

## CURRICULUM VITAE

# Joseph W. Pfender

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### Education

Ph.D. in Music: *Oblique Music: Tape Experimentalism and Peripheral Cultures of Technology in America, 1887 and 1950*; Adviser: Brigid Cohen; Committee: Michael Beckerman, Emily Dolan, Jaime Oliver, Lisa Gitelman

“Oblique Music” considers the surprising ways in which the tape experiments of Louis and Bebe Barron, Vladimir Ussachevsky, and Otto Luening were influenced by late 19th-century cultures of technology and religion. I trace a Spiritualist impulse to sacralize the machine through the history of magnetic recording, from the first proof of concept in 1888 through to tape’s wide dissemination in 1948. Against the current narrative of its origins in Weimar-era Germany, then, this project proposes that the culture of technology into which tape first emerged was industrializing, American, 19th-century, and Spiritualist, rather than exclusively industrialized, German, 20th-century, and secularist. In this new light, the technophilic sensibilities of the Barrons, Luening, and Ussachevsky emerge as recapitulations of a much older tension between mystification and materiality.

New York University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, September 2019

M.A. in Music

New York University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, May 2013

B.Mus. in Music Theory and Composition ; B.A. in English Language and Literature  
Lawrence Conservatory of Music and Lawrence University, June 2008, with honors

### Publications under review

“Magnetic Attractions: Tape, Friendship, and Intersubjective Composition,” invited to revise and resubmit, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*

### Other Publications

“Struck History: Industrialization and Magnetic Sound Recording” on the *Sonic Circulations Research Network*, 4 May 2018. [www.soniccirculations.com/research-students-blog/joseph-pfender-struck-history/](http://www.soniccirculations.com/research-students-blog/joseph-pfender-struck-history/)

Conference Proceedings, “‘Feeling’ vs. Appropriation: The Limits of Musical Signification in Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos*” in *The National Element in Music*, International Musicological Conference, Athens, 2014

### Awards and Fellowships

Provost GRI Fellowship..... Spring 2019  
Villa La Pietra, Florence, Italy

Keitel-Palisca MPD Grant, American Musicological Society..... 2015, 2018

Henry Belin du Pont Exploratory and Research Grants.....Spring & Summer 2017  
 Hagley Library Center for the History of Business, Technology and Society

McCracken Fellowship, NYU Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.....2011-2017

Anthropocene Campus Seminar Award.....Spring 2016  
 Max Planck Institute and Haus der Kulturen der Welt

Global Research Fellowship, NYU Shanghai.....AY 2015-2016

### Conference Presentations

“Bureaucratic Modern”.....June 24-25, 2019  
 Sonic Circulations 1900-1950: Musical Thought, Scientific Fantasies, Global Contexts      London, UK

“Modes of Existence of Teleological Objects” .....March 7-10, 2019  
 in seminar “Musical Affect and Posthumanist Literatures”      Georgetown, Washington, DC  
 American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting

“Sublunary Sound”.....November 1-4, 2018  
 American Musicological Society Annual Meeting      San Antonio, TX

“Sensory Agency & Timbral Intention:  
 Orchestrating Listening in Direct Animation Film”.....May 24-27, 2018  
 Music and the Moving Image XIII      New York University, New York, NY

“Anaïs Nin and Louis and Bebe Barron: Tape, Film, and Intermediality”.....April 26-29, 2017  
 Golden Silence: Surrealism at 100      McGill University, Montreal, QC  
*Artistic Migration and Identity, Paris 1870-1940*

“Lasting Impressions: magnetic *enregistrement* and tape experimentalism”.....April 18-19, 2017  
*Beyond Genius & Muse: Collaborating Couples in Twentieth-Century Arts*      University of Bristol, UK

Participant and contributor: *Anthropocene Campus II, The Technosphere Issue*.....April 14-22, 2016  
 Max Planck Institute, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt      Berlin, Germany

“Cybernetic Subjectivity”.....December 4-7, 2015  
 International Musicological Society, East Asia (IMS-EA) Annual Meeting      HKU, Hong Kong

“Taped Together: Anaïs Nin and the ‘Capture’ Barrons”.....November 12-15, 2015  
 American Musicological Society Annual Meeting      Louisville, KY

“Fleeting Moments: Greenwich Village’s Sympathetic Technological Aesthetic”.....April 8-10, 2015  
 Modernist Musics and Political Aesthetics      University of Nottingham, UK

“The Lifespan of Circuits”.....March 24-29, 2015  
 Society for Cinema and Media Studies Annual Meeting      Montreal, QC

“‘Feeling’ vs. Appropriation: Musical Signification in Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos*” .....January 18-20, 2013  
The National Element in Music  
University of Athens, Greece

“The Strenuous Herald in *Makropulos*” .....May 8, 2012  
Metropolitan Opera, Symposium on Leoš Janáček’s *Věc Makropulos*  
New York, NY  
Bohemian National Hall

### **Academic Service**

Assistant Professor search committee, .....2018-19  
NYU FAS Music Department

Public Communications, “Precarious Sounds//Sounding Sanctuary” .....February 2018  
NYU GSAS Music Department

Organizer, “Instrumentality & Interactivity: A Symposium on Music & Technology” .....May 2014  
NYU GSAS Music Department, NYU Waverly Labs for Music and Computing

Organizer, Colloquium Speaker Series .....2013-14  
NYU FAS Music Department

### **Invited Talks**

“Musicology’s Empirical Moment,” *Musical Thought and the Scientific Imagination* Study Day,  
Harvard University Department of Music, invited by Dr. Emily Macgregor, Fall, 2018

“John Cage and the New York School: cybernetics in the music and visual art of Greenwich Village,”  
Eugene Lang College, The New School, New York, NY, Fall 2015

“Orchestration and Timbre in Bartók’s *Concerto for Orchestra*,” Harold Washington College, Chicago,  
IL, Spring 2011

### **Departmental Talks**

“The Ego of the Artist: cybernetics and experimentalism in postwar New York,” New York University  
CAS, New York, NY, Summer 2017

“Listening to Technology,” New York University CAS, New York, NY, Spring 2017

### **Teaching Experience**

Adjunct Professor, New York University CAS Music Department, New York, NY  
“Music Theory I”, Spring 2020

Teaching Adjunct, Queens College, City University of New York, New York, NY  
“Music Appreciation”, Fall 2019

Adjunct Professor, New York University CAS Music Department, New York, NY

“Art of Listening”, Fall 2019

Teaching Assistant, New York University CAS Music Department, New York, NY  
Expressive Cultures: Sounds, Spring 2018

Adjunct Professor, New York University CAS Music Department, New York, NY  
“Elements of Music”, Fall 2016 & Spring 2015

Adjunct Professor, New York University CAS Music Department, New York, NY  
“Music of New York”, Summer 2014

Teaching Assistant, New York University CAS Music Department, New York, NY  
“Harmony and Counterpoint I”, Fall 2013

Teaching Assistant, New York University CAS Music Department, New York, NY  
Morse Academic Plan course: “Music and Language”, Spring 2013

### **Relevant Work Experience**

Archivist.....	Jan. - March 2019
ARChive of Contemporary Music	New York, NY
Archivist.....	Dec. 2018 - Sept. 2019
American Musicological Society	New York, NY
Project Director, Diversity Grants and Fellowships program.....	March 2018 - June 2018
American Musicological Society Committee on Cultural Diversity	New York, NY
Organizer, Colloquium Speaker Series.....	2013-14
New York University FAS Music Department	New York, NY
Managing Director.....	2012-3
Washington Square Contemporary Music Society	New York, NY

### **Performances**

Composer and Performer, “Coughing is a Form of Love” for two performers, paper, and small instruments; Institute for Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; Imprintech Paris - Philly, December 2017

Composer and Performer, “Haze” for voice and interactive audio; Brooklyn, NY, July 2017;

Composer and Performer, “Prestidigital Behemoth” for voice and 4 channel audio; Mise\_en\_Place, Brooklyn, NY, May 2015

Performer, “Puppet Show” (with Wang Jue) for Talea Ensemble and shadow puppets; Clemente Soto Velez Center, New York, NY, April 2015

### **Research Interests**

American musical avant-gardes, electroacoustic and tape music, history and philosophy of technology, sound studies

### **Professional Memberships**

American Musicological Society, Society for American Music, Society for Cinema and Media Studies, American Comparative Literature Association