

Dr Arman Schwartz

Birmingham Fellow

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About

I am a musicologist specializing in European and American art music, especially opera, from the mid-19th century through the present. My major critical interests include the theory of modernism, Italian cultural studies, and the history and philosophy of listening and sound.

Qualifications

I received my BA in Music from the University of Chicago and my MA and PhD in Music History and Literature from the University of California, Berkeley. Before joining the faculty at the University of Birmingham, I held an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania (2009-2011) and an ACLS New Faculty Fellowship at Columbia University (2011-2013).

Teaching

I teach modules on 19th- and 20th-century music.

Postgraduate supervision

I am happy to discuss potential supervision with postgraduate candidates pursuing research on topics including opera and performance studies; music of the 19th-, 20th-, and 21st centuries; sound and media studies.

Research

The bulk of my research has addressed opera's fraught relationship with modernity, dealing broadly with the period between 1850 and the present day. My interest in the stubbornly traditional medium of opera (and in the stubbornly traditional nation of Italy) is partially motivated by a desire to complicate entrenched understandings of musical modernism; to this end, I've tried to find new ways to talk about both "conservative" composers like Verdi and Puccini and "avant-garde" figures including the Italian futurists, Luciano Berio, and Cathy Berberian. I've been especially concerned with the seemingly paradoxical notion of operatic "realism," a problem that has led me to devote considerable attention to the early history of sound recording. This interest in technological mediation has, in turn, prompted me to explore the relationship between nineteenth-century opera and a variety of later cultural forms: fascist spectacle, neo-realist cinema, recent experimental stage and film productions, the installations of contemporary visual artists.

I recently completed my first monograph, entitled *Puccini's Soundscapes*, and am currently finishing up editing a special issue of *Opera Quarterly* on "Opera and the Avant-Garde." My research has been supported by a Marian and Andrew Heiskell Pre-Doctoral Rome Prize in Modern Italian Studies from the American Academy in Rome, an AMS-50 fellowship from the American Musicological Society, and the biennial Premio "Rotary" Giacomo Puccini. An essay on Tosca and versimo, published in *19th-Century Music*, was awarded the Royal Musical Association's Jerome Roche Prize, "for a distinguished article published by a scholar in the early stages of his or her career."

Other activities

I am a member of the editorial board of *Opera Quarterly*. I have also served as a Director's Guest scholar at Civitella Ranieri, an international artists' residency center in Umbria.

Publications

- *Puccini's Soundscapes* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, forthcoming)
- *Opera and the Avant-Garde*, guest-edited special issue of *Opera Quarterly* (forthcoming)
- "The Absent Diva: Notes toward a Life of Cathy Berberian," *Opera Quarterly* (forthcoming)
- "Musicology, Modernism, Sound Art," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* (forthcoming)
- Review of Stefan Herheim, *La bohème*, *Opera Quarterly* (forthcoming)
- "Puccini, in the Distance," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 23 (2012), 167-189
- "Mechanism and Tradition in Puccini's *Turandot*," *Opera Quarterly* 25 (2009), 28-50
- "Manon in the Desert, Wagner on the Beach," *Opera Quarterly* 24 (2008), 51-61
- "Rough Music: Tosca and Verismo Reconsidered," *19th-Century Music* 31 (2008), 228-44
- Review of Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism, and Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), *Notes: Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 64 (2008), 736-38
- "Prospero's Isle and the Sirens' Rock," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15 (2003), 81-106

