

Virtual Study Day, 'Hymns and Race: Agency, Mobility, Coloniality' Hosted by the Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies, the International Network for Music Theology, and Durham University

The rise of discussions in 2020–2021 around decolonisation and Black Lives Matter have provided an opportunity to re-examine musical genres in light of questions about race, identity and colonial history. The genre of the hymn, in particular, is ripe for these kinds of decolonial reassessments, as the spiritual, theological and communal aspects of hymn singing, in line with the genre's history of several centuries of global missionization (most notably through the long nineteenth century), have rendered it particularly open to questions of agency, mobility and de/coloniality.

This virtual study day welcomes both local and global discussions around the genre of the hymn as a product of empire, as means of individual and communal expression, and as an aesthetic form of oppression and/or resistance. As such, the conversations that we encourage are in dialogue with academic literature on the genre of the hymn as a form of colonialism (i.e. Agawu 2016; Bohlman 1997); the cross-cultural dynamics that arise from issues of translation, conversion and self-determination (Rademaker 2018); and community singing as liberation (Hawn 2003, Whitla 2015).

We warmly invite individual abstract and roundtable panel submissions on the topic of hymns and race, broadly defined, in and beyond Christian contexts. As this is an entirely virtual event, we particularly welcome submissions from around the world, and will try, where possible, to schedule the sessions according to the speakers' time zones.

Submission guidelines:

- Individual papers (15 minutes): an abstract of c.200 words; OR:
- 1-hour Roundtables / more flexible collaborative panel submissions: please send a c.250-word description of the collaborative panel and a 50-word summary of each contribution.

Abstract Deadline: please email abstract submissions or any questions to Erin Johnson-Williams at: erin.g.johnson-williams@durham.ac.uk by no later than 20 August 2021.

Organisers: Erin Johnson-Williams (Durham) and Philip Burnett (Independent Scholar)