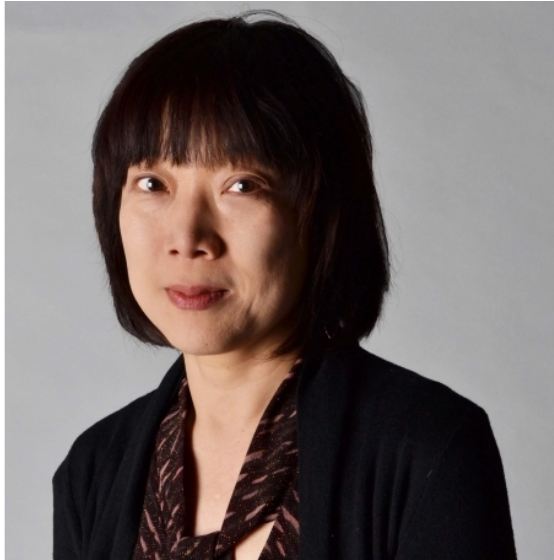


Distinguished Lecturers in Music Theory Series

Dr. Yayoi Uno Everett



Professor of Music
University of Illinois at Chicago

Opera in Flux: Multimodal Narrative and Narrative Agency

Tuesday, March 1st, 2022
1:00pm EST
Via Zoom

Register for Zoom Webinar at
<https://bit.ly/3KDYSCx>

Informal conversation with graduate
students immediately to follow

Lecture Abstract:

In *Unsettling Opera* (2007), David Levin claims that opera has emerged as “an unsettled site of signification,” requiring the audience to attend to a surfeit of competing systems. He argues that operatic performance is intrinsically *polylogical* and lacks a stable narrative form precisely because the performance text (production elements) may compete with or undermine the opera text (lyrics, music, and stage direction). Moreover, the DVD or high-definition broadcast of opera utilizes filmic devices that shape the viewer’s multimodal experience of narrative in an entirely different manner from attending a staged performance. So how does opera in its remediated form (as film) constrain and/or enrich narrative interpretation? How does music relate to the visual and kinesthetic dimensions of film in shaping narrative? In Annabel Cohen’s Congruence-Associationist Model (CAM), cross-modal processes give priority to *congruent* structures across audio-visual channels in analyzing film where the music’s primary role is to direct attention to the visual. In contrast, operatic music generates imagistic content that assumes narrative agency on its own terms. As Marilyn Boltz claims, “the invoked schemas guide selective attending toward those actions and objects consistent with the adopted interpretation” in formulating narrative meaning. Drawing on concepts introduced by Michel Chion, Gérard Genette, and Robert Hatten as well as models introduced by Mark Johnson and Juan Chattah, I propose a preliminary typology of agential mechanisms that shape the narrative trajectories of recent contemporary operas by John Adams, Kaija Saariaho, Toshio Hosokawa, and Charles Wuorinen.



Toshio Hosokawa, *Matsukaze*
(with choreography by Sasha Waltz, 2017)

Bio:

Yayoi Uno Everett is Professor at University of Illinois at Chicago and her research focuses on the analysis of postwar art music, film, and opera from the perspectives of semiotics, multimedia theories, cultural studies, and East Asian aesthetics. Her publications include *Reconfiguring Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Opera* (2015) and *The Music of Louis Andriessen* (2006). She is a recipient of fellowships from Bogliasco Foundation, Japan Foundation, and National Endowment for Humanities.