

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE IN MUSIC THEORY

“The Long Song: Extended Form in Popular Music”

Dr. John Covach

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Director of the University of Rochester

Institute for Popular Music

Professor of Music Theory,

Eastman School of Music

Tuesday, January 22, 6:00 p.m.

135 Music Building

Free and open to the public.

BIO

John Covach is Director of the University of Rochester Institute for Popular Music, Professor of Music in the College Music Department, and Professor of Theory at the Eastman School of Music. Professor Covach teaches classes in traditional music theory as well as the history and analysis of popular music. His online courses at Coursera.org have enrolled more than 350,000 students in over 175 countries worldwide.

Professor Covach has published dozens of articles on topics dealing with popular music, twelve-tone music, and the philosophy and aesthetics of music. He is the principal author of the college textbook *What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock Music* (W.W. Norton) and has co-edited *Understanding Rock* (Oxford University Press), *American Rock and the Classical Tradition and Traditions*, *Institutions*, and *American Popular Music* (Routledge), *Sounding Out Pop* (University of Michigan Press), as well as the forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to the Rolling Stones*. He is one of the founding editors for *Tracking Pop* (Michigan), a series devoted to scholarly monographs on popular music. He appears regularly on radio and television in North America and England, and his writing may be found in *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Huffington Post*, *CNN.com* and *FoxNews.com*.



As a guitarist, Covach has performed widely on electric and classical guitar in both the US and Europe and recorded with the progressive rock band, Land of Chocolate. He currently performs with several bands, including Going for the One.

ABSTRACT:

Most discussions of form in popular music take as their focus songs lasting five minutes or less. When the length of such songs remains within the 2-5 minute range, the usual designs (AABA, ABAC, simple verse, simple verse-chorus, contrasting verse-chorus, and compound forms) are effective. But when songs become extended, ranging in some cases up to 20 minutes in length or more, new approaches to the analysis of form are required. This talk will explore some of the ways that musicians have structured such “long songs,” drawing on examples from popular music across the twentieth century, from Irving Berlin and Cole Porter to Aretha Franklin and Peter Gabriel.

