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**University of Richmond  
Department of MUSIC**

**Spring 2023  
Neumann Lecture  
on Music**

# **Music After Oil**

**The place of music studies in the context  
of environmental crisis  
and vital energy transitions.**

**Dr. Sherry D. Lee, speaker  
Associate Professor of Musicology  
University of Toronto**



**[music.richmond.edu](http://music.richmond.edu)**

## The 2023 Neumann Lecture on Music

Tonight's lecture brings together music studies and the environmental humanities, to raise questions about the place of music in the context of environmental crisis and vital energy transitions. Our lives today are fundamentally shaped by fossil fuels, yet we know that oil is finite. How is music implicated in our culture's modern dependencies on a petroleum economy? Do music and soundmaking have roles to play in re-imagining petrocultures, and in just transitions to new forms of energy? These questions recognize that energy transition does not only involve issues of technology, policy, or the economics of supply: rather, it is a human and a social issue at the core of our values about the way we live. Invoking the idea of a world after oil may seem like invoking an apocalyptic future, but what if it's a promise?

### About the speaker

Sherry Lee is Associate Professor of Musicology at the University of Toronto. She is a fellow of Trinity College and Victoria College, and currently serves as the Director of the Northrop Frye Centre. Her research and teaching interests include music and modernist cultures, music and philosophy, sound media and technology studies, and discourses of music, sound, landscape and environment. She is presently leading an international research cluster in the environmental humanities, in partnership with Oxford University and the University of Pennsylvania, and she is co-editing the volume *Music, Sound, and Global Modernism* for Cambridge University Press.

### About the Neumann Lecture

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

*Please silence cell phones, digital watches, and paging devices before the lecture.*

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 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-born 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

*Continued...*

music from an ethnomusicological perspective. To mark Mozart's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2006, Nicholas Till delivered a talk centered on that composer. 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. In ensuing years, the series further broadened its scope by presenting the composer Lei Liang in 2011 and the conductor Joseph Flummerfelt in 2012.

The tenth Neumann lecturer, 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. J. Peter Burkholder (2016) spoke about Charles Ives's practices as a church organist and their impact on works such as his Third Symphony. Ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong investigated contemporary social policies with her 2017 talk titled "Listening to Pain." The following year, George Lipsitz spoke about ethical acts of co-creation in "Accompaniment as Social Practice." Guthrie Ramsey made a return visit in 2019 to share new research on the history of African-American music and its resonances of enslavement. In 2020 Tammy Kernodle historicized the role of Black women in framing the sonic contexts of Civil Rights and protest music, while in 2022 Robynn Stilwell focused on The Band's Robbie Robertson and the musical impact of his marginalized identity.

Now, twenty years after the first Neumann Lecture, the Department of Music looks forward to continuing the legacy of the series' namesake by highlighting dynamic and groundbreaking musical research.