

Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference November 15-18, 2018 | Albuquerque, New Mexico

Roundtable: Ethnomusicology in the K-12 Classroom | Sponsored by the Applied Ethnomusicology Section

This roundtable considers the potential that ethnomusicological approaches offer in creating more socially-engaged, culturally responsive K-12 classrooms, and investigates opportunities for ethnomusicological work within primary and secondary education. The panelists are recent ethnomusicology graduates who work in the K-12 sector as teachers, folklorists, and directors of educational nonprofits. Panelist A discusses her collaborations with a Sierra Leonean rapper in advocating for a more musically inclusive classroom environment, and suggests ways ethnographer-interlocutor relationships might transition into more socially-engaged partnerships founded upon what Maisha T. Winn terms “worthy witnessing.” **Panelist B describes her efforts fostering social and cultural learning within a general music classroom. Drawing upon Patrick Schmidt’s Freirean approach to music education, she outlines a pedagogical model of music education that emphasizes the musical traditions of the students and the surrounding community.** As the director of a music education non-profit, Panelist C details his organization’s efforts to curb high school dropout rates by developing standards-aligned American music curricula that can be utilized by teachers across disciplines. Panelist D reflects on his work with a local arts council to develop afterschool music and dance programs for Paraguayan and Ghanaian youth. Through these presentations, we hope to stimulate discussion about how ethnomusicology as a discipline and SEM as an organization might more effectively expand beyond postsecondary settings, what role ethnomusicologists could play in developing public education policy and pedagogy, and what opportunities are offered to ethnomusicologists considering careers outside of the academy.

Swietlik Abstract - Building a Culturally Informed Classroom & Re-Defining the Paradigm of Music Education: Applied Ethnomusicology in Urban Public Schools

Urban public schools present a unique opportunity to explore and question the relationship between traditional music education practices and approaches in which social and cultural learning through music making take precedence. They create a space in which the educator, if amenable to re-evaluating the structures in place, can begin the process of conscientization and implement a music curriculum that invites the musical cultures of the students and their communities (Schmidt 2005: 2-3). In this process, the teacher ethnomusicologist looks beyond the paradigm of Western Art Music and into the rich and diverse music ever-present in the urban environment, taking on both the roles of ethnographer and educator. Engaging in dialogue and inquiry within the music classroom, as it relates to the cultures present, holds the potential for transformative education and new pedagogical approaches. This intersection of critical pedagogy and applied ethnomusicology in combination with the open space for curricular experimentation in urban schools prompts a conversation about the responsibility of the music educator to provide a culturally informed curriculum.