Recognized as one of the most innovative and influential directors of our time, Peter Sellars has produced acclaimed—and often controversial—versions of many beloved operas and oratorios. He has also collaborated with several composers, including John C. Adams and Kaija Saariaho, to create challenging new operas. The Passions of Peter Sellars follows the development of his style, beginning with his interpretations of the Mozart-Da Ponte operas, proceeding to works for which he assembled the libretti and even the music, and concluding with his celebrated stagings of Bach’s passions with the Berlin Philharmonic.

Many directors leave the musical aspects of opera entirely to the singers and conductor. Sellars, however, immerses himself in the score, and has created a distinctive visual vocabulary to embody musical gesture on stage, drawing on the energies of the music as he shapes characters, ensemble interaction, and large-scale dramatic trajectories.

As a leading scholar of gender and music, and the history of opera, Susan McClary is ideally positioned to illuminate Sellars’s goal to address both the social tensions embodied in these operas as well as the spiritual dimensions of operatic performance.

Susan McClary is Professor of Music at Case Western Reserve University.

THE BEATLES THROUGH A GLASS ONION: RECONSIDERING THE WHITE ALBUM

By Mark Osteen, Editor - 328 pp. | 15 musical examples | 6x9 | © 2019 - March

The Beatles, the 1968 double LP more commonly known as the White Album, has always been viewed as an oddity in the group’s oeuvre. Many have found it to be inconsistent, sprawling, and self-indulgent. The Beatles through a Glass Onion is the first-ever scholarly volume to explore this seminal recording at length, bringing together contributions by some of the most eminent scholars of rock music writing today. It marks a reconsideration of this iconic but under-appreciated recording and reaffirms the White Album’s significance in the Beatles’ career and in rock history. This volume treats the White Album as a whole, with essays scrutinizing it from a wide range of perspectives. These essays place the album within the social and political context of a turbulent historical moment; locate it within the Beatles’ lives and careers, taking into consideration the complex personal forces at play during the recording sessions; investigate the musical as well as pharmaceutical influences on the record; reveal how it reflects new developments in the Beatles’ songwriting and arranging; revisit the question of its alleged disunity; and finally, track its legacy and the breadth of its influence on later rock, pop, and hip-hop artists. The Beatles through a Glass Onion features the scholarship of Adam Bradley, Vincent Benitez, Lori Burns, John Covach, Walter Everett, Michael Frontani, Steve Hamelman, Ian Inglis, John Kimsey, Mark Osteen, Russell Reising, Stephen Valdez, Anthony D. Villa, Kenneth Womack, and Alyssa Woods. John Covach’s Afterword summarizes the White Album’s lasting impact and value. The Beatles through a Glass Onion represents a landmark work of rock music scholarship. It will prove to be an essential and enduring contribution to the field.

Mark Osteen is Professor of English and Director of the Center for the Humanities at Loyola University Maryland.
How do we define improvised music? What is the relationship of highly improvised performances to the work they are performances of? How do we decide what are the important parts of an improvised musical work? In Intents and Purposes, Eric Lewis uses a series of case studies to challenge assumptions about what defines a musical work and musical performance, seeking to go beyond philosophical and aesthetic templates from Western classical music to foreground the distinctive practices and aesthetics of jazz. Pushing aside the assumption that composition and improvisation are different (or even opposed) musical practices, Lewis’s philosophically informed approach revisits key topics in musical ontology, such as how to define the triangle of composer-performer-listener, and the status of live performances in relation to scores and recordings. Drawing on critical race theory, feminist theory, new musicology, sociology, cognitive science, and genre theory, Lewis opens up new questions about agency in performance, as well as new ways of considering the historical relationships between improvisational practices with roots in different cultural frameworks. By showing how jazz can be both art, idea, and action all at the same time, Lewis offers a new way of seeing any improvised musical performance in a new culturally and aesthetically rich context.

Eric Lewis is Associate Professor of Philosophy, McGill University.

DEVELOPING WRITERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY
By Anne Ruggles Gere, Editor - 348 pp. | 8 figures | 6x9 | © 2019 - January

For undergraduates following any course of study, it is essential to develop the ability to write effectively. Yet the processes by which students become more capable and ready to meet the challenges of writing for employers, the wider public, and their own purposes remain largely invisible. Developing Writers in Higher Education shows how learning to write for various purposes in multiple disciplines leads college students to new levels of competence. This is an important book for researchers and graduate students in multiple fields. Those in writing studies get an overview of other longitudinal studies as well as key questions currently circulating. For linguists, it demonstrates how corpus linguistics can inform writing studies. Scholars in higher education will gain a new perspective on college student development. The book also adds to current understandings of sociocultural theories of literacy and offers prospective teachers insights into how students learn to write. Finally, for high school teachers, this volume will answer questions about college writing.

Anne Ruggles Gere is Director of the Sweetland Center for Writing, Professor of English, and Professor of Education at the University of Michigan.
Monstrous Kinds is the first book to explore textual representations of disability in the global Renaissance. Elizabeth B. Bearden contends that monstrosity, as a precursor to modern concepts of disability, has much to teach about our tendency to inscribe disability with meaning. Understanding how early modern writers approached disability not only provides more accurate genealogies of disability, but also helps nuance current aesthetic and theoretical disability formulations. The book analyzes the cultural valences of early modern disability across a broad national and chronological span, attending to the specific bodily, spatial, and aesthetic systems that contributed to early modern literary representations of disability. The cross section of texts (including conduct books and treatises, travel writing and wonder books) is comparative, putting canonical European authors such as Castiglione into dialogue with transatlantic and Anglo-Ottoman literary exchange.

Elizabeth B. Bearden is Professor of English, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Laura E. Wangerin challenges traditional views of the Ottonian Empire's rulership. Drawing from a broad array of sources including royal and imperial diplomas, manuscript illuminations, and histories, Ottonian kingship and the administration of justice are investigated using traditional historical and comparative methodologies as well as through the application of innovative approaches such as modern systems theories. This study suggests that distinctive elements of the Ottonians’ governing apparatus, such as its decentralized structure, emphasis on the royal iter, and delegation of authority, were essential features of a highly developed political system. Kingship and Justice in the Ottonian Empire provides a welcome addition to English-language scholarship on the Ottonians, as well as to scholarship dealing with rulership and medieval legal studies.

Laura E. Wangerin is Assistant Professor of History at Seton Hall University.
Beyond the Gender Gap in Japan

Why do Japanese women enjoy a high sense of well-being in a context of high inequality? Beyond the Gender Gap in Japan brings together researchers from across the social sciences to investigate this question. The authors analyze women’s values and the lived experiences at home, in the family, at work, in their leisure time, as volunteers, and in politics and policy-making. Their research shows that the state and firms have blurred “the public” and “the private” in postwar Japan, constraining individuals’ lives, and reveals the uneven pace of change in women’s representation in politics. Yet, despite these constraints, the increasing diversification in how people live and how they manage their lives demonstrates that some people are crafting a variety of individual solutions to structural problems. Covering a significant breadth of material, the book presents comprehensive findings that use a variety of research methods—public opinion surveys, in-depth interviews, a life history, and participant observation—and, in doing so, look beyond Japan’s perennially low rankings in gender equality indices to demonstrate the diversity underneath, questioning some of the stereotypical assumptions about women in Japan.

Gill Steel is Associate Professor at the Institute for the Liberal Arts, Doshisha University.

Gendered Power: Educated Women of the Meiji Empress’ Court

Gendered Power sheds light on the sources of power for three prominent women of the Meiji period: Meiji Empress Haruko; public speaker, poet, and diarist Nakajima Shoen; and educator and prolific author Shimoda Utako. By focusing on the role Chinese classics (kanbun) played in the language employed by elite women, the chapters focus on how Empress Haruko, Shoen, and Shimoda Utako contributed new expectations for how women should participate in a modernizing Japan. By being in the public eye, all three women countered criticism of and commentary on their writings and activities, which they parried by navigating gender constraints. The success or failure as women ascribed to these three figures sheds light on the contradictions inhabited by them during a transformative period for Japanese women. By proposing and interrogating the possibility of Meiji women’s power, the book examines contradictions that were symptomatic of their struggles within the vast social, cultural, and political transformations that took place during the period. The book demonstrates that an examination of that conflict within feminist history is crucial in order to understand what radical resistance meant in the face of women-centered authority.

Mamiko C. Suzuki is Assistant Professor of Japanese in the Department of World Languages and Cultures at the University of Utah.
GLOBAL DIGITAL CULTURES: PERSPECTIVES FROM SOUTH ASIA
By Aswin Punathambekar and Sriram Mohan, Editors - 304 pp. | 5 Illustrations | 6x9 | © 2019 - June

Digital media histories are part of a global network, and South Asia is a key nexus in shaping the trajectory of digital media in the twenty-first century. Digital platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and others are deeply embedded in the daily lives of millions of people around the world, shaping how people engage with others as kin, as citizens, and as consumers. Moving away from Anglo-American and strictly national frameworks, the essays in this book explore the intersections of local, national, regional, and global forces that shape contemporary digital culture(s) in regions like South Asia: the rise of digital and mobile media technologies, the ongoing transformation of established media industries, and emergent forms of digital media practice and use that are reconfiguring sociocultural, political, and economic terrains across the Indian subcontinent. From massive state-driven digital identity projects and YouTube censorship to Tinder and dating culture, from Twitter and primetime television to Facebook and political rumors, Global Digital Cultures focuses on enduring concerns of representation, identity, and power while grappling with algorithmic curation and data-driven processes of production, circulation, and consumption.

Aswin Punathambekar is Associate Professor of Media Studies and Founding Director of the Global Media Studies Initiative in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Michigan. Sriram Mohan is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Michigan.

#IDENTITY: HASHTAGGING, RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND NATION
By Abigail De Kosnik and Keith P. Feldman, Editors - 344 pp. | 20 figures, 3 tables | 6x9 | © 2019 - April

Since its launch in 2006, Twitter has served as a major platform for political performance, social justice activism, and large-scale public debates over race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationality. It has empowered minoritarian groups to organize protests, articulate often-underrepresented perspectives, and form community. It has also spread hashtags that have been used to bully and silence women, people of color, and LGBTQ people. #identity is among the first scholarly books to address the positive and negative effects of Twitter on our contemporary world. Hailing from diverse scholarly fields, all contributors are affiliated with The Color of New Media, a scholarly collective based at the University of California, Berkeley. The Color of New Media explores the intersections of new media studies, critical race theory, gender and women's studies, and postcolonial studies.

The essays in #identity consider topics such as the social justice movements organized through #BlackLivesMatter, #Ferguson, and #SayHerName; the controversies around #WhyIStayed and #CancelColbert; Twitter use in India and Africa; the integration of hashtags such as #nohomo and #onfleek that have become part of everyday online vernacular; and other ways in which Twitter has been used by, for, and against women, people of color, LGBTQ, and Global South communities. Collectively, the essays in this volume offer a critically interdisciplinary view of how and why social media has been at the heart of U.S. and global political discourse for over a decade.

Abigail De Kosnik is Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Berkeley Center for New Media and the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies. Keith P. Feldman is Associate Professor of Comparative Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.
Why does Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) consistently invoke God and Providence in his most prominent texts relating to international politics? In this wide-ranging study, Seán Molloy proposes that texts such as Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent and Toward Perpetual Peace cannot be fully understood without reference to Kant's wider philosophical projects, and in particular the role that belief in God plays within critical philosophy and Kant's inquiries into anthropology, politics, and theology. Molloy's broader view reveals the political-theological dimensions of Kant's thought as directly related to his attempts to find a new basis for metaphysics in the sacrifice of knowledge to make room for faith. This book is certain to generate controversy.

Kant is hailed as "the greatest of all theorists" in the field of International Relations (IR); in particular, he has been acknowledged as the forefather of Cosmopolitanism and Democratic Peace Theory. Yet, Molloy charges that this understanding of Kant is based on misinterpretation, neglect of particular texts, and failure to recognize Kant's ambivalences and ambiguities. Molloy's return to Kant's texts forces devotees of Cosmopolitanism and other 'Kantian' schools of thought in IR to critically assess their relationship with their supposed forebear: ultimately, they will be compelled to seek different philosophical origins or to find some way to accommodate the complexity and the decisively nonsecular aspects of Kant's ideas.

Seán Molloy is Reader in International Relations at the University of Kent.