

Documents related to subpoena request  
Philip Ewell  
September 9, 2024

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From philipaewell@gmail.com:

Feb. 15, 2021:

Media request - Dallas Observer

**Simone Carter** <simone.carter@dallasobserver.com>

Feb 15, 2021,  
12:50 PM

to me

Hi Dr. Ewell,

I hope you're doing well. My name is Simone Carter and I'm a reporter for the *Dallas Observer*. I had tried to contact you in August of 2020 as the *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* controversy arose; I wrote a story on it.

I wanted to reach out today because I'm working on another article about the issue--specifically, surrounding the [lawsuit](#) that Dr. Timothy Jackson filed against the University of North Texas. Would you be interested in commenting on Dr. Jackson's latest move/offering your reaction to the lawsuit? If so, my deadline is today at 4 p.m. CST.

Thank you very much. Feel free to email me back or call the number listed below.

Best,

**Simone Carter**

Staff Reporter, *Dallas Observer*  
(940) 368-9417

**Phil Ewell** <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Feb 15, 2021,  
2:33 PM

to jennifer.raab, Suzanne, jtrose, draskin, ae1732

Dear Alison, Deborah, Jennifer, John, and Suzanne:

I've received the request to my website email, below, for an interview with the *Dallas Observer*. I'm going to decline this request, as I don't wish to comment on the Texas lawsuit that we've been talking about. Michael Powell's [NY Times piece yesterday](#) has turned up the heat, I think, on this issue.

If you have any advice about this media request, or other general advice, I'd be happy to hear from any of you. Thanks!

-Phil

Philip Ewell (he/him)  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)  
@philewell

**Mail Delivery Subsystem** <mailer-daemon@googlemail.com>

Feb 15, 2021,  
2:33 PM

to me

**Address not found**

Your message wasn't delivered to **jtrose@hunter.local** because the domain hunter.local couldn't be found. Check for typos or unnecessary spaces and try again.

The response was:

DNS Error: 3651276 DNS type 'mx' lookup of hunter.local responded with code  
NXDOMAIN Domain name not found: hunter.local

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Phil Ewell <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>

To: [jennifer.raab@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:jennifer.raab@hunter.cuny.edu), Suzanne M Farrin <[sf1357@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:sf1357@hunter.cuny.edu)>, [jtrose@hunter.local](mailto:jtrose@hunter.local), [draskin@rubenstein.com](mailto:draskin@rubenstein.com), [ae1732@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:ae1732@hunter.cuny.edu)

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Mon, 15 Feb 2021 14:33:17 -0500

Subject: Fwd: Media request - Dallas Observer

----- Message truncated -----

**Phil Ewell** <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>

Feb 15, 2021,  
2:34 PM

to Simone

Dear Simone, thanks for this email. No, I'm not interested in commenting on this...best,

-Phil

Philip Ewell (he/him)  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)  
@philewell

**Simone Carter** <[simone.carter@dallasobserver.com](mailto:simone.carter@dallasobserver.com)>

Feb 15, 2021,  
2:36 PM

to me

Thank you for letting me know, Dr. Ewell. I appreciate your response and hope you have a wonderful week.

Best,  
Simone  
--

**Phil Ewell** <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>

Feb 15, 2021,  
2:36 PM

to jtrose

John, hi. I just sent the email below, but put your wrong email address in the "to" line. So now you have it...best,

-Phil

Philip Ewell (he/him)  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)  
@philewell

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Phil Ewell** <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>

Date: Mon, Feb 15, 2021 at 2:33 PM

Subject: Fwd: Media request - Dallas Observer

To: <[jennifer.raab@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:jennifer.raab@hunter.cuny.edu)>, Suzanne M Farrin <[sf1357@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:sf1357@hunter.cuny.edu)>, <[jtrose@hunter.local](mailto:jtrose@hunter.local)>, <[draskin@rubenstein.com](mailto:draskin@rubenstein.com)>, <[ae1732@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:ae1732@hunter.cuny.edu)>

Dear Alison, Deborah, Jennifer, John, and Suzanne:

I've received the request to my website email, below, for an interview with the *Dallas Observer*. I'm going to decline this request, as I don't wish to comment on the Texas lawsuit that we've been talking about. Michael Powell's [\*NY Times\* piece yesterday](#) has turned up the heat, I think, on this issue.

If you have any advice about this media request, or other general advice, I'd be happy to hear from any of you. Thanks!

-Phil

Philip Ewell (he/him)  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)  
@philewell

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Simone Carter** <[simone.carter@dallasobserver.com](mailto:simone.carter@dallasobserver.com)>

Date: Mon, Feb 15, 2021 at 12:50 PM

Subject: Media request - Dallas Observer

To: <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>

Hi Dr. Ewell,

I hope you're doing well. My name is Simone Carter and I'm a reporter for the *Dallas Observer*. I had tried to contact you in August of 2020 as the *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* controversy arose; I wrote a story on it.

I wanted to reach out today because I'm working on another article about the issue--specifically, surrounding the [lawsuit](#) that Dr. Timothy Jackson filed against the University of North Texas. Would you be interested in commenting on Dr. Jackson's latest move/offering your reaction to the lawsuit? If so, my deadline is today at 4 p.m. CST.

Thank you very much. Feel free to email me back or call the number listed below.

Best,  
**Simone Carter**

Staff Reporter, *Dallas Observer*  
(940) 368-9417

**Alison E Ewing** <ae1732@hunter.cuny.edu>

Thu, Feb 18, 2021,  
10:27 AM

to me

Phil,

Just a note that Jennifer is going to try to connect with you today or tomorrow. She's been thinking a lot about strategy here and has some ideas she wanted to talk through with you. Milka will be reaching out shortly for your availability.

Best,  
Alison

Alison E. Ewing  
Office of the President  
**Hunter College** | 695 Park Ave | New York, NY 10065

**Phil Ewell** <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Feb 18, 2021,  
2:28 PM

to Alison

Thanks for this Alison. I'm upstate now, skiing, until Sunday. No cell coverage, but I have wifi at the cabin. So, I'm checking email both late and early in the day...best,

-Phil

Philip Ewell (he/him)  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)  
@philewell

**Alison E Ewing** <ae1732@hunter.cuny.edu>

Feb 18, 2021,  
2:30 PM

to me

Phil,

I hope you're getting as much snow as we are! That sounds delightful. When you're back we can find a time for you and Jennifer to connect. Stay well and enjoy.

Nov. 14, 2019:

Music Theory's White Racial Frame  
Personal

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Attachments

Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 10:40 AM

to me, bcc: stephan.pennington, bcc: Horace, bcc: matthew.morrison, bcc: Billy, bcc: Nicholas.Baragwanath, bcc: boenke, bcc: battle2000, bcc: Annemarie.Nicols-Grinenko, bcc: william.fouriel, bcc: matildiethomwium, bcc: wolfgang.marx, bcc: gcm.schroeder, bcc: Noriko, bcc: m.forman, bcc: jg.rollefson, bcc: Peter.Schmelz, bcc: rachel, bcc: Mark, bcc: Mark, bcc: wbaldwin, bcc: Sterling, bcc: mdone, bcc: David, bcc: shafer.mahoney, bcc: jneary, bcc: jewel.thompson, bcc: mariann.weierich, bcc: Andrew, bcc: Rosalie, bcc: Daniel, bcc: Jim, bcc: Marina

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Many of you are aware of my recent 20-minute talk, "Music Theory's White Racial Frame"-- thanks for your support and encouragement with this ongoing project. If you haven't had a chance to watch the talk, you can do so here (I go on at 2'14").

Also, I'm attaching a PDF I collated from all the wonderful comments I've received, to me personally or on social media (identifying names redacted, except my own). I was heartened to see the positive impact this work has had. Who knew music theory could be so exciting?

Sincerely,

-Phil

Philip Ewell  
work: 212-396-6253  
www.philipewell.com

One attachment  
• Scanned by Gmail

Bergman, Rachel <rbergman@sheridan.edu>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 10:53 AM  
to me

WOW, kudos to you, Phab!!! Wish I could've been there. Read through the comments and look forward to listening to the talk asap!

Hugs,  
Rav

From: Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2019 8:40 AM  
To: Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Music Theory's White Racial Frame

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links, open attachments, or correspond with the sender unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Rollefson, J. Griffith <jg.rollefson@ucc.ie>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 11:07 AM  
to me

Thanks Phil -- that was amazing hearing you talk about it and then seeing it blow up! Had great chats with both Ellie (at AMS) and Noriko (at SEM) about it (before and after/during).

Anyway, great chatting with you and Murray! I'm going to put your name up on the Global Hip Hop Studies website right now. They're quite quick with additions in my experience.

Best,  
G

J. Griffith Rollefson, Professor of Music  
<http://www.music.ucc.ie/> | <https://europeanhiphop.org>  
Principal Investigator, CIPHER: Hip Hop Interpellation (ERC CoG)  
[www.ucc.ie/cipher](http://www.ucc.ie/cipher)  
Coordinating Editor, Global Hip Hop Studies  
<https://www.intellectbooks.com/global-hip-hop-studies>

\* \* \*

Department of Music | University College Cork | Cork, Ireland  
CIPHER Offices at the Wandesford Quay Research Centre  
office: +353 (0)21 490 4931 | mobile: +353 (0)89 220 6263  
[jg.rollefson@ucc.ie](mailto:jg.rollefson@ucc.ie) | [cipher@ucc.ie](mailto:cipher@ucc.ie)  
<http://research.ucc.ie/profiles/A021/jgrollefson>

\* \* \*

€2m ERC Grant: Interview about CIPHER on Morning Ireland  
New Chapter: "Hip Hop as Martial Art: A Political Economy of Violence in Rap Music" (Oxford Handbook of Hip Hop Studies)  
New Article: "'Yo Nací Caminando': Community-Engaged Scholarship, Hip Hop as Postcolonial Studies, and Rico Pabón's Knowledge of Self" (Journal of World Popular Music Double Special Issue: Hip Hop Activism and Representational Politics)

The Book: Flip the Script: European Hip Hop and the Politics of Postcoloniality (University of Chicago Press)

“Detailed, innovative, and exhilarating...

At last we have a critical survey that can match the complexity and power of the music.”

-Paul Gilroy, author of The Black Atlantic

From: Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday 14 November 2019 15:40

To: Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Subject: Music Theory's White Racial Frame

...

[Message clipped] [View entire message](#)

Daniel Culhane <dan@discoverygenie.com>

Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 11:34 AM

to me

Phil—

Can't wait to watch your presentation—I'll check it out this weekend when I have some time.

Loved the reviews, and I especially love that you are taking on historical racism in your field and in the wider world. Wow, do we need a lot of this kind of effort. I'm going to forward this to Molly (daughter—you met her at the last reunion). She's a senior at Stanford, majoring in social justice (technically history), and her honors thesis is basically on racism in policing and the criminal justice system. I'm sure she will enjoy your talk and your themes.

Missed you at the reunion and I'm looking forward to seeing you soon.

Who knew music theory could be so exciting?

Dan

<MTWRF-Reactions.pdf>

Maura Donohue <mdono@hunter.cuny.edu>

Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 12:44 PM

to me

Phil!!!! I am sending this to my MFAs and could so easily replace Dance Theory (tho still nascent enough a field that it is quite diversified NOW but not really enough when we look at published texts or revered choreographers) and Visual Art too... ANY WAY... just caught a few glimpses of the slides and cranked up. Thank you for sharing. Might really need to pass this on to the other faculty and our current chair. There's 3 MFA candidates up against slide 6 fo absolutely sho...



- ok - coffee or cocktails overdue... plus I've got a trained cellist MFA who needs to find some contact with the music department at some point next semester too!

- m

Maura Nguyen Donohue  
Associate Professor of Dance, Hunter College/CUNY  
Faculty Associate, Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute  
(212) 396-6122

For appointments: <https://MauraAdvising.as.me/>  
From: Phil Ewell [philipaewell@gmail.com]  
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2019 10:40 AM  
To: Phil Ewell  
Subject: Music Theory's White Racial Frame

Maxile, Horace <Horace\_Maxile@baylor.edu>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 1:04 PM  
to me

And you didn't even quote my diplomatic response..... lol!! Congrats on all fronts. Well done.

Horace

Sent from my iPhone  
<MTWRF-Reactions.pdf>

Lambert, Sterling <jslambert@smcm.edu>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 2:28 PM  
to me

Holy shit!

Well....like it or not, for better or worse, I guess you're a pretty big name in music theory now!

For some reason, I have this absurd image in my head of you giving this paper as a grad student at Yale, in the seminar room in the music building on Elm Street, with Smokin' Bob sitting in the background muttering "insolent b\*\*\*\*\*d" to himself....

....all this goes to show, of course, that there are some things that you can only really say once you're tenured!

Anyway, well done

All best,

Sterling

Billy Hunter <williamjhunter@gmail.com>

Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 4:12 PM

to me

Awesome stuff. Very proud to know you, let alone to have had a glimpse into your thinking throughout your time working on this.

(Also, please compile a pdf of all the negative comments. Lol.)

B

Annemarie Nicols-Grinenko <Annemarie.Nicols-Grinenko@cuny.edu>

Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 4:41 PM

to me

Dear Phil,

Bravo! I am so happy (but not surprised) to hear that your work is being so well-received. Congratulations!

Thanks so much for sharing.

I wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season.

All best,

Annemarie

Annemarie Nicols-Grinenko, Ph.D.

University Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs

City University of New York (CUNY)

205 E. 42nd Street, 9th floor

New York, NY 10017

646-664-8068

<https://www.cuny.edu/academics/faculty-affairs/>

From: Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2019 10:40 AM  
To: Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Subject: Music Theory's White Racial Frame

\*\*\*ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.\*\*\*

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 5:26 PM  
to Sterling

That's funny about your absurd image about smokin Bob. If he's still alive--and I think he is--and he watched my talk, he's certainly calling me an insolent b\*\*\*\*\*d, among other spicy things.

And yes, I wouldn't recommend to anyone to say these things pre tenure!

All best,

-Phil  
Philip Ewell  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 5:29 PM  
to Billy

Thanks Billy! So far the only negative comment I've seen is the one YouTube comment I included in that PDF. It was from some white guy in Europe--sounded like he doesn't understand English too well, but that didn't stop him from chiming in (unsurprising). Two people--also white male Europeans--quickly corrected him though, which was fun to see.

You've been there from the start Billy, right? Thanks. Lunch soon, probably after the new year. End-of-semester crunch now...best,

-Phil  
Philip Ewell  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 5:30 PM  
to Horace

Thanks Horace!

-Phil  
Philip Ewell  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 5:30 PM  
to Annemarie

Thanks Annemarie!

-Phil  
Philip Ewell  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

Andrew Ropp <aropp22@yahoo.com>  
Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 5:47 PM  
to me

Wow Phil! Nice job!

You are really shaking up the establishment! Good for you!

Hope you and family are well.

-Ang

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 6:26 PM

to Andrew

Thanks Ang!

-Phil

Philip Ewell

work: 212-396-6253

www.philipewell.com

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Thu, Nov 14, 2019, 8:09 PM

to Rachel

Thanks Rav! Lemme know what you think of the talk. I'm eager to hear. Best,

Phab

--

Jim Bauman <jbauman@stanfordalumni.org>

Sun, Nov 17, 2019, 7:32 PM

to me

Hey Phil,

I just watched the video of your talk. Wow, very impressive, powerful and courageous! Based on all the reactions you forwarded, it seems you are having a real and positive impact on music theory. Not many can claim such influence in their domain. Kudos. I also found your message thought provoking beyond the context of music theory.

Can't wait to see you in SF next weekend. Let me know when and where to meet you.

-Jim

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Mon, Nov 18, 2019, 8:52 AM

to Jim

Thanks for this Jim. Yes, it was daunting making this presentation to a SRO crowd of at least 500 music theorists, 95% of whom are white. But at this point, this shit needs to be said. Basically, the old crowd is uneasy at best and hostile at worst, but the good thing is that the young crowd, irrespective of race, is totally on board. I've been most touched by the many young white men and women who've come up to me and said thanks and "how can we move forward." That gives me hope for the field.

Anyway, yes, looking forward to seeing you Sunday eve for dinner and hanging. Maybe meet up 5-6-ish? I'll try to spend Sunday at the conference. I've got a double room at the SF Marriott Marquis, so I hope you're planning on staying the night Sunday. My flight leaves Monday at 12:57p--would be great if you could drop me whenever at SFO, but if you can't I can certainly manage. If you had any ideas for where to grab dinner Sun. eve I'd be all ears. Otherwise, we can play by ear. Sounds good?

Cya soon,

-Phil

Philip Ewell

work: 212-396-6253

www.philipewell.com

Jim Bauman <jbauman@stanfordalumni.org>

Mon, Nov 18, 2019, 11:47 AM

to me

Sounds good, I'll plan to crash there and get you to the airport on Monday. I don't get up to the city often enough to have a useful opinion about restaurants, but I'll try to get some advice from those that do, otherwise we'll figure it out.

We can text on Sunday and you can let me know how the day is going, and I'll time my departure accordingly.

Looking forward to it!

-Jim

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Mon, Nov 18, 2019, 1:05 PM

to jbauman

Copy that. I'll text Saturday/Sunday to make plans. Later,

Phil

--

Mark Childs <cantorchilds@me.com>

Tue, Nov 26, 2019, 11:32 AM

to me

Thanks for sharing this video, Phil. As you say... "Here, here!". This was so well presented. Great laugh lines.

I'm now paying more attention to your point.

It was so great to get together. I loved our time together.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Mark

<MTWRF-Reactions.pdf>

Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Wed, Nov 27, 2019, 8:35 PM

to Jim

OK Jim, you gotta watch this: [https://youtu.be/dkwu\\_MR1D-E](https://youtu.be/dkwu_MR1D-E)

I need this car....pe

Philip Ewell

work: 212-396-6253

[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

Attachments area

Preview YouTube video Porsche Taycan Turbo On The Angeles Crest Highway! (Hint, it's a blast...)

Jim Bauman <jbauman@stanfordalumni.org>

Wed, Nov 27, 2019, 9:26 PM

to me

Good thing you married well. That is a sweet ride!

-Jim

Here is the PDF referenced above:

Responses to SMT Plenary Talk on Nov. 9, 2019 Philip Ewell November 12, 2019 Positive Comments: EMAIL: Hi Phil, I just wanted to write a quick note of congratulations for your part in Saturday's plenary. I'd wager that your talk literally changed the lives and careers of many music theorists: it certainly did mine. I cannot wait to read and cite the article, and hope we can work on something—perhaps a symposium or workshop of some sort—in the future. Dear Philip Ewell, We have not met, my name is Miriam [last name withheld]. I just wanted to say it was an honor to hear your powerful plenary speech yesterday at SMT. I greatly appreciate and admire the work you shared and have never felt more galvanized. Thank you and congratulations! Dear Dr. Ewell, I just wanted to send my gratitude for your presentation, my regret for not being able to attend, and my affirmation that your research is critically important to the health of classical music. I plan on citing you in April when I present a talk entitled "Music By White Men Predominates in Music Theory Textbooks" at the Great Lakes Region College Music Society Conference. Thank you for your work, and I hope you have an easy end to your semester! Dear Philip, Your plenary talk was stellar, and I wanted to write and thank you for it. I can imagine what an expenditure it was to write and deliver it. I am so grateful for your leadership, and your willingness to expose the racism that so deeply underpins our ways of being. I was overwhelmed by the whole plenary, but also grateful our community is having these deeply challenging conversations. Thank you again for your visionary work. Onward. Dear Philip, First of all, congratulations on your excellent and provocative paper yesterday at SMT. Among other things, it was shocking to hear in such detail the level of racism in Schenker's thought, and how our profession has knowingly chosen to remain blind to his ideologies and its consequences, even for music analysis. Truly amazing. Thank you for bringing these matters to the forefront of the society's discussions. Hi Phil, I watched your presentation at the plenary session on the SMT live stream yesterday evening. Wonderful job! It seemed, from the video, like you received quite a positive response in the room, which was great to see. Dear Professor Ewell, It was a pleasure seeing you again this weekend at SMT. Your plenary session paper was amazing; I knew the field was "white," but I never knew to how much extent it was. It was inspiring. I look forward to your Spectrum article (which for some reason I thought was already out, my bad) and your MTO articles. Bravo Phil!! I joined the stream a couple of minutes late but saw most of it and you were great!!! Was that a standing ovation I noticed at the end?!? Well done, Phil! Dear Phil, I want to thank you for your presentation at SMT on Saturday. You've challenged me to think about my work on Schenker and my position in the field in important ways that I hope will have a lasting effect on my research and teaching in the future, as well as on our curricular requirements at UMass Amherst. Hey Phil, I'm sorry that we didn't get a chance to connect at SMT this year, but I figured we'd be able to catch up in San Francisco. I just wanted to drop you a quick note and say thank you so much for your paper. Your intellectual values, scholarly rigor, and eloquence were so apparent. I know that your message and that paper will be one that is thought about, referenced, and most importantly, is a source for actual change in the future. Thanks so much! Dear Phil, I just wanted to thank you for what I hope will be known as a pivotal plenary session in the history of SMT. Your paper in particular will stay with me for a very long time, and I will continue to reflect on and think about what role I can play in these conversations going forward. In many ways, the session reaffirmed my commitment to making music theory a more inclusive



and equitable field. I wish I could express my thoughts more eloquently, but I am incredibly thankful for your work and for your powerful words in Columbus. Thank you for making a much-needed statement that the Society desperately need to hear. Dear Phil, I am sorry I was not able to tell you this in person this past weekend in Columbus, but I just wanted to thank you for giving such a powerful and riveting talk. You give us hope that this is the moment to act and make an actual change and that change will come. Dear Phil, Crazily enough, just after sending you this email, I saw people endorsing your SMT talk on social media and just watched it. What a relief to hear all of what you said uttered out loud and with such clarity and courage. Kudos! Wow. Just saw your video. Amaaaazing!! Great intro, by the way - set the tone beautifully. You're an official disrupter now. TEXT: Hey Phil! Twitter has been blowing up about how exciting, essential, and transformative your plenary talk yesterday was. Congratulations!! So proud to call you a friend and colleague—and looking forward to reading the printed version in the future. Congrats on a coup! TWITTER: Currently enjoying a prolonged torching of Schenker's racism in Ewell's talk on music theory's white racial frame. #smt42 Good news. I finally had my #SMT42 break-down-and-cry moment. It was during Phil Ewell's plenary talk about music theory's white racial frame. This frame is the exact reason I cry at this conference every 2 year. Except this time, the tears came from the power of being understood, whereas they usually come from the understanding that I am powerless against theory's white priorities. Ewell paper on "Music Theory's White Racial Frame" is brilliant: <http://philipewell.com/wpcontent/uploads/2019/11/SMT-Plenary-Slides.pdf>... Riveting paper from Philip Ewell! Slides here <http://philipewell.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SMTPlenary-Slides.pdf>... #smt42 #MusicTheorySoWhite I think Music Theory might be having a moment. #tippingpoint #smt42 #metoo #woke #abouttime #MusicTheorySoWhite #SRO The #SMT42 plenary session made it clear what is necessary to transform our field. Bravo and thank you to Philip Ewell, Yayoi Uno Everett, Joseph Straus, and Ellie M. Hisama -I attended a conference where Philip Ewell also presented, and his work on race and music was revelatory to me! I wish I'd been there. -I am grateful to learn about his research through these tweets, he appears to be doing incredible and vital work - I look forward to keeping track of him (and sending him an email, perhaps!) -Good plan--I'll do the same! It sounds like many people had similar revelatory moments at his plenary panel presentation. It's like he shook my brain and reset how I thought of casualty in racism, challenging my white-based assumptions. -Honestly very emotional and kind of speechless at the most important plenary/keynote in SMT history #smt42 -Yes. My 3 1/2-hour drive home from #SMT42 today was what I needed to reflect on it, particularly on Phil Ewell's staggering contribution Powerful institutions don't usually create space for open opposition, let alone centering it in the most public of forums. The plenary session was critical of music theory at it's core and the brilliant speakers didn't pull punches. I've proud to be a part of this. #SMT42 Slides from Philip Ewell's #smt42 talk on the whiteness of music theory are fire fire fire <http://philipewell.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SMT-Plenary-Slides.pdf> I feel invigorated and personally challenged by the important conversations that are taking place this year at SMT. The most important plenary session I've ever witnessed. I'll leave the conference and work toward being a better theorist, pedagogue, colleague, and human. #smt42 I am loving all the tweets about plenary at #SMT42. I'm not there, but I'll be presenting on whiteness in music therapy at #amta19 in 1.5 weeks and I will be referencing Dr. Ewell's talk! I am glad whiteness in the music academy is being addressed across multiple disciplines! It was a fascinating moment to be at the plenary talks of #SMT42 Especially realizing in some part of our world, these kinds of discussion are even illegal to bring out. I know we still need to pass our German exams, but

now I am excited to see what slight changes will happen. Flying home after an amazing 4 days at #smt42. There's so much to reflect on, especially that powerful plenary. I met so many great people, I can't wait for next year! 3 It was my first SMT, but many veterans told me that it felt like a watershed moment for the field. I hope so. I find myself, to my slight surprise, wanting to go back next year, so maybe I'll see you then #smt42 Whatever about amateurs or non amateurs - Philip Ewell's total dunk of Schenker and his racism was PRO. #smt42 Maybe I'll make some sort of "statement" about what happened on twitter over the #smt42 weekend (and is happening) but first I just want to say how much I enjoyed seeing people, new faces and familiar, this conference. I have so much new faith in the Society for Music Theory. FACEBOOK: [MUST WATCH VIDEO] The Society for Music Theory had their annual conference this weekend and the opening plenary included a paper by Hunter College's Philip Ewell that had theorists gushing on Twitter—and for good reason. Ewell's talk, entitled "Music Theory's White Racial Frame" explores many assumptions that are foundational in western classical music—I'll include the link to the slides in the comments. Kudos to Philip for this incredible work! just watched your lecture on the Whiteness of Music Theory. Thank you! I have taught theory for over 20 years without evidence of whitewashing of agendas and beliefs. Your lecture goes to the core of necessary change. Members of my undergraduate seminar watched this live on Saturday and we just (re-)watched it in class. So incredibly grateful for your work and excited to take up your suggestions. Thank you so very much! Thank you so much Philip. So powerful. So much food for thought. This is very helpful. So empowering—thank you, Phil! Thank you, Philip Ewell. I hope we are finally able to begin talking about this. And it goes well beyond music theory. And then today I watched Professor Philip Ewell's courageous address to SMT about the unexamined whiteness of music theory, which clings to old ideas about aesthetic autonomy to perpetuate racist thought (video below). I think it's time for some serious meditation on what it is we're teaching, how we remain relevant to the institutions that employ us, and how we're going to move forward from here... Thanks, Phil, for this powerful talk. I'm sorry I didn't get to congratulate you afterward! That was one of the most amazing and most needed presentations I have ever seen at SMT. It was an honor to be there and hear it live. Thank you so much! You're making a major impact on academia. Great talk. A call to action for your field. Thank you, Philip Ewell. I hope we are finally able to begin talking about this. And it goes well beyond music theory. Thanks for posting. I am so glad I got to watch it from Israel. Lots to think about, but mostly I was so very happy to see these issues brought up in the biggest spotlight SMT could give them, to what sounded like a packed room, with integrity, poise, polish, and hope. As I get ready to teach Schenker in the Spring and Beethoven next Fall, I have ideas to bring to those classes to enrich them. Thank you for putting it all out there! An excellent lecture. Phil! Powerful presentation. I love that you included your dad. It's interesting to look back on the lens our parents saw the world through and realise the flaws and inconsistencies of that viewpoint. Your quote from Laurie Shrage was very powerful. You have given me much to think on. Thank you for sharing this. So grateful for your clarity and labor. Will be boosting and folding into pedagogy. You owned it! And wow, standing ovation! Yep, never have I seen that at an academic presentation. 😊 Loved that you included your dad. Reflecting on the two conferences I just attended (AMS and SEM) and heartened by what I think might be the sub-disciplinary ground finally shifting below our feet thanks to the labor of so many scholars-senior, junior, grad students, those contingent, tenure-stream and tenured—who are tired of the old paradigms, of the peacocking and the lack of compassion. And then today I watched Professor Philip Ewell's courageous address to SMT about the unexamined whiteness of music theory, which clings to old

ideas about aesthetic autonomy to perpetuate racist thought (video below). I think it's time for some serious meditation on what it is we're teaching, how we remain relevant to the institutions that employ us, and how we're going to move forward from here... Thanks for the heads up, fascinating talk. If you have more written/video material on similar topics, please let me know. It was so well done. The picture and comments about your dad really helped put things in perspective. I cried spontaneously at the end of the session after all of you had spoken, because I felt so much freer, but also sad that I felt I couldn't say for around 35 years what you had said Congratulations Phil! What a great lecture and a reception to match: Standing ovation! That I have never witnessed. I was watching from Oslo. Negative Comment: YOUTUBE: If I understood the professor kind of suggested the idea of eliminating Schenker of any academic studies? What's next? We shouldn't play Wagner? What is the solution of the professor? You can recognize Schenker atrocious racial views and recognize than his contributions to music theory are too important to be ignored. Don't these people realize that if they are consequential with these ideas they would also need to stop using the English language to communicate (since it was the language of conquest), stop using the frame of an academic presentation (since that's rooted in western academic traditions) ? When does the puritanical revisionism end? Nobody wants to remember Schenker (Or Wagner, or Hume, or Voltaire) for his racism BUT for his important work that is influential. Positive rebuttals to the YouTube comment above: REPLY 5 No, he doesn't suggest to eliminate Schenker - it's not all or nothing, black or white (no pun intended). He suggests to a) make people aware of this other side of his thinking and its links to his theoretical constructs, and b) to reduce (but not remove) the time dedicated to Schenker in order to allow for the inclusion of theoretical concepts related and better suited to analyse non-white musics. REPLY "At a minimum, we must present Schenker's work to our students in full view of his racist beliefs and let them decide what to do with that information." To present Schenker without his racism is whitewashing. But for exactly the same reasons, presenting music theory without Schenker is also whitewashing. Schenker is not detachable from how our field operates any more so than his racism is detachable from how his theories operate. The solution is emphatically NOT to hide racism or racists, to pretend like our figures were not racist or that our racist figures did not exist. The solution is to confront how these racist figures and their racist ideas have and continue to influence the way we think to this day. I too have heard some people desire to get rid of Schenker from the academy because of his racism. But doing so is whitewashing the field, which ultimately is not the right solution. As for his specific solutions, you can hear 3 of them around 2:34:00. 1.) Reduce the 4 semester theory sequence to a 2-semester one to make room two semesters of non-western, non-white music theory core classes, 2.) Eliminate the antiquated requirement to learn German as a grad student (allow the standard two languages to be whatever makes the most sense for that student's research interests), and 3.) We need to present the racist ideas of music theorists alongside their theories (NOT eliminate those theories altogether). These are just a few starting examples. Practical steps along the right path, not full solutions. 6

Jan. 3, 2020:

got your message on my site

**Phil Ewell** <philipaewell@gmail.com>

Fri, Jan 3, 2020,  
4:34 PM

to rwason

Hey Bob, happy new year! I got your message on my site, but I'm responding from gmail, since it's a more active email for me.

Thanks for watching my SMT talk. The response--from hundreds of people, from all over the world, and nearly unanimously positive--has been overwhelming. There certainly is an audience for critical-race work in music theory. I'm aware of hostile reactions as well, though those have not come to me through any official channels. (I hear through word of mouth.)

I'm attaching PDFs of the talk and PowerPoint to this email. Note that there's a long article, also entitled "Music Theory's White Racial Frame," forthcoming in MTO, probably by summertime. It expands on many of the issues I brought up in the talk.

It sounds like retirement is treating you well, which is great. All the best from the big city  
Bob...and happy new year!

-Phil

Philip Ewell  
work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

August 10, 2020:

3 of 8  
questions for you, for a GC story

Harpaz, Beth <bharpaz@gc.cuny.edu>  
Mon, Aug 10, 2020, 10:25 AM  
to me

Dear Professor Ewell,

Thank you for your willingness to do a Q-and-A. You can respond in writing, or let me know a day and time you are free to chat. We can talk on the phone, and I can take notes from our conversation and craft a story from that. (My cell: 347-533-0986.) I will let you see a draft before we publish.

Your critique of your field is important to the GC. It's a conversation the GC wants to be part of. I brainstormed with colleagues and a handful of other academics (who don't know you) on what to ask you. Some of these questions will help outsiders understand the fundamentals of your field. Other questions are designed to elicit a clear pronouncement from you on some of the issues you raise, along with honest questions from others in higher ed struggling with similar issues.

I apologize in advance if this feels overwhelming! I promise we can get through this in 30 minutes on the phone. Feel free to skip or reframe any question that you don't care to answer.

What exactly is music theory, for folks who have no idea? Would it be fair to compare it with grammar as a playbook for understanding and analyzing the rules, conventions, and patterns of language? Is music theory simply a way to explain the structure and to some extent the 'best practices' or most effective/successful/common expressions of melody, harmony, and arrangements in any musical expression or composition?

Your plenary talk and journal article lay bare the racism and white supremacy of music theorist Heinrich Schenker, who lived in Austria in the late 19th and early 20th century. His views on race and white supremacy were not uncommon in that place and time, and with hindsight we see German nationalism/Aryanism as a precursor to Hitler and the Nazis. Similar views were held by many others of the era, from Heidegger to influential Americans like Margaret Sanger. That said:

--Why do Schenker's views on race matter in the field of music theory?

--Others have brought up and even published books in the past that documented Schenker's views. Why are your remarks NOW causing a controversy in your field?

--Is music theory behind the curve in examining the bias of its foundational thinkers and revamping its approach to teaching? Jefferson's behavior as a slave-owner and Heidegger's anti-Semitism have for years been explored by historians and philosophers, in the academy and outside of it. What took music theory so long? Or perhaps, rather than being behind the curve, do you see this moment of contemporary reckoning, part of the #whysowhite zeitgeist of so many other fields like STEM and publishing/media/journalism?

--Some of the coverage of your talk and paper have cast

this as a feud between you and diehard Schenkerians like Timothy Jackson and the Schenkerian journal. But it's much bigger than that, right? Can you characterize the way you want this to be seen? Is the uncritical adulation of Schenker simply the most obvious and biggest manifestation of music theory's white frame?

--Did you cross paths with Professor Jackson at CUNY?

--A philosophy professor told me, "We teach students about Heidegger's views on race but we don't repudiate him altogether because his work in philosophy is too important." Similarly, in linguistics, we can debate Chomsky's politics -- some will hate him, some will love him -- but you can't teach linguistics without Chomsky. You said in your journal article that you would continue to teach Schenker. Can you articulate a way forward for educators and students struggling to reconcile what's good about Schenker with what's bad about Schenker? How would YOU, how do YOU, teach Schenkerian theory? Or as a linguistics professor put it to me, "How does one preserve what's good in the life work of a person who's said/done despicable things?"

Your critique of Schenker is part of a larger call to dismantle the 'white frame' in your field that exalts Schenkerian theory, the great German composers, and Western tonal system above all else, while privileging whites as students, academics, experts, music theory society office-holders, journal editors etc. You caution against 'diversity' or tokenism as a remedy, saying that adding a few people of color to the field only reinforces the white frame.

--Even as you caution against 'solutions,' what is your advice to educators and students who agree with you? What are the baby steps and long-term goals? Where's the door here for white allies in your field and at CUNY? How do you begin to change the imbalance in academic disciplines like theory where 95% of the field is white?

--Is there an argument for "Musics of the World" as the introductory music course, to be followed up by "History of Western Tonal Music"?

--If Schenker had been born in Italy with the same gift for analysis, the same mind, and same opportunities, would he have built a structural analysis of music in which all the greats were opera composers? Do you believe that, say, ragas, or your specialty, the Russian composers, are as important as the canon held up by Schenker?

You are one of a very few Black professors in your field. What was your path? And given that your father was also in the field ... how do we create more pathways for students of color outside of that type of built-in advantage of someone in the family showing the way?

5. Given that so much of American pop music culture has long been dominated by Black composers, performers, musicians, and producers, why hasn't there been more of a spillover of African-Americans into your field?

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[Message clipped] [View entire message](#)

Phil Ewell <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>  
Mon, Aug 10, 2020, 12:31 PM  
to Beth

Dear Beth, these are indeed lofty questions. I think I'd prefer to answer them in a call, since writing out answers will take so long. If we do a zoom, I can put useful quotes from my many writings in the chat box, so that you might refer to them in your story. Is tomorrow, maybe 10:30a possible?

-Phil  
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Harpaz, Beth <[bharpaz@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:bharpaz@gc.cuny.edu)>  
Mon, Aug 10, 2020, 12:38 PM  
to me

Sure, that works. Are you able to create the Zoom meeting? Although I attend them, I do not have my own account. I can look into how to do it if it's not something you have readily set up. If you can do it, just send me an invite and I'll be there.  
Thank you!

---

Beth Harpaz, editor for the CUNY website SUM  
<https://sum.cuny.edu/>  
From: Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 12:31 PM  
To: Harpaz, Beth  
Subject: Re: questions for you, for a GC story

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Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
Mon, Aug 10, 2020, 1:07 PM  
to Beth

Great Beth. Let's meet in my whereby.com room. Click this link to access. See you tomorrow at 10:30a...best,

-Phil  
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work: 212-396-6253  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

Harpaz, Beth <bharpaz@gc.cuny.edu>  
Mon, Aug 10, 2020, 1:09 PM  
to me

OK! I assume I'll be able to tape the meeting so I can transcribe our conversations and have access to your written material after to use in crafting the story?

---

Beth Harpaz, editor for the CUNY website SUM  
<https://sum.cuny.edu/>  
From: Phil Ewell <philipaewell@gmail.com>  
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Dec. 10, 2023:

Cate Blanchett Plays Bach: A Breakdown

Personal

Search for all messages with label Personal

Remove label Personal from this conversation

**Feagin, Joe R** <feagin@tamu.edu>

Sun, Dec 10, 2023,  
3:00 PM

to me, Edna

Hi, my colleague on diversity books and articles also has a Phd in Piano/Music... She just sent me this,,,,, Joe

Phillip Ewell and the White Racial Frame come up in this video! [https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://youtu.be/g2Y0R1A68hI?si=wrgjNm4CEoJW6eMI\\_!!KwNVnqRv!GArzoJRRO0DrQmCB7LiHM4UZ0OF81QGeJUXVpYh6W\\_-Vhbx6pL3Ztxza1NddJZwoOG6nwsaRisgj2a0y\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://youtu.be/g2Y0R1A68hI?si=wrgjNm4CEoJW6eMI_!!KwNVnqRv!GArzoJRRO0DrQmCB7LiHM4UZ0OF81QGeJUXVpYh6W_-Vhbx6pL3Ztxza1NddJZwoOG6nwsaRisgj2a0y$) Sent from my iPad

Attachments area

[Preview YouTube video Cate Blanchett Plays Bach: A Breakdown](#)



[Cate Blanchett Plays Bach: A Breakdown](#)

**Phil Ewell** <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>

Sun, Dec 10, 2023,  
3:42 PM

to Joe, Edna

Joe, thanks for this. Interesting YouTube piece on Tar, which I have seen. Eric Wen, whom this YouTuber cites, contacted me after the NYT piece came out in Jan. 2021, and essentially apologized for taking part. We had a long zoom about it, probably Summer 2021. He said that his two adult daughters scolded him for saying, in the piece, that it doesn't matter that Schenker was such a horrible person--only his greatness matters. Leave it to the younger generation to save us older folks from ourselves.

It was nice that Eric, whom I know personally, reached out and that we had that zoom. I gave him a shout-out in the Acknowledgements to my book...pe

PS: Hi Edna.

Philip Ewell  
[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

**Feagin, Joe R** <[feagin@tamu.edu](mailto:feagin@tamu.edu)>

Sun, Dec 10, 2023,  
3:45 PM

to me

Hi, that is an interesting point, esp on the generational responses:) And you ain't old yet:) best,  
Joe

---

**From:** Phil Ewell <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 10, 2023 2:42 PM  
**To:** Feagin, Joe R <[feagin@tamu.edu](mailto:feagin@tamu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Edna Chun <[edna.chun@gmail.com](mailto:edna.chun@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Cate Blanchett Plays Bach: A Breakdown

**This Message Is From an External Sender**  
This message came from outside your organization.

**Edna Chun** <[edna.chun@gmail.com](mailto:edna.chun@gmail.com)>

Sun, Dec 10, 2023,  
3:46 PM

to me, Joe

Hi Phil,

I was surprised when it came up, as I enjoy the Tonebase videos and unexpectedly this reference appeared. The analysis of the movie Tar does provide a good backdrop for the discussion.

Best,

Edna

Sent from my iPad

On Dec 10, 2023, at 3:42 PM, Phil Ewell <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)> wrote:

Aug. 7, 2020:

**Phil Ewell** <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>

Fri, Aug 7, 2020,  
1:31 PM

to karen.painter

Dear Karen:

Thanks for your email, which you sent to my website address. (Still having trouble responding from there, hence my gmail response here.) Yes, I look forward to my UMinn talk in January...

And thanks for the words of encouragement and support. 98% of the comments on my work has been positive--I can handle the right-wingers who are coming out of the woodwork to disparage it. Just proves the work is useful and needed.

Anyway, all best to you and yours,

-Phil

Philip Ewell

work: 212-396-6253

[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

**Karen Painter** <[karen.painter@aya.yale.edu](mailto:karen.painter@aya.yale.edu)>

Fri, Jan 22, 2021,  
8:06 PM

to me

Hi Phil,

I wanted to thank you for your inspirational talk and discussion today. It meant a lot to me, personally, as I've been fighting a battle here for women and Blacks (only two Blacks, neither African-American, on our tenured/tenure-track faculty) which hasn't worked, so Sunday I signed the retention agreement with two lawyers. Some of it has the makings of a novel, with sexual harassment, but also boilerplate discrimination, retaliation, and salary equity. The state filed a complaint on my behalf a year ago (so they're investigating the Minneapolis Police department and the University side by side)—I know the problems will be fixed one way or another. I wanted to share this because you mentioned a lawsuit re: Texas, so I'd like to confirm that you have good representation, hopefully pro bono. Your work is too important to be distracted by

legal problems, whatever their nature. (I wouldn't have wanted to mention this before your lecture here, but two of the most reprehensible are white theory guys, one a Schenkerian who fits the bill exactly, in terms of the broader points you make.)

Now onto my next email . . . to propose to colleagues and our student rep that we eliminate the entrance exams.

Thank you as well for taking the interview with my new doctoral student, who is also at Minnesota Public Radio. It was a lovely piece, which I sent around to top administrators here.

Best, Karen

P.S. I don't know whether you saw us drop off toward the end: my son needed a ride to ski team at 5:57 suddenly, so I missed the final cadence.

--

Karen Painter

[karen.painter@aya.yale.edu](mailto:karen.painter@aya.yale.edu)

**Phil Ewell** <[philipaewell@gmail.com](mailto:philipaewell@gmail.com)>

Sat, Jan 23, 2021,  
11:58 AM

to Karen

Karen, thanks so much for this note. I wish I could say I'm surprised by some of the treatment you and your BIPOC/female colleagues are facing, but you know I'm not. You're in my thoughts...

No, I don't have representation--thanks for asking--but so far I've not been sued. I'm named many times in [the complaint filed in Texas](#), but, as far as I know, Timothy Jackson is suing the Board of Regents of UNT, 17 colleagues who signed a letter, and Rachel Gain, a doctoral student in their program. I'll be honest, I'm not reading these things until I absolutely have to. If someone, somewhere, sues me, for whatever reason, then I'll move on the legal front. I have sent the link to this complaint to my chair, and she's forwarded it to Hunter's legal department. I know your husband, Richard, has supported me on Twitter, and I'm super grateful for his support. If you have any thoughts on all this I'd be happy to hear them.

My best to you and Richard,

-Phil

Philip Ewell (he/him)

work: 212-396-6253

[www.philipewell.com](http://www.philipewell.com)

@philewell

From [contact@philipewell.com](mailto:contact@philipewell.com) (this email was discontinued Nov. 23, 2020—screenshots here since cutting and pasting didn't capture the header information):



Dear Michael:

I respectfully decline your request for an interview.

Best regards,

-Phil

Philip Ewell  
[contact@philipewell.com](mailto:contact@philipewell.com)  
Work: +1.212.396.6253

On Sep 25, 2020, at 1:45 PM, Michael Powell <[powellm@nytimes.com](mailto:powellm@nytimes.com)> wrote:

Dear Professor Ewell

I'm a reporter on the national staff of The New York Times and I write on free speech and identity culture and politics and I'd very much like to talk with you. I'm reporting out a story on your speech on classical music theory and white supremacy, and the Journal of Schenkarian studies and the current battle over whether Professor Timothy Jackson should face any consequences for his essay.

To that end, I've read your essay, and near all the essays in that issue of the Journal. I've so far talked at length with Professor Jackson and with Professor Edward Klorman of McGill University, who signed the open letter.

If you have some time, I'd much like to talk with you. I'm free all weekend and next week here and there. If you're game, please let me know some times that work for you.

Thanks very much

Michael Powell





Benjamin Westney

📁 Personal August 13, 2020 at 12:55PM

A note of support and an appeal

To: Philip Ewell

Dear Prof. Ewell,

I'm writing to you today to express my support for your efforts to shine a light on the racial disparities at all levels in classical music study and practice, and to make an important appeal in that regard.

To give you a brief background as to why this issue is important to me, I was a professional cellist for many years (BA in Music, MM Cello Performance, both from UT Austin), including several roles as a tenured orchestral musician (including Principal Cello) and as Lecturer in Cello at Texas State University and San Antonio College, where the majority of my students and recruiting targets were from racial minority communities. After an MBA and a change to a career in finance, I joined the Board of Directors for Youth Orchestras of San Antonio, one of the most innovative and diverse organizations of its kind, and have devoted countless volunteer hours and thousands of personal dollars toward improving opportunities and outcomes for musicians of color from the ground up. My term was limited to six years, but my service recently concluded as Board Chair. I believe in the life-changing power of music education not only for its inherent benefits to mental and social development, but as a means to success through cultivation of talent and personal discipline. On a personal level I have no problem admitting that I benefited from both race and class privilege in my upbringing, education and career, and that in addition to listening to black voices and fostering better opportunities for people of color we must also remake the fundamental structures of our society to remove the systemic biases that perpetuate racial oppression.

Your plenary message and associated writings illuminated a racial disparity that persists to this day despite efforts to correct it. My own training never required the study of Schenker's methods or life, however much of what you have written on this subject rings quite true in my experience (my running joke in grad school was that Beethoven was a "One Trick Pony" - for his overreliance on the Neapolitan 6th chord). The standard curriculum for university music students must become less white and male. And the orchestral world is long overdue for a reckoning around diversity as well, as evidenced by Tony Tommasini's recent eye-opening column on blind auditions.

Without belaboring the details, what has happened following your plenary and the associated controversy surrounding the publication of the JSS has brought national attention to this issue, though I'm afraid not for the reasons it should have. Unfortunately the vital message you introduced into the discourse has been sidelined by accusations of a "cancel mob," and the negative attention that has generated.

Just as you maintain it is not necessary to "cancel" Schenker in order to teach music theory or achieve racial progress in classical music education, it should not be necessary to do so to Timothy Jackson. His reaction, though offensive, was made from a place of deep personal hurt ("triggering," if you will), because he has had his entire life's work called into question. But if the fight for racial equity and justice cannot be constructive and empathetic rather than destructive and punitive, it cannot win.

When our actions feed right into the disturbing narratives proffered by Donald Trump, who said, "One of their political weapons is "Cancel Culture" — driving people from their jobs, shaming dissenters, and demanding total submission from anyone who disagrees," we should examine if we are helping our cause or hurting it, regardless of its righteousness. Despite how frightening we may find him and his followers, they do exist and they believe what he tells them. In this case he is the proverbial stopped clock.

You are not responsible for the UNT graduate students' demand letter, or the SMT open letter that received such a large number of signatories. If only those letters did not call for Dr. Jackson's removal from his position, we would not be in this position. Your explicit support for those letters means you tacitly approve of the "canceling" of Dr. Jackson, an action seemingly fueled less by racial justice than personal vindictiveness for the way the Journal was published and its contents. This makes you no better than he in this matter, except you benefit from a massive wave of anti-racist hammers in search of a nail. And despite your own privileges of tenure and access to all the same scholarly and popular outlets as him, a much larger audience, and most importantly, the comfort of knowing your work is important and justified, you still acquiesce to the darkest anti-racist impulses of your allies in higher education, many of whom possess the institutional station to affect these changes without the ugliness of "cleaning house."

My appeal is for you to publicly renounce the calls for the ruination of Dr. Timothy Jackson's career as demanded in the UNT graduate student and SMT open letters, and to regain the core message of your plenary and writings on racism in music theory. The progress we seek in racial equality in music must be constructive and inclusive, and allow for the inevitable "white fragility" to express itself before joining the discussion. To view this as a zero-sum game with winners and losers, or worse, an Orwellian campaign to root out and punish wrongthink is to play right into the political forces which seek to minimize the effects of racism today and mischaracterize its activists as radicals intent on overthrowing America.

Your message is too important to allow this distraction to continue. Despite how valorous it may seem in the cause of social justice, the accusation that this is a cancel mob brings with it an unfortunate element of truth. If "silence is violence" with regard to anti-racism, *es muß sein* for cancel culture. You have the power to make things right. You must call them off.

Thank you for taking time to read this message and please feel welcome to contact me if you would like to discuss it further.

Best regards,

Ben Westney  
San Antonio, TX



Rev'd Cody Coyne

Thank you - White Racial Frame

To: Philip Ewell

Personal August 7, 2020 at 12:48 PM

Dear Prof. Ewell,

I wanted to write and thank you for your blog posts on the "White Racial Frame" within music theory. I studied music as an undergrad (Eastman, BMus Euphonium '06), and although I no longer work in music, my Facebook wall is replete with musicians. It is through that medium that I first encountered your writing.

I just felt moved to write to you because your writing has helped me understand and direct my own anti-racist work. I am a minister in a white-majority denomination in Britain, which has begun to explore its racial biases and problems inherent to its history. Trying to see the "water" of Whiteness (I tick just about every box of privilege) felt like a near-impossible task. But your description and analysis of your field has helped me feel a stronger conviction in exploring my own.

I hope things will be well for you, and am sorry for the grief caused by the recent JSS controversy. The more I reflect on responses to accusations of racism, I am frustrated to see that, between expansion and contraction, some people choose the latter. I hope your work will lead to the expansion of music theory techniques and diverse methodologies, which is of course beneficial to all.

With thanks,

Cody Coyne



Harpaz, Beth

Personal

August 7, 2020 at 10:39 AM

story for CUNY websites about your article in Music Theory Online

To: Philip Ewell

(cc'ing what I sent to your Hunter email)

Dear Professor Ewell:

I'm the editor of a CUNY website called [SUM](#). We write summaries of published CUNY research.

I've been following the controversy surrounding your call to action in the field of music theory.

I've read your article, listened to your video, and read the various interviews and coverage related to it. I attach a draft of a story/summary of your article in *Music Theory Online* that I plan to publish on the SUM site soon. I realize you are on leave and I'm sure you are overwhelmed with all kinds of emails right now, but if you have a chance to look at it, I'd be grateful. I don't want to misstate your views or get the facts wrong. Please bear in mind that I can't write more than 500 words, and our website is geared to a general audience that knows nothing about music theory, so things have to be explained simply. But I'm open to your edits, tweaks, feedback etc.

Second request: Would you be willing to do a Q-and-A with me for a longer story for [The Graduate Center](#) website? The CUNY community needs to know more about your concerns in your field and your thoughts on moving forward. Many disciplines are undergoing this type of reckoning right now, and robust conversation on the "white frame" of academia is necessary. In the GC story, I would summarize your research and I would summarize the controversy, such that it is (seems like it's just Professor Jackson against the world at this point, and I see that he is a GC alum -- did your paths cross here other than both studying with Schachter?). But the GC article would be mostly about your work at CUNY, your advice or thoughts for students and faculty in your field in terms of how to dismantle the 'white frame' and move forward, and maybe specifically I would ask you to talk about music theory and how we can approach it if we reduce Schenker to just one way in to studying and mastering music theory.

If you're up for a Q-and-A (fingers crossed that you say yes!), I can email you questions and you can email me answers, or we can talk on the phone. My schedule is wide open! At your convenience.

Thank you for your time!

Beth Harpaz, editor for the CUNY website SUM

<https://sum.cuny.edu/>



music race  
SUM.docx





Colleen Flaherty

Personal August 6, 2020 at 2:04 PM

media request for today-- on deadline

To: Philip Ewell, Philip Ewell

Hi Prof. Ewell,

I hope you're doing alright.

Have you been following the controversy over the UNT journal and it's response to your comments on Schenker? I'm writing a story about it.

I learned of the case through the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, which says that one of the editors of the Schenker journal may be fired and the publication is being investigated. That's after graduate students complained about the journal's response to your comments.

In any case, would you be willing to comment on this? It's really important to highlight how great artists were in many cases bad people. But I guess that ruffled some academic feathers which in turn hurt students who viewed the discussion as a kind of defense of Schenker...

Thanks for any/all help you might be able to provide today, as I'm on deadline,

Colleen Flaherty  
Faculty Correspondent  
[InsideHigherEd.com](http://InsideHigherEd.com)  
203.830.9538 (cell)



Philip Ewell

📁 Personal July 14, 2020 at 6:35 PM

Re: Cello teaching repertoire

To: Daniel Ketter

Dan, thanks for this note, thanks for the kind words about my recent critical-race work, and thanks for the links below. With respect to your two questions below, I can't be too helpful, but I can mention a few things. I gave a concert several years ago that featured to solo cello works by black American composers: "Eclatette," by Arthur Cunningham, and "Blues Impromptu for Solo Cello," by Gary Powell Nash. Cunningham has died, but I imagine Nash is still alive, and not that old. He was at the conference session where I played these two pieces at the Amer. Musicological Society many years ago. That session was put together by my friend and colleague Horace Maxile, who's now a music theory professor at Baylor U. He used to work at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago. So you may want to reach out to Horace for more info on black composers, generally (he suggested the two pieces above).

Then there's Rob Deemer's Institute for Composer Diversity, which features POC composers generally. He'd be another good resource for POC composers. But in terms of, specifically, cello pieces, and cello method books, I'm a bit at a loss. There are many interesting composers out there, but I can't think of one in particular off the bat that I'd recommend.

But I hope this helps, as a beginning at least...let me know if there's anything else I can help with.

Best,

-Phil

Philip Ewell

[contact@philipewell.com](mailto:contact@philipewell.com)

Work: +1.212.396.6253

On Jul 12, 2020, at 12:05 PM, Daniel Ketter <[danielmketter@gmail.com](mailto:danielmketter@gmail.com)> wrote:

Philip,

First, while we haven't met I want to thank you for what you have done to challenge our music theory community and me personally to re-examine our teaching and research. Your SMT plenary talk has been on my mind nearly daily since November, especially since I just completed my PhD expanding speculative theories of Schenker. Since then I've been working to re-imagine personal ways to make my theoretical work, teaching, and music making anti-racist.



For the last two years I have been teaching cello and music theory at Missouri State in Springfield, MO. Most of my cello students are music education majors, and have a playing level that ranges from intermediate to advanced. Some are learning thumb position for the first time, while others are quite talented, better than I was at that age.

I've been trying to assign my students works to study from people of broader backgrounds, and have run into what feels like a massive problem: that there appears to be little to no significant contemporary, pedagogically-minded music for cello, and even less by people identifying as Black, people of color, women, or from other musical traditions. The problem is compounded because the existing repertoire is well-known, effective, organized, and generally free in public domain. This is a significant problem for me, because the pieces I teach to my students, and the example I set for them, will be the same attitude they take when they teach the next generation. One distinction I'm making is that most contemporary music written for cello challenges the student mostly in the art of interpretation, or poses unique technical problems, rather than teaching pieces along the line of Goltermann, Klengel, Popper, Grutzmacher, classic etudes, or Suzuki books 6 and up. I'm really looking for teaching pieces that focus on general issues of string playing in a variety of styles, like lyrical bowing, shifting and positions, double stops, string crossing patterns, perpetual motion, etc. I would also be interested in pieces that explore contemporary or alternative techniques, along the lines of Mike Block's new Contemporary Cello Etudes book. I have a feeling that these kinds of pieces need to be written by composers with lots of string experience, string players, or even better, cellists, as they have been historically.

There are many things I've become aware of that are interesting, but there should be more. Here are two that might interest you:

A collection of intermediate to advanced etudes in a Latin musical style by Samuel Máynez Vidal:

[http://www.violoncello.pro/index\\_eng.html](http://www.violoncello.pro/index_eng.html)

Music by Black Composers, creating a series of pieces for violin from beginner upward, will include more volumes and a cello volume in future stages: <https://www.musicbyblackcomposers.org/>

I'm asking for your advice on two fronts.

First, if you know of any pieces or resources that you think are especially compelling, either contemporary music or music that is less well known generally, I would be very grateful for your suggestions. I've been compiling a list of pieces to buy and get to know, but there is so much out there and it is not collected in ways that are easy to access.

Second, I'm at a point in my personal journey where I think it is time to commission teaching pieces or etudes, probably in a consortium structure. I could picture collections of concert pieces aimed to fit into ASTA grade categories, or potentially commissioning "doubles" for classic etudes or pieces that expand on their challenges. I would be interested if you have suggestions for people who might be good to write music, to advise on this kind of project, or general thoughts or advice. If you would be interested to write music or advise, that would be great as well. I am ready to commit time and money to a commissioning project, but would want it to be organized and have input from seasoned teachers and different perspectives. If you have any interest in this, I'd love to learn more, or if you know anyone I should talk to, your suggestions would be much appreciated.

Thanks again for your thoughtful, challenging work, and for your time.



Philip Ewell

November 19, 2019 at 1:08 PM

Re: A massive thank you

To: Imogen Lawlor

Dear Imogen:

Thanks so much for this note. The response to my talk has been overwhelming. I'm most heartened by the women and people of color (and women of color like you) who have responded so positively.

I look forward to continuing this important work, so stay tuned for more announcements...best regards,

-Phil

Philip Ewell

[contact@philipewell.com](mailto:contact@philipewell.com)

Work: +1.212.396.6253

[See More](#) from Imogen Lawlor



Imogen Lawlor

November 19, 2019 at 5:13 AM

A massive thank you

To: Philip Ewell

Dear Philip,

I just wanted to share my appreciation for your amazing talk at the Society of Music Theory Conference about a week ago. I was utterly moved by the way you spoke so frankly about Schenker's racism. Having attended Oxford (and being a woman of colour in that space), it was so refreshing to see an academic speak so frankly about race and music, as it often feels such a taboo in academia even in 2019.

Keep doing what you're doing, it is immensely appreciated.

Best wishes

Imogen



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Philip Ewell

Re: [your subject]

To: Lucinda Breeding

📁 Sent-Copy July 29, 2020 at 5:40 PM

Yes, sure Lucinda. Let me know how to proceed...best,

-PE

Philip Ewell  
[contact@philipewell.com](mailto:contact@philipewell.com)  
Work: +1.212.396.6253

On Jul 29, 2020, at 5:13 PM, Lucinda Breeding <[example@philipewell.com](mailto:example@philipewell.com)> wrote:

From: Lucinda Breeding <[cbreeding@dentonrc.com](mailto:cbreeding@dentonrc.com)>  
Subject: The Journal of Schenkerian Studies

Message Body:  
Dr. Ewell,

I'm pursuing a story about the recent edition of the Journal of Schenkerian Studies and the majority of essays rebutting your talk during the 2019 Society for Music Theory plenary.

I work for the Denton Record-Chronicle in Denton, where the University of North Texas is located.

Would you be interested in talking about your talk, the rebuttals in the journal and your response to the publication?

--

This mail is sent via contact form on Philip Ewell <http://philipewell.com/currentevents>

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Philip Ewell

Re: [your subject]

To: Joseph Walden

📁 Sent-Copy July 29, 2020 at 2:51PM

Dear Joey, thanks for this note of support. Yes, it hasn't been easy, but the support I'm receiving, from all over the world, has been overwhelming...best,

-Phil

Philip Ewell  
[contact@philipewell.com](mailto:contact@philipewell.com)  
Work: +1.212.396.6253

On Jul 26, 2020, at 11:30 PM, Joseph Walden <[example@philipewell.com](mailto:example@philipewell.com)> wrote:

From: Joseph Walden <[joeywalden87@gmail.com](mailto:joeywalden87@gmail.com)>  
Subject: You are amazing! Keep it up!

Message Body:  
Hello Dr. Ewell,

I just started reading some of the disgusting responses from theorists in the Journal of Schenkerian Studies. I wanted to let you know that you are doing AMAZING work! It is needed and needs to be said. Please, do not stop and keep going! I only a recent graduate in music theory and composition, and if I become even half the person you are, then I would be doing great. I wish you well. I know there is probably not much I can do, but if there is anything I could do to help, let me know. Keep being brave, keep speaking truth, keep being strong!

Be well,  
Joseph "Joey" Walden

--

This mail is sent via contact form on Philip Ewell <http://philipewell.com/currentevents>



Philip Ewell  
Thanks for your note  
To: eli@jazzpower.org

Sent-Copy June 6, 2020 at 11:59 PM

Eli:

Thanks for your note below, and thanks for watching my talk. Yes, my blog ([musictheoryswhiteracialframe.com](http://musictheoryswhiteracialframe.com)) will also be of interest to you. Let me know what you think. Otherwise, watch my site for upcoming talks...my best,

-Phil

Message Body:  
Hello Dr. Ewell,

I was floored to come across your work this evening and watched your talk at the SMT Plenary.

I am a jazz musician/educator with 30 years experience. After 20 years teaching at Jazz at Lincoln Center including 10 years as founding director of Middle School Jazz Academy, I have just completed my 1st year of a DMA in Jazz Piano at Stony Brook University. Prior to coming to Stony Brook my teaching centered around the African American Cultural foundations of jazz and American Music. I published a book called So You Want to Sing Blues, a collaboration between Rowman and Littlefield and The National Association of Teachers of Singing.

All this to say, I struggled mightily this past semester as a student in the course, Post Tonal Analysis Of Music of the 20th and 21st Century. I found the music exhilarating though entirely new to me; Schoenberg "atonal period," Webern, Varese. The analysis part was nearly impossible in large part because my associations with African American music I know was so strong and yet so dismissed in the class, as if it did not exist. This was especially apparent when we covered John Cage in 1949. I couldn't help but think while Cage was putting screws on the piano strings to play a song with 2 chords, Charlie Parker, Fats Navarro, Miles Davis, Gil Evans, Mary Lou Williams, and many more were playing circles around him up the street. How could this not even be mentioned?

Well, you explained it. The White Racial Frame.

All I can say right now is thank you. I will read all your blogs and hope to hear you present sometime soon. I am eager to learn more about your research and analysis using non-white methodologies. I

Please let me know when you are giving a public presentation.

Thank you again,

Eli

--

This mail is sent via contact form on Philip Ewell <http://philipewell.com/currentevents>

Philip Ewell  
[contact@philipewell.com](mailto:contact@philipewell.com)  
Work: +1.212.396.6253

### From Facebook Messenger:

Trevor Weston  
Trevor Weston  
You're friends on Facebook  
Lives in Brooklyn, New York  
Composition Faculty at The Juilliard School Pre-College, Faculty, Composition and Music Theory at The Juilliard School's Music Advancement Program and Professor of Music, Chair, Music Department at Drew University  
11/11/19, 7:53 AM  
Trevor  
Trevor Weston

I just watched your lecture on the Whiteness of Music Theory. Thank you! I have taught theory for over 20 years without evidence of whitewashing of agendas and beliefs. Your lecture goes to the core of necessary change.

11/11/19, 2:52 PM

You sent

Thanks Trevor! The reception has been overwhelming, to be honest.

11/12/19, 11:27 AM

Trevor

Trevor Weston

Question: Do you think Schenker avoids the significance of rhythmic complexity because rhythmic complexity was considered “non white” while harmonic and melodic complexity is Western European?

11/12/19, 2:17 PM

You sent

To an extent Trevor, yes, I do. The hyper focus of functional tonality has been a major part of music theory's white frame, and rhythm necessarily takes a back seat to that tonality. Of course, there are many white framed scholarly works on rhythm, so wouldn't go so far as to say that rhythmic complexity is considered "nonwhite." But there is something to what you say...best

Lissa Reed

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Salt Lake City, Utah

Chief of Staff at Kindly MD

You are now connected on Messenger

12/1/19, 7:00 PM

You sent

Hi Lissa! Can I have an email for you? Clifton sent the link of your response to Joe's Open Letter, and I had some ideas/thoughts I wanted to share. Maybe we can get a phone call in sometime this week? Lemme know, best, Phil

12/1/19, 7:56 PM

Lissa

Lissa Reed

Hi Phil- certainly! I'd be happy to chat on the phone. I would be available after 4pm on Monday and Tuesday, or between 12 and 4 on Wednesday.

Lissa

Lissa Reed

areed17@u.rochester.edu

12/1/19, 8:21 PM

You sent

Great Lissa! I'll follow up tomorrow with an email. Pencil in Tuesday, 4:30-ish for a call.

Melonie Bryant

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Greeley, Colorado

Digital Media Coordinator at Access Intelligence

4/30/20, 7:55 PM

Melonie

Melonie Bryant

Hi Dr. Ewell! My name is Melonie Bryant and I am a graduating master of music student at the University of Northern Colorado. Thanks for the add! I just encountered some of your work today, specifically, your presentation on Music Theory's White Racial Frame. As a graduating master of music history student, I drew a lot of parallels between the white framework of music theory and musicology from your presentation. I appreciate your work and its revelency. I hope to shed similar light to the field of musicology one day as well. All the best! -Melonie

You sent

Thanks for this Melonie. If you haven't, check out my blog at <https://musictheoryswhiteracialframe.wordpress.com/>. I have two more posts, one tomorrow and the last a week from tomorrow. Read blog from the bottom up. Good luck with everything. If I can help with anything, just ask...say hi to my old friend Jonathan Bellman! -Phil

Melonie

Melonie Bryant

Will do! I'll be sure to check it out.

Sara Everson

You're friends on Facebook

Worked at University of Toronto Faculty of Music

Studied at Florida State University

5/18/20, 3:28 PM

Sara

Sara Everson

Hi Dr. Ewell, I hope this note finds you well. I am a very recent grad of FSU's program, and I am wondering if it would be alright if I asked you a few questions about your work on music theory's white racial frame. Specifically, I am interested in the possibilities of having some opportunities for open peer review in the discipline (following in the footsteps of some "newer" disciplines, such as digital humanities), and how that might align with your work on issues of diversity and representation. If you're willing to share a few thoughts, would it be best if I used your faculty email? If not, I wish you and your family a wonderful summer! - Sara

5/18/20, 4:23 PM

You sent

Of course Sara, I'd be happy to answer some questions. Yes, please use my faculty email. Also, I'm happy to talk on the phone or zoom if you prefer...best,

You sent

Phil

Paul Rudy

You're friends on Facebook

Composer, Curators' Distinguished Professor at UMKC Conservatory, Composer, Curators' Distinguished Professor, Coordinator of Composition at UMKC and Ordained Priest at Church of the Latter-day Dude

Studied at The University of Texas at Austin

6/6/20, 1:04 PM

Paul

Paul Rudy

Phil, I saw your SMT talk on Music Theory's White Racial Frame and am so grateful for your courage to go down this rabbit hole. I have been dismayed by "classical" music's whiteness since I spent 9 summers at the Aspen Music Festival and encountered only a few handfuls of PoC in 10's of thousands of audience members and performers. Your work is so important, and has inspired me to begin talking with all my students at UMKC about it this Fall. Thank you. Deep bow of respect and gratitude.

6/6/20, 5:26 PM

You sent

Thanks so much for this Paul! Let me know how the discussions go in the fall. Phil

Leigh VanHandel

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Vancouver, British Columbia

Associate Professor at University of British Columbia

6/10/20, 3:15 PM

Leigh

Leigh VanHandel

The Pedagogy Interest Group has started a Slack channel to discuss issues of inclusivity and to find a way to provide access to pieces by composers of color to make it easier to include those pieces in the curriculum. Your voice would be welcome if you're interested:

Composers of Color workspace:

[https://join.slack.com/t/composersofcolor/shared\\_invite/zt-ezpy95wi-gNN9sh3UNqYUnJ7t~mzmA](https://join.slack.com/t/composersofcolor/shared_invite/zt-ezpy95wi-gNN9sh3UNqYUnJ7t~mzmA)

[https://join.slack.com/t/composersofcolor/shared\\_invite/zt-ezpy95wi-gNN9sh3UNqYUnJ7t~mzmA](https://join.slack.com/t/composersofcolor/shared_invite/zt-ezpy95wi-gNN9sh3UNqYUnJ7t~mzmA)

6/10/20, 11:07 PM

Katya Ermolaeva

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Princeton, New Jersey

Ph.D. Candidate in Musicology at Princeton University and Director of Music at Mother of God

Joy of All Who Sorrow Orthodox Church

You are now connected on Messenger

6/14/20, 8:18 PM

Katya

Katya Ermolaeva

Icon for this message's header

My People Tell Stories, LLC

An Open Letter on Racism in Music Studies, Especially Ethnomusicology and Music Education.

In 2014, frustrated with the lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of music, I left my position as an Assistant Professor of Music History and Cultures at Syracuse University to start My People Tell Stories. Six years later, problems continue to plague the field. In this open letter I provide a snapshot of my story and candid thoughts about racism in music studies.

<https://www.mypeopletellstories.com/blog/open-letter>

Facebook

Katya

Katya Ermolaeva

Hi Phil, great to talk tonight! Thank you! I thought you should read this blog post by Danielle Brown—an ethnomusicologist who left ethnomusicology/academia because of the white racial frame of ethnomusicology. If you don't know her you should! She lives in Brooklyn. I wish I could introduce you but I don't know her personally.

6/14/20, 10:25 PM

You sent

Katya, ditto, great to talk. Already read Danielle's piece. Sent her a follow up email. I've been following the aftermath on email. I'm considering writing something to SMT. But for now I wait.

Best, Phil

6/16/20, 1:48 PM

Katya

Katya Ermolaeva

Excellent! Let me know what happens if you write to SMT!

David Forrest

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Lubbock, Texas

Associate Professor at Texas Tech University

6/18/20, 4:37 PM

David

David Forrest

Dear Dr. Ewell, I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate your work on Music Theory's White-Male Frame. I was moved by your talk at SMT in November and I have been inspired by your blog (which I just finished). It took me a while to finish the blog because virtually every paragraph would send me to the computer to rework something I was preparing. Your arguments have articulated some nagging concerns I've had for a while as well as opened my eyes to issues I had never considered. I am re-examining everything I do in the profession: I am preparing presentations on your work for our graduate students, drawing up new plans for undergraduate curriculum, re-examining my current and past research projects, and, as President-elect of Texas SMT, I am beginning a process of examining that organization's practices to see how we can do better moving forward. Thank you for your leadership in this area. I look forward to learning more!

You sent

David, thanks so much for these heartfelt words. Yes, rethinking what we do. As I began work on these ideas over two years ago now I began swallowing that bitter pill: "what have I been doing all these years?" Not so much that the music itself isn't beautiful, meaningful, and inspiring, but how we've sanitized our interpretations of this music and how we all, myself included (ugh!) have been so exclusionary in our understanding not just of classical music, but simply music writ large. I'll have a long article, also called Music Theory's White Racial Frame, coming out in MTO any day now, so look for that, and I'll continue to work on these ideas for the 2020-2021

year as part of an ACLS grant. So onward. Thanks again for this note, and for your work in rethinking these difficult issues. Phil

Olga Panteleeva

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Utrecht

Former Visiting Scholar at University of Michigan

6/24/20, 10:32 AM

Olga

Phil, you definitely caused some above-average butthurt by writing your White Racial Frame series

Attachment Unavailable

This attachment may have been removed or the person who shared it may not have permission to share it with you.

Olga

Olga Panteleeva

I hope you are holding up ok and sorry for bringing this to your attention if you don't have the capacity for this right now

Olga

Olga Panteleeva

Oops, that link did not include the original post: Phil, you definitely caused some above-average butthurt by writing this post:

[https://www.facebook.com/mfrolovawalker/posts/10160043455649358?\\_\\_xts\\_\\_\[0\]=68.ARBmBFnjU7esP9s7eWO-1uM7t-IzznPCfNmkauNvd-s9iB\\_3QCizFHZ9kCd\\_JTpNN-pIn4PdHg2gNmct\\_zb2lRpYkI4N4W6NsI9Erj612ddlvsVvfG7Ge2MN9iCl-\\_sdJ4l\\_i0E2YV\\_D-Yl2a\\_NdodiZa0e9\\_PuBcoEJ8nrUE9nF6yK7xlu49RFbRGzVl2yO3tvftxgPOPI573sVb8JdHNNZ-dD2EHtfeSnsdlTG\\_EVaMSpcE\\_RRZEGkgS7m5e1Vo7Y\\_zcrFXxq9cx13-wGJw\\_H\\_LLgcFO3Dz9KoV-oKljNerYUyYHi1sNw-muS7hz59ckFGp9iOMRJMY7HdA&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=](https://www.facebook.com/mfrolovawalker/posts/10160043455649358?__xts__[0]=68.ARBmBFnjU7esP9s7eWO-1uM7t-IzznPCfNmkauNvd-s9iB_3QCizFHZ9kCd_JTpNN-pIn4PdHg2gNmct_zb2lRpYkI4N4W6NsI9Erj612ddlvsVvfG7Ge2MN9iCl-_sdJ4l_i0E2YV_D-Yl2a_NdodiZa0e9_PuBcoEJ8nrUE9nF6yK7xlu49RFbRGzVl2yO3tvftxgPOPI573sVb8JdHNNZ-dD2EHtfeSnsdlTG_EVaMSpcE_RRZEGkgS7m5e1Vo7Y_zcrFXxq9cx13-wGJw_H_LLgcFO3Dz9KoV-oKljNerYUyYHi1sNw-muS7hz59ckFGp9iOMRJMY7HdA&__tn__=)

You sent

Thanks Olga. I had a DM with Marina a few weeks back. She's cool with my work. But old school (and Russian/Soviet) in many ways obviously.

Olga

Thank you for expressing so graciously what I would call "she's deeply horrible when it comes to any issues of equity"

Olga

Olga Panteleeva

I've given up talking to her

You sent

Of course, but you have to think about where she's coming from, and her situation. Senior scholars like her are deeply invested in the status quo--they have to be shaken in their boots. I'm having a bit of a row with Bob Hatten now, and his inability to see nonwhiteness...

Olga

Olga Panteleeva

I'm so sorry, Phil, that you have to expend your labor on this. Please let me know how I could show up better



Olga

Olga Panteleeva

I tried to understand where she was coming from for about five years (before you and I were friends on facebook). During that time she was a major and most incorrigible troll on my FB page, willfully misunderstanding anything I said just to make me waste energy trying to persuade her when she did not have the slightest intention to listen. She might not be so horrible to those she considers equal but she was to me, who was fresh out of grad school back then.

6/24/20, 3:40 PM

You sent

Sorry to hear Olga. Simply cutting off the conversation is a great option I've always found. The following quote is from the Preface of Reni Eddo-Lodge's *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race*. You and Marina are both white, but it still applies to your case in that, ultimately, it's about power: "So I'm no longer talking to white people about race. I don't have a huge amount of power to change the way the world works, but I can set boundaries. I can halt the entitlement they feel towards me and I'll start that by stopping the conversation. The balance is too far swung in their favour. Their intent is often not to listen or learn, but to exert their power, to prove me wrong, to emotionally drain me, and to rebalance the status quo." Hang in there...

Olga

Olga Panteleeva

Oh Phil, thank you for being so kind and sorry for making this about my frustration with Marina. Please, whenever you feel unable to deal with white entitlement, consider me on call for some "white academic nonsense roundup". I'll be happy to lend my emotional labor so you don't have to.

Tom Baker

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Seattle, Washington

Composer/Guitarist/Improviser/Electronicist/Educator and works at Cornish College of the Arts

6/26/20, 8:35 PM

Tom

Tom Baker

Hi Dr Ewell, My name is Tom Baker, I am a Professor at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. I have been working through your blogs and videos, and it has been instrumental in changes we are making to our curriculum. I have been teaching theory for the past 20 years, a long time (now lapsed) member of SMT, and I have learned so much from your writings. We are all very excited here at Cornish to explore this in real time next Fall. I know that you know my chair and friend James Falzone. I am currently serving as the president of our faculty senate, and am planning an all-faculty meeting for the middle-end of August. This would be all departments, all faculty. I would love to dedicate 60-90 minutes to anti-racist pedagogy and techniques, and was wondering if you might be interested in being a guest speaker and lead us through some exercises or thought-experiments? We are undertaking an enormous amount of professional development right now with online teaching, etc. But I would like to bring your work that inspired us so much in the music to the larger college, and would love to have an expert sharing ideas with us. Let me know if this would interest you, and if so, I will explore the possibility that I can get funding from the provost (that would be my next hurdle)... And we could chat about a format that would work for you (lecture, Q and A, small group work, reading in advance, etc). I just realized this is

a very long message, probably should have been an email. My info is tbaker@cornish.edu and phone is 206-234-5667. Thanks again for your work - I believe that something new is emerging (not just at Cornish but in the larger world) and I believe that your thinking and writing is central to that emergence. Very best, Tom

6/26/20, 11:30 PM

You sent

Thanks for this Tom. I was so honored to be named as an inspiration for your new curriculum in music. Very humbling indeed. I'd also be honored to be a virtual guest in August. We'll be out of town till August 17. But maybe possible before then. Let's pull the conversation to email: pewell@hunter.cuny.edu. Maybe have a zoom? Wife's b-day is Sunday, so let's be in touch after Monday, ok? All best, Phil

Dan Trueman

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Princeton, New Jersey

Works at Composer, Fiddler, Electronic Musician and Princeton University

6/28/20, 11:30 AM

Dan

Dan Trueman

Philip, I read your MTO article and 6 White Racial Frame pieces; thanks so much for your incredible work -- it's so powerful and instructive. All best, Dan

You sent

Thanks for reading Dan!

Chris Segall

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Cincinnati

Associate Professor at University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

7/24/20, 8:51 PM

You sent

Hey Chris. JSS's non-invite was remarkable. The whole episode is indicative of the problem of our white frame. But, for me, this is a lemons-to-lemonade moment. I've collected materials and will present them at talks this year. I've booked over ten talks for the year, and this episode is a great example of the problem with our field. So I want to sit on this for now. But thanks for the support! Much appreciated.

7/24/20, 9:23 PM

Chris

Chris Segall

No problem, but I just ran to campus and scanned the whole thing:

[https://mailuc-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/segallcr\\_ucmail\\_uc\\_edu/EQa7mHugAvlBoFl-ulPKSrYBZJIXiAHczuOL\\_BAgFkDsyw?e=K8k1Qz](https://mailuc-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/segallcr_ucmail_uc_edu/EQa7mHugAvlBoFl-ulPKSrYBZJIXiAHczuOL_BAgFkDsyw?e=K8k1Qz)

mailuc-my.sharepoint.com

7/25/20, 12:25 AM

Chris

Chris Segall

Hey Phil, just a follow-up. So glad that your work is being so well received. Congrats on all the invitations! (Too bad you can't really travel right now—but I'm sure virtual talks will be just as good.) I can only imagine what it must be like to be trolled by an entire journal, but I can certainly understand not wanting to be sucked into their ridiculous "exchange" (their word!). I sent you the issue just so that you'd have it, so you can refer back to it whenever you decide to write about the incident. Congrats on your work and all the recognition it's getting!

7/25/20, 9:53 AM

You sent

Thanks Chris. I got the link and I'll download the issue soon. Good to have for reference. I hadn't seen "exchange" before. I can use that for my talks. I'll likely be in touch at some point to ask about the process for this issue, since no one contacted me. Onward...

Ben Graf

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Denton, Texas

Senior Lecturer of Music Theory at University of North Texas

7/25/20, 10:28 PM

Ben

Ben Graf

Philip,

I wanted to reach out on light of some of the conversations on social media lately. I want to apologize to you and emphasize that (although I stepped down and am no longer involved), the JSS would likely welcome a response from you. The young editorial team (recently Levi Walls and myself) are in a very difficult position with the advisory board as dissertation advisor(s). We felt uneasy about the situation from the beginning but we got significant pressures from the advisory board and some members of the editorial board. We tried to distance ourselves from some of the content of the responses as a result, but as you well know— silence is complicity, and I sincerely apologize for that. We were trying to facilitate and continue the discussion. I really enjoy reading your blog posts and the JSS advisors mentioned asking you about a response after your planned visit to UNT. I'm so sorry if that was lost or misinterpreted as not contacting you at all, and, as I say, I was ultimately trying to follow their guidance. I hope to share a coffee or other time with you next time we have a chance. I'm sorry we haven't met before and I'm reaching out on these terms.

-Ben Graf

7/26/20, 12:55 AM

You sent

Thanks Ben. I understand the difficult position you were in. Yes, the next time we meet I'd be happy to get a coffee...best, Phil

Devin Chaloux

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Deerfield, New Hampshire

7/26/20, 12:57 AM

Devin

Devin Chaloux

Phil - I'm incredibly disturbed by this issue and the whole process. I'm hoping that we can conjure up a significant chunk of our society to denounce this. You deserve better

You sent

Thanks Devin! Yeah, it's ugly. I've decided not to read basically, but what I'm seeing on Twitter and FB is appalling. I too hope that there can be some kind of censure. We'll see. Thanks for the support, as ever!

Devin

Devin Chaloux

I hope that you don't feel the need to respond. It's our responsibility as a society to face this - and I think we have enough people up for the task.

You sent

Thanks. You're right, I'm not responding. I will retell this episode in some talks I'm giving this upcoming academic year. But I can't read that crap...don't have the stomach for it...pe

August Sheehy

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Stony Brook, New York

Studied Composition at Berklee College of Music

7/25/20, 9:44 PM

August

August Sheehy

Hi Phil! I'm just catching up on the emerging JSS fiasco. I'm sorry that this has happened, that you were never contacted, etc. The cfp was fishy, but the actual issue is just appalling.

I suppose it provides grist for the mill/further evidence of just how much work our field has to do. In any case, I hope you're well. I'd love to chat again sometime if you're up for it, though I'm sure you're busier than ever. Congrats on your virtual residency this year!

7/25/20, 10:04 PM

You sent

Thanks for this August! Yes, what JSS did was horrible. And yes, it provides some great material for my talks this year. I've booked over ten. Catching up would be great. We're at a cabin upstate now—awesome!—and back in Brooklyn August 18, so after that? Thanks for the support. Means a lot to me, really ...

7/26/20, 9:10 AM

August

August Sheehy

10? Incredible! Catching up after 8/18 would be great. Let's touch base when you're back in town and figure out a time. Until then, enjoy your cabin!

Ian Gerg

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Durant, Oklahoma

Assistant Professor of Music Theory at Southeastern Oklahoma State University

7/26/20, 4:27 PM

Ian

Ian Gerg

Hi, Phil -- We've never met, but Cora Palfy encouraged me to reach out because I've been wanting to for some time. In a few words, I want to share that your work has led me on a journey to transform myself by recognizing the social/cultural power afforded to me by my intersecting identities. While I don't believe much in the humanist valorization of the exceptional individual, I must admit that your unflinching commitment to structural change has given me the strength to engage in uncomfortable conversations about identity. Best to you. -Ian

7/27/20, 3:31 PM

You sent

Thanks for this heartfelt note Ian. I'm humbled by colleagues who are willing to do the hard work of self reflection that your note clearly indicates you are doing. None of this is altogether easy--I've had to swallow several bitter pills myself--but I think now is a time that we can make real progress with racial issues, not just in music theory, but in the country writ large. Thanks again, Phil

Ian

Ian Gerg

Mark Spicer

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in New Haven, Connecticut

Works at City University of New York and The Bernadettes

7/27/20, 3:47 PM

Mark

Mark Spicer

Hi Phil, Apologies for contacting you in Messenger, and I know we're not FB friends, but due to the sensitive subject I'd rather not use my Hunter email. I've been following the discussion on social media this weekend in relation to the whole JSS debacle, and I must say I'm appalled and ashamed to call UNT one of my alma maters. For what it's worth, I too experienced a certain prejudice ("rage") of a different kind from some of the UNT folks in my dealings with them recently, and if you'd like to talk about it, I'd be happy to do so off the record. But more importantly, I want to apologize again for all you had to go through in the "bruising tenure battle" you refer to in your blog post. That year, 2014-15, was probably also the most difficult for me in my entire CUNY career, largely as a result of having to deal with a toxic chair who sought to force their hand in crucial decisions affecting the future of the department, of which I found myself caught uncomfortably and awkwardly in the middle. I'll leave it at that for now, but you can rest assured that your upcoming promotion to full professor will not be similarly compromised by such "white [male] rage"! (And by the way, your MTO piece is beautifully written and researched, and vitally important—but I think you already know that!)

Marina Frolova-Walker

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Ely, Cambridgeshire, United Kingdom

Professor of Music History at University of Cambridge

You are now connected on Messenger

5/16/20, 2:35 PM

You sent

Marina, I just realized that my comment about German Meister being the same as Russian мастер sounded like I was mansplaining that to you, and I didn't mean to. You obviously know that. FB is so public that I was directing that comment at American colleagues, most of whom don't. Anyway, apologies. Stay safe, Phil

5/16/20, 3:46 PM

Marina

Marina Frolova-Walker

Oh don't worry! I appreciate your answer. It's the meaning that apparently predates the one concerned with ownership. I obviously only made the comment because you know Russian! and I genuinely thought about the word that way. And of course in Russian "masterwork" is шедевр which of course doesn't usually ring any bells with Russians...

Marina

Marina Frolova-Walker

It amazes me how Beethoven still needs to prop up so many musicologists though... Don't take it personally! Susan McClary had a go on behalf of women 30 years ago. But he really doesn't need to be propped up by anything, because people have looked very hard at all the music written at that time and, well - they haven't found anything comparable. What you are talking about is not of course Beethoven, but the idea of Beethoven - which is basically generations of people propping themselves up by Beethoven. And in the same way Esperanza Spalding doesn't need to be propped up by anyone - I had a chance to hear her live and it was most amazing (with Geri Allen, who is sadly no more). But the SMT probably needs to be taken down, Beethoven or no Beethoven, so I'll keep reading your blog to see how you get on with the project!

5/16/20, 10:47 PM

You sent

Да конечно, шедевр, от фр. chef-d'oeuvre. Когда я работал над ладом (статья вышла в МТО 25.4 если Вам интересно) в России года 3 назад моя голова шла кругом на 4-х языках: лад, тональность, строй, тон, Tonart, Tonalität, tonalité, mode. Кошмар (cauchemar!) конечно, но статья получилась ничего на мой взгляд. А что касается Бетховена, Вы правы, это не Бетховен сам а идея Бетховена. And not only have people propped him up, but he has propped musicologists and music theorists up! (Which is not a point I've made clearly enough--if I do I'll make sure to give you a shout out.) Thanks for this, and for reading my blog. It's got over 10,000 views in just over a month, which I think is a lot (I don't really know, I'll be honest). Warmly,  
Phil

5/17/20, 7:46 AM

Marina

Marina Frolova-Walker

7/27/20, 5:33 PM

Marina

Marina Frolova-Walker

Dear Phil, I am appalled by what I saw in JSS (not that I ever thought I would read it!). I am very sorry you have to go through this. My warm wishes of courage and resilience. Marina

You sent

Thanks for this Marina. Yes, the JSS "dumpster fire," as it's been called on Twitter, has been taxing. But I'll live. Thanks again, Phil

Marina

Marina Frolova-Walker

TLJ is a known nutcase, of course, but the fact that they printed this is just beyond belief! and an "anonymous" response! just simply beyond belief.

Ellen Bakulina  
You're friends on Facebook  
Lives in Montreal, Quebec  
Associate Professor at McGill University  
7/27/20, 6:01 PM

Ellen

Ellen Bakulina  
Dear Phil, thanks for the message on FB and your email. I am unable to engage in a discussion on Facebook on anywhere else regarding the JSS issue and your work on critical race theory, because my administration at UNT has forbidden me to engage in discussing this topic until they take steps. So, I cannot answer to your FB post either publicly or privately, except to say what I've already said--that I've been asked not to talk about this. I'm very sorry about this whole story. I wish I had the right to talk with you. I hope I will have such a chance at some future point. Hope you and your family are well. --Ellen

7/27/20, 6:34 PM

Ellen

Ellen Bakulina

I have just responded to your latest email.

Loneka Wilkinson Battiste  
7/28/20, 8:32 PM

Loneka

Loneka Wilkinson Battiste

I hope I am not overstepping by sending you this message, but I want to THANK YOU for your amazing article. I am in music education and have watched for decades as talented musicians were weeded out of music programs because their musicianship was incongruent with the musicality valued at the institutions, music theory being used as the measuring stick. These same musicians have gone on to enjoy wonderful careers in music. This has troubled me greatly and just before the pandemic hit, I was preparing a study on musicality among African American students in a high school piano class. Preliminary findings of the study were to be presented at the National Association for Music Education's Annual Conference in November. Your eloquently crafted article validated all of the things that I have felt for such a long and has given me the inspiration needed to resume this study once we have regained some sense of normalcy. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

7/28/20, 11:06 PM

You sent

Loneka, thanks so much for this note. I'm glad you've found my scholarship so helpful. Don't hesitate to reach out if I can help with anything...best, Phil

Andrus Madsen  
You're friends on Facebook  
Lives in Boston, Massachusetts  
Artistic Director at Arcadia Chamber Players and Artistic Director at Newton Baroque

7/29/20, 10:00 AM

Andrus

Andrus Madsen

Thank you for the work you are doing. And thank you for accepting my friend request

Andrus

Andrus Madsen

I was a musicology student at Eastman in the 90s and if I hadn't had a bad bike accident and a concussion the dissertation I would have written was a deconstruction of the canon, examining the 19th century reception of non ethnic Germans working in German speaking cities. There were so many incredibly damning things I came across along the way. How can we not see the canon as racist, when even the impurity of being a Bohemian or an Italian is too great a flaw for the music to be considered relevant. I could go on and on, a books worth, but. Thank you for saying what needed to be said about the music theory discipline.

7/29/20, 11:14 AM

You sent

Thanks for this note of support Andrus! I'm humbled by all the notes of support I've received, from all over the world. Best, Phil

Vincent Ho

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Calgary, Alberta

Former New Music Advisor at Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and Artistic Director at Land's End Chamber Ensemble

7/29/20, 11:57 PM

Vincent

Vincent Ho

Thank you for your article! As a Chinese-Canadian composer (did my doctorate at USC actually, which you cited in your paper), your thoughts certainly resonated with me given my own experiences studying music theory and Shenkerian analysis back 15-20years ago. Since then, I've went off and did my own research on the distinction between Eastern and Western musical traditions, principles, and aesthetics that helped me examine own bi-cultural identity and how I could manifest the confluence of the two worlds in my music. I could go on about it, but for now I just wanted to drop a note of thanks and how much I support your position on this issue.

Vince

7/30/20, 9:58 AM

You sent

Thanks so much for this note of support Vincent! The positive response has been overwhelming...best, Phil

Wendelin

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Berlin, Germany

Works at Wendelin Bitzan

7/28/20, 5:00 PM

Wendelin

Wendelin



Dear Philip,

Many thanks for accepting friendship! If I recall correctly, we met in Moscow at the 2nd OTM conference in October 2015, but you might not remember me as we didn't talk to each other ... I am a composer and music theorist from Berlin, focusing on Russian music and Nikolai Medtner's sonatas in particular.

I was deeply impressed by your MTO piece on the white racial frame in music theory, and especially by what you wrote on the racist dimensions of Schenker's theory, which I wasn't fully aware of so far. As a German, I was unacquainted with Schenker during my undergraduate studies (you won't necessarily get in touch with his ideas if you don't happen to study in Vienna), but with Martin Eybl as an advisor, I was prompted to develop something of a critical interest at least. Thank you so much for your invaluable work—I am seriously shocked at the extent of rejection and unscholarly repudiation you had to face recently. I will aim to raise awareness of these issues among my peers and within the GMTH, the German-speaking society, and I am curious of the professional music theory community here (which is still emerging and hasn't yet reached the state of an established scholarly discipline) will respond to the issue unbiasedly.

Best wishes from Berlin,

Wendelin ([www.wendelinbitzan.de](http://www.wendelinbitzan.de))

7/30/20, 11:25 AM

You sent

Dear Wendelin, thanks so much for this note of support! The positive response has been overwhelming. If you're ever in NYC after our current dystopia ends, do look me up so we can go out for a coffee (or, better, a stiff drink) and talk over these matters.

7/31/20, 8:30 AM

Wendelin

Wendelin

Dear Philip, I'd love to do that! Sure, I'll let you know whenever I happen to be in NYC.

All best, Wendelin

Tammy Kernodle

You're friends on Facebook

Professor of Musicology at Miami University

Studied at The Ohio State University

7/30/20, 2:36 PM

Tammy

Tammy Kernodle

Hello Philip, I am sorry that I have been delayed in reaching out to you. I've been trying to debrief from the SAM virtual conference and to turn my focus on some MA students trying to finish. I wanted to encourage you in this moment. Don't let folks reactions to what you know was true and honest work discourage you or weigh your spirit down. I am one of many who are standing behind you. What you did equated to scholarly activism. It was long overdue. Thank you! Thank you! If you need anything please don't hesitate to reach out.

8/17/20, 11:12 AM

You sent

Thanks for this Tammy. I just got back to FB after two unplugged glorious weeks. Thanks for the solidarity, and for what you do for the field. Say hi to my dear friend Gabby Cornish from me. You're lucky to have her!

Jacqueline Warwick  
You're friends on Facebook  
Lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Professor at Dalhousie University  
7/29/20, 3:20 PM  
Jacqueline  
Jacqueline Warwick  
Dear Phil,

We've never met in person, but I'm glad to be your Facebook friend and I hope you will not mind me writing out of the blue! I have been sickened and angered by the JSS debacle, and today I wrote this piece, which I intend to pitch to The Conversation. I'm sending it to you not to ask for your comments (though of course those would be very welcome!) but simply to make sure you are ok with what I've written.

Hope you are holding up ok. I am very grateful for your scholarship and your courage, and I wish you all the best.

Jacqueline  
Jacqueline Warwick  
7/30/20, 11:04 AM

You sent  
Jacqueline, thanks for this. I've attached the document here with some thoughts. Best, Phil

You sent  
7/30/20, 1:56 PM  
Jacqueline

Jacqueline Warwick  
Wonderful -- can't thank you enough for the feedback! Please enjoy a well-earned detachment from social media, and let the rest of us take up the fight for a while.

Xavier Beteta  
You're friends on Facebook  
Lives in La Jolla, California  
Studied Music Composition at University of California, San Diego  
7/31/20, 4:07 PM

Xavier  
Xavier Beteta  
Dear Philip, I am a composer from Guatemala. I recently watched your masterful talk about Schenker's racism. Please receive my admiration and support.

8/17/20, 11:48 AM

You sent  
Thanks so much for this Xavier!

منعم أزعرينا

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Moscow, Russia

فن الكنافة - الصحيفة at رئيس تحرير  
أوركسترا أبو حمادة السيمفوني الدولي السريع at عازف الهلاؤه and الرسمية لجمهورية أبو حمادة السيمفونية الوحشية

7/7/20, 1:53 AM

منعم

منعم أزعرينا

Dude.. You are great

منعم

منعم أزعرينا

How are you doing in NYC?

All тихо тихо @ RT here, applying for the Вид На Жительство in few weeks. I was thinking this morning, that when you're coming for your retirement in Moscow, I will be well informed concerning all documents needed for your papers.

7/7/20, 11:19 AM

You sent

Can you talk?

You sent

7/27/20, 5:07 PM

منعم

منعم أزعرينا

You sent

You sent

منعم

منعم أزعرينا

It's ok. We'll talk later. Just read what you wrote about UNT. Was curious about it.

You sent

big story. i'll fill you in when we talk.

منعم

منعم أزعرينا

Good luck dude. Enjoy. Lovely day man.

You sent

7/30/20, 2:59 PM

منعم

منعم أزعرينا

8/19/20, 4:15 AM

منعم

منعم أزعرينا

So you're back man... GREAT news

منعم

منعم أزعرينا

Happy to see you here again. My old account is retrieved. No idea why it was disabled (The say it was by mistake, I will believe them!), no idea why it was retrieved now.. But what the heck, It's back and that's the most important.

Lori Burns  
You're friends on Facebook  
Lives in Ottawa, Ontario  
PROFESSOR OF MUSIC at University of Ottawa  
11/15/20, 9:41 PM  
Lori

Lori Burns  
Just writing this privately to you, Philip. Yes it is discouraging to see the same story again and again. It is hard on all marginalized members, including the women who have been loyal servants to the society for many years. On my part, I considered divorcing myself from the SMT but have carried on. It is especially hard when the unrecognized work of peer review has kept me so busy, with no rewards. I had an edited collection as a finalist today but was definitely not holding my breath to see the announcement. I do feel a kind of heavy heart though.

11/15/20, 10:31 PM

You sent  
Thanks for this Lori. I no longer allow myself a heavy heart when I think of music theory's extreme exclusionism. I just report on it in any forum that will allow. I believe there will be a breaking point at which SMT, and other structures, must listen. Thanks again for this. Best, Phil  
Lori

Lori Burns  
Your efforts are so important. You are using you strong voice to good effect!

Giorgio Sanguinetti  
You're friends on Facebook  
Lives in Rome, Italy  
Worked at Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata  
11/16/20, 10:59 AM

Giorgio  
Giorgio Sanguinetti  
Phil, I am very sorry about what happened with my comment. I understand that my choice of words was, to say the least, poor. I signed your appeal, and in return I had a very angry message from Tim, who accused me of being unfriend with him. So I am really shocked to read the harsh comments on what I thought was a fairly innocent comment - which turned out it wasn't, and I am very sorry for this. Truth is, I don't know your country any more. I mean, we have our share of racial issues here - just think at people like Salvini and their right wing politics. But reading the comments on this post make me think that I am not sure I can understand what's going on there. It's like we live on two different planets. Certainly the amount of violence you are suffering with the resurgence of white suprematism is unheard of here in Europe. Again, what0s going on in this country? Perhaps what we know - police officers killing innocent people because of their skin - is just the tip of the iceberg? Anyway, thank you for taking my part. All the best,  
Giorgio

11/16/20, 11:32 AM

You sent  
Thanks for this follow-up note Giorgio. Yes, what's happening in the States now with respect to race and racial justice is hard to understand for an outsider, I imagine, but not so hard for a black American like me. I'm just doing my part to try to make American music theory less exclusionist,

which is harder than it should be. Interesting that Jackson sent you a nasty email. But this, again, proves my point about the racist hostility of the field. Let's hope for a more inclusive environment in the future...warm regards, -Phil

Dana Lyn

You were friends on Facebook

Using Messenger without Facebook

2/16/21, 8:22 PM

Dana

Dana Lyn

Hello Philip, I just listened to your SMT talk, and I cried. Thank you for this. I'm so glad that you've brought this to the table. And, happy birthday! Best, Dana.

2/16/21, 9:29 PM

You sent

Thanks for this note Dana!

You can now call each other and see information like Active Status and when you've read messages.

2/17/21, 12:25 AM

Dana

Dana Lyn

You're welcome... and thank you!

Shazia Ali

Lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado

2/22/21, 11:12 PM

Shazia

Shazia Ali

Hello! I stumbled upon your talk about Shenkerian Analysis while doing some research for my business and was deeply moved. I want to thank you for your time and dedication to the topic. My colleague and I have launched a business called PRISMM (People Rising in Service through Multimedias) which aims to re-invent how we are discussing music and art to young people while supporting underprivileged communities with resources to be able to participate in the arts. We have almost completed our first round of classes and are building our next. I was wondering if you would be available to chat with us for a mentorship hour (we would pay you for your time) to discuss how to go about teaching music from a non-white perspective. I understand you must be very busy and if you are unable to meet, any other resources you may have would be extremely helpful. Thank you so much for your time!

2/28/21, 12:10 PM

You sent

Shazia, thanks for this heartfelt note. Great to hear of your important work. In terms of a "mentorship hour," March is too crazy to try to add anything for me, but April might work. Feel free to email me at my website address, [contact-at-philipewell-dot-com](mailto:contact-at-philipewell-dot-com), or at my Hunter College work email address...best, -Phil

You can now call each other and see information like Active Status and when you've read messages.

Shazia

Shazia Ali

Thank you! I will send an email soon 😊

Kenneth Forkert-Smith

3/19/20, 6:37 PM

Kenneth

Kenneth Forkert-Smith

Hi Phil

Sorry to bother you with trivialities in the middle of global pandemic, but I was wondering if you had any time next week to maybe do me a favour? I have a book out next month - lots of Scriabin and hexatonics and stuff - and OUP haven't had much success at getting dust jacket blurb ready so I thought I'd take it upon myself to find someone who might be interested in the topic, and you were the obvious choice. The deadline is pretty tight - 31st March. Whadda you reckon? I understand if course if you can't, but I figured it'd worth a shot. I hope you're fighting fit in these strange times? I figured this is a good time to send an odd request; life doesn't get much stranger. If you reckon you can help I can email you the proof in the morning. Best wishes, Kenneth

3/19/20, 8:23 PM

You sent

Hi Kenneth. Sure, send me the info at [pewell@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:pewell@hunter.cuny.edu). I'll do what I can. But yes, no promises. Too many moving parts now, right? Stay safe!

3/20/20, 6:29 AM

Kenneth

Kenneth Forkert-Smith

Brilliant. Thanks Phil. Yes - no promises to anything at the minute!

7/30/20, 7:50 AM

Kenneth

Kenneth Forkert-Smith

Hi Phil, Greetings from Italy. I'm Holidaying after near-burnout so have promised the family that I will do no work and keep emails and the world outside (including Facebook) locked out. However, things slip through the net and I heard via messenger messages about the JSS issue. I gather that it's something of a personal attack against you, so I thought I'd write and offer my personal support. You've forced thousands of people to question what we teach and study and I guess you rattled some reactionary cages that needed a good rattling. I do hope you are able to rest this summer and that you manage to take this unpleasant business in your stride. Will catch up soon. Kenneth

7/30/20, 9:56 AM

You sent

Thanks so much for this note of support Kenneth! The positive response has been overwhelming. Have fun in Italy...best, Phil

3/26/21, 7:04 AM

Kenneth

Kenneth Forkert-Smith

Hi Phil. Hope you're well? I won't make your paper tonight as I'm running an SMA study Day. We have a roundtable with Adam Neely, 12-tone, Julianne Grasso and William O'Hara, It finishes at 7 uk time, which I think means I'll be able to give a plug for your talk and share the

link if that's ok with (or desirable for) you? Folks can then come to your talk straight after the discussion. Our thing is on Youtube so we may have a decent number of viewers.

3/26/21, 7:47 AM

You sent

Great Kenneth, thanks! Do you have a link for your event? I'd love to try to come if possible.

3/26/21, 8:56 AM

Kenneth

Kenneth Forkert-Smith

Yeah great. Will do. The youtube link is <https://youtu.be/VT9QS96Hq7U> . It'll 5-7 UK time, so I hope that squares.

Thomas Husted Kirkegaard

You're friends on Facebook

Lives in Silkeborg, Denmark

Postdoc at Aarhus Universitet

10/19/20, 6:36 AM

Thomas

Thomas Husted Kirkegaard

Dear Phil,

First of all, thanks for your congratulations when I received my doctorate!

Second, thank you so much for putting me in contact with Bill Rothstein back in 2015 (I guess..? after the Moscow conference). Bill was an enormous help throughout the project, as you can imagine. Too bad I didn't meet you when I was in NYC in 2018.

Third, congratulations on the well-deserved attention to your work, even though it is happening on a, well, not so good background... I was incredibly disappointed that JSS published what they did. It was really a great chance to critically discuss the legacy of Schenker, but there was nothing critical (in the real, academic sense of the word) about it (or most of the responses).

Full disclosure: I noticed that no one in my dissertation committee had signed the statement of support, so I decided to wait with my own signature until after my defence, but now it has been closed. Cowardly of me, I admit, but I was very nervous about how some members of the committee might take this matter (clearly, it can stir up some emotions) and I was worried that it would affect their assessment. I refer to your 2019-talk in my dissertation as one example of a recent, critical study of Schenker and his legacy (but I handed it in in late April, so the subsequent debate is not part of the dissertation).

Anyway, I write because I wanted to let you know that "your" debate has now also reached Denmark on Seismograf.org (in Danish). The last few months has seen quite a few articles on the matter.

I think it is great that music theory is now discussed in the public instead of only in specialized journals. And I think it's great that now - for the first time in a long time - there is a critical look at the discipline, which has been taken as a sort of taken-for-granted helping subdiscipline in Musicology. But I also think that the case of Schenker has become a sort of strawman in this

Danish debate - he has had virtually no influence here, and he seems to overshadow relevant issues in our own scholarly tradition. I have now contributed with some of these points in Seismograf. It's in Danish. I apply the same theoretical frame that I did in my dissertation, namely that of "practice theory". In so doing, I argue that the white racial frame is not inherent in the theory as such, but is constructed and upheld in the way the theory is practiced in scholarly communities. For me, this is also a way of moving responsibility to actual people rather than abstract systems. But I wonder whether you might disagree with this. You don't need to answer - I just wanted to let you in on some of the reception of your work in Denmark.

On another note, I am now engaged in challenging the gender frame of the field in my new project. I am studying Danish women composers and their music (from around the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century). One of them, Tekla Griebel Wandall, was also an interesting music theorist, and I hope to publish something about her music theories before long, preferably in English.

I hope we will get the chance to meet again before too long. And I hope that you and your family are well in these strange times. Once again, thank you for being an important stepping stone in my journey towards the PhD.

Best,  
Thomas

Forsiden | Seismograf

Jonathan Bellman  
You're friends on Facebook  
Lives in Greeley, Colorado  
Professor at University of Northern Colorado  
7/28/20, 12:24 AM

Jonathan

Jonathan Bellman

Hi, Phil. Leigh Van Handel kindly sent me a selection of relevant documents regarding the current issue under discussion.

1) I do not understand how your close reading of the sources under discussion is found to be so threatening.

2) Well, actually, I do. You are calling into question the premises of the field/vineyard in which many of your colleagues have labored. The problem is not that you have called such premises into question; it is, rather, that you have asked (please forgive me for this) rather obvious questions that all of them should have been asking since graduate school, about relationship and indeed dependence between the part of HS's music theory that we teach (and, you should excuse me, sanctify), and the untidy stuff we'd rather ignore.

3) "Baytzim," we call this in Yiddish; a Hebrew word literally meaning "eggs." Balls, in other words. I can see that I might have felt very defensive of my chosen areas when I was, y'know,



30—these are major senior people responding this way. You know the extent to which I consider myself a disciple of Leonard Ratner; I suppose my first response would be strongly defensive if his work were to be case in such a light.

Here's the thing, though: the problem would be mine to work through. Yes, I'm deeply attached, now I need to catch my breath and calm the feeling of being threatened, blah blah. Some of the problem here might be music theory's longstanding and delusional view of itself as a "science" (since, y'know, Sputnik and the funding and ideology associated therewith), but still: you see what happens when you have the temerity to actually question orthodoxies.

All of which is to say: mazel tov. You've initiated a deeply helpful debate, as soon as some of your orthodox Schenkerian colleagues and calm down and think a minute. It is a real debate not a stupid and petty debate over trivia.

Bravo. Obviously, you're strong enough on this issue not to be crippled by self-doubt, but just know that this one old fossil sees real merit in the questions you're asking, and wishes you all possible strength in staying the course.

7/28/20, 3:23 PM

You sent

Thanks, Jonathan, for this note of support. Ya know, irony of ironies, JSS has done more to damage, perhaps irreparably so, Schenkerism than anything I have. If they ever contacted me, I would have told them to wait until my long article came out. My talk was 3000 words, the article, c. 17000. Here's a quote from para. 8.1 of my article: "I have offered many challenges to our music theory community, but I do so only in the spirit of scholarly inquisition and betterment for the field. If music theory is to survive in the twenty-first century, as I hope it does, we have much soul searching to do with respect to race. If Schenkerian theory is to survive in the twenty-first century, as I hope it does, we must confront the uncomfortable realities not just of Schenker himself but, more important, of the legacy of how we have engaged with his ideas and what that means with respect to race in American music theory. Racial matters are difficult to discuss, but there is no good reason for not doing so, even if such discussion is uncomfortable." Too bad they never contacted me. Oh well. Let's have a smoke the next time we meet. I won't tell Deborah, I promise!

7/29/20, 3:34 PM

Jonathan

Jonathan Bellman

Well, it engendered some fruitful discussion around here. One of the theorists passed your letter around, then I followed up with your article and that masterpiece of a JSS issue (Leigh Van Handel had supplied the links, at my request), and there was a productive discussion. (It didn't start well—one individual said, "Well, I hope musicology will also start..." and I pointed out we'd been dealing with such issues for 40 years...not always well, but these issues have indeed been on everyone's radar.)

I'm now seeing interesting engagement and careful reading among some of my FB people, so that's a plus.

(A side matter: I know we got to know each other at Stanford; I can't remember, though, whether or not you were in Berger's Romantic class, the one I was TA for. Do you remember?) .

On the smoke: oh, yes. We owe ourselves at least that.

Congratulations, again, on shaking things up in your discipline. The defensive, cat-spitting tone of some of the High Old Ones' responses tells you immediately that you hit home.

Edward Klorman

You're friends on Facebook

12/28/20, 7:13 PM

Edward

Edward Klorman

Hi Phil, I wanted to let you know that the NYT article is indeed coming it. The writer shared an excerpt with me to verify my quotes, that they are appropriate in context. From the few paragraphs I saw, the article may be okay but not great -- that is, whereas the writer appears to have framed it in terms of debates over cancel culture, I feel that's the least interesting frame (in fact, it's a frame that centers the discussion around Jackson). I'll look forward to reading the final, edited version of the article when it appears.

You sent

Thanks for this Ed. I'll look forward to seeing that. I'm very happy that I didn't do the interview.

Cya tomorrow!

Edward

Edward Klorman

1/12/21, 1:59 PM

Edward

Edward Klorman

Hi Phil, I'm assuming you've already seen this CFP, but in case you haven't I wanted to pass it along. I've given some thought to writing a short piece about the the idea of Schenkerian "insiders" and "outsiders" and the relationship of this thinking to the Jewish diasporic experience of North American Schenkerians. But I probably don't have enough time to study the relevant secondary literature in time for this deadline -- we'll see.

Edward

Edward Klorman

[http://www.danishmusicologyonline.dk/downloads/call\\_for\\_papers/dmo\\_call\\_for\\_papers\\_special\\_issue\\_2022.pdf](http://www.danishmusicologyonline.dk/downloads/call_for_papers/dmo_call_for_papers_special_issue_2022.pdf)

[www.danishmusicologyonline.dk](http://www.danishmusicologyonline.dk)

You sent

Thanks Ed, I did see this. I actually know Thomas Jul Kirkegaard-Larsen from two foreign conferences, Belgium and Moscow. (I was in Moscow when he was in NY.) I think it'd be great to submit your paper. If not now, then later at some point. As you know, I've hesitated to get into questions of Jewishness, though I will deal with this in the monograph. Gotta run to another zoom (ugh!)...later, pe

Edward

Edward Klorman

I think Thomas also spent a semester at CUNY working with Bill Rothstein. He posted a blog in Danish critiquing the JSS issue (if I remember it and if I understood it from Google Translate). I'll give some thought to whether I'm in a position to write something. The problem is I don't have many sources (mostly just impressions/gossip/scattered observations), so I'm not sure I have the know-how to turn those into something publishable. But I'll think about it. Stay well, and great job at the talk on Saturday!

1/12/21, 4:11 PM

You sent

Yeah, I set up Thomas's work with Bill. Thomas and I talked in Moscow (2016?) about his dissertation. He had asked Ildar Khannanov to help him with American topics but, once Thomas realized what a jerk Khannanov was, in Moscow (it was on vivid display as you can imagine), he asked me for guidance over a beer one night. I put him in touch with Bill, since he wanted a refined Schenkerian perspective, and they hit it off. I'm happy it worked out. (Thomas was in NY when I was in Moscow for the 2017–2018 academic year.) Thomas is a great guy if you never met him. Thanks for coming to the talk Sat. Ed...best, pe

Edward

Edward Klorman

Thanks for explaining!

You sent

1/26/21, 12:51 PM

Edward

Edward Klorman

Hi Phil, sorry for the terse email earlier. I'm happy to talk by phone or Zoom or to read drafts of any texts you're preparing anytime. Stay well!

1/26/21, 1:20 PM

You sent

Oh, no trouble at all Ed. I'll reach out when I'm ready...thanks, pe