

Prism

MUSIC • WORSHIP • ARTS

YALE INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC
COMMON GROUND FOR SCHOLARSHIP AND PRACTICE

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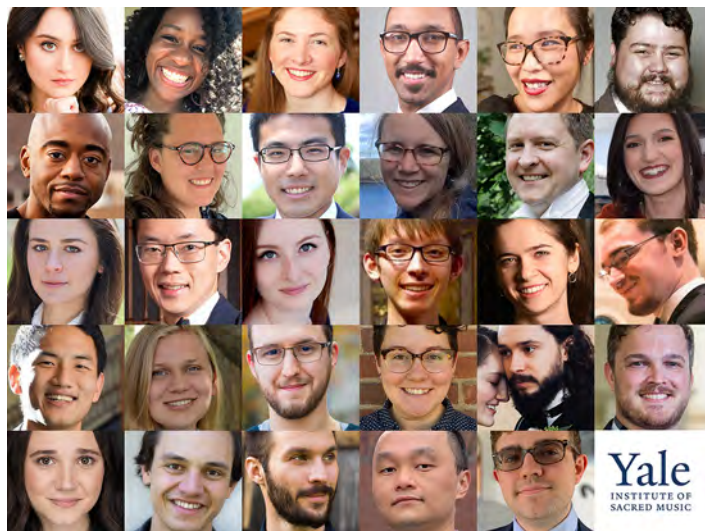
2021 Commencement Goodbye, Graduates!

*Because of pandemic precautions, the ISM was not able to celebrate its graduating students and award them their certificates in person this year. The ISM's virtual celebration featured recorded selections from the Yale Camerata's virtual spring concert, gathering music by **Mark A. Miller**, a response by the Yale Black Seminarians Choir, and an anthem by Yale Schola Cantorum.*

The School of Music held its commencement virtually, while Yale Divinity School held an in-person commencement with attendance limited to participants and the graduates themselves.

The ISM is, however, very proud of this strong and resilient class of 2021, and readers are invited to [watch the celebration on YouTube](#).

As always, many of our graduates took advantage of the opportunity to reflect on their ISM experience and look ahead to their future plans.



Arranged by Stephen Gamboa-Diaz

STUDENTS

Nia Campinha-Bacote (M.Div.) says that her time with the ISM has solidified her belief in the transformative, holy, and healing power of music. “My time spent hearing the stories of Black Death Doulas and listening to the sounds of the world around me, from the cries of protestors gathering for Breonna Taylor to the weeping whispers of the trees of Lake Wintergreen, have shown me the sonics of this

2021 Prizes and Scholarships

The Hugh Giles Prize

Emily Boring and Emily Helferty

The Hugh Porter Prize

Aaron Tan

The Edwin Stanley Seder Prize

Bin Xia

The Aidan Kavanagh Achievement Prize

Kyler Schubkegel

The Director's Prize (best Colloquium presentation)

Jim Davis and Leah Silvieus

The Richard Paul DeLong Prize

Meghan Stoll

The Faculty Prize

Nia Campinha-Bacote and Leah Silvieus

The Margot Fassler Prize in the Performance of Sacred Music

Andréa Walker

The Liturgical Studies Prize

Phoenix Gonzalez

The John W. Cook Prize in Religion and the Arts

Kelly Norris and Phoenix Gonzalez

Students' Choice for Best Colloquium Presentation

Jim Davis and Leah Silvieus

ISM Community Award

Haven Herrin

The Robert Baker Scholarship

Matthew Ingwesen

The Mary Baker Scholarship in Organ Accompanying

Manuel Piazza

The Hugh Porter Scholarship

Jenny Smith and Elizabeth Searcy

The E. Stanley Seder Scholarship

Margaret Kearney and Maddie Blonquist

The Louise E. MacLean Scholarship

Haven Herrin

The Dominique de Menil Scholarship

Clare Kemmerer

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES! CONT. FROM PAGE 1

world are dripping with the presence of Divine Love," she writes.

Rhianna Cockrell (M.M.A.) is grateful for her time at the ISM and for her generous, wonderful, brilliant colleagues. She's proud to know many of the incredible minds who will change the world!

Carolyn Craig (M.M.) is deeply grateful for her two years at the ISM, from the fantastic

education to the wonderful community. She fondly remembers organist food truck hangs, being silly and being serious at Trinity on the Green, the choral communities of which she's been a part, the Woolsey Hall organ, and almost all of her coursework. While the pandemic has been an obstacle to collaboration, 2020–2021 was a fruitful year for solo work; Carolyn won the top prize in the 2020 Arthur Poister Organ Competition online, performing from Woolsey, and will get to go to Kaliningrad for the next round of the Tariverdiev International Organ Competition in September. Carolyn looks forward to a third year at Yale, pursuing a Master of Musical Arts in organ performance, during which time she will continue to grow as a solo and collaborative organist, conductor, singer, and activist (visit amplifyfemalecomposers.org). In 2021, Carolyn will become the first female music director of The Episcopal Church at Yale.

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Choral conductors Jim Davis, Maura Tuffy, Meghan Stoll, Joe Lerangis

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Director's Remarks

Given at the online celebration of the ISM's class of 2021

May 23, 2021

Martin Jean, director

Photo by Stephen Gamboa-Diaz



Martin Jean at YDS's in person Commencement

All our lives are built on the memories we have amassed.

Good memories and bad ones make us who we are: the first time we tied our shoe; the first fight with a sibling, our first day at school, perhaps our first date, first kiss, first loss of a friend or family member.

These memories

all become as deep a part of us as the DNA in our genes.

For you all, these last two or three years have been one colossal act of memory building. There were those facts, sounds, and sights that you have learned by heart, new ideas that you have integrated into your own. There are the friendships and loves you have had here, and— and let me tell you—very few others in your lives to come will be as dear.

And would that these memories remained intact throughout our lives, as clear as the day they were formed. In fact, our memories get packed into our bodies like so many clothes into a closet. Sometimes muddled and out of order—confused as to color and size. These memories invade our dreams where they become all a jumble with fears and hopes that have gone unexpressed.

And what of the memories of this past year and a half? The fear? The trauma? The confusion? The losses? That constant nagging anxiety that by being too close to someone, by touching an object or person, by breathing out or in at the wrong time we will cause harm? Sickness? Death? And what about the millions upon millions of people for which that is the very thing that happened? In what corner of our mental closets to these memories abide, and what will happen to them in a few years?

How will we remember, for example, those who have died because of this dreaded disease or by some ill suffered or exposed on its account?

And as things get “back to normal,” will we remember the lessons we've learned? The causes for the divisions in our country due to religion and ideology? The hate speech and violence around race and other identity markers? The cancer that grows through the very tissues of our society? Or do these divisions get papered over again somehow, creating again a kind of societal amnesia?

We know that the past will always be with us. Some of these memories will become ghosts that haunt us well into the future—visiting us in our darkest nighttime hour. And for some time to come you will likely feel anger, disappointment, resentment from the losses you have suffered, from the crimes you've witnessed. You will need to find an outlet, a healthy, constructive outlet, for these feelings, because these feelings will eventually have their say.

But the story doesn't end in despair of the cataclysm that has been COVID and all of its toxic fallout. It is not only the past that can come crashing into our today—it the future may also intrude. An inbreaking of what might be. What can be. What needs to be. And—you guessed it—this is where you come in.

You as artists and interpreters of the arts have the eye that can gaze into the unknowns to come to catch a glimpse of the world as it was meant to be: a sustainable, verdant, generous, and just world that cares for and supports all that inhabit it.

It is, in fact, *the* world visioned by the One who both sees us today and peers into the mists of tomorrow. It is a world crafted by love, love that resists self-importance, that obliterates evil. This love burns away that which has no meaning. This love lives beyond death.

And you, who have caught this vision for the future and gained knowledge of the past—with the resilience, creativity, and determination you have shown at every turn during these past years—you become a co-creator, an agent for change, a builder of Love with the Spirit whose architectonic power we celebrate today. With one arm stretching back into the memories of the past and the other arm pushing forward into a vision of the future, you become a bridge, a portal, a gateway by which sound and sight, text and rite pass on the gift that none of us deserves, but with which we all are equally gifted—the gift of love.

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES! CONT. FROM PAGE 2

James Davis (M.M.) feels “blessed to have been part of such a vibrant, unique intellectual community. All the best to the incoming ISM class and a special shout out to the rising senior conductors. Peace and love!”

While a student in the ISM, **Caryne Eskridge** (M.Div.) joined classmates and instructors to explore traditions of pilgrimage and religious tourism, Christian liturgical developments across time and space surrounding death and dying, the theologies of digital media, and more. Encouraged by her time with the ISM community, she looks forward to incorporating art, material culture, and storytelling into her ministry as a (soon-to-be) ordained minister in the United Church of Christ.

Mark Florig (M.A.R.) writes that he is “surprisingly glad that I got to live through one of the most interesting years in Yale Divinity School and the Institute of Sacred Music’s history; I just wish that I could have enjoyed more time on campus with friends, colleagues, and the ISM’s free coffee machine. Although I have no memories of the quashed trip to Peru, I rejoice that I was able to journey to Salisbury and Winchester, England with several of my colleagues and **Dr. Spinks**.” Mark is looking forward to taking a gap year, during which he will “pass the time by attempting to earn some money, attending Liturgy conferences, and of course, trying to get published in peer reviewed journals. (The fact that I will be in church is a given). Hopefully, I will report back in subsequent years from a Ph.D. program that will set me up to perhaps become an ISM fellow someday.”

Clara Gerdes-Bartz (M.M.) writes, “There have been many highs (and some lows) these past two years! Of all the parts of my ISM experience, I will



Mark Florig and Wyatt Reynolds

definitely most miss her classmates, particularly the organ studio, who all became closer with one another while navigating the challenges of living under COVID. Next year, God willing, I will continue my musical work at a Catholic parish in the greater NYC area.”

Ingrid Goetz (M.A.R.) has used her time at the ISM to “broaden and complicate” research from her previous degree. She focused on the material and visual culture of the Scandinavian Reformation, as well as its reception in the 19th and 20th centuries and impact on encounters between Lutheranism and Orthodoxy in Finland. Courses taught by ISM faculty and fellows on subjects ranging from Russian iconography to ethnomusicology have been the highlight of her YDS academic career.

Phoenix Gonzalez (M.A.R.) is grateful for the infinite diversity of her three years at the ISM. From staging a medieval play set to the tune of our current climate crisis to a Colloquium Presentation about Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s lost musical treatise to a Zoom play about megachurches to co-leading the Roman Catholic Fellowship and planning Marquand Chapel worship—all of her experiences “have helped illuminate how ‘liturgical studies’ can mean the ‘performance studies’ of the church. I would have not been able to explore any of this without the support and grace of this community, including its staff, faculty, and her truly amazing fellow students.” She is grateful for all of the musicians, visual artists, dancers, poets, and other performers she has met along the way, whose work and approach to that work have been eye opening. She is especially grateful to her advisor **Teresa Berger**, all of her professors, to **Martin Jean, Kristen Forman, Caitlin MacGregor, Ray Vogel**, her classmates, her fiancé Tim, and her mom and dad. She will carry with her the friendships and interdisciplinary approach nurtured here as she begins her Ph.D. in theater and drama at Northwestern University. She says, “Thank you, all! May we be blessed as we continue our work in a world that needs faith and the arts now more than ever.”



Carolyn Craig at St. Ignatius Loyola

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Braxton Shelley Appointed to Lead New Program

The Yale Institute of Sacred Music is proud and privileged to announce the tenured appointment of Dr. **Braxton Shelley** as associate professor of sacred music, of divinity, and of music, a joint appointment in the ISM, Yale Divinity School, and Department of Music that began July 1, 2021.

Prof. Shelley comes to Yale from Harvard University to teach, to continue his path-breaking work as a theorist of African American sacred music, and to serve as faculty director of a new interdisciplinary Program in Music and the Black Church housed in the ISM. He is a scholar, an ordained minister, and an experienced church musician who will bring to Yale University much-needed attention to a vital and under-researched musical tradition.

Prof. Shelley's work with the ISM's new Program in Music and the Black Church will serve churches and the academy through conferences, performances, residencies, publications, and workshops that will be designed to analyze and teach the many musical practices of African American Christian communities and their extraordinary influence on a host of musical cultures—confessional and commercial, American and global. Through its slate of activities, the program will draw together practitioners and scholars, students and congregants, neighbors and visitors, pursuing a fuller consideration of this crucial strand of African American life and history.

"I am delighted and grateful that Dr. Shelley will join the ISM in its interdisciplinary work," said Martin Jean, director of the Institute. "His presence, and this new program that he will lead, marks a bold new way forward for the ISM to live into its mission to 'foster, explore, and study engagement with the sacred through music, worship, and the arts in Christian communities, diverse religious traditions, and public life'."

A native of North Carolina, Prof. Shelley graduated as an undergraduate with highest distinction from Duke University where he majored in music and minored in history. He then entered the Ph.D. program in the history and theory of Music at the University of Chicago. While there, he also earned a Master of Divinity degree at the University of Chicago Divinity School, upon which he was ordained in the Missionary Baptist church. In 2017, he was appointed assistant professor of music at Harvard University, where he has taught since.

Prof. Shelley is one of the most celebrated musicologists of his generation and on his way to be one of the most celebrated in any generation. He was awarded the Paul A. Pisk Prize in 2016 by the American Musicological Society (AMS) for the best paper by a graduate student. In 2018, he won the Dean's Distinguished Dissertation Award from the University of Chicago's Division of the Humanities. His field-changing article "Analyzing Gospel," which appeared in the *Journal of the AMS*, was awarded the top prizes from all three major American professional societies for music



Photo courtesy Braxton Shelley

studies: the Einstein Award from the AMS, the Kunst Prize from the Society of Ethnomusicology, and the Krims Award from the Society of Music Theory. Recognition from these three scholarly organizations illustrates the extraordinary interdisciplinary expertise Prof. Shelley brings to our campus.

Prof. Shelley's first book, *Healing for the Soul: Richard Smallwood, the Vamp, and the Gospel Imagination* was published this year by Oxford University Press, hailed by Prof. Cornel West as "the best book written on Gospel Music." He added, "This instant classic forever changes modern scholarship in contemporary music and Black cultural performance." Prof. Guy Ramsey of the University of Pennsylvania wrote, "This profound and illuminating book could only have been written by someone who's spent years on the cultural frontline: in the pulpit, behind a Hammond B-3 organ, and immersed in the archives of gospel music's history and lived experiences."

A second book, under contract with the University of California Press, is entitled *The Eternal Pitch: Bishop G.E. Patterson and the Afterlives of Ecstasy*. It analyzes the great preacher's musical style, his use of radio and other media, and the digital reverberation of his ministry after his death in 2007.

Prof. Shelley already has over a dozen articles and book chapters in press or published. He is also a frequent guest lecturer and clinician.

Braxton Shelley is no stranger to the ISM. He was a speaker at the 2018 Liturgy Conference "Full of Your Glory: Liturgy, Cosmos, Creation." He presented a paper here at the daylong symposium "Antiphony Otherwise," organized by former ISM fellow **Ashon Crawley** in April, 2019. Most recently, he was a speaker on this year's virtual series "Race, Power, and the Production of Musical Canons." The ISM looks forward to welcoming him back to his new home here.

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES! CONT. FROM PAGE 4

After getting married to his fiancée Bridget in June, **Richard Gress** (M.M.) plans to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Notre Dame this coming fall. He is excited to enter the studio of **Olukola Owolabi** (M.M. '03).

Ethan Haman (M.M.), from Fremont, California looks forward to staying at the ISM for one more year to complete a Master of Musical Arts degree in organ performance. He has enjoyed serving as organist of both Yale's Marquand Chapel and Noroton Presbyterian Church in Darien, CT for the past two years while pursuing further study in foreign languages at Yale College alongside his musical studies at the YSM and ISM. Ethan is thankful for the excellent instruction he has received from the wonderful faculty who have helped him to advance his organ performance, composition, and improvisation skills, and he is especially grateful for many memorable experiences collaborating with talented classmates here.

Gabe Kepler (M.Div.) will be residing in Fullerton, California following his graduation, as he discerns his eventual transition into full-time ministry. Among many other things, Gabe is especially grateful for the opportunities the ISM has provided to him to study Spanish abroad, given that he is interested in the possibility of soon ministering internationally. Some of his fondest memories over the past three years come from the summer he spent studying Spanish in Costa Rica, which was made possible through the help of a language grant provided to him by the ISM.

Daniel Kim (M.A.R.) is grateful for the depth and breadth of experiences he had at the ISM. He explored his academic interests ranging from sacred music and liturgy to law, theology, philosophy, and history, while singing in Yale Schola Cantorum and working as a youth minister for a Korean congregation in New Haven. In the fall, he will begin his legal education at Stanford Law School and continue to explore the intersections of arts, religion, and law.

Joe Lerangis (D.M.A. expected '25) is interested cross-cultural and transnational art, issues of musical hybridity, and disintegrating the walls around what is considered notions of musical canon and genius. He writes: "I am a passionate educator and hope to be teaching at the college or

high school level after leaving Yale. I am grateful for all the people I met here at the ISM and the wonderful thought-provoking discussions that permeated my time here."

Despite a strange year, **Alex Longnecker** (M.M.A.) is very grateful for the opportunities, friends, and stories gained from being at Yale. Alex will most remember the incredible time spent with the players of Juilliard 415 in Norfolk, coaching Telemann and Schütz with Masaaki Suzuki, and Evangelist coachings with James Taylor and Jeff Grossman. Alex would additionally like to thank his family for support, Tomoko Nakayama for her beautiful collaborative playing, and "East Rock Park for its role in maintaining my COVID sanity."

Molly Martien (M.A.R.) is thankful for her experience at the ISM. She values the close relationships she has formed with fellow classmates as well as the helpful, steadfast guidance she has received from mentors within the program. Upon graduation, Molly is excited to work in a museum setting where she can apply her recently acquired knowledge.

Skyler Neberman (M.A.R.) is deeply grateful for the many opportunities afforded by the ISM, from incredible professors, the library, and ISM funded trips to the Met, as well as the chance to live among the vibrant communities of New Haven. He looks forward to working in diocesan liturgy offices, and potentially pursuing doctoral studies "sometime in a paradisiacal future where COVID time feels like a distant fever dream." Until then, he will be pursuing independent research into the Sarum Use, Medieval Organa, the Knights Templar, post-modern approaches to Medieval metaphysics, and writing epic fantasy and the occasional poem.

Kelly Norris (M.A.R.) is thankful for two wonderful—albeit unconventional—years at the ISM. Despite the pandemic, there have been numerous bright spots. Chief among these are the colloquium project she completed with Andréa Walker on Libby Larsen's song cycle, *Try Me, Good King*, and collaborating on the digital music and art exhibition *Silent Fire* with fellow ISM students Maddie Blonquist, Maura Tuffy, and Andréa Walker. She will always be grateful for the role the ISM has played in shaping her as a collaborator, musician, and scholar.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Daniel Kim



Ingrid Goetz (c) and friends

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES! CONT. FROM PAGE 6

As a YDS and Berkeley student, **Andrew Ogletree** (M.Div.) is thankful for his colleagues and professors at the ISM for making his experience richer and more robust. He writes: “The diverse offerings, research, and perspectives that I have encountered through the ISM bear witness to the abundance of God’s creative spirit in this broken world. In following a call to Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church, I look forward to taking the ethos of interdisciplinary collaboration, engendered through the ISM, into my future ministry, empowering the people of God to use their diverse gifts, and experiences together in creative service to one another, to humanity, and to God.” As he continues to seek fellow collaborators from across disciplines in this work, he will always remember that working together is not just an academic exercise, but one that is made better through “fellowship, laughter, and of course, a little sherry.”

Sean Rodan (M.A.R.) did a program concentration in Asian religions. For the past three years, Sean has enjoyed reflecting on the various connections between music, literature and religion in Japan. Some of his most cherished memories at the ISM were made singing in choir as a baritone. This year, he sang virtually with Yale Schola Cantorum and the Episcopal Church at Yale Choir, and in his first year was a member of Battell Chapel Choir, Marquand Chapel Choir, and Repertory Chorus.

Leah Silvius’s (M.A.R.) interests are religion and literature broadly; the conversations to be had at the intersection of religion, poetry, and music; the role of creative expression in community building; and political discourse.

Chris Talbot (M.M.) is grateful for all the wonderful friendships he’s made during his time at the ISM, and is stunned by the resilience shown by his colleagues throughout the year. He’s looking forward to a return to in-person music-making, and he hopes to start a private voice studio as well as continue his work as a freelance singer and audio engineer.

For a long time, **Aaron Tan** (M.M.A.) has had two parallel musical interests: the practical study of sacred music, and in finding interesting repertoire that can hopefully draw new audience members



Kelly Norris

to the organ. His most enjoyable pursuits at Yale this year were directing the virtual choir of the Episcopal Church at Yale and preparing and researching for his degree recital.

Maura Tuffy (M.M.) is most grateful for the community at the ISM. Though these two years have been different from what anyone could have imagined, she has been inspired by the art that her friends have made, the connections built, and the dedication of her teachers during this period. Next year, Maura will continue her studies at the ISM/YSM to pursue a Master of Musical Arts in choral conducting.

Andréa Walker (M.M.) is grateful for her classmates and teachers at the ISM who have helped shape her personally and musically with their kindness. While at the ISM, she enjoyed diving deep into the music of American composer Libby Larsen with her Colloquium presentation partner Kelly Norris and was thrilled to be a part of the team (with Kelly, Maura Tuffy, and Maddie Blonquist) that put together the online multi-media exhibition “Silent Fire” featuring art and music by and about women. Inspired by many of her colleagues at the ISM she hopes to continue championing repertoire that challenges the status quo within the art music community. Andréa is happy to be continuing her studies in the fall at Case Western University where she will pursue a D.M.A. in historical performance practice.

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Wyatt Reynolds

Join us! @yaleism



CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES! CONT. FROM PAGE 7

Abe Wallace (M.M.) fondly remembers Camerata rehearsals, and is grateful to have had so many opportunities to make music with his classmates. He plans to continue his education at the University of Michigan in the fall, pursuing a D.M.A. degree in pipe organ performance with an emphasis in sacred music.

Bin Xia (S.T.M.) is grateful for his study and for the community life at the ISM, with special thanks to his advisor, Prof. **Teresa Berger**, who provided academic and pastoral support to him and to his family. His study in historical Chinese Anglican prayer books helped him develop a better understand of Chinese Anglican liturgy as well as his own faith identity. He is working as a content specialist with a Bible app developing team to

create new features including daily prayer and spiritual formation for future versions. He hopes in a couple years to go back to school and continue his research on historical Chinese Anglican liturgy.

Other graduating students: **Wyatt Reynolds** (M.A.R.), **Meghan Stoll** (M.M.).

DEPARTING FELLOWS

Blenda Im (M.A.R. '12) is deeply appreciative of the ways in which the ISM community warmly welcomed her back, first as a lecturer, then as a postdoctoral associate. She has been encouraged by the community's sensitivity and commitment to making the ISM a safe and equitable institutional home, and will treasure the brilliance and kindness of her colleagues and students. Next year, Blenda will continue her scholarly pursuits as a Global Korean Diasporas Postdoctoral Fellow at the Korea Institute at Harvard University. She welcomes community members to keep in touch!

Jean Ngoya Kidula writes: "My year at ISM was much appreciated for physical, mental, intellection and spiritual rejuvenation by the people, in the space and for the season."

Other departing fellows: **Meg Bernstein** (M.A.R. '13), **Rebecca Dirksen**, **Christopher-Rasheem McMillan**, **Marie-Ange Rakotoniaina**, **Riley Parker Soles**.



Nia Campinha-Bacote

YDS in-person commencement photos by Stephen Gamboa-Diaz.
Other photos supplied by ISM community.





Annual Conference Series on Black Sacred Arts

The ISM is thrilled to announce a new interdisciplinary conference series launching in 2022 to study the music, ritual, and related arts of religious cultures of the Black Atlantic and

beyond. The conversations envisioned in this series will place Black thought, worship, and practice in dialogue with multireligious perspectives that are linked with the arts. | [Read more](#)

2022: Africana Sacred Healing Arts

The first conference, to be held May 16–18, 2022, will explore the wide variety of rituals and practices related to healing in African and African Diasporic religions.

- In what ways do suffering and affliction activate aesthetic responses?
- How do the Black healing arts inflect disease, illness, and sickness on individual, social, and political bodies?

Registration opens fall 2021. | [Read more](#)

If you would like to be on a list to receive notifications of the conferences, please email ismconferences@yale.edu.

Call for Proposals

The ISM invites proposals for papers, presentations, and artistic performances that address topics including, but not limited to

- Expanding definitions of the healing arts, illness, and unwellness
- Arts of healing and baptism/initiation
- Arts of healing and mortuary rites
- Healing as experienced transnationally and in the digital world
- Healing arts and the senses (inclusive of extra-sensory modes)
- Therapeutic arts of music, dance, and performance
- Medicine, materiality, and the arts
- Relationships between healing, religion, and the medical sciences
- The various identities of healers

Submission deadline: September 15, 2021

NOTE: Accepted presenters and performers in attendance will receive an allowance to help defray the cost of travel to New Haven. In addition, they will be provided hotel accommodation and several meals during the conference. | [Read more](#)

Questions? email ismconferences@yale.edu

ALUMNI NEWS

HORACE D. BALLARD (M.A.R. '10) has been appointed as the new Theodore E. Stebbins Jr. Associate Curator of American Art at the Harvard Art Museums, effective Sept. 1, 2021. Ballard is currently curator of American art at the Williams College Museum of Art, in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he was previously assistant curator from 2017 to 2019. [Read more.](#)

CHRISTIAN DETISCH (M.Div. '20) and his wife are moving to Asheville, NC where he will be a chaplain resident at the Asheville VA Hospital.

WESLEY HALL (M.M. '15), minister of music and the arts at First Baptist Church of Worcester, MA, has become something of a TikTok sensation. According to [an article in Worcester Magazine](#), one of his series of entertaining organ videos has topped 340k views.

PAUL JACOBS (M.M. '02; A.D. '03) has received the 2021 International Performer of the Year Award from the American Guild of Organists. A sponsored recital is being planned for 2022 in New York City. Previous award recipients include Professor Emeritus **THOMAS MURRAY** (in 1986).



[MORE ALUMNI NEWS ON PAGE 12](#)

In Memoriam: Chester William Cooke

Chester William Cooke, long-time friend of the Institute of Sacred Music, passed away at HillHouse Assisted Living in Bath, Maine on Monday, July 12, 2021, at age 86. A 1957 graduate of Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, Chester maintained close ties with his alma mater throughout his life, and had moved to Highland Green, a retirement community near Bowdoin in 2003.

Music was one of his keenest interests, especially organ and choral music. A Connecticut native and resident, he rarely missed recitals played by Yale organ students and visiting artists or choral concerts by the Yale Camerata and Schola Cantorum. Convivial gatherings of ISM faculty, students and friends at his waterfront home in Stony Creek were ever a highlight of the academic year. After retiring in 1992, he volunteered as an editor for ISM publications for several years.

Chester loved travelling in England to hear choral evensong at cathedrals and collegiate chapels, and cherished long friendships with some of the most distinguished choral musicians of his generation, including David Willcocks at Kings College, Cambridge; George Guest at St. John's College, Cambridge; and Francis Jackson at York Minster.

His circle of friends was extensive and benefitted from his uncanny ability to maintain friendships across distance and years, ranging from his childhood through recent Yale and Bowdoin graduates. He

loved to give out nicknames and collected his own throughout life's journey, including Buddha (from college), and "the windy shore-dweller" (bestowed by a Yale organ major). ISM students of a certain era will remember his good-natured teasing and the curmudgeonly *persona* he created for himself. With humble generosity, he had an impact on countless lives, and his mischievous smile brought joy to all who knew him.

Contributed by Thomas Murray. Photo courtesy Thomas Murray. Obituary at [legacy.com](https://www.legacy.com)



The "Windy Shore-Dweller" playing the curmudgeon.

Hammer, Bite, and Blessing: A Conversation with Danielle Chapman

*In March, LETTERS Managing Editor Josiah A.R. Cox began an email exchange with poet Danielle Chapman about her first collection *Delinquent Palaces* and her more recent work. They discuss, among other things, the poet's vocation, the strangeness of grace, and the contemporary draw toward fragmented prose. Their conversation, edited for clarity and length, appears in the summer 2021 issue of LETTERS.*

Danielle Chapman's collection of poems, *Delinquent Palaces*, was published by Northwestern University Press in 2015. Recent poems appear in *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Atlantic*. Her essays can be found in *The Oxford American* and *Commonweal*. She teaches literature and creative writing at Yale and lives in Hamden, CT with her husband, ISM/YDS faculty member **Christian Wiman**, and their twin daughters.



Photo by Stella Maria Baer

JC: Ilya Kaminsky commended your debut poetry collection as “one of those rare things, a first book by an already developed, master poet.” When did that development begin for you? What writers were most influential to the process of maturing your own work?

DC: That was a very kind thing for Ilya to say. My first book came out when I was in my late 30s, so I think I managed to pack a couple books (and a couple of lifetimes) in there. The poems are the result of me hammering out a sound against many poetic obsessions over the years. At the very beginning, in college at NYU, I was infatuated with the poets of the Nuyorican Poetry Café. I loved the boldness and immediacy of those voices, and I ransacked my required reading for parallels, which I found in Shakespeare and Yeats. A bit later, when religious consciousness began to fuse with my poems, Dickinson blazed her way through me (and still does). Gwendolyn Brooks and Lorine Neidcker have been my guides when it comes to form and to sound. And, though I’ve always handled them gingerly (and without a Ouija board), Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes still stun me with their metaphorical power. Also James Schuyler, for his painterly touch, and Zbigniew Herbert for his irony. I could go on!

JC: Hammering seems like an apt metaphor to use because I’ve thought that your poems do sound forged or smithed. You are so careful to avoid a weak word.

Could you say more about that fusion between religious consciousness and your poetry? You mention Dickinson, from whom you draw the title of your collection, but you are definitely drawing on Dante and other metaphysical/religious poets at points in the collection. When or why did those two things begin to meld, and what is your religious background?

DC: Yes, Dante is an awesome, or awful (in the spiritual sense of the word) influence. I love how Mandelstam describes the terza rima of the *Commedia*, as a huge beehive, “a thirteen-thousand-faceted form.” I wish I knew Italian, so I could hear the formal virtuosity of the original, but, in translation, it’s the mystical sensibility, and particularly the movement of the light, in Dante that rivets me.

I experienced a conversion when I was 21 years old, at the same time that my first real lines of poetry came to me—by real, I mean they came from outside, rather than me trying to gin something up. The central poem in my book, “A Shape Within,” attempts to dramatize the rapture and the dismay that transpired, which I interpret as one soul’s vision of the radical love of God, being felt (and seen and heard), vividly and in many aspects, then disappearing. As Dante laments so many times throughout the *Commedia*, an experience like that remains indelible in memory, though it is wildly untranslatable. While poetry may be better at getting at it than other art forms, every poem remains only a try or an approximation.

JC: The distinction you just made about poetic inspiration resonates with the tension in that poem around whether the speaker’s experiences are chimeric or real—yes?

DC: Yes, I hope that the poem is suffused both with the undeniable reality of the experience and the demand of the rational mind (which is ultimately baffled) to comprehend it. Though I think my use of the word chimera may have been more confusing than it needed to be. The chimerical figure in that poem is a real person, a love interest, though the opposite of a Beatrice—in that he reveals the love of God as a foil to a more daemonic form of human love. Some of the anxiety over the

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JOSEPH KEMPER (M.M. '18) will be Visiting Assistant Professor of Music and Choirs at Whitman College, in Walla Walla, WA for the 2021–2022 academic year.

KAREN SCHNEIDER KIRNER (M.M./M.A.R. '90) has just published her first collection of responsorial psalms, written over her 23-year career serving as a choir director and organist with Campus Ministry at the University of Notre Dame, at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. It's entitled "Let the Peoples Praise You: Psalms for the Liturgical Year" and is published through the Liturgical Press of Collegeville, MN. It's updated with the latest texts approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

She has now retired from the University of Notre Dame, is serving as Organist/Director of Music for

Grace United Methodist Church in South Bend, works on various composing/recording projects, and teaches private piano and organ students.

NICHOLAS QUARDOKUS (M.M. organ '18) has been appointed Canon Organist and Director of Music at Grace Church Cathedral in Charleston, SC. He had served as Assistant Organist at St. Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue in New York City since 2019.

SPENCER REECE (M.Div. '11) was recently interviewed by Philip F. Clark for A&U: America's AIDS Magazine upon the publication of a new book, *The Secret Gospel of Mark: A Poet's Memoir*, by Seven Stories Press (2021). [Read their conversation on the A&U website.](#)

In Memoriam: John Leinenweber

John Leinenweber (B.A. '57; M.A.R. '93) passed away on July 7, 2021 while residing at Kendal, Oberlin, Ohio. He was 85 years old. A friend and community member of the ISM for more than twenty years, he worked as an editor, indexer, and translator; attended concerts and lectures; and supported students and faculty of the ISM, YDS, and BDS in innumerable ways. He worked with **Teresa Berger** and **Bryan Spinks** on several edited volumes from the ISM's liturgy conference series, and was a translator from the Latin into English of books he loved, especially works by Augustine and St. Gregory the Great, including *Love One Another, My Friends: St. Augustine's Homilies on the First Letter of John* (1989); *Be Friends of God: Spiritual Readings from Gregory the Great* (1990); *Letters of Saint Augustine* (1992); *Pastoral Practice: Books 3 and 4 of the Regula Pastoralis* (1998); *In the Beginning*

Was the Word: St. Augustine's Homilies on the Gospel According to John (abridged; 2012); and Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons for Lent and the Easter Season* (2013).

After receiving his undergraduate degree, he joined a Benedictine monastery in Rhode Island; he taught and served there and in Elmira, NY and Abiquiu, NM before returning to Yale to study at Yale Divinity School around 1990. In later years, he moved to Kendal retirement complex next to the Oberlin campus, where he devoted himself to his Roman Catholic faith, to choral singing, to his beloved gardening, and to attending concerts and lectures on subjects of interest. Wherever John lived, all these things grew richer and flourished because of his careful and loving attention.

Contributed by Margot Fassler with Teresa Berger and Melissa Maier. Obituary at [Legacy.com](https://www.legacy.com)



Photo by Robert A. Lisak

John Leinenweber, back row 3rd from right in this 2003 staff photo, was part of the ISM family for many years. Eighteen years later, three of those pictured here are still on staff: Sachin Ramabhadran (front row, 2nd from left), Melissa Maier (front row, 3rd from left), and Trisha Lendroth (back row, 2nd from left). Former ISM director Margot Fassler is 3rd from the right in the front row.

“unreal” is the realization a passion of this sort is not “real love” and yet illuminates the possibility of it somehow. The figure of Law in Anne Carson’s “The Glass Essay” is one parallel, or maybe Ganymede in *As You Like It*, who Marjorie Garner says is “the extra something, or something missing, that is the ‘overestimation of the object’ associated with falling in love.”

JC: I find the poem very moving in that respect. Back to the work of an artist—do you mean to equate “real” with “effortless”? Can you say more about what difference real inspiration, as you’ve described it, makes for you as an artist? Do you think it makes a difference in the art itself?

DC: Hm. Well it seems I may have made a bit of a false distinction there. Because only a very small number of poems or lines have come to me whole, in a way where the poem feels received rather than hammered out. (And I have already admitted to doing a lot of hammering.) I don’t think the measure of inspiration is whether the poem emerges effortlessly or not, but rather whether it manages to capture the urgency of the utterance that brought it on. Often a lot of tinkering with phrase, sound, and line is required to make it do that.

JC: One of my favorite poems in *Delinquent Palaces* capitalizes on another definition of “chimera.” “Rituxan Spring” is a poem about a “miracle drug” that’s chimeric in the sense of combining two kinds of genetic tissue—in its case, that of mice and humans... Your work is keen to grace or glory in strange or terrible places. My sense is that these perceptions come from your own experience. But I’m curious whether they are mostly discovered in the process of writing or occur to you in the course of life?

DC: That’s a great question. And I think I am realizing only in answering it that often it is the writing of the poem (or the intense need to write a poem) that makes me conscious of the paradoxes in my own experience. I am by temperament a pretty optimistic person, and I come from a Marine Corps family, so it’s my habit to kind of “soldier through” difficult circumstances. The problem with doing that is that it can keep you from feeling your life. Poems erupt in a way that force me to see both the glorious and the terrible, both of which I might miss otherwise.

JC: You told me once that writing poetry can be a painful or arduous religious endeavor. What you’re saying now about poetry countering the tendency to avoid difficulty seems related to that.

DC: When it comes to the spiritual arduousness of being a poet, I think what I must’ve meant is that it doesn’t necessarily get easier in the way that one assumes it will at the beginning. I think there’s a parallel to religious calling in that way, because the rewards can feel meager, even invisible. A poetic vocation requires faith, because inner triumphs don’t always match up with outer recognition. Often the only reward for this kind of faith is another poem—which, in the moment of writing it, validates the whole enterprise. Emily Dickinson is of course the poster girl for this kind of faith. But

she’s also a cautionary tale because she illustrates how masochistic poetry can become. The need to throw yourself on the altar of intensity every single day and demand a poem from the encounter is a kind of religious fanaticism. It reminds a person that it’s good to have some hobbies, and to get out of the house.

JC: You’ve just finished a new manuscript of poems. How would you describe it as a whole?

DC: In terms of what the book is “about,” I think your question earlier gets at it well: it’s a book of poems that dramatize those paradoxical moments when the grace/glorious of life encounters the terror/strangeness of life and makes a sound (through language.) Though I think that might just be my definition of what a poem is. The book came together for me at the beginning of quarantine, when all social obligations had abruptly disappeared and life was suffused with this terrible, yet lucid, quiet. (The hours between 4 and 7 A.M., that is, because we have twin daughters and were also suddenly running a home school.) Those early, eerie mornings I was reading Alice Oswald and, through her, finding my way back to that elemental substance at the bottom of poetry, that clarity stripped of learning but foundational to language—what’s underneath *King Lear*, but which also undermines or transfigures *King Lear*, making it new for every generation. That water “at the bottom of all things/utterly worn out utterly clear,” in Ted Hughes’s imagining. I think I would call it Soul, or maybe even the Holy Spirit, yet it is a source fundamentally mysterious and resistant to labels. All I know is that, when I sense its existence (in this case in Oswald’s poems), I love poetry again. Believing in it makes the prospect of writing a poem joyous, rather than harrowing, and it helped me finish the manuscript.

JC: Is your poem “Dog Bite” in the new manuscript? It has that juxtaposition we’ve been talking about. It also draws on the book of Job, particularly at the end, where “the savage/and the good/so intermingled” evokes God’s whirlwind tour of creation.

DC: Yes, it is. Job is a primary text for that intersection between grace and suffering—which, in theological terms, is (as I know you know) theodicy, or the attempt to explain how God can allow so much evil and suffering to exist if God is both omnipotent and good. Though I can’t say Job offers an airtight explanation. If there is one, it’s just that the ecstatic experience of meeting God obliterates everything else, including all past pain. Belief is its own justification. At the time I wrote that poem I was reading Stephen Mitchell’s translation, *The Book of Job*, which I love. My favorite innovation is the names he gives to Job’s three daughters, the daughters he has after everything is taken away and then restored in this unbelievable surfeit of newness. Mitchell calls them “Dove,” “Cinnamon,” and “Lipstick.” That just captures the somewhat absurdist joy of the ending perfectly.

Accompanying the Dying and the Dead in the Time of COVID

How can we provide better care for the dying, and meaningful funerals or memorials for those who have been lost?

What can history teach us about how our ancestors coped and ministered in times of plague?

How do we think theologically about the effect of COVID-19 on faith communities amid God's eternal presence and promises?

In June, the ISM presented a series of four webinar discussions moderated by **Thomas G. Long** probing these and other questions to explore what our experience of the pandemic has taught us. The series was designed for an interdisciplinary and ecumenical audience of pastors, liturgists, hospice workers, musicians, medical professionals, and others involved in caring for the dying and providing leadership for funerals and memorials. [Recordings of the sessions are now online.](#)



Time to Heal, (c) 2016 by John August Swanson
Giclee, 16.5" x 13.5"
www.JohnAugustSwanson.com

Choral Music Online

In spring 2021, our choirs could not sing together—but the music-making went on virtually, and are available for viewing online.



Yale Schola Cantorum
[Music for Holy Week and Easter](#)
Works of Raphaella Aleotti, Amy Beach,
Tomás Luis de Victoria, and David Hurd
David Hill, conductor



Yale Camerata
[“Let Your Voice Be Heard”](#)
Works by composers from
underrepresented groups
André J. Thomas, conductor

JC: Oh, I love that! Where did you come across Gregory of Nyssa's doctrine of "epektasis," and how important is it to you?

DC: It's very important to me, though I will confess that I just had to look it up again! It's one of those things that you might experience deeply before you know there's a name for it. I can't remember where I first encountered Gregory of Nyssa's word, but when I did I couldn't resist it, for the way that "epektasis" phonetically enacts the movement it describes—that hard "p" and "k" (the difficulty of living, of engaging, of working, of surviving) being hauled up and transfigured into the dynamism of a life in faith by that determined "t," then sailing off (into possibility) on those "s"s. Another way to think of it is that, for an artist, faith must be incarnational, worked out through the things of this world, like, for instance, the insult of a dog bite to a spring evening in the park.

JC: Or a peach pit being gleaned by ants—as in your 2019 *Commonweal Magazine* essay "Anyway in Spring." I appreciate many things about that essay, which reflects on Christian faith as you reckon with your husband's (the poet Christian Wiman) battle with illness alongside becoming a mother to twin girls. I'm glad that it appears in the middle of your new manuscript. Why did you choose to write it in the third person?

DC: Thank you. Though I'm afraid I can't answer that question very authoritatively. The truth is that was just the only way it would come out. I find it painstaking to write about such intense experiences of joy and pain, partly because the emotions aren't all that accessible to my conscious mind. I wanted to let the images from those moments of extremity emerge and, hopefully, take on their own shape and meaning. The distance of third person seemed to make that possible, whereas first person's demand for intimacy felt like it overwhelmed the material.

JC: I called it an "essay," but prose seamlessly transitions to poetry at moments. It is also poetic in its use of a fragmented or episodic form, which I've noticed many writers using these days. Why do you think that form is attractive to contemporary writers? What unique advantages does offer?

DC: I also initially thought of it as an essay, though then the poetic impulse (or in this case, specifically the impulse to praise or exclaim) kept disrupting the essayistic movement toward explanation and resolution. I think, in general, that's what the fragmentary form allows—a narrative that includes disruption, or is, in fact, defined by disruption. My guess is that it's popular these days because it's hard, and sometimes dishonest, to make a linear, "authoritative" argument or narrative (or even lyric) in a world that is as plural and multifaceted as ours. In some ways the form speaks to the old hatred of that which has a "palpable a design on us," which has long been the poet's resentment. But it has a new urgency to it now, in the post-postmodern age, when chaos is the norm, and we're skeptical of forms that are too

neat. Also, fragmentary forms privilege perception and the idiosyncrasies of a singular consciousness in the same way that poems do, so I think poets are particularly given to them.

JC: One more question. You have a line in "Leaving Boston" that says, "there is a discipline, a sport to hope." Is there a discipline to praise?

DC: I think there's a discipline to making one's poetry available to the totality of human experience—not to praise above all else. If you do that, your poems can take on the automatic bell-chime of cheerfulness, which will cause a feeling reader to despair. But a poet should be aware of their tendency toward the moribund, the self-centered, and the sentimental; and of the need to train one's eye and ear to look and hear further, to perceive more, to take in the whole picture of creation. The experience of existing in this world gives us plenty of cause for lamentation, but also, often when we least expect it, it bowls us over with happiness at simply being alive. So we need to learn how to sing those blessings, without sounding like saps.

I'll sign off with this little poem by Alicia Ostriker, which I think does that brilliantly—and with many thanks to you for inviting me into this conversation:

[The Blessing of the Old Woman,
the Tulip, and the Dog](#)

To be blessed
said the old woman
is to live and work
so hard
God's love
washes right through you
like milk through a cow

To be blessed
said the dark red tulip
is to knock their eyes out
with the slug of lust
implied by
your up-ended skirt

To be blessed
said the dog
is to have a pinch
of God
inside you
and all the other
dogs can smell it

Students Collaborating

Among the many benefits of being an ISM student is the opportunity to collaborate on projects with other students, with generous support from the ISM.

During the 2020–2021 academic year, undeterred by the lack of personal interaction, several of our students worked on projects that live online and reflect the broad interests of our community. Feel free to share!

Light and Truth: A Virtual Evensong

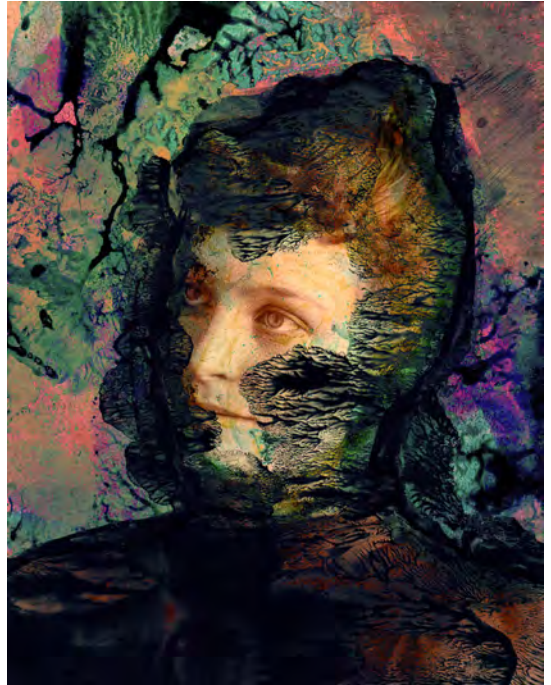
Abe Wallace, primary organizer
with Carolyn Craig, Emily Boring,
and Jake Cunliffe
and the participation of many, many more
[Watch on YouTube](#)

Silent Fire: A Digital Exhibition Featuring Works by Womxn and about Womxn

Organized by Maddie Blonquist, Kelly Norris,
Maura Tuffy, and Andréa Walker
A collaboration of music and visual arts, featuring original recordings of rarely performed musical works from the 1600s to the present with accompanying visual responses of contemporary artists.
[See it on the Nasty Women CT website](#)

Gilead's Balm: A Sonic Healing Album

Organized by Nia Campinha-Bacote, Sydney Mukasa, Deborah Stephens, and Gabe Kepler
A collaborative sonic healing album that melds the melodies and instrumentation of Afro-diasporic musicians in harmony with found sounds of landscapes and nature.
[Visit the Gilead website](#)



Julie Blankenship, *Turning*. From the *Silent Fire* exhibition website.



Publications

Check out the latest issues!

The Yale ISM Review
Vol. 6, No. 1, *Disaster*
ismreview.yale.edu

Yale Journal of Music & Religion
Online now
Vol. 6, No. 2 “Sound and Secularity”
ism.yale.edu/yjmr

Letters Journal
Online now
Summer 2021
lettersjournal.com

OTHER NEWS

FELLOWS NEWS

CHRISTOPHER-RASHEED McMILLAN (2020–2021) will be a fellow at the Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University for the upcoming academic year. The CBA fellows come from a multitude of disciplines: artists to develop new work and scholars to develop new ideas, creating new dances and building artistic collaborations. At the CBA, McMillan will endeavor to complete his book, *Performance Criticism: Scripture, Sex and the Sacred*, which questions how beliefs function through the performative. He will also work on a new dance work titled “Sacred.” McMillan seeks to understand both the meaning of the religious body in performance and the arrangements of the religious bodies in space as central parts of both lived experience and enactments of spiritual practices.

FACULTY NEWS

MARK A. MILLER, director of Craig Chapel and associate professor of church music at Drew University, has been named a Scholar/Teacher of the Year by the university.

NOTES ON THE STAFF

After four years at the ISM, **STEPHEN GAMBOA-DIAZ** has accepted a promotion to Web Producer at Yale’s central Office of Public Affairs and Communications. His warm good humor, sharp wit, and consummate skills will be missed here. Congratulations and good luck from all of us at the ISM!

Vocalizing Over Zoom

