

10 YEARS OF UNM MUSICOLOGY

A Newsletter for alumni & friends



SASHA ARTEAGA

Hi all! I am so happy to be back and celebrating ten years of UNM Musicology with you all here today! I graduated from the program in Spring 2023 after completing my thesis on music, memory and the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. After graduation, I worked with the UNM Office of Admissions as an Admissions Advisor, where I reviewed applications from thousands of prospective Lobos. In February I left my position at UNM and began working as an Academic Support Specialist with the Pueblo of San Felipe Education Department. My duties involve liaising with parents, students and school districts to connect students with appropriate support and resources, as well as providing enrichment through field trips, participation in activities such as Youth

Council, and college/career mentoring. I still live in Albuquerque and am enjoying my time here and continue to savor the beautiful sunsets and relaxed pace of life. While I have taken an extended break from research and performing, I do make time to jam with friends and am getting back into Armenian language study. At this time, I haven't committed to further study and am still exploring my options, but I am grateful for the professional mentorship and cultural competency training I received while in the UNM musicology program; even though I don't work in a musicologist capacity at the moment, these skills have been crucial in my early professional career. Congratulations to UNM Music for 10 years of the musicology program, and here's to many more!

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CLARA BYOM

With interests in community-driven ethnomusicology and perception of groove, Clara Byom serves as Development Director for the Klezmer Institute, co-founder/co-director of the New Mexico Contemporary Ensemble, and coordinator of Yiddish New York. She performs (accordion, clarinet, piano, and voice) around the United States as a soloist, collaborative experimental improviser, member of the award-winning alt-rock band Dust City Opera, and member of folk dance groups The Parson Sisters and Idlewild. She holds a Master of Music degree from the University of New Mexico in Clarinet Performance and Musicology (2017) and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Luther College (2012). In the fall of 2024, she began her doctoral studies at Texas Tech University, where she is researching experience and groove in social folk music-dance in the PhD of Fine Arts, Interdisciplinary Track Program.

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Clara Byom

LAUREN COONS

Since receiving my Master’s in Musicology and Music Theory & Composition in 2017, I have had the great privilege of enjoying a multi-faceted career as an intermedia composer, educator, and healing arts practitioner. My compositional work has maintained a relationship to my thesis work in indeterminacy and social practice, and continues to consist primarily of collaborative and community-engaged projects. I’ve continued to develop my interests in the healing arts, receiving additional training and certification in functional exercise, mindfulness/bodyfulness practices, and meditation, which I’ve applied to my compositional work as well as in my teaching. I served as an artist-in-medicine with UNM’s Arts-in-Medicine program for three years, providing music, movement, and mindfulness services to patients in the pain clinic, inpatient psychiatric unit, and comprehensive cancer center as well as for hospital staff. I also co-taught the UNM Healing arts Courses alongside Professor Patricia Repar. As an educator, I’ve had the opportunity to provide classes and lessons in music, dance, storytelling, healing arts, and intermedia art to students aged 0 to 82. I’ve maintained a private teaching practice and have worked with various organizations and programs including the Anderson-Abruzzo International



Balloon Museum and the Santa Fe Opera's Active Learning Through Opera program. In the summer of 2024 I relocated to Portland, Oregon where I have since been serving as the Program Director for Ethos Music Center, a music education nonprofit that aims to provide free to low-cost accessible and culturally responsive programming to youth and adults from historically underserved communities. Through my work at ethos and my ongoing creative practice, I look forward to continuing to pursue my passion for creating access and opportunities for all people to participate in the arts.

"Since receiving my Master's in Musicology and Music Theory & Composition in 2017, I have had the great privilege of enjoying a multi-faceted career as an intermedia composer, educator, and healing arts practitioner." – Lauren Coons

ROBERTO DE LEON

Roberto De Leon is a musician and teacher across the greater ABQ area. He is a substitute teacher for APS, he is the steelband teacher at *Highland High School* and the banda teacher at *Atrisco Academy Heritage High School*. Additionally, he teaches swim lessons and is a lifeguard. Mr. De Leon's specialization as a musician is in Mexican music and steelpan. When he is not freelancing as a mariachi or drummer, he directs *Banda505*, ABQ's only authentic Mexican banda ensemble. Just recently Mr. De Leon presented at the *2025 Teaching World Music Symposium* at Northern Illinois University, where he obtained a bachelor's degree ('21) and performer's certificate ('22) in percussion performance. He spoke about what he has learned about mariachi being taught in Albuquerque Public Schools and his story on teaching banda at *Atrisco Academy Heritage High School*. Beginning in the fall of 2025, Mr. De Leon will begin a new career path at Northern Illinois University School of Music as faculty, directing *Banda NIU*, of which he was a founding member of in 2019.



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EDUARDO GARCÍA

Dear UNM Musicology faculty, colleagues, and friends,

Wishing I could be there in person to celebrate the wonderful milestone of a decade of musicology at UNM. It is an honor to have been part of this program amongst all of the outstanding faculty and colleagues that continue to do important research and writing on how music provides identity, place, space, and visibility. Now more than ever, our voices must be heard louder and urgently. A special shoutout to the COVID cohort of musicology seminar and graduating classes (Renata, Nevi, Sam- hope you are doing well!). And to Dr. Ana Alonso-Minutti: muchísimas gracias por ser una gran parte formativa de mis estudios y carrera.

Sending you all warmest wishes, cheers to another 10 years and then some. Saludos y felicidades!

“Now more than ever, our voices must be heard louder and urgently.” –

Eduardo García

AMY GILLESPIE



Amy Gillespie, MM, 2016 - How did I get from an atmosphere of Ranchera, from my father's upbringing on a cattle ranch in northern NM, and from my mother's love of crooners like Sinatra via her Hollywood upbringing, to a love of Medieval Chant, English polyphony, and the pedagogues of the classical guitar? My personal musicology has occupied much of my thoughts lately. Mine is a line drawn from Led Zeppelin, Jimmy Hendrix, the Methodist Church choir I joined instead of the Girl Scouts, to Tom Petty, Gillian Welch, Margo Timmins to a splintering off to von Bingen, Haydn, Boccherini,

Dowland, Villa-Lobos, Torroba, and Presti.

I am grateful for my UNM experience and the fabulous instructors and advisors that I was honored to have had. I can put much of my musicology in perspective and find the commonalities and harmonies of my past with the present. I continue to enjoy local and National artistic productions and facilitate my classical guitar ensemble. I often create arrangements for this group of amateurs of differing abilities and experience: one must meet them where they are. And throughout my teaching, many conversations have gone like, “don't you hear this chord progression from Luis de Narváez in this pop tune?”

I'm traveling to London this summer to knock off a few “bucket list” activities such as two days at Wimbledon, then time at the British Museum. And in the category of “once a musicologist,” I have a

reservation at the Royal Academy of Music's library where I expect to get lost in the handwritten manuscripts of Ferdinando Carulli and the Elizabethan lute music held in the Robert Spencer Collection.

"I can put much of my musicology in perspective and find the commonalities and harmonies of my past with the present. I continue to enjoy local and National artistic productions and facilitate my classical guitar ensemble." – Amy Gillespie

TYICIAN CHARLES KNIGHT



Tyician Charles Knight is the most recent UNM Musicology Graduate, Class of 2025, and has finished their thesis "Sobre el arcoíris: The Queering of Mariachi," discussing queerness and mariachi music through the work of the women of mariachi, queer artists such as Juan Gabriel, and the world's first LGBTQ+ mariachi, Mariachi Arcoíris de Los Ángeles. In addition to UNM Musicology, they have been a part of the UNM Mariachi Ensemble and have collaborated and presented research about Mariachi Educators, their lived experiences and the barriers that they encounter in becoming public school educators. Previously, Tyician worked for ten years as a public-school music educator in the Clark County School District. In CCSD mariachi and ballet folclórico programs are part of the curriculum and it was there that Tyician met queer mariachi students who inspired their research interests in Mariachi, Mexican music and culture, and the intersectionality of queerness.

The UNM Musicology program is a world-class, one-of-a-kind program and Tyician is very grateful to have been a part of it. They are also incredibly lucky to have met scholars through networking opportunities, all of which were made possible by musicology faculty Ana R. Alonso-Minutti.

¡Muchísimas gracias por todo, Dra. Alonso-Minutti!

"In addition to UNM Musicology, they have been a part of the UNM Mariachi Ensemble and have collaborated and presented research about Mariachi Educators, their lived experiences and the barriers that they encounter in becoming public school educators." – Tyician Charles Knight

CHRIS RAMOS



My time in the musicology department at UNM was transformative for my family and me, even though I didn't finish my musicology degree. In 2016, I changed paths when I was offered a position as a middle and high school band director at Dalat International School in Penang, Malaysia.

My wife and I initially signed a two-year contract to work in Penang, but we fell in love with the school and community, staying for four years before returning to the USA in 2020. Our two children were born in Penang, and we left a large

piece of ourselves there. In 2020, I started my DMA in Instrumental Conducting at The Hartt School in Hartford, Connecticut, where my research focus shifted to disability studies, culminating in my doctoral thesis on the intersection of disability studies and wind band music.

Moving into disability studies was a natural progression, influenced by my schooling at UNM, my time as an international school band director, and family members dealing with disabilities. I reconnected with UNM Musicology alum Lauren Coons while working on my essay, as her work, though not explicitly focused on disability, was significant to my research and ideas about cultural models of disability in large ensemble practice.

I graduated from Hartt in 2023 and, upon getting a job at UVU, invited Lauren for a residency to perform her piece “Sonic Pathways.” It was an incredible experience, with some students considering it the most important piece they worked on all year. This year, I presented my perspectives on this music at the College Band Directors National Association national conference, and a detailed article about it will be published in the Music Educators Journal later this year. Without Lauren, Dr. Alonso-Minutti, and the UNM Musicology community, none of this would have been possible.

“I reconnected with UNM Musicology alum Lauren Coons while working on my essay, as her work, though not explicitly focused on disability, was significant to my research and ideas about cultural models of disability in large ensemble practice.” – Chris Ramos

RENATA YAZZIE

Yá'át'ééh, my name is Renata Yazzie—I'm a Diné musicologist, pianist, composer and writer. I completed a Master of Music in Musicology (Historical Musicology) and Piano Performance in May 2022. My advisors were Dr. Alonso-Minutti and Prof. Steinbach. My master's thesis outlined a history of Navajo hymnody with particular attention to translation initiatives and ideologies held by Navajo Protestant Christian ministers, translators and congregants. I am now a 2nd year PhD Student at Columbia University in Ethnomusicology and my research focuses on how Diné listening ideologies and expressions of vocality shape Diné aesthetics in the context of our sonic expressions post-1868. In addition to my research which you can find most recently published as a book chapter in *Modeling Musical Analysis* edited by John Peterson and Kim Loeffert and in a forthcoming edited volume, *Insurgent Music Theory*, edited by Tatiana Koike and Jade Conlee, I also host and produce a radio show on Classical 95.5 KHFM that features North American Indigenous composers and their music. I freelance as a music journalist, covering Indigenous popular music and artists for various magazines, news outlets, and music websites from time to time. In my capacity as a composer, you can hear my contributions in the documentary short, *Ways of Knowing: A Navajo Nuclear History* and in *Weaving Sounds: Elementary Piano Pieces by Native and Indigenous Composers* edited by myself and Connor Chee. Lastly, I continue to teach piano as often as I can on the Navajo Nation with the Heartbeat Music Project, and provide funding for Native music students through my scholarship program, the American Indian Musicians' Scholarship. I currently reside in New York City with my little family and make every excuse I can to return to the Southwest as often as possible.



“I am now a 2nd year PhD Student at Columbia University in Ethnomusicology and my research focuses on how Diné listening ideologies and expressions of vocality shape Diné aesthetics in the context of our sonic expressions post-1868.” – Renata Yazzie

THANK YOU!

Thank you for your support!

We hope to see you at an upcoming event soon.

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