

## ALEXANDER W. COWAN

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study • Harvard University  
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### EDUCATION

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**Harvard University**, Cambridge, MA

**Ph.D.** Historical Musicology, expected May 2023

Dissertation: “Unsound: A Cultural History of Music and Eugenics”

**King’s College, London**, London, UK

**MMus** Musicology, with Distinction, 2016

**St. Hugh’s College, University of Oxford**, Oxford, UK

**BA (Hons)** Music, First Class, 2015

### RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

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Music and Eugenics

American Music

Music, Science, and Technology

Opera and Music Theater

Music and Literature

Music of the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

### PUBLICATIONS

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#### Refereed Articles

“Eugenics at the Eastman School: Race, Talent, and Musical Efficiency,” manuscript in preparation.

#### In Edited Collections

“The Musical Mind is the Normal Mind’: Reimagining Musicianship for Eugenics,” in *The Science-Music Borderlands: Reckoning with the Past, Imagining the Future*, Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis, Deirdre Loughridge, and Psyche Loui, eds. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), in press.

“The Phonograph as Instrument of Race Betterment: Science, Marketing, and Critique,” in *Sonic Circulations 1900–1950* (working title), Emily MacGregor, Emily I. Dolan, and Arman Schwartz, eds., forthcoming.

#### Reviews

“Review: Stephen P. Garabedian, *A Sound History: Lawrence Gellert, Black Musical Protest, and White Denial*,” *Journal of the Society for American Music*, in press, 2022.

“Review: Emily Petermann, *The Musical Novel: Imitation of Musical Structure, Performance, and Reception in Contemporary Fiction*.” H-Music, H-Net Reviews, 2017.

#### Other

“Listen to yourself!: Spotify, Ancestry.com, and the Fortunes of Race Science in the Twenty-First Century,” *Sounding Out!: The Sound Studies Blog*, 2019.

“Methods and Ethics,” Sonic Circulations Research Network, 2018.

### SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND PRIZES

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Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Dissertation Fellowship	2022–3
Alvin H. Johnson AMS 50 Dissertation Completion Fellowship, American Musicological Society	2022–3

Jan LaRue Grant, American Musicological Society	2020
Margery Lowens Dissertation Research Fellowship, Society for American Music	2020
Oscar F. Schafer Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching, Harvard University	2020
Derek Bok Center Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University	2020
Charles E. Warren Center for American Studies Summer Fellowship	2019
Richard F. French Fellowship, Harvard University	2018
Paul A. Pisk Prize for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper, American Musicological Society	2017
Hilda Margaret Watts Prize for Highest MMus Degree, King's College, London	2016
Adam Prize for Highest MMus Dissertation, King's College, London	2016

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#### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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“Hearing ‘Hereditary Genius’: Musicality and the Rhetorical Foundations of Eugenics,” American Musicological Society, Online	2021
“Musical Selection: Eugenics, Ethnomusicology, and the Right,” Society for Ethnomusicology, Online	2021
“Was There a Eugenic Musical Aesthetic?” Conference of the Royal Musical Association Music and Philosophy Study Group, London [Conference cancelled owing to COVID-19]	2021
“Francis Galton’s Singing Eutopia: Musicality, Vitality, and Sexuality in <i>The Eugenic College of Kantsaywhere</i> (1909),” Modern Language Association, Toronto, CA [Online], January 7–10, 2021	2021
“Eugenics at 78rpm: The Phonograph as Instrument of Racial Betterment,” Society for American Music, Minneapolis, MN [Conference postponed owing to COVID-19]	2020
“Spotify, Ancestry, and Race Science in the Twenty-First Century,” American Musicological Society, Boston, MA	2019
“The Mismeasure of Music: Eugenics and the Science of Musical Ability,” Sonic Circulations 1900–1950: Musical Thought, Scientific Fantasies, Global Contexts, King’s College, London	2019
“Eugenics at the Eastman School: Music Psychology and the Racialization of Musical Talent,” American Musicological Society, Rochester, NY	2017

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#### TEACHING AND ADVISING EXPERIENCE

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**Departmental Pedagogy Fellow**, Harvard University  
Pedagogy Practicum for New Teachers

**Head Teaching Fellow**, Harvard University

Opera

Theory 1a

A Social History of Rock n’ Roll

**Teaching Fellow**, Harvard University

Thinking About Music

Bach to Beyoncé

**Undergraduate Advisor**, Harvard University

Junior Research Tutorial

**Graduate Course Assistant**, Harvard University  
 American Studies and American Music: Classic Texts and Recent Trends,

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**RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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Editorial Assistant, Journal of the American Musicological Society,	2019–22
Research Assistant, Professor Braxton D. Shelley, (Harvard University),	2017–21
Research Assistant, Professor Judith Tick, (Northeastern University),	2017–21
Chair, Harvard Graduate Music Forum,	2018–19
Organizing Committee, Ex-Centric Music Studies Conference, Harvard	2018
Graduate Colloquium Convener, Harvard Graduate Music Forum,	2017–18

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**REFERENCES**

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**Professor Carol J. Oja**, Committee Chair  
 Department of Music, Harvard University  
 3 Oxford St, Cambridge, MA 02138  
 coja@fas.harvard.edu

**Professor Carolyn Abbate**, Committee  
 Department of Music, Harvard University  
 3 Oxford St, Cambridge, MA 02138  
 cabbate@fas.harvard.edu

**Professor Braxton D. Shelley**, Committee  
 Yale Institute of Sacred Music  
 406 Prospect St, New Haven, CT 06511  
 braxton.shelley@yale.edu