

KELLY HOPPENJANS

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EDUCATION

PhD candidate in Musicology	2021–present
University of Michigan	
Certificates: Digital Studies, U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate	
Dissertation: <i>Voice Transforming Technology: Digital-Human Entanglements in 21st-Century US Pop Music</i>	
Anticipated graduation: May 2027	
Master of Music in Commercial Voice Performance	2015
Belmont University	
Thesis: <i>Finding Your Voice: Making Connections between Vocal Quality and Songwriting through the Analysis of Five Female Singer-Songwriters</i>	
Bachelor of Music in Musical Theatre	2011
Northwestern University	
Minor: Musicology	
Recital: <i>Blah Blah Me: Songs from the Space between Opera and Musical Theatre</i>	
Honors: Excellence in Musical Theatre, <i>summa cum laude</i>	

ACADEMIC HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND RESEARCH GRANTS

Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship for dissertation completion, University of Michigan	2026–2027
Graduate Music Award, Presser Foundation	March 2026
Louise E. Cuyler Award for Best Article, University of Michigan	February 2026
Rackham Humanities Research Dissertation Award, University of Michigan	2025–2026
David Sanjek Graduate Student Paper Prize, International Association for the Study of Popular Music	March 2025
Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant (Candidate), University of Michigan	January 2025
Digital Studies Institute Graduate Research Funding, University of Michigan	April 2024
Musicology Department Summer Research Award, University of Michigan	March 2024
Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant (Pre-Candidate), University of Michigan	March 2024
Louise E. Cuyler Award for Best Conference Presentation, University of Michigan	February 2024
Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Nomination, University of Michigan	January 2024
Hans T. David Memorial Scholarship, University of Michigan	April 2022
Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Belmont University	May 2015
National Merit Scholar	2007–2011

PUBLICATIONS

- Book Chapter. “Whose Voices Do We Hear? Compensation, Transparency, and Control in AI Voice Clones.” Co-written with Micheal Nayebar. *The Palgrave Handbook of Artificial Intelligence and Popular Music*. forthcoming
- Book Chapter. “Broadcast Your Self: Blackness, Auto-Tune, and Songified Others on Early YouTube.” *Oxford Handbook of Online Music Cultures*. forthcoming (2027)
- Peer-Reviewed Article. “‘Doing Something Unholy’: Algorithmic Publics and Reclaiming LGBTQ+ Culture on #QueerTok.” *Journal for Popular Music Studies* 38, no. 3: 54–84. forthcoming (2026)
- Article. “The Singer in the Loop: Searching for Embodiment in Grimes’s AI Voice Clone.” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 34, no. 2: 258–263. 2025
- Book Review. “Alexander Weheliye, *Feenin: R&B Music and the Materiality of Blackfem Voices and Technology*.” *The Bulletin of the Society for American Music* vol L, no. 3: 13–15. 2024
- Book Chapter. “Call and Response: Using Imitation to Teach Style and Originality.” In *Action Based Pedagogies for Popular Music Education: A Practical Guide*, eds. Steve Holley, Kat Reinhert, and Zach Moir, 39–45. 2021
- Article. “Cross-Voice Influence: The Relationship Between the Singing Voice and the Songwriting Voice,” *Journal of Singing* 77, no. 1: 47–57. 2020

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “‘Ain’t Changing My Tone’: Racialized Authenticity and Transforming Voices in Country Music” March 2027
(forthcoming)
Society for American Music Annual Conference, Buffalo NY
- “‘Sure Looks Strange to Me’: Chipmunk Voices and Uncanniness in 1950’s Novelty Music” November 2026
(forthcoming)
American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, Virtual
- “AI Voice Clones, Embodied Knowledge, and the Future of Voice Work” September 2026
The Popular Voice Conference (PopVoxCon) 2026, Vienna Austria
- “‘God in His Hand’: Chipmunked BlackFem Voices and Soulfulness in 90’s–00’s UK Garage” June 2026
Feminist Theory and Music, Dayton OH
- Poster Paper: “Visions of Creative AI in Speculative Fiction, 1950–Present” May 2026

(co-written with Catherine Brist) Rackham Student AI Working Groups Symposium, Ann Arbor MI		
“What Is a Voice Worth? Voice Actors and AI Voice Labor Under Techno-Capitalism” (co-written with Micheal Nayebare) American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, Minneapolis MN		November 2025
“Whispering in Our Ears: Billie Eilish and the Unsettling Side of Sonic Intimacy” International Association for the Study of Popular Music International Conference, Paris France		July 2025
Society for American Music Annual Conference, Tacoma WA		March 2025
“‘A Self-Replicating Pop Star?’ Grimes AI and Voicing Humanity” International Association for the Study of Popular Music (US Branch) Conference, Los Angeles CA		March 2025
Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, Virtual		October 2024
“Doing Something Unholy’: Mainstreaming Queer Subculture on ‘TikTok” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Baltimore MD		November 2024
Feminist Theory and Music Conference, Ann Arbor MI		June 2024
American Musicological Society Annual Meeting, Denver CO		November 2023
“Doubles and Stacks, Reverbs and Effects: Teaching Vocal Production Skills” National Association of Teachers of Singing National Conference, Knoxville TN		July 2024
“Doja Cat and Self-Memefication in the COVID-19 Pandemic” International Association for the Study of Popular Music International Conference, Minneapolis MN		June 2023
“Gender Bio-Essentialism and Voice Classification” Association for Popular Music Education Conference, Detroit MI		June 2022
“Singer-Songwriter Success: Uniting your Singing Voice with your Songwriting Voice” Association for Popular Music Education Conference, Murfreesboro TN		June 2018
Poster Paper: “Your Unique Voice: A System for Vocal Quality Assessment in Commercial Singers” National Association of Teachers of Singing National Conference, Chicago IL		July 2016

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Vocasource.com. This public-facing website and educational resource, co-created with Micheal Nayebaré with support from the Presser Foundation, is aimed at connecting high school and college students as well as vocalists from amateur to professional with knowledge and resources about voice AI. The site will include educational modules, links to professional organizations and legal resources, and guides for safely and ethically engaging with AI voice cloning technology.

“Visions of Creative AI in Speculative Fiction, 1950–Present.” This collaborative article co-written with English literature and gender studies scholar Catherine Brist explores fictional representations of AI creativity in speculative fiction across literature, film, television, and music. We examine how depictions of AI as creative circulate and inform how audiences read real-world generative AI’s creativity.

INVITED LECTURES

“Doubles and Stacks, Reverbs and Effects: Teaching Vocal Production Skills”	2026
Voice Study Centre, Colchester UK	
“Songifying Speech: Musical Memes on Social Media”	2026
Music and Online Cultures, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	
“AI and Musical Creativity”	2026
Borrowed Music, University of Michigan	
“Visual Albums and Beyoncé’s <i>Lemonade</i> ”	2025, 2024
Music and Media, University of Michigan	
“TikTok Generation”	2024
Intro to Popular Music, University of Michigan	
“Voice and AI: Creativity and Ethical Considerations”	2024
AI for Creative Work (online MOOC), University of Michigan	

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

For the following courses, I developed the syllabus, taught all classes, handled grading, and advised students during office hours. When noted, I designed new course offerings

Graduate Student Instructor: Music Video in the United States from Talkies to TikTok	Fall 2024
Department of Musicology, University of Michigan	
<i>300-level, undergraduate students, non-music majors</i>	
<i>I designed and taught this new course.</i>	

Graduate Student Instructor: Music Creation in the Digital Age
Department of Digital Studies, University of Michigan
200-level, undergraduate students, any major
I designed and taught this new course. Summer 2023

Lecturer: Commercial Vocal Styles II: Pop
Department of Commercial Voice, Belmont University
300-level, undergraduate students, music majors (voice principal) Fall 2020

Lecturer: Commercial Vocal Styles Survey for Integrated Majors
Department of Commercial Voice, Belmont University
300-level, undergraduate students, music therapy and music education majors (voice principal)
I designed and taught this new course. Fall 2018, Fall 2019

Lecturer: Commercial Voice Seminar
Department of Commercial Voice, Belmont University
300-level, undergraduate students, music majors (voice principal) Spring 2017–Fall 2020

Lecturer/Graduate Student Instructor: Commercial Voice Class I
Department of Commercial Voice, Belmont University
100-level, undergraduate students, non-voice majors Spring 2015,
Spring 2018, Spring 2019

Ensemble Director

For the following ensembles, I selected repertoire, arranged music, taught parts, and prepared students for live performances unless otherwise noted.

Lecturer: Pops and Company
Department of Vocal Ensembles, Belmont University
Small and large commercial vocal ensembles for voice principals and accompanying bands
Students in Pops (large ensemble) were split into small groups and chose and arranged their own repertoire with my guidance. In this COVID year, they created music videos for our livestream “performance” and gained practical experience in recording sound and video. Fall 2020–Spring 2021

Lecturer: Showstoppers
Department of Music, Volunteer State Community College, Gallatin TN
Small vocal ensemble for music and non-music majors Fall 2019–Spring 2021

Director: Spring Musical/Play 2019–2021
St. Paul Christian Academy, Nashville TN

After-school activity, large cast of 5th and 6th graders

Students learned acting, music, choreography, and backstage skills through preparing a theatrical production. I directed the musical, taught vocal parts, created choreography, taught sound and lighting skills, oversaw the logistics of the production, and collaborated with the art teacher who handled set- and prop-making.

Private Music Instruction

For the following positions, I taught voice major and elective voice lessons in vocal health, performance, technique, style, and artistry, preparing them for performances, juries, and recitals.

Lecturer: Applied Voice 2019–2021

Department of Music, Volunteer State Community College

Lecturer: Applied Commercial Voice 2017–2021

Department of Commercial Voice, Belmont University

Freelance Instructor: Voice, Guitar, Piano, and Ukulele 2013–Present

Kellybird Studio (my independent voice studio/small business), Music Staff Studio (Nashville TN), and A2 Guitar (Ann Arbor, MI)

Private lessons for students of all ages and levels

I have taught private students in voice, guitar, piano, and ukulele lessons in technique, performance, style, and artistry in preparation for performances, recitals, and auditions. I have also handled the business and organization of my lesson studio, including scheduling, billing, taxes, business expenses, and planning recitals.

Graduate Student Assistant

Research Assistant: AI for Creative Work MOOC Summer 2024

Center for Academic Innovation, University of Michigan Online

Online course aimed at all levels of learners, primarily business professionals

I assisted with researching course content, gathering materials, designing assignments, and creating content aimed at equipping learners with tools to understand generative AI and use it creatively and ethically in their work.

Teaching Assistant: Multiple Courses

Department of Musicology, University of Michigan

For the following large courses, all between 100–180 students, I led discussion sections in the history, culture, aesthetics, analysis, and current events in the course topic, as well as graded assignments and helped students prepare for exams and learn to write effectively

about music. When noted, I gave a guest lecture in the main lecture section on a topic related to my scholarship.

Music in Sci-Fi Film (300-level, non-music majors)	Winter 2024
Guest Lecture: <i>Blade Runner</i> and Techno-Orientalism	
History of US Music (100-level, music majors)	Winter 2024
Guest Lecture: Music, Gender, and Intersectionality	
Introduction to Popular Music (100-level, non-music majors)	Winter 2023, Fall 2023
Guest Lecture: TikTok Generation	
Introduction to Art Music (100-level, non-music majors)	Fall 2022

PERFORMANCE AND SONGWRITING HONORS AND AWARDS (selected)

The Acorn Songwriting Competition Finalist	July 2023
Songwriter-in-Residence at Willapa Bay AiR	July 2021
John Lennon Songwriting Competition Finalist	March 2020
Eddie's Attic Songwriting Competition Winner	March 2020
NewSong Music Songwriting Competition Finalist	November 2019
Lightning 100's Road to Roo/Music City Mayhem Quarterfinalist	March 2020, March 2018
Kerrville New Folk Songwriting Competition Finalist	May 2017

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE (selected)

Indie Rock Solo Performer: New York City NY, Nashville TN, Ann Arbor MI, and nationally touring in the US	2014–Present
Select venues include Rockwood Music Hall and Pianos (NYC); The 5 Spot, Cobra, Exit/In, Basement East, The East Room, and City Winery (Nashville); the Blind Pig (Ann Arbor); McCabe's Guitar Shop (Santa Monica, CA); the Musical Instrument Museum (Phoenix, AZ); the Evening Muse (Charlotte, NC); and the Grey Eagle (Asheville, NC)	
Opened for <i>American Idol</i> 's Crystal Bowersox on 2019 summer tour	
Theater: New York City NY, Nashville TN, Northwestern University	2008–2019
Select roles include Second Nature Soloist (<i>Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson</i> , Nashville Repertory Theater); Lucy (<i>Jekyll and Hyde</i> , Street Theatre Co.); Ensemble/u.s. Belle (<i>Beauty and the Beast</i> , Weathervane Playhouse); Violet (<i>Sideshow</i> , Northwestern University); Dreamer/u.s. Lily (<i>The Secret Garden</i> , Northwestern University)	

RECORDING (selected)

“Can’t Get the Dark Out” (EP)	Kelly Hoppenjans	May 2022
Reviewed and featured in <i>Bearded Gentlemen</i> , <i>A2 Pulp</i> , <i>Various Small Flames</i> , and <i>Nashville.com</i>		
<i>OK, I Feel Better Now</i> (full length)	Kelly Hoppenjans	October 2019
Reviewed and featured in NPR’s “All Songs Considered” and “World Café”, <i>American Songwriter</i> , and <i>The Alternative</i> (among others)		
Radio play in over 55 stations across the US; highlights include Lightning 100 and WXNA (Nashville) and KUTX (Austin TX)		
“Dreaming is Easy” (EP)	Kelly Hoppenjans	June 2017
Reviewed and featured in <i>Nashville Scene</i> , <i>Wolf in a Suit</i> , <i>East of 8th</i> , and <i>Ear to the Ground</i>		

SERVICE AND RELATED EXPERIENCE

Student Representative, Musicology Department, University of Michigan	2026–2027
Participant, AMS Popular Music Study Group Junior Scholar Symposium	2026
Co-Chair, Society for Music Research (Univ. of Michigan graduate student organization)	2025–2027
Participant, Rackham AI Student Workings Groups, University of Michigan	2025–2026
Student Seat, Board for the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, US branch	2024–2026
Book Award Committee, IASPM-US	2024–2025
Conference Organizer and Treasurer, Midwest Graduate Music Consortium	2024–2025
Treasurer, Society for Music Research	2023–2025
Participant, Digital IDEAS Summer Institute	2023
Editor, <i>Currents in Music Research</i> (Univ. of Michigan graduate student music journal)	2022–2024
Social Chair, Society for Music Research	2022–2023
Participant, CCM Institute at Shenandoah University, Levels I and II	July 2018
Author of several voice-related articles on pedagogy blog <i>Singing in Popular Musics</i>	2018–2023
Volunteer Instructor, Southern Girls Rock Camp/Girls Rock Detroit	2016–2024

SKILLS

Instruments: guitar, piano, ukulele

Languages: conversational Italian and Spanish

Music production: Ableton, BandLab (some Logic and GarageBand)

Songwriting

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Musicological Society
American Studies Association
Broadcast Music International
International Association for the Study of Popular Music (US branch)
National Association for Teachers of Singing
Pi Kappa Lambda, Music Honor Society
Society for American Music
Society for Ethnomusicology

REFERENCES

Jessica Baldwin
Assistant Professor of Voice, Ohio University
Athens OH
jessbaldwin@ohio.edu

Jamie Bricker
Owner and Founder, Music Staff Studio
Nashville TN
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