

THE SPOKENWEB SYMPOSIUM 2021

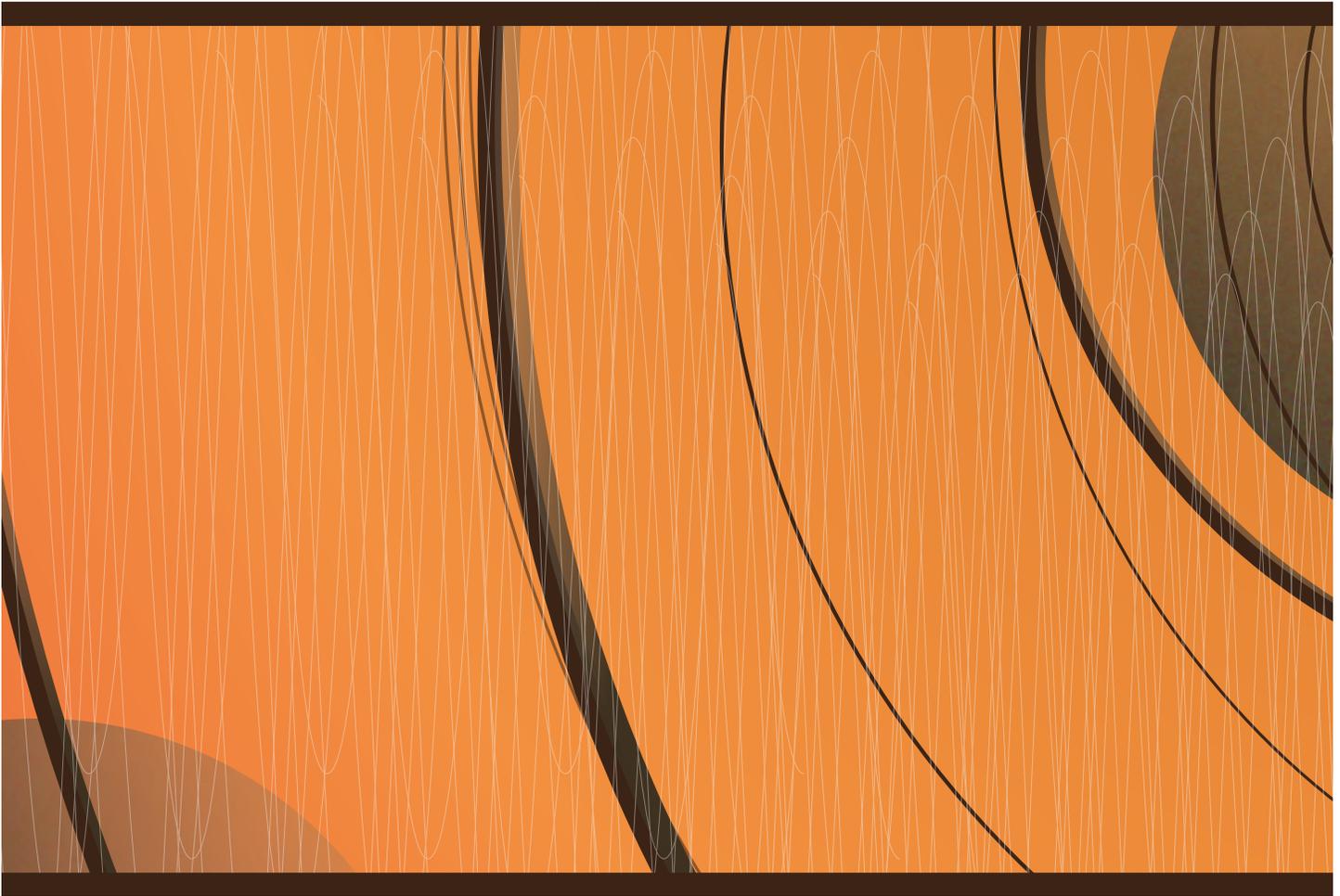
LISTENING A VIRTUAL MEETING OF SOUND AND LITERATURE

SOUND AGENCY

May
18 - 23
2021

#SWSymposium2021

ABOUT THE SPOKENWEB SYMPOSIUM 2021



LISTENING, SOUND, AGENCY

An International Scholarly Symposium

May **18-23**, 2021

ONLINE

Listening to sound entails scenarios of subjection and agency. In Althusserian terms we might say that we are persistently interpellated, or hailed into positions of listening subjects in society, requiring us to engage in or with the cultural assumptions and techniques that those listening positions entail. But listening may also represent a capacity for agency. In *Sonic Agency: Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance*, Brandon LaBelle, elaborates upon this idea, stating that to listen is “to perceive the ever-changing relations in which the self is always embedded.” As LaBelle proceeds to explore a series of sonic figures, he outlines a complex roster of listening modalities in which listening is inherently relational.

The SpokenWeb Symposium aims to explore a broad range of disciplinary and methodological approaches that reflect upon the relationship between our three keywords: Listening, Sound, and Agency. The event prioritizes the development of new theories and practices for underrepresented voices in audio archives. It will feature plenary talks from **Dylan Robinson** (Queen’s U), **Jonathan Sterne** (McGill), **Mara Mills** (NYU), and **Nina Sun Eidsheim** (UCLA).

The entire symposium will be held via Zoom and is open to the public. All times indicated in the symposium schedule are Eastern Time (ET) as the symposium events will be hosted from Montréal, Canada.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



GIVING/TAKING NOTICE

Dylan Robinson (Queen's U)

Moderated by Deanna Fong (Concordia U)

Wednesday, May 19th

5:00 - 6:30pm

Dylan Robinson is a xwélmexw (Stó:lō/Skwah) artist and writer. He is also an Associate Professor at Queen's University, where he holds the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Arts. He is the author of *Hungry Listening* (Minnesota, 2020) on Indigenous and settler colonial forms of listening. His current research focuses on the material and sonic life of Indigenous ancestors held by museums, and reparative artistic practices that address

these ancestors' incarcerations in museums. Other publications include the co-edited collection *Music and Modernity Among First Peoples of North America* (Wesleyan, 2019) which received both the AMS's Ruth Solie Award for best collection and the Society for Ethnomusicology's Ellen Koskoff Prize for edited collections.



RE-WRITING ALGORITHMS FOR JUST RECOGNITION: From Digital Aural Redlining to Accent Activism

Nina Sun Eidsheim (UCLA)

Moderated by Michelle Levy (SFU)

Thursday, May 20th

1:30 - 3:00pm

Nina Sun Eidsheim studied vocal performance, composition, and philosophy at the University of Agder (Norway) and The Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus (Denmark) before pursuing an MFA in Music at the California Institute of the Arts. She completed her Ph.D. in critical studies/experimental practices program at the University of California, San Diego. Eidsheim is the author of *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice* (Duke, 2015) and *The Race of Sound: the Micropolitics*

of Listening to Vocal Timbre and Vocality in African-American Popular Music (Duke, 2019). She is Professor of Musicology at the Herb Alpert school of Music, UCLA, where she has just launched the PEER (Practice-Based Experimental Epistemology Research) Lab, an experimental research lab dedicated to decolonizing data, methodology, and analysis through creative practice.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



OF TAPE AND TIME: Compressing and Expanding Sound in the Analog Era

Jonathan Sterne (McGill U)

Moderated by Katherine McLeod (Concordia U)

Friday, May 21st

11:00am - 12:30pm

Jonathan is James McGill Professor of Culture and Technology at McGill University. He is author of *MP3: The Meaning of a Format* (Duke, 2012), *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Duke, 2003); and numerous articles on media, technologies and the politics of culture. He is also editor of *The Sound Studies Reader* (Routledge, 2012) and

co-editor of *The Participatory Condition in the Digital Age* (Minnesota, 2016). He is at work on two books: *Diminished Faculties: A Political Phenomenology of Impairment*, and *Tuning Time: Histories of Sound and Speed*, co-authored with Mara Mills, and beginning a project on artificial intelligence and culture.



WHAT IS AMPLIFICATION?

Mara Mills (NYU)

Moderated by Jenterey Sayers (U Victoria)

Saturday, May 22nd

1:00 - 2:30pm

Mara Mills is Associate Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University, where she co-founded and co-directs the NYU Center for Disability Studies (CDS). She is also a founding editor of the journal *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* (winner of the 2020 4S STS Infrastructure Award). Mills works at the intersection of sound studies and disability studies. Most recently, she co-edited the book *Testing Hearing: The Making of Modern Aurality* (Oxford, 2020) with Viktoria Tkaczyk and Alexandra Hui. She has published articles

in *Grey Room*, *differences*, *Social Text*, *PMLA*, and *Technology & Culture*, among many other academic journals. Her public arts and humanities writing can be found at sites like *Triple Canopy*, *Artforum*, *Public Books*, *Somatosphere*, and *AVIDLY*—a channel of the Los Angeles Review of Books. Her writing has been translated into German, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. More details about her research, grants, and awards can be found at maramills.org.

PLENARY EVENTS

PRACTICING WITH SOUND

Tuesday, May 18th
6:00 - 8:00pm

Julieanna Preston (Massey U, NZ),
“*Tryst’s Sympathetic Entanglements*”

Julieanna Preston is Professor of Spatial Practice and Coordinator of Master of Fine Arts, at Massey University’s College of Creative Arts, Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa/ in Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara/ Wellington, Aotearoa/ New Zealand. Her practice draws from the disciplines of architecture, art and philosophy, and her background in interior design, building construction, landscape gardening and performance writing.

Dayna McLeod (McGill U), “*Queerly Circulating Sound and Affect in Intimate Karaoke, Live at Uterine Concert Hall*”

Dayna McLeod is a performance and video artist whose work uses humour and capitalizes on exploring the body’s social and material conditions using performance-based practices for cabaret and video. She is a lecturer at the Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies at McGill U and has recently taught a graduate seminar on Queer Aesthetics in Studio Arts at Concordia U, in Montreal.

Teresa Connors (International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation), “*Environmental Data and Audiovisual Installations through an Intra-active Lens*”

Teresa Connors is Associate Researcher at the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation. She is an active creative coder, audiovisual installation and interdisciplinary artist.

INTERNATIONAL DEBUT OF “SMALL STONES”: a work in poetry, sound, music and typography

Saturday, May 22nd
5:00 - 7:00pm

Specially commissioned for the Listening, Sound, Agency Symposium, Griffin-award-winning poet **Kaie Kellough**, designer and artistic director of LOKI studios, **Kevin Yuen Kit Lo**, and Constellation recording artist and saxophonist **Jason Sharp**, collaborate on an interdisciplinary work. Titled *Small Stones*, the work is a collage of references from the writing of Caribbean and Latin-American authors. Drawing on the history and settling of the Americas, *Small Stones* blends vocal performance with dynamic musical improvisation. As language becomes visual and sonic, it fragments and reassembles. This trio has collaborated on several performance installations, notably UBGNLSWRE for the Aga Khan Museum (Toronto, 2020), and FYEAR for the Jazz Ahead Festival (Bremen, 2021). These artists take on the challenge of the online stage and merge their various disciplines into a generative interplay of experimental poetry, sound, music, and typography. Join to experience the premiere of this new piece, followed by a virtual conversation with the performers.



Kaie Kellough



Kevin Yuen Kit Lo



Jason Sharp

PLENARY EVENTS

The Words and Music Show

Sunday, May 23rd
8:00 - 9:30pm

Hosted by Ian Ferrier and Jason Camlot

On the conference's closing night, we are partnering with poet, curator, and SpokenWeb community affiliate Ian Ferrier (Wired on Words) to co-host a special edition of the Words and Music Show, a literary and performance cabaret that has been running in Montréal for over twenty years.

In this special symposium edition of the Words and Music Show, conference participants are invited to present original creative works and collaborations, including poetry readings and performance, music, sound art, dance, and everything in-between.

Whether you intend to perform or observe, we hope you'll join us as we conclude our conference in a spirit of creativity and celebration.



Photo Credit thepointofsale.com/casa-del-popolo

MAY 18th

6:00PM

6:30PM

7:00PM

7:30PM

8:00PM

1.0

6:00 - 8:00pm

PLENARY EVENT: Practicing With Sound

Moderated by Ali Barillaro, Klara du Plessis, Emma Telaro (Concordia U)

A curated panel of three scholar-practitioners (**Julieanna Preston, Dayna McLeod, Teresa Connors**) presenting work from their critical-creative practice. Graduate students Ali Barillaro, Klara du Plessis

and Emma Telaro from Concordia U will facilitate this session and lead a Q&A with the panelists.

MAY 19th

PANELS DAY 1

11:00AM

11:30AM

12:00PM

12:30PM

1:00PM

1:30PM

2:00PM

2:30PM

3:00PM

1.1

11:00am - 12:30pm

PLENARY PANEL: Teaching with Sound / Sound and Pedagogy

Moderated by Aphrodite Salas
(Concordia U)

Leah Van Dyk (U Calgary)

"Listenings of the (in)Accessible: Community
Building and Public-Facing Pedagogy
in Audio Archives"

Nicole Brittingham Furlonge
(Columbia U)

"'New Ways to Make Us Listen': Exploring
the Possibilities for Sonic Pedagogy"

**Samuel K. Adesubokan, Julie
Funk, Faith Ryan, and Jentery
Sayers** (SpokenWeb at UVic)

"Designing Prompts for Literary
Audio Studies"

BREAK

12:30 - 1:30pm

1.2

1:30 - 3:00pm

1.2A - VOICE TECHNOLOGIES AND MATERIALS: Interdisciplinary approaches to sound, noise and the mediated voice

Chair: Tanya Clement (U Texas
at Austin)

**Philippe-Aubert Gauthier,
Georges Roussel, François
Proulx, Nicolas Bernier** (UQAM)

"Listening to Acoustic Metamaterials:
A Futuristic Speculation on Acoustic Lens"

Karine Bouchard (Université
du Québec à Trois-Rivières)

"Listening to Noise in the Art Gallery:
A Way to Challenge the Visitor's Experience"

Chris Mustazza (U Penn)

"Distant Listening as Hermeneutic Method:
Computational Prostheses, Sonic Genre,
and the Poetic Audiotext"

1.2B - ARCHIVES OF HISTORICAL LISTENING: Histories of listening in different political and media contexts

Chair: Andrea Murray (U Calgary)

Caroline Kita (U St. Louis)

"Anxious Ears: Listening to Postwar
German Radio"

Renée Altergott (Princeton U)

"The Listener as Colonized: The Phonograph
and the Scramble for Africa"

Kevin McNeilly (UBC)

"Sounding the Living Archive: Listening
with Dálava"

3:00PM 3:30PM 4:00PM 4:30PM 5:00PM 5:30PM 6:00PM 6:30PM 7:00PM 7:30PM

**WORKSHOP:
“Noticing,
Noting and
Notating
Sound”**

3:00 - 3:30pm

Hosted by Angus Tarnawsky
(Concordia U)

This workshop will provide a practical set of resources for how to document your perspective on everyday sonic moments. Techniques and strategies discussed in this session are suggested as ways of approaching the daily collective sound walk.

These sessions, the first of which is at the conclusion of this workshop, are an invitation to get outside—wherever that may be for you—and to “de-Zoom” for a few moments each day. To participate, any combination of the following are required: (1) curiosity; (2) a smart phone (or audio recording device and camera); (3) a pen/pencil and notebook/paper.

**COLLECTIVE
SOUND WALK**

3:30 - 4:30pm

BREAK

4:30 -
5:00pm

1.3

5:00 - 6:30pm

**PLENARY TALK: Dylan
Robinson (Queen’s U)**

Moderated by Deanna Fong
(Concordia U)

Giving/Taking Notice

How do we sense the materialization of colonialism in institutional and quotidian daily structures of relation? Hungry listening—as one among many practices of settler colonial perception—is a set of extractive listening practices indexed by the term *xwelitem* (starving person) that *xwelmexw* (Stó:lō people) use to describe settlers. Yet hungry listening is just one way that positionality and perception intertwine to produce different modes of settler listening that are context-specific and non-generalizable. To develop an awareness of the various norms and habits of settler listening positionality requires that we learn to notice different moments of intersection. This learning to notice is not undertaken as a means to amass a comprehensive catalogue of settler perception’s “bad surprises” (Sedgwick). Instead, noticing such moments attune us to positionality’s material emergence (habitual timbres, rhythm, and tempi), and provide new possibilities for improvisation.

DISCORD CAFÉ

6:30 - 8:00pm

MAY 20th

PANELS DAY 2

11:00AM

11:30AM

12:00PM

12:30PM

1:00PM

1:30AM

2:00PM

2:30PM

3:00PM

2.1

11:00am - 12:30pm

2.1A - QUEER VOICE AND AGENCY: Sound as Resonating Queerly Through and Across Bodies and Communities

Chair: Hannah McGregor (SFU)

Moynan King (York U)

"Queer Resonance: Trans Vocality
and Transtemporal Collaboration"

Mathieu Aubin (Concordia U)

"Listening for Queer Sonic Resonances
in the Sir George Williams University
Poetry Series"

Victoria Roskams (Oxford U)

"Queer Listening to Trilby and Teleny"

2.1B - ETHICS OF LISTENING

Chair: Felicity Tayler (U Ottawa)

Spy Dénommé-Welch (Western U)
and **Catherine Magowan** (Brock U)

"Pivoting towards a Key Change: Indigenous
Knowledge Systems in Sonic Production
to facilitate Embodied Understanding"

Jason Wiens (U Calgary)

"The Sound of the Found: Ethics,
Appropriative Poetics, and the Sir
George Williams Reading Series"

Katharina Fuerholzer (U Penn)

"Aphasic Poetry and the Ethics of Listening"

BREAK

12:30 - 1:30pm

2.2

1:30 - 3:00pm

Plenary Talk: Nina Sun Eidsheim (UCLA)

Moderated by Michelle Levy (SFU)

RE-WRITING ALGORITHMS FOR JUST RECOGNITION: From Digital Aural Redlining to Accent Activism

In the mid-1950s, the Eastman Kodak Company famously standardized their Shirley cards test, which used a photograph of a white woman to calibrate color when printing photos. Jersson Garcia, who worked at a photo lab told the NPR: "She was the standard," so whenever we printed anything, we had to pull Shirley in. If Shirley looked good, everything else was OK. If Shirley didn't look so hot that day, we had to tweak something — something was wrong." Around the Christmas shopping season of 2009, we saw the same premise illustrated by YouTube videos featuring Hewlett Packard webcams that "can't see black people." I argue that, in the same way as Kodak film and HP cameras were calibrated for white skin colour, voice- and listening technologies also carry and reproduce the same social bias, discrimination, and racism. Akin to discriminatory real estate and lending-practice redlining, I dub these practices digital aural redlining. I also identify oppositional uses of these technologies that could counter essentializing practices as aural redline jamming. Considering the vocal synthesis software Vocaloid, voice to text technology, and the Voice Bank Monopoly game, I show how vocal and listening technology listens for, against, and in non-recognition of certain accents, vocal performances standing in for non-whiteness. I conclude by calling for each (accented) accent to be justly recognized, affording each voice its multiplicity and humanity.

3:30PM

4:00PM

4:30PM

5:00PM

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6:00PM

6:30PM

7:00PM

7:30PM

**COLLECTIVE
SOUND WALK**
3:30 - 4:30pm

BREAK
4:30 -
5:00pm

2.3
5:00 - 6:30pm
**2.3A - MUSIC AS
ETHNOGRAPHIC SOUND:
Listening to the socio-political
resonance of musical sounds
and sound performance**

Chair: Sadie Barker (Concordia U)

Kate Galloway (Rensselaer
Polytechnic Institute, NY)

"Playing and Listening to the Sounds of
Extraction, Surveillance, and Curation
as Environmental Monitoring in Games"

Ellen Waterman (Carleton U)

"Imagining Otherness Then and Now:
Patria Three: The Greatest Show and
Anthropologies imaginaires"

Junting Huang (Cornell U)

"Animating Sound Bodies: Listening
to Nakasi in Taiwan's Labor Movement"

**2.3B - CORPOREAL
LISTENING: Listening to
the body through textual
and graphic scores and
media formats**

Chair: Karis Shearer (UBCO)

Katherine McLeod (Concordia U)
and **Emily Murphy** (UBCO)

"bill bissett: technoscores
for voice-movement"

Shannon Maguire (Algoma U)

"Noise, Resistance and Sonic Composition
in Leonora Carrington's Paintings
and Prose"

Andrew McEwan (Brock U)

"'Selvesothers' in Performance: Hannah
Weiner's Community Performance
Hearing-Voices Listening"

DISCORD CAFÉ
6:30 - 8:00pm

MAY 21st

PANELS DAY 3

11:00AM

11:30AM

12:00PM

12:30PM

1:00PM

1:30AM

2:00PM

2:30PM

3:00PM

3.1

11:00am - 12:30pm

PLENARY TALK: Jonathan Sterne (McGill U)

Moderated by Katherine McLeod (Concordia U)

OF TAPE AND TIME: Compressing and Expanding Sound in the Analog Era

This talk examines the development of analog time-compression and time-expansion technology in the analog tape era. While traditional tape playback could not be sped up or slowed down without affecting the pitch of playback, after World War II a number of devices that could overcome this problem became available. While still quite expensive, they were taken up by blind readers, avant-garde composers, educators, broadcasters, cryptographers, speech researchers, and communication engineers—all populations who had an interest in manipulating playback speed. While the technology is now ubiquitous today and available in standard software like Audible, Pro Tools, and YouTube, this earlier generation's reflections on tape and time provide new clues into the meaning and politics of media playback.

BREAK

12:30 - 1:30pm

3.2

1:30 - 3:00pm

3.2A - SONIC SPACES: A panel on space, sound, and listening

Chair: Julieanna Preston (Massey U, NZ)

Andre Furlani (Concordia U)
"Sound Walks/ Sounds Walk"

Klara du Plessis (Concordia U)
"From Poetry Reading to Performance Art: Agency of Deep Curation Practice"

Julia Polyck-O'Neill (Brock U)
"Lisa Robertson's Archive, Singular and Collective: Feminist Subversions to Institutional Memory"

3.2B - HEARING VOICES/AUDITORY HALLUCINATIONS: A panel on disembodied voices from the disciplinary perspectives of virtual reality, psychiatry and literary performance

Chair: Marit MacArthur (UC Davis)

**Jon Saklofske (Acadia U) and
Deanna Fong (Concordia U)**
"Reversing the Sacrifice: Auditory Verbal Hallucination and the Productive Disruption of Localization in Virtual Reality Experiences"

Robert Stacey (U Ottawa)
"Sounding Degree Zero: Listening to Zombies, Hearing Ourselves"

Kevin Zemmour, Philippe-Aubert Gauthier, Sandrine Rousseau (U Montreal), and Laurie Pelletier (U Sherbrooke)

"Listening to Our Voices Experience"
Project: Empathy for Voice Hearers"

3:30PM

4:00PM

4:30PM

5:00PM

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6:00PM

6:30PM

7:00PM

7:30PM

**COLLECTIVE
SOUND WALK**

3:30 - 4:30pm

BREAK

4:30 -
5:00pm

3.3

5:00 - 6:30pm

**PLENARY PANEL:
UNVOICING: A panel
about the politics and
poetics of voices
and silence**

Moderated by Jason Camlot
(Concordia U)

Eric Schmaltz (Sheridan)

"Poetics of the Unvoice: The Mouths
That Do Not Speak in the Poetries of M.
NourbeSe Philip and Gerry Shikatani"

Kristin Moriah (Queen's U)

"Playing the Red Record: Ida B. Wells
and the Politics of Voice"

Smaro Kamboureli (U Toronto)

"Storying Chrystos's Oral Life Story:
The Making of an Archive"

THANK YOU.

**Closing Remarks.
Future Projects.
Announcing
Weekend Events.**

6:30 - 7:30pm

MAY 22nd

1:00PM

1:30PM

2:00PM

2:30PM

3:00PM

4.1

1:00 - 2:30pm

PLENARY TALK: Mara Mills (NYU)

Moderated by Jenterey Sayers (U Victoria)

What is Amplification?

Amplification is an old rhetorical term for “making large”: adding detail, repeating, extending in amount or in space. In the nineteenth century, it was occasionally used to describe the mechanical increases in loudness afforded by things like ear trumpets—however terms like “magnification” or “increase” were just as often used. Similarly, in the 1870s Emile Berliner and David Edward Hughes used the language of “magnification” and “multiplication” when discussing their improvements to telephone transmitters—devices later known as microphones.

In the 19-teens, Irving Langmuir and H.D. Arnold patented new vacuum tubes to “amplify” voltage or electrical current; they called these electronic components “amplifiers.” For Arnold, working in the Bell Telephone System, vacuum tube amplifiers were first meant to be installed as “repeaters”—components that added energy to a voice signal at different stages along a line to combat attenuation. The voice received at the end of a long-distance call would still be marked by loss of volume, but to a lesser degree.

Amplification, in other words, referred to signal gain rather than perceptual loudness. As vacuum tubes enabled the construction of longer-distance lines, American telephone engineers created a new mathematical unit to measure transmission loss and amplification—the decibel, which became an international standard. The decibel represents a physical ratio (relative signal energy) rather than “loudness” or perceptual experience.

The word amplification entered into broad usage with electronics, and since the 19-teens its popular meaning has always been divided between signal and sound. While much recent scholarly work in music has examined the impacts of microphones, loudspeakers, and amplifiers on the soundscape, aesthetics, and human perception, this talk will instead look at the telephone transmission origins of “amplification” and their legacy in present-day critiques of its measurement (the decibel).

3:30PM

4:00PM

4:30PM

5:00PM

5:30PM

6:00PM

6:30PM

7:00PM

4.2
5:00 - 7:00pm

**PLENARY EVENT -
INTERNATIONAL DEBUT
OF "SMALL STONES":
a work in poetry, sound,
music and typography**

**Kaie Kellough, Jason Sharp
and Kevin Yuen Kit Lo.**

Hosted by Jason Camlot and
Klara du Plessis

A collage of references from the writing
of Caribbean and Latin-American authors,
"Small Stones" blends vocal performance
with dynamic musical improvisation.

MAY 23rd

8:00PM

8:30PM

9:00PM

9:30PM

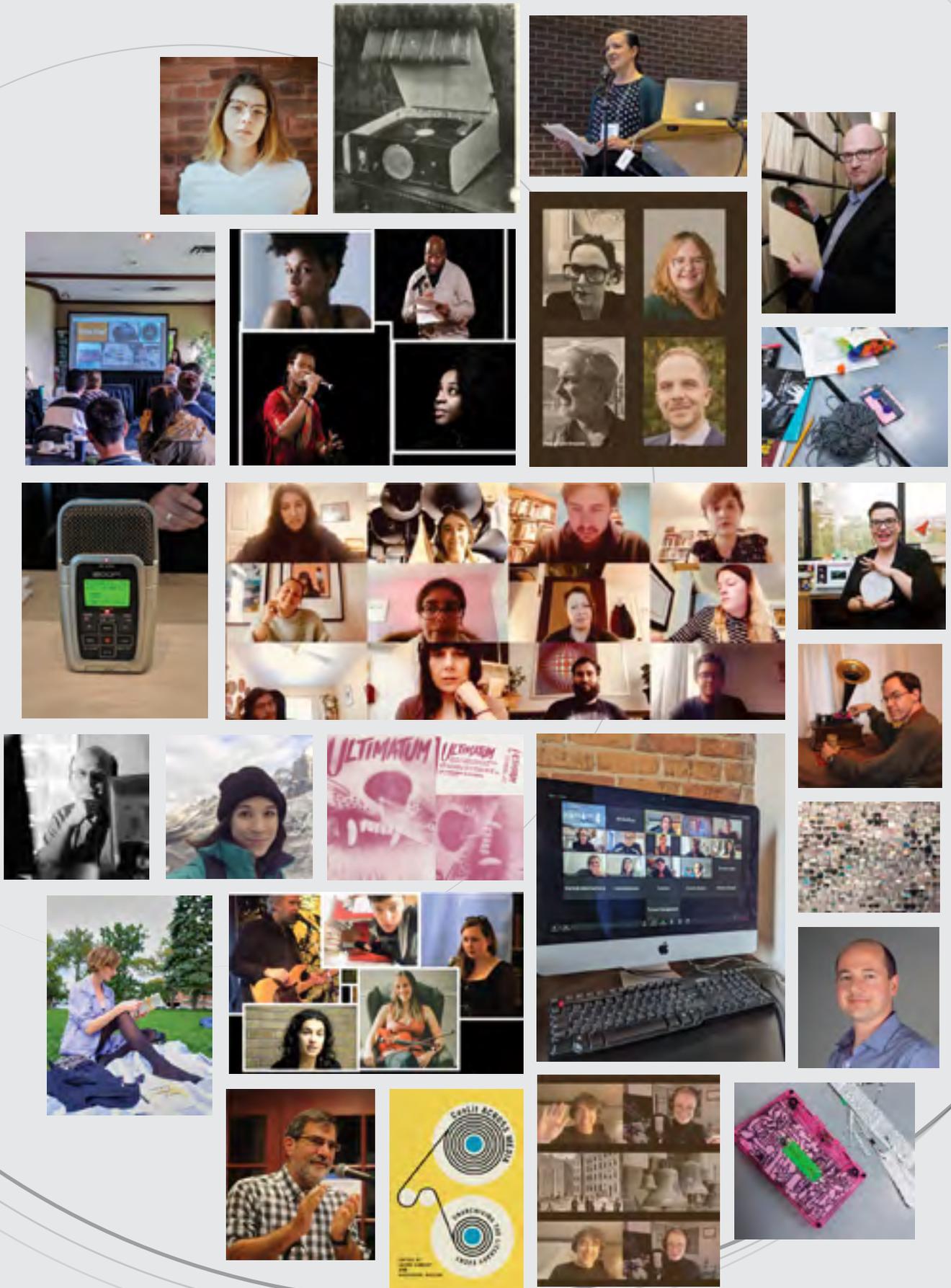
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8:00 - 9:30pm

The Words and Music Show

Hosted by Ian Ferrier and Jason Camlot

In this special symposium edition of the Words and Music Show, conference participants are invited to present original creative works and collaborations, including poetry readings and performance, music, sound art, dance, and everything in-between.



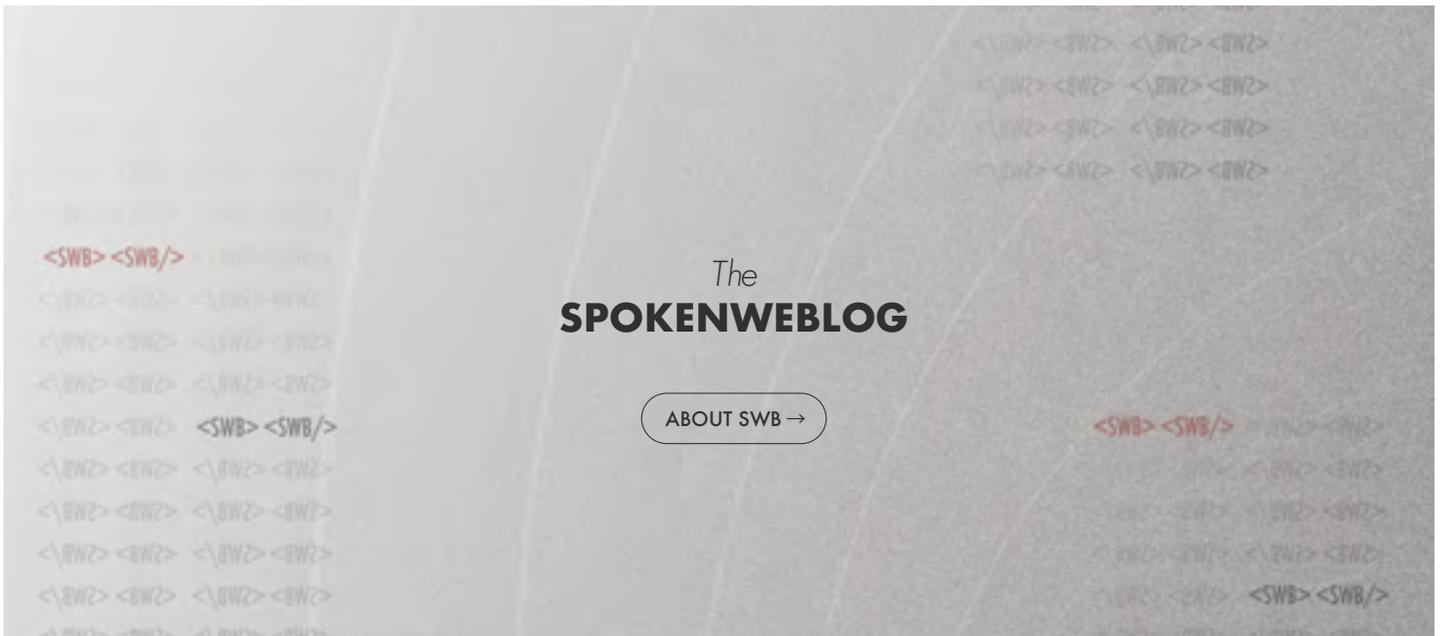
Coming soon on Archive of the Present...

The SpokenWeb Podcast
spokenweb.ca/podcast/episodes



SpokenWeb ShortCuts
spokenweb.ca/podcast/shortcuts

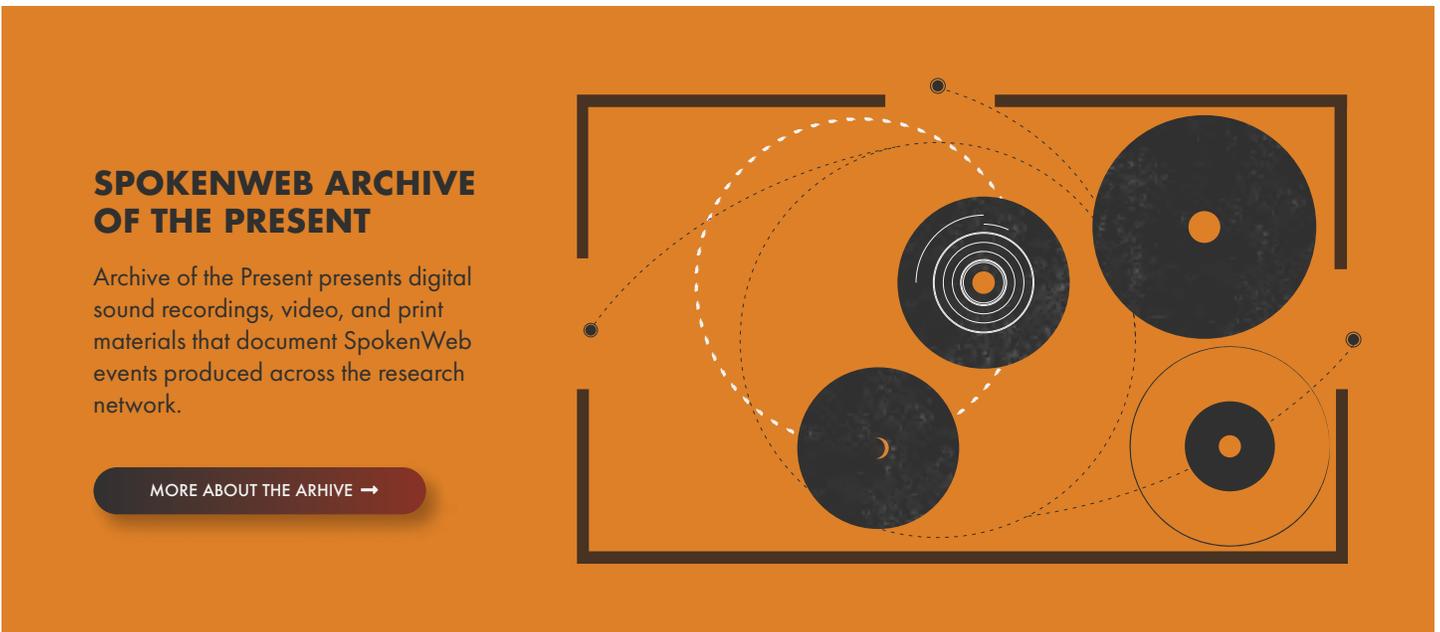




The
SPOKENWEBLOG

ABOUT SWB →

The SpokenWeblog
spokenweb.ca/spokenweblog



**SPOKENWEB ARCHIVE
OF THE PRESENT**

Archive of the Present presents digital sound recordings, video, and print materials that document SpokenWeb events produced across the research network.

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spokenweb.ca
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This program was designed by Concordia student Manami Izawa.



Social Sciences and Humanities
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Conseil de recherches en
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Canada