VMC SUNY book series general descriptor

ABOUT THE SERIES:
Studies in Vernacular Music is a book series published by SUNY Press, authored by scholars and practitioners from around the globe, and edited by the staff of the Vernacular Music Center at Texas Tech University. The series seeks short (60-80K words) manuscripts on cultural transmission as process, pedagogy, performance, embodiment, and knowledge tradition. The series is receptive to manuscripts on core performing arts traditions like music, dance, theater, and storytelling, but also welcomes address to issues of vernacularity in other modes of expression and knowledge traditions: architecture, written texts, and play. The series likewise welcomes cross-disciplinary studies which link vernacularity in expressive and knowledge traditions via analytical tools from fine arts (criticism, historiography, performance studies, arts practice research), humanities (ethnography, sociology, and anthropology), public and community activism, and the STEM disciplines (meaning-making, critical thinking, and improvisation).

For decades, well-intentioned scholars seeking to describe their study of performance traditions from around the world have struggled to find terminology which could accurately and sympathetically describe–or even simply define–those traditions, in a fashion which recognized the traditions' own identity, agency, and meaning, exclusive of an outsider's viewing perspective. Multiple labels for this cluster of global performance traditions were volunteered, from various sectors in the global North, and have thankfully been largely discredited and abandoned.[1]

Our liaison at SUNY-Press is senior acquisitions editor Richard Carlin, a fine musician himself, and a long-time friend of the VMC. Formerly at Norton, Richard is also a strong popular/jazz music scholar in his own right, and an excellent and veteran interlocutor with a very acute understanding of both vernacularity and of the academic publishing market. The Press's film, visual culture, and performing arts lists can be found here.

ABOUT THE PROPOSAL AND ACQUISITIONS PROCESS:
We at the VMC are happy to answer specific questions regarding the proposals and acquisitions process, or refer them to the Press, but we can also provide a summary here:

Manuscripts are reviewed by two Readers, selected by the Press from a list suggested by the VMC Editorial Board; contingent upon those Reader Reports, contracts can be signed upon the Press's acceptance of the proposal. The average turnaround time for Reports is 3 months, and some MSS have been approved in as little as 1 month. The SUNY Press Editorial Board employs a consensus agenda, which likewise streamlines the approvals process. Though VMC staff do not serve as Readers, we have a central role recommending candidates for proposals; we are particularly interested in building the international network of authors and teachers working on vernacularity in arts education, and so are particularly interested to hear from international partners engaged in such work. SUNY Press typically employs a multi-stage publication process once the contract is signed, with an initial run of hardcover copies to libraries, paired with an ebook; within 6 months of the original publication date, there is a first run of paperback copies, and a relaunch of the ebook. The Press, which is distributed by Johns Hopkins and processes

[1] The range of terminology employed by global North scholarship and commerce–"world music," "traditional music," non-western music," "folk music," etc–is mostly notable for its distance from practitioners' own internal terminology, and for its externalized and alienating frame, often describing these art forms as secondary components in symbolic dyads.

approximately 160 books per year, supplies in-house copy editing and design; indexing services are also available.

ABOUT THE VERNACULAR MUSIC CENTER:
At the Vernacular Music Center, alongside our partners and fellow thinkers and teachers around the world, our *insight* is to recognize that what connects much of the world's music, dance, and theatrical performance traditions is not the specifics of the objectified repertoires to be performed, but rather the processes by which those practices are transmitted, both locally and within traditional channels and also globally via travel and digital communications. Our *contribution* is to recognize that this vernacular process–this process of encounter, imitation, critique, and revision–unites expressive forms across a wide range of registers, media, language groups, and experience. Our *intervention* is to insist that failure to recognize, not only these other genres of performance, but also the generational wisdom, acuity, artistry, and intention behind vernacular performance, must be redressed, by resituating vernacularity at the heart of learning, of knowledge creation, and of community vitality. All art, like nearly all embodied human knowledge, depends in part upon this process of demonstration, imitation, and critique: whether learning to play the violin or tabla, nurse a baby, plant a garden or knead bread, ride a horse or a motorcycle, humans learn many skills via this ancient, vital process of observation, imitation, and revision.

In *Studies in Vernacular Music*, we will find this connecting thread—the nature of the process by which knowledge systems are preserved, transmitted, evolved, and reinscribed–in a range of performance, expressive, and knowledge traditions. The series invites authors from around the world, with particular receptivity to under- theorized or under- represented genres and cultural voices, and from fields not conventionally understood as either performative or vernacularized. The series thus joins conversations which implicate the study of performance, arts practice research, new media, transnational and postcolonial theory, and decentralized and non hierarchical pedagogy. It is our conviction, based in decades of practice, that this way of conceiving vernacular processes of performance, within and beyond the conservatory, resonates with 21st century students and empowers them in terms of critical thinking, both about their own scholarly and creative practice and about the links between those practices and the wider world.

The VMC specializes in vernacular music and dance: performing arts forms which are embedded within traditions of cultural and linguistic function; learned, taught, and passed-on via demonstration, imitation, and critique; focused upon collaborative and project-centered processes as opposed to canons of repertoire; and–in the series' editorial stance–ubiquitous across, and beyond, human communities in all eras and historical contexts.

The Vernacular Music Center is a designated research center focused upon vernacularity, housed within a Carnegie Tier 1 research university and a major regional conservatory, on a campus also boasting world-class colleges of architecture, humanities (especially languages and historiography), and creative media industries. In addition, we dialog with other institutions leading analogous research in other places, most notably Argentina, the Republic of Ireland, the UK, and Finland. Likewise, we have very active and effective collaborative partnerships with both universities and conservatories, and various arts and culture non-governmental organizations, also worldwide. As a result, we have access to a wide range of potential authors and an especially wide range of potential readerships.

PUBLICATION TIMELINE:
The series plans an ambitious but sustainable publication schedule, with an initial tranche of three to four titles in the first publication year, thereafter transitioning to an ongoing schedule of

two titles per year. In that initial tranche, we will offer new work by both established and emerging multinational scholars from a wide range of positionalities, disciplinary backgrounds, and research practices.

In the first round of solicitations, for example, we have potential interest from authors on a range of topics, whose very diversity we believe illustrates the series' potential strength and continuity across individual volumes. These initial possible topics include: the pedagogy of vernacular arts in university settings; audience participation as vernacular practice; public-facing and socially-aware movement and sound choreography; vernacular architecture; Diasporic culture and musical identity; music, instrument, and dance revivals; organology; linguistics; literature and performance, and so on.

We believe that, by centering upon tightly-focused volumes of manageable size and cost, authored by vital and engaging scholars & performers at all career stages across a range of disciplines within and beyond the university, volumes in the *Studies in Vernacular Music* series will be applicable as supplemental textbooks in college undergraduate and graduate fine arts and humanities settings, and also as texts which can be shared between and across contrasting fields. The series' particular and unique contribution will be found in *uniting practitioners, students, and scholars*, in an understanding of the key process of "vernacularity" that links their various expressive and communicative modes.