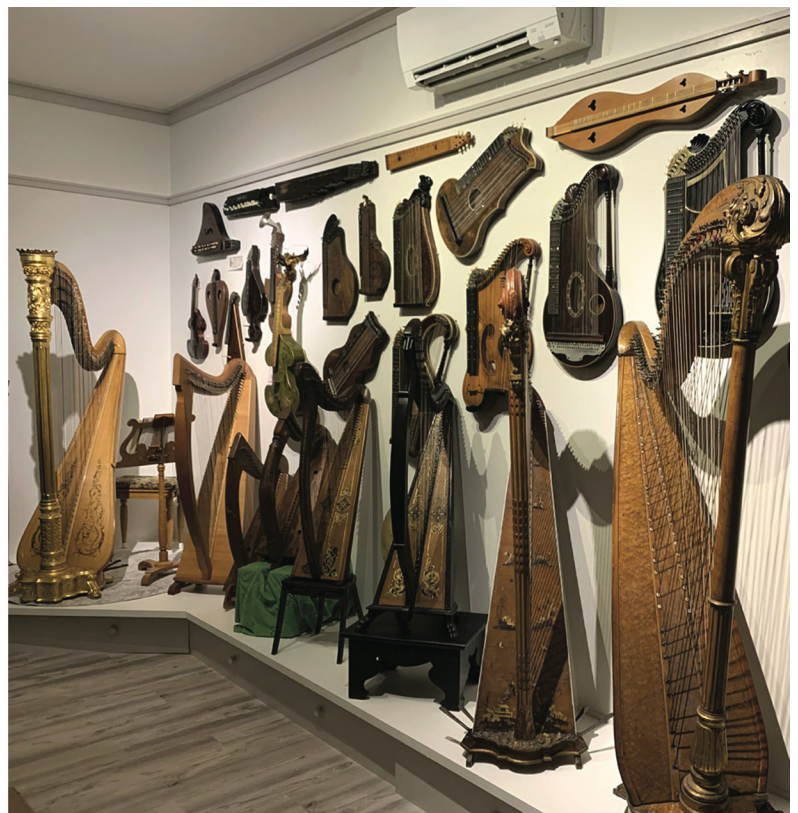
Same corner with tracing placement mock-ups, ephemera brainstorming, and floor instruments



One wall and corner complete!



Both garage doors were removed and “dummy” doors re-created outside (even fooling the snow-plow guy!)



Same corner now. 24/7 year-round heating/cooling, humidifying/de-humidifying. Music and supplies stored underneath with quick-pull magnetic-latch access.

MIRCat NEWS

Wind Instrument Makers Database

The Wind Instrument Makers (WIM) database is an ongoing, updateable database of makers from many countries of the world, from the fifteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first. It is based on the material published in *An Index of Wind-Instrument Makers* (six print editions, 1959–1980) by Lyndesay G. Langwill and *The New Langwill Index of Musical Wind-Instrument Makers and Inventors* (1993) by William Waterhouse. The database includes up-to-date biographical information for each maker, with dates of activity and types of instruments made or sold—and in many cases, a comprehensive list of surviving instruments in public museums and selected private collections.

The WIM's general editor is Albert (Al) R. Rice (arrice@rocketmail.com), based in Claremont, California, USA. He is eager to correspond with individuals who want to share details of the wind instruments that they own or know of in both museum and private collections. (Individuals may be

listened anonymously if desired.) All details of the instruments are important to include: the complete (or most complete) maker's mark; number of keys for woodwinds and number and type of valves for brasses; type of wood or material used in construction; unusual key system or mechanism; nominal pitches for transposing instruments; and museum number if known. Any details about the instrument maker that have been discovered would also be appreciated. The WIM database will include additional instrument types not in Waterhouse's book, such as bagpipes (Scottish and other nationalities), the Catalan *tenora* and *tible*, and others.

The WIM database is a project of the Musical Instrument Research Catalog (<https://mir-cat.org>). Work on the system is nearing completion and has a target opening date of late 2024. Watch the AMIS listserv for an announcement.

-✉ Albert R. Rice

JAMIS Archive Now Online

An archive of the complete *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* is now digitized and publicly available as a searchable online resource. All volumes from its 1975 beginnings are included, with access to the most recent three issues restricted to current AMIS members only.

Articles are individually downloadable. Search author name or title keywords using your browser's search feature (Ctrl+F or Command+F), or browse the continuous Table of Contents by scrolling. Click to read articles, essays, reviews, communications, lists of new publications, and front and back matter.

There is also a powerful feature for searching the full text of all issues in a single pass.

It returns a clickable list of articles containing the search term, whether part of the title, buried in a footnote, or anywhere in between.

The online archive and download page are created and hosted without cost to AMIS through a partnership with the Musical Instrument Research Catalog (MIRCat). Find the JAMIS Archive from the link on the Journal page on the AMIS website (<https://www.amis.org/journal>) or through MIRCat at (<https://amis.mircat.org/>). Send questions or suggestions to JAMIS archivist John Watson.

-✉ John R. Watson

NEWS from MEMBERS

Albert R. Rice and Catherine J. Crisp (University of Chichester) recently published a joint article: "John and William Mahon, the Earliest British Clarinet Soloists," *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* (2023): 1–30. doi:10.1017/rrc.2021.7.

Abstract: Over the course of a playing career that spanned roughly fifty years, John Mahon (pronounced M'hone) introduced and popularized the clarinet as a solo and chamber instrument throughout Britain. He performed extensively in London and in many provincial towns. This article presents biographies of John Mahon and his father William and illustrations of contemporary clarinets and a basset horn. It examines John Mahon's work as a teacher, his music, and his influence and legacy.

The article is available at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/royal-musical-association-research-chronicle/article/john-and-william-mahon-the-earliest-british-clarinet-soloists/5F2F0832BD20C61D59892D2BC765BFBF/share/c2ec4976fd285ea422f43aaa05369a-3baf244c61ea81396d908de8874bff4277>

Marcello Rizzello's most recent article, "Thoughts on the External Development of the Oboe in France from 1650 to 1810," was published in April 2024 in *Philomusica* on-line 22, no. 3 (2023). The article may be found at <http://riviste.paviauniversitypress.it/index.php/phi/article/view/2282>

Flutist **Peter H. Bloom** sends news of recent concerts on historical and modern instruments. In September 2023 he performed an unaccompanied recital on concert flute, alto flute, bass flute, piccolo, percussion, and voice, featuring works composed for him over the past half-century by American composers Elliott Schwartz, Marianela Maduro Lang, Len Detlor, John McDonald, Avrohom Leichtling, Karl Henning, Sean Burns, and Timothy Bowlby. The concert was made possible by an Artist Fellowship from the Mass Cultural Council and the Somerville Arts Council. Mr. Bloom continues to tour throughout the U.S. with the period instrument group Ensemble Chaconne (marking its fortieth anniversary in 2025), the Modernistics Trio (celebrating George and Ira Gershwin,

The Bloom/Funkhouser Duo (spotlighting Duke Ellington and his circle), and the chamber trio Ensemble Aubade. He continues his long tenure as a member of the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra, about to begin its 52nd season. Contact Peter at pjb@am-wks.com or visit <http://www.americasmusic-works.com>.

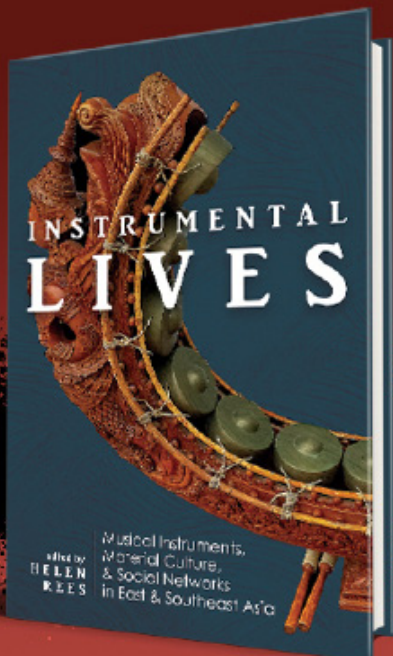


Peter H. Bloom with Ensemble Chaconne (lutenist Chris Henriksen and gambist Carol Lewis) performing at the National Music Museum, March 2023, hosted by Michael Suing. Flute by Friedrich von Huene, Boston 2005, after Bressan.

News, continued


Helen Rees has published an edited volume *Instrumental Lives: Musical Instruments, Material Culture, and Social Networks in East and Southeast Asia*

(University of Illinois Press, 2024). Contributors are Helen Rees, Terauchi Naoko, Tyler Yamin, Bell Yung, Jennifer C. Post, Maire-Pierre Lissouir, and Insee Adler.



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edited by
HELEN
REES



Dawson Butts, Tùng Nguyễn, Christopher Ellis Reyes Montes, Patrick Huang at the 2024 AMIS banquet



Ken Moore serves as liaison for the Nour Foundation.
Please contact him if you have questions.

The Nour Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, promotes mutual understanding by exploring commonalities among diverse cultures. In this regard, music plays a special role by uniting people, engaging and healing the senses, stirring the passions, and communicating in profound ways the spoken word cannot.

For the last decade, large and small events highlighting various music traditions have been presented in partnership with the Department of Musical Instruments at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Foundation is now seeking to expand its programmatic collaborations with other diverse institutions that share a common vision of the power of music to bring people from all walks of life together. Such programs are not only highly enjoyable, but also serve to reinforce public engagement and community outreach.

<https://www.nourfoundation.com>.

For further information, please contact
Ken Moore
Curator Emeritus, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Ken.Moore@metmuseum.org; kmoorenc@aol.com
(212) 570-3813 or (646) 642-2285



2024 AMIS meeting: Michele Winter, guest attendee Thomas Kite, Tom Winter, Connie Huff, Susan Thompson, Matthew Hill at Arizona State University

AMIS at MIM

photos: Aurelia Hartenberger



Selina Carter, Stew Carter, Robb Stewart, Connie Huff



Matt Zeller, Jayme Kurland, Michael Suing



Carolyn Bryant-Sarles honors Curt Sachs Award winner the late Patrizio Barbieri with a toast



Trinity Howell presents "There She Is--"



Fanny Magaña and Lisa Beebe



Maya Brown-Boateng, Jayson Dobney, Ken Moore, Matthew Hill, Jayme Kurland



John Watson, with Janet K. Page
John receives the Frances Densmore Prize



Herbert Heyde, Laury Libin



Daniel Fishkin, Christopher A. Miller



Albert Fontelles-Ramonet, Cassandre Balosso-Bardin, Bradley Strauchen-Scherer



Matt Zeller welcomes delegates to the Meeting



Massimiliano Guido pays tribute to Curt Sachs Award winner the late Patrizio Barbieri



Brian Glasscock presents "The Future of Sound in Museums"

CALL FOR PAPERS
AMERICAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENT SOCIETY
ANNUAL MEETING: JUNE 3–7, 2025
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, SAVANNAH, GA

The 2025 AMIS meeting will be held in beautiful and historic Savannah, Georgia, at Georgia Southern University, June 3–7, 2025. Georgia Southern is home to the Fred and Dinah Gretsch Instrument, Artifact, and Document Collection, comprising thousands of unique instruments, music industry artifacts, and company records within and across collections and three exhibitions in Savannah and Statesboro, Georgia. Most notably, Georgia Southern’s “That Great Gretsch Sound!” Museum is a featured attraction at Plant Riverside District, Savannah’s premier riverfront entertainment center. As part of the Georgia Southern Museum, the Gretsch Collection supports the University’s mission of teaching, research, and service specifically through collections, exhibits, and educational outreach. Presentations will be held at the auditorium of the Fine Arts Building at the Armstrong Campus in Savannah.

The AMIS program committee invites proposals, **due November 15, 2024**, for paper presentations, roundtable panels, and lecture-recitals. Papers will be twenty minutes in length plus ten minutes for discussion; roundtable panels and lecture-recitals may request longer time slots. Presenters wishing to use or discuss an instrument in the Gretsch Museum collection should first inquire with the appropriate curator to see if use or display of the instrument is possible. Questions regarding using or discussing instruments from the collection can be directed to Matthew Hill: mhill@georgiasouthern.edu.

Proposals must include an abstract of not more than 300 words, a 75-word biography for each presenter, a list of audio-visual or other requirements, and e-mail addresses for all presenters. Please send proposals as e-mail attachments in pdf form to program committee chair Anne Acker, a.acker@comcast.net.

Students are eligible to apply for the William E. Gribbon Memorial Award for Student Travel. See <https://www.amis.org/william-gribbon-award>.
