

MELINA ESSE
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MUSICOLOGY
Curriculum Vitae

602 Taylor Rd.
Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
(585) 298-7351

messe@esm.rochester.edu

Eastman School of Music
Department of Musicology
University of Rochester
26 Gibbs St.
Rochester, NY 14604

EMPLOYMENT

EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Associate Professor of Musicology with Tenure
2015-Present

Associate Professor of Musicology
2011-2015

Assistant Professor of Musicology
2004-2011

EDUCATION

Ph.D. **University of California, Berkeley**
Music History and Literature, 2004.

Dissertation: "*Sospirare, Tremare, Piangere: Conventions of the Body in Italian Opera.*"

Committee: Mary Ann Smart (chair) and Wye J. Allanbrook, Music Department; William B. Worthen, Theater and Performance Studies.

M.A. **University of Virginia**
Music History and Criticism, 1997.

Thesis: "Voice, Desire, and the Trouser Role in *Der Rosenkavalier*."
Committee: Lloyd Whitesell and Elizabeth Hudson.

B.A. **Macalester College**
Music major and Anthropology minor, 1993.

Five-month research project on urban transportation undertaken as an intern with ENDA (an international non-governmental development agency) in Dakar, Senegal (1992).

PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

Singing Sappho: Improvisation and Authority in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera. University of Chicago Press, 2020.

Edited Collections

Guest editor of special issue of *Opera Quarterly: Mediating Opera* 26 (2010). Chose issue topic, solicited authors, and wrote introduction and edited five essays on the theme of opera and technologies of mediation.

Articles and Essays

"Vessels of Flame: Letitia Elizabeth Landon and the Improviser's Voice." Chapter in *London Voices 1820-1840: Vocal Performers, Practices, Histories*, edited by Roger Parker and Susan Rutherford. University of Chicago Press (2019).

"The Sexual Politics of Operatic Collaboration: Gounod, 'Ô ma lyre immortelle' (Sappho)." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 28 (2016): 171-4.

"The Silent Diva: Farrar's Carmen." Chapter in *Technology and the Diva: Sopranos, Opera and the Media from Romanticism to the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Karen Henson. Cambridge University Press (2016).

"Encountering the *improvisatrice* in Italian Opera." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 66 (2013): 709-70.

"Performing Sentiment, or How to Do Things with Tears." *Women and Music* 14 (2010): 1-21.

"Don't Look Now: Opera, Liveness, and the Televisual." *Opera Quarterly* 26 (2010): 81-95.

"A Note from the Guest Editor." *Opera Quarterly* 26 (2010): 1-3.

"Donizetti's Gothic Resurrections." *19th-Century Music* 33 (2009): 81-109.

"Rossini's Noisy Bodies." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21 (2009): 27-64.

"Speaking and Sighing: Bellini's *canto declamato* and the Poetics of Restraint." *Current Musicology* 87 (2009): 7-45.

"'Chi piange, qual forza m'arretra?': Verdi's Interior Voices." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14 (2002): 59-78.

Reviews

Review of Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (Oxford University Press, 2009). *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64 (2011): 725-30.

Review of *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, edited by Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith. Jointly authored with Holly Watkins. *GLSG: Newsletter of the Gay and Lesbian Study Group of the American Musicological Society*, October 1997.

Program Notes

"Andrea Chénier: The Revolutionary Poetry of Annihilation." Amics del Liceu, Barcelona Opera House, Season Book 2017-18.

"'Confused and Noise': Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and the Problem of Comic Commotion." *Figaro Forever: Welsh National Opera*, Spring 2016.

"Hugo von Hofmannsthal." Brief program note published in the *Lyric Season Companion: 2005/2006* (Chicago: Lyric Opera of Chicago, 2005).

PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Divinely Inspired: Incantation and the Making of Melody in Bellini's *Norma*." Invited talks given at Case Western Reserve University, University of Toronto's Jackman Humanities Center and UC-Berkeley (Spring 2018).

"The Opera Singer as Muse and Creator: Pauline Viardot and Gounod's *Sapho*." Invited talk, Phelps Colloquium Series, Hosted by Office of the Provost, University of Rochester (February 2016).

"A Sapphic Orpheus: Pauline Viardot as composer-performer." Paper read at First Transnational Opera Studies Conference, Bologna (July 2015).

"Rossini's *La Cenerentola*: Sound and Sentiment." Hillman Opera Lecture, SUNY Fredonia (November 2013).

"Muses of Memory: Poetic Improvisation and Embodying the Past in Nineteenth-Century Italy." Invited colloquium at SUNY Fredonia Music Department (April 2013).

"Improvisation, History, Memory: Rosa Taddei and the Work of the *improvvisatrice* in Nineteenth-Century Italy." Invited colloquium at Cornell University Music Department (May 2012).

- "Saffo's Lyre: Improvisation and Neoclassicism in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera." Paper read at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, San Francisco (November 2011).
- "Pacini, Pompeii, and Tourist Opera." Paper read at "Opera and Urban Culture" conference, Berkeley, CA (November 2011).
- "Encountering the *improvvisatrice* in Italian Opera." Eastman School of Music Colloquium, Musicology Department (March 2011).
- "The *improvvisatrice* as muse in Pacini's *Saffo*." Invited colloquium at Cornell University Music Department (February 2011).
- "Don't Look Now: Opera, Liveness, and the Televisual." Paper presented at Syracuse International Film Festival Forum on Music and Sound in Film (October 2009).
- "Speaking and Sighing: Bellini's *canto declamato* and the Poetics of Restraint." Invited colloquium at the University of Pittsburgh (October 2007).
- "The Silent Diva: Farrar's *Carmen*." Paper read at the conference "Technologies of the Diva," Columbia University (March 2007) and at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Washington, D.C. (November 2005).
- "Tradition and Innovation in Saverio Mercadante's *Orazi e Curiazi* (1846)." Two-hour lecture-seminar presented at the Minnesota Opera in conjunction with the North American première of Mercadante's opera, Minneapolis, MN (March 2006).
- "The Music of Melodrama" and "Staging Spectacle." Presentation and workshop given as a Visiting Scholar of the Residential Option in Arts and Letters (ROIAL), Michigan State University (April 2005).
- "Male Madness and the Three Marias." Two-hour lecture-seminar presented at the Minnesota Opera in conjunction with a production of Donizetti's *Maria Padilla*, Minneapolis, MN (February 2005).
- "The Sound of Spectacle: Seducing the Eye and Ear." Study seminar/panel participant at the annual meeting of the American Society for Theater Research, Las Vegas, NV (November 2004).
- "Resonant Bodies: The Sounding Image in D. W. Griffith's *Orphans of the Storm*." Paper read at the annual meeting of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, U. S. Chapter, Charlottesville, VA (October 2004).
- "Magical and Musical Incantation: Busoni's *Faust*." Pre-performance lectures given at the San Francisco Opera (June 2004).
- "Echoing Space and Remembered Cries in Verdi's *Il trovatore*." Pre-performance lectures given at the San Francisco Opera (June 2003).

"Noise, Sentiment, and the Body in and around Rossini's Comic Operas." Presentation given to the Townsend Center for the Humanities, UC Berkeley (November 2002).

"Verdi's Prisoners, Sleepwalkers, Spirits." Paper read at the conference "Primal Scenes: Staging and Interpreting Verdi's Operas," Berkeley, CA (November 2001).

"Gothic Shudders: Discourses of the Body in Donizetti's *Maria de Rudenz*." Paper read at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Atlanta, GA (November, 2001) and at the annual meeting of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism, Seattle, WA (August 2001).

"The Sentimental Body in Paisiello's *Nina*." Invited lecture presented to Comedy in Musical Theater seminar, UC Berkeley (October 2001).

"Voice, Desire, and the Trouser Role in *Der Rosenkavalier*." Paper read at the Feminist Theory and Music IV conference, Charlottesville, VA (June 1997).

"Blurring Boundaries: Music and Subjectivity in *M. Butterfly*." Paper read at the Feminist Theory and Music III conference, Riverside, CA (June 1995).

AWARDS AND HONORS

Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Award for a Manuscript in Italian Studies, 2020.

The prize is awarded each year by the Modern Language Association to "an author of an outstanding manuscript dealing with any aspect of the languages and literatures of Italy."

Alfred Einstein Award, 2014 (for "Encountering the *improvvisatrice* in Italian Opera.")

Awarded by the American Musicological Society for an article of "exceptional merit" by a scholar in the early stages of her career.

NEH Summer Stipend, 2010.

AMS 50 Dissertation Fellowship, American Musicological Society, 2003-2004.

Mabelle McLeod Lewis Memorial Fellowship, 2002-03.

Fellow, Townsend Center for the Humanities, UC Berkeley, 2002-03.

Chancellor's Dissertation Fellowship (honorary), UC Berkeley, 2002-03.

Women's Studies Dissertation Grant, Woodrow Wilson National Foundation, 2002.

Italian Studies Summer Research Grant, UC Berkeley, 2002.

Teaching Effectiveness Award, UC Berkeley, 2001.

Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, UC Berkeley, 2001.

Graduate Division Summer Fellowship, UC Berkeley 2001.

Humanities Research Grant, Graduate Division, UC Berkeley 2000.

Graduate Fellowships, University of Virginia, 1994-1996.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Eastman School of Music (Fall 2004-present)

Graduate Seminars

The Musician's Body
Romanticism and Improvisation
Singers in Nineteenth-Century Opera
Voice and Spectacle in the Twentieth Century
Introduction to Musicology
Classicism, Romanticism, Opera
Nineteenth-Century Opera: Texts and Acts
Stage to Screen
Operatic Collaboration
Staging Italy in Nineteenth-Century Opera
Toscanini in American Musical Life

Graduate Surveys

Music in the Classic Period
Music in the Nineteenth Century

Undergraduate Courses

Stage to Screen
Toscanini and American Musical Life
Music and the Literary Imagination
Music and Society, 1780-1880
Music and Society, 1880-2000

University of California, Berkeley, Department of Music

Instructor (Summer 2003)

Introduction to Western Art Music (Middle Ages to the Present)

Head Teaching Assistant (Fall 2001-Spring 2002)

Introduction to Music

Teaching Assistant

Musical Culture and Musical Style in Europe, 1700-1850 (Fall 2000)

Twentieth-Century Music (Spring 2001)

Introduction to Music (Fall 1999-Spring 2000)

SERVICE

Advising

Musicology:

Cindy Kim (Independent Scholar/College teacher in Boston and New York City) – Primary Advisor. Received the Ph.D. in 2011 for dissertation “Changing Meanings of Ornamentation in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera.”

Kim Teal (Assistant Professor, University of North Texas) – Primary Advisor. Received the Ph.D. in 2012 for dissertation “Living Traditions: Embodying Heritage in Contemporary Jazz Performance.”

Sarah Fuchs (Assistant Professor, Syracuse University)– Primary Advisor. Received the Ph.D. in 2016 for dissertation “Operatic Artifacts: Technology and Opera in Fin-de-siècle France.”

Eric Lubarsky (Senior Editor, Carnegie Hall) – Primary Advisor. Received the Ph.D. in 2018 for dissertation “Reviving Early Music: Metaphors and Modalities of Life and Living in Historically Informed Performance.”

Megan Steigerwald-Illie (Currently Assistant Professor, Educator of Musicology at College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati.)—Primary Advisor. Received the Ph.D. in 2018 for dissertation “Bringing Down the House: Situating and Mediating Opera in the Twenty-First Century.”

Jane Sylvester—Primary Advisor. Received PhD in May 2021 for dissertation entitled “Spectacles of Sensational Science: Locating the ‘Real’ Bodies of *verismo* Opera.” Awarded ACLS/Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2020-21.

Stephen Armstrong—Primary Advisor. Received PhD in May 2021 for dissertation entitled “Operatic Mobilities: Italian Opera as Tourist Exchange, 1770-1830.”

Pallas Catanella Choi Riedler—Primary Advisor. Dissertation in progress entitled “Virtual Ontologies and Spectral Space: Opera and Immersive Technology in the Long Nineteenth Century.”

Matthew Morrow – Second Reader. Received the Ph.D. in 2011 for dissertation “‘Complex Impressions’: Nature in the Music and Criticism of Claude Debussy.”

Non-Musicology Dissertations, committee member:

Marco Alunno, composition (Topic: Wagner and film—completed 2006)

Julie Scott, music education (Topic: Orff Schulwerk and singing pedagogy—completed 2010)

Doctoral Theses, Advisor

Irina Georgieva, choral conducting (Topic: Verdi's *Quattro Pezzi Sacri*, completed 2012)

Richard Masters, accompanying (Topic: Opera companies in early 20th-century America, in progress)

Lecture Recitals:

Sophia Ahmad, piano (Fall 2013—Schumann's *Waldszenen* and Romantic ideas of nature)
Andrew Gilchrist, voice (Fall 2013—Wagner's tenors)
Mario Martinez, voice (Fall 2009—Felice Varesi and Verdi's "acting" singers)
Andres Gomez-Bravo (Fall 2010—Haydn's keyboard music)
Ted Christopher, voice (Spring 2009—Mahler's symphonic songs)
Hyery Hwang, accompanying (Spring 2009—Changing form in 19th-c. Italian opera)
Lisa Raposa, accompanying (Fall 2007—Ruth Crawford Seeger)
Yvonne Douthat, voice (Spring 2007—Mahler's songs of war)
Mark Di Pinto, piano (Spring 2007—John Cage's piano works)
Chol Min Jin, voice (Spring 2006—Verdi's heroes)
Mune Sugitani, voice (Fall 2005—The development of the Verdian baritone)

Service

Graduate Advisor
Graduate Professional Committee
Musicology Graduate Admissions Committee
Eastman T.A. Teaching Prize Committee
Charles Warren Fox Prize Committee
DMA Admissions Folder Review
Alfred Mann Dissertation Prize
Adviser/Coordinator of Doktoranden
Co-Coordinator, Musicology Symposia and Colloquia
Lecture Committee
Co-Coordinator of Faculty/Student Symposia
Musicology PhD General Qualifying Exams
Elsa Johnson Fellowship
Glenn Watkins Traveling Fellowship Committee
DMA Comprehensive Written Exams
Foreign Language Exams

General

Evaluation of music history entrance exams
Organizer of two colloquia on grant-writing and applying for dissertation fellowships for Musicology graduate students
Hosted Musicology Doctoral Exam prep session
Ongoing Service on DMA oral exams
Advise DMA and PhD students on graduate school applications, grant applications and editing proposals

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Co-organizer of "Film Lost and Found," a multi-day event celebrating early and pre-cinema held March 18-21, 2010 at the Eastman School of Music,

George Eastman House and the University of Rochester, funded by the UR Humanities Project.

Overview and Program:

<http://www.rochester.edu/college/humanities/projects/archive09-10.php?silentcinema&events>

Post-event report:

<http://www.rochester.edu/college/humanities/projects/archive09-10.php?silentcinema&report>

Editor for *repercussions*, UC Berkeley's graduate student journal, 1999-2004.

Founder of informal Dissertation Working Group (2002-2004) and summer Reading Group in Critical Theory (2001) for graduate students in the Berkeley Music Department.

Member of the American Musicological Society.

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

Paid alto section leader, St. John's Presbyterian Church Choir, Berkeley, CA, 2003-2004.

Recorder and alto, Collegium Musicum, University of Virginia, 1994-1995.

Percussionist, African Music Ensemble, University of Virginia, 1995.

Alto, Festival Chorale, Macalester College, 1992-1994.

Flautist, African Music Ensemble, Macalester College, 1990-1991.

Piano teacher, Wieck-Schumann School of Music, Wayzata, MN, 1990-1991.

Piano lessons with Beth Anderson (Minneapolis, MN), Donald Betts (Macalester College), and Mimi Tung (UVA), 1976-1996.

LANGUAGES

Proficient in Italian and French. Competent in German.