

2-23-2019

Neumann Lecture on Music: Dr. Guthrie P. Ramsey

Department of Music, University of Richmond

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/all-music-programs>

Part of the [Music Performance Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Department of Music, University of Richmond, "Neumann Lecture on Music: Dr. Guthrie P. Ramsey" (2019). *Music Department Concert Programs*. 756.

<https://scholarship.richmond.edu/all-music-programs/756>

This Program is brought to you for free and open access by the Music at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Music Department Concert Programs by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

Beyond Exoticism

TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT FESTIVAL
OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS 2018-19

2019 NEUMANN LECTURE ON MUSIC

Dr. Guthrie P. Ramsey

*Hide/Melt/Ghost:
Writing the Early History of African-American Music*

Saturday, February 23, 2019

7:30 p.m.

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

AS.RICHMOND.EDU/TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT

THE LEGACY OF THE NEUMANN LECTURE ON MUSIC

What do protest songs, madrigals, Mozart, cognitive neuroscience, and the Civil Rights era have in common? They've all been topics presented at the University of Richmond Neumann Lecture Series. The Department of Music started the series in 2003 to remember former music faculty member Frederick "Fritz" Neumann, who taught violin and started the University Symphony. Neumann held a Ph.D. in music education, as one might expect of a music professor. But his career was hardly a conventional one. Though he had trained as a violinist in childhood, he earned his first Ph.D. (in 1934 at the University of Berlin) in economics and political science, writing a dissertation on the stock market crash of 1929. After spending a few years working as an export-market analyst in Prague, he decided to take up the violin again — this time, more seriously. His studies took him to several major European cities — Berlin, Paris, Basel — and finally to New York, leading him to apply for United States citizenship. During the Second World War, he served in U.S. Army Intelligence for three years before resuming his music studies at Columbia University, where he earned his second Ph.D.

Starting in his late fifties, Neumann pursued yet another career with great dedication and vigor: the study of performance practices in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music. During the next few decades, he published over forty articles and three books that challenged performers and scholars to revisit long-held beliefs about how to execute musical ornaments and rhythms. He became a scholar of international renown, receiving grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, and the American Council of Learned Societies. In 1987, the American Musicological Society awarded his book, *Ornamentation and Improvisation in Mozart*, one of its highest honors: the Otto Kinkeldey prize, given annually to a book of "exceptional merit." After living for more than

*Please silence all electronic devices before the lecture and performances.
Recording of any kind and photography are strictly prohibited.*

five decades in the United States, he had planned a trip to Prague in the spring of 1994, which would have been his first return visit since 1939. But he died that year in March at age 86, after a life overflowing with accomplishment.

The Neumann Lecture Series kicked off in 2003 with Christoph Wolff, a German-educated scholar who teaches at Harvard University and studies the music of J.S. Bach. Wolff and Neumann were cut from similar cloth: both were educated in Germany and interested in eighteenth-century music, reflecting a branch of music-historical study that centered on Austro-German repertoire from centuries ago. But the scholarly interests of Neumann lecturers rapidly diversified: Susan McClary (2004) applied feminist methods of scholarship in her talk, while Kay Kaufmann Shelemay (2005) spoke about Syrian Jewish music from an ethnomusicological perspective. Guthrie Ramsey (2007) is the only speaker to date who brought his own band with him to illustrate his lecture on music in the Civil Rights movement. Opera scholar and native Londoner Roger Parker (2008) talked about a 1930 production of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* at the famed La Scala opera house. Later that year, Suzanne Cusick introduced research on the use of music as a form of torture in the U.S. "global war on terror," which she discovered through unclassified military documents and interviews with detainees and interrogators. Craig Wright (2013), who started out as a scholar of medieval music, discussed a new project in which he applied current neuroscientific knowledge of the brain to Mozart's compositional processes. Anthony Seeger (2014), nephew of folk singer Pete Seeger, talked about protest music in the 1960s, singing a few songs and accompanying himself on the guitar. In 2015, Jessie Ann Owens discussed how the Italian Renaissance composer Cipriano de Rore turned a well-known literary lament (that of Dido from Virgil's *Aeneid*) into a small-scale musical drama. In 2016, J. Peter Burkholder spoke about Charles Ives's practices as a church organist and their impact on the compositional process behind works such as his Third Symphony.

Continued ...

Ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong investigated contemporary social politics with her 2017 talk titled "Listening to Pain." Last year, George Lipsitz spoke about ethical acts of co-creation in "Accompaniment as Social Practice." This year's Neumann Lecturer, Guthrie P. Ramsey, makes a return visit to the University of Richmond to share his latest research on the history of African-American music.

ABOUT TONIGHT'S 2019 NEUMANN LECTURE

Tonight's talk represents the keynote of *Contested Frequencies: Sonic Representation in the Digital Age*, a three-day conference presented by the University of Richmond's Department of Music. The conference is part of this year's Tucker-Boatwright Festival, *Beyond Exoticism*, which investigates expression across difference and recognizes the ethical ambiguity and aesthetic complexity this entails. Musical performances, public panels, film screenings, and the *Contested Frequencies* conference highlight the dynamic and cosmopolitan histories of the many global cultures with which Western orientalists were once enamored, while also expanding its geographic scope beyond those cultures to examine the ways that contemporary artists maintain, resist, reject, and critique the impulse to exoticize others, or lend cultural legitimacy to themselves.

Contested Frequencies extends the festival's focus on issues of aesthetic decolonization, appropriation, borrowing, and influence within the context of contemporary music, broadly conceived. This multidisciplinary meeting features scholarly and creative contributions in the form of research presentations, performances, and new commissions.

Dr. Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. is a pianist, composer, and the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Term Professor of Music at the University of Pennsylvania. He's the author of *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop*; *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black*

Genius, Jazz History and the Challenge of Bebop; African American Music (Grove Kindle Editions); and, together with Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. and Melanie Zeck, *The Transformation of Black Music: The Rhythms, the Songs and the Ships of the African Diaspora*. He is currently completing two new books, a collection of mid-career essays titled *Who Hears Here?* and *Soundproof: Black Music, Magic and Racial Intimacies*, a history of African American music from the slave era to the present.

As the leader of the band *Dr. Guy's MusiQology*, he has released three recordings and has performed internationally at legendary venues such as The Blue Note in New York. Among his other musical works is "Someone Is Listening," a commission written with poet Elizabeth Alexander and commemorating the 100th anniversary of the NAACP. His documentary film *Amazing: The Tests and Triumph of Bud Powell* was a selection of the BlackStar Film Festival in 2015. He co-curated the 2010 exhibition *Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment* for the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institute, and was a contributing scholar to the Museum of Modern Art's recent exhibition *One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series and Other Works*. Ramsey is the founder and editor of the popular blog, *Musiqology.com*, which takes on musical issues of the day. He received a doctorate in musicology from the University of Michigan and taught at Tufts University before joining the University of Pennsylvania faculty in 1998. He was a Thurgood Marshall Dissertation Fellow at Dartmouth College, a DuBois Institute Fellow at Harvard University, and has held visiting professorships at Princeton University and Harvard University.

He is now expanding the MusiQology banner to include a record label, *The MusiQ Department* and a community arts program called *MusiQology Rx*. Through his musical ventures and academic studies, Ramsey hopes to reach the youth in his community and

Continued ...

help them recognize and achieve their artistic goals and endeavors.

Dr. Ramsey's lecture, "Hide/Melt/Ghost: Writing the Early History of African-American Music," is drawn from his current book-in-progress, *Soundproof: Black Music, Magic and Racial Intimacies*, which is his take on the history of African American music from the slave era to the present. It features live music and includes a film component. He writes about how the musical practices of the enslaved were deployed as an important sign of humanity, a melting pot for the diversity of African cultural groups that would become African American people, and as soundtrack for paranormal events such as spirit possession. Music did not and does not just reflect community values, it "makes" communities and creates social bonds.

The literary, musical and visual aspects of this lecture represent Dr. Ramsey's attempt to reach broader, more diverse audiences for his academic work. It also combines his activities as a scholar, musician, activist and his interests in film making.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Bridget Ramsey is a singer-songwriter influenced by jazz, R&B, reggae and classical music. She received her Bachelor of Arts in music from Spelman College and went on to perform in venues like The Blue Note in New York City and SOUTH, L'Etage, & The Painted Bride in Philadelphia. She released her debut EP *B-Eclectic* in April 2016, and her second project, *Jazz Nonstandards* in November 2018.

In addition to being a recording artist for MusiQology, Bridget is also on the Events and Planning Committee for MusiQology Rx. She hopes to be influential as a woman in music to young girls who are interested in pursuing the arts. As the daughter of the

creator, Dr. Guthrie Ramsey, she hopes the special connection she shares with her father will motivate parents in her community to encourage their children to engage in the arts.

Vince Anthony is a singer-songwriter and music producer. He just released his first EP, *Black Child: A Song Cycle*, a meditation on Black coming of age in November 2018. He's sung and worked with Ronnie Burrage, Tasha Cobbs, Dorinda Clark-Cole, Nandi Smith, and Bridget Ramsey to name a few. He has had a breadth of musical experience from being classically trained at Swarthmore College through the Chester Children's Chorus as well as steadily building a repertoire in hip-hop, R&B, electronic and acoustic soul over the last 15 years.

In addition to being a recording artist and producer for MusiQology's *The Music Department*, he also manages the Events and Planning Department for MusiQology Rx. Through MusiQology Rx, Vince hopes to help young artists further develop their skills in producing and writing their own music as well as be a role model for young Black children in his community. An example of his contribution is teaching and directing Freedom School at the St. Paul's Baptist Church in Philadelphia, PA. He attended Indiana University of Pennsylvania from 2005-2010 and currently works as an administrative assistant to Dr. Guthrie P. Ramsey at The University of Pennsylvania.

JOIN US FOR MORE!

On Sunday morning, *Contested Frequencies* will conclude with a public discussion on "Inclusivity and Change in the Richmond Music Scene," moderated by Sarmistha Talukdar of Virginia Commonwealth University, and featuring several local musicians (11:00 am – 1:00 pm, North Court room 124).



RICHMOND
School of Arts & Sciences™