

Nicholas J. Shea, Ph.D.  
**Curriculum Vitae**

**Academic appointments**

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2020 – Assistant Professor of Music Theory, Arizona State University  
Co-founder and Principal Investigator, CACTUS Music Lab  
Director, Music Theory Pedagogy Graduate Certificate program  
Coordinator, first-year undergraduate music theory and aural skills sequence

**Publications**

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- Published
- N. Shea**, N. Reymore, C. White, B. Duinker, L. VanHandel, M. Zeller, N. Biamonte. 2023. “Diversity in Music Corpus Studies.” *Music Theory Online* 30.1. [[link](#)]
- N. Shea**. 2023. “‘Guitar Thinking’ and ‘Genre Thinking’ among an Online Community of Guitarists.” *IASPM Journal* 13, no. 1. [[link](#)]
- N. Shea**. 2022. “A Demographic Sampling Model and Database for Addressing Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Bias in Popular-music Empirical Research,” *Empirical Musicology Review* 17, no. 1. [[link](#)]
- K. Knowles & **N. Shea**. 2022. “From Counterpoint to Small Forms: A Cross-Stylistic Approach to Centering Black Artists in the Theory Core,” chapter in *Expanding the Canon: Black Composers in the Music Theory Classroom*, ed. M. Hoag.
- S. Gardner & **N. Shea**. 2022. “Gestural Perspectives on Popular-music Performance,” *Music Theory Online* 28.3. [[link](#)]
- N. Shea**. 2022. “The Feel of the Guitar in Popular Music Performance,” *SMT-V* 8.3. [[link](#)]
- N. Shea**. 2020. “Descending Bass Schemata and Negative Emotion in Western Song,” *Empirical Musicology Review* 14, no. 3. [[link](#)]
- M. Markel & **N. Shea**. 2016. “Report on the 2016 Workshops in Music Theory Pedagogy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst,” *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 30, no. 1.
- In press
- N. Shea**, C. White, B. Hughes, and D. Vuvan. 2024. “Metric Accent Affects Perception of Key Center in Pop-Music Chord Loops.” *Music Perception*. Accepted Aug 25, 2024. [[link](#)]
- N. Shea**. 2026. “Open Strings: Manipulations of Time, Distance, and Pitch Space.” *Music Theory Spectrum* Vol. 28, Issue 2. Accepted July 19, 2024.
- Under revision
- N. Shea**. “Six Weeks is Not Enough: Equity and Fundamentals in the First-Semester Music Theory Course.” *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*. Submitted Oct 15, 2023.
- Under review
- N. Shea**. “The Kinesthetic Grammar of Popular-Music Guitar Performance.” *Journal of Music Theory*. Submitted Oct. 12, 2024.
- In progress
- N. Shea**. Book proposal: *The Structure of Song: A Cognitive Theory of Musical Organization in Popular Genres*. Lever Press: Ann Arbor, Michigan. Expected submission May. 30, 2025.

## Higher education

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- 2020 Doctor of Philosophy in Music Theory, *Ohio State University*  
Dissertation, “Ecological Models of Musical Structure in Pop-Rock, 1950–2019”  
Anna Gawboy & Nicole Biamonte, directors; Daniel Shanahan, advisor
- 2017 Master of Music in Music Theory, *University of Massachusetts Amherst*  
Thesis, “Meter in French and Italian Opera, 1809–1859”  
Christopher Wm. White, director
- 2013 Bachelor of Education in Music, *Univ. of Missouri-St. Louis, Pierre Laclède Honors College*

## Awards

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- |      |  |           |
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| 2023 | ASU Professor of Impact Award, Music Theory 1  | awarded   |
| 2022 | Outstanding Mentor to Master’s Students, Arizona State University  | nominated |
| 2020 | Helmholtz Award for Excellence in Music Cognition  | awarded   |
|      | Graduate Teaching Associate Award for Excellence in Teaching   | awarded   |
| 2019 | Hayes Graduate Research Forum, Ohio State University<br>“Addressing Issues of Representation in Popular-music Research.” | 2nd place |

## Grants and other funding

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USD unless otherwise noted

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| 2024 | <b>N. Shea.</b> (Under review). “Kinesthetic Models of Musical Organization in Popular Genres” <i>National Science Foundation Perception Action and Cognition</i>   | \$1.1 mil<br>(proposed) |
|      | McGill ACTOR consortium. “Interactions of Timbre, Texture, and Form in a Multi-Genre Popular Music Corpus.” <i>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grants</i>                               | \$157,222<br>CAD        |
| 2022 | <b>N. Shea.</b> “Guitar Performance Practices in Popular Music Styles.”<br><i>Herberger Institute Research Building Investment, Arizona State University</i>  | \$4,985                 |
| 2020 | K. Knowles & <b>N. Shea.</b> “Hearing in time: Continuous temporal processing of musical structures in classical and popular music.”<br><i>Herberger Institute Research Building Investment, Arizona State University</i> | \$14,910                |
| 2019 | <b>N. Shea.</b> “Ecological Models of Communication in Vernacular Music Styles.”<br><i>OSU Center for Cognitive and Brain Sciences Summer Research Fellowship</i>   | \$5,500                 |
|      | <i>OSU Alumni Grants for Graduate Research and Scholarship</i>  | \$2,120                 |

## Invited talks

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- 2024 “Computational Models of Fretboard Grammar,” *Research Computing Showcase – Tempe, AZ*
- 2022 “Research-backed Strategies for Building Musical Fluency in Diverse Populations of Undergraduate Music Majors.” *National Association of Schools of Music, Region 1 Session – St. Louis, MO.* [[talk](#)] [[slides](#)]
- “Developing a Stylistically and Demographically Diverse Corpus of Timbral Features in 1990s Popular Music.” *Society for Music Theory, Music Informatics Interest Group – New Orleans, LA*

### Invited talks, cont.

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- 2018 “Empirical Measures of Style in Popular Music.”  
*Society for Music Theory*, Music Informatics IG – San Antonio, TX
- “Instrumental Texture and Function in Popular Music.”  
*Research in Music Series*, University of Massachusetts Amherst

### Presentations

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- 2022 **N. Shea**, C. White, B. Hughes, & D. Vuvan. “Meter vs. Harmony as Key Determinant in Popular Music: Which One Wins?”  
*Society for Music Theory Annual Meeting* – New Orleans, LA
- N. Shea**, C. White, B. Hughes, & D. Vuvan. “Meter and harmony, but not musical training style, impact tonic perception in rock music.”  
*Society for Music Perception and Cognition* – Portland, OR
- 2022 L. Reymore, M. Zeller, L. VanHandel, B. Duinker, **N. Shea**, C. White, J. Tatar, J. Roth, & N. Biamonte. “Encoding and Analyzing a New Corpus of Popular Songs.”  
*Music Encoding Conference* – Halifax, Canada
- 2021 **N. Shea**. “Open Strings as Lorentzian Wormholes: Traversing Parallel Universes in Fretboard Space.” *Society for Music Theory Annual Meeting* – online due to Covid-19
- N. Shea**. “Cartesian Segmentation of Fretboard Space and Form by Style” *International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition* – online due to Covid-19
- 2020 **N. Shea**. “Inclusive Methods of Popular Music Performance Analysis.”  
*Music Theory Midwest* – Madison, WI  
*Music Theory Society of New York State* – Hempstead, NY
- 2019 **N. Shea**, L. Glowacki, & D. Shanahan. “Performer-Generated Aspects of Musical Structure in Pop-rock.” *Society for Music Perception and Cognition* – New York, NY
- N. Shea**. “Addressing Issues of Representation in Popular Music Research.”  
*Edward F. Hayes Graduate Research Forum* – Columbus, OH
- 2018 **N. Shea**. “Do Descending Bass Lines Signal Sadness?”  
C. White & **N. Shea**. “Some Influences of Chord Progressions on Accent.”  
*Society for Music Perception and Cognition* – San Diego, CA
- N. Shea**. “How Guitar (Hero) Performance Can Convey Function in Pop-rock.”  
N.C. Hansen & **N. Shea**. “'Too Fast for Comfort': A Historical Performance Analysis of Tempo Choice in Piano Recordings.”  
*Music Theory Society of New York State* – New York, NY
- 2017 **N. Shea**. “Meter in French and Italian Opera, 1809–1859.”  
*Society for Music Theory* – Arlington, VA
- C. White & **N. Shea**. “Do Downbeats Influence Harmonization Preferences?”  
*Society for Music Perception and Cognition* – San Diego, CA
- N. Shea**. “Meter in French and Italian Opera, 1809–1859.”  
*New England Conference of Music Theorists* – Amherst, MA  
*Music Theory Society of New York State* – Geneva, NY

## Teaching experience

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### Arizona State University

Coordinator of first-year undergraduate core curriculum. Graduate-level instructor.  
Director of Music Theory Pedagogy Graduate Certificate.

- Undergraduate    Basic Music Theory (F 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024)  
                      18th Century (S 2021, 2022)  
                      Popular Music Analysis (S 2023)  
                      Advanced Form and Analysis (S 2024)
- Graduate        Computational Analysis of Music (Spring 2022)  
                      Pedagogy of Theory (F 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)  
                      Performance Analysis (S 2021, 2023)  
                      Analytical Techniques (F 2020)  
                      Music Theory Pedagogy Internship (F 2020, S 2023, F 2023, F 2024)
- Supervisor     5–8 aural skills and music theory teaching assistants  
                      1–2 faculty associates  
                      3–4 music theory tutors

### Ohio State University

Graduate teaching associate, instructor of record.  
Music Theory I, II, III & IV (2017 – 2020)  
Aural Skills I, II, III & IV (2017 – 2020)

### University of Massachusetts Amherst

Teaching assistant.  
Aural Skills I & II (2014 – 2017)  
Music Theory I, II & III (2014 – 2017)

### Parkway School District

Primary and secondary strings ensemble director. Kodály-method instructor.  
2013–2014    Barretts and River Bend Elementary. Director, 3rd–5th grade  
2012–2013    Parkway West Middle. Teaching assistant, 6th–8th grade

## Peer reviewing

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*Music Theory Online* (2024); *Music and Science* (2023); *Journal of Music Theory* (2023); *Theory and Practice* (2023, 2021); *Indiana Theory Review* (2023, 2022); *Oxford University Press* (2022); *Canadian Association of Music Libraries Review* (2021)

## Committees and service

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Field-level positions

- 2023–    Chair        Music Informatics Interest Group, *Society for Music Theory*  
          Member    Anti-Racism and Equity Committee, *Society for Music Perception and Cognition*  
                      McGill ACTOR Project
- 2023    Co-chair    Music Cognition Interest Group, *Society for Music Theory*
- 2020–    Ed. board   *Indiana Theory Review*

## Committees and service, cont.

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Dissertations, theses, and comprehensive exam committees

Chair      Jaclyn Connor. *Popular Music Program Capstone Project*.  
Taylor Simpson. *Barrett Honors Undergraduate Thesis*.

Co-chair   Jessica Dodge. *DMA Saxophone Perf.*  
Benjamin MacDonald. *DMA Saxophone Perf.*  
Shuxiao Zhang. *DMA Piano Perf.*

Member    Hugo Bauer-Bedrick & Luke      Alicia Castillo. *MM Composition*.  
Hinderaker. *Barrett Honors Thesis*.      Riley Braase. *DMA Clarinet Perf.*  
Ryan Matejek. *DMA Tuba Perf.*      Shiyu Liu. *DMA Piano Perf.*  
Kemi Chen. *DMA Percussion Perf.*      Chun-Ya Pien. *DMA Piano Perf.*  
Sarah Core. *Barrett Honors Thesis*.      Gabbie Wong. *MM Oboe Perf.*  
Joshua Oxford. *DMA Composition*.      Mikaela Hannon. *DMA Flute Perf.*  
Isaac Brady. *DMA Guitar Perf.*

Barrett Honors College contracts

2022      Corinne Kisicki. Musical semiotics in 19th century vocal music.  
Zachary Brown. Temperament and non-Western tuning systems.  
2021      Abigail Berg. Rhythm and meter in musical theater.  
Taylor Simpson. Mathematical approaches to jazz harmony.  
2020      Corbin Cowan. Timbre and musical meaning in popular music.  
Zachary Scrabeck. Topic theory and film music.

Arizona State University committees

2023      Member      Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor of Music Theory search.  
2022                      Assistant Professor of Music Theory search.  
2020                      Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

## Advisee achievements and other mentorship

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Academic appointments by former music theory teaching assistants and Theory Ped students

Jacob Chesney      Adjunct Professor of Music Theory, Lipscomb University. 2022–  
Daniel Taborda-Higuita      Adjunct Professor of Music, Grand Canyon University. 2022–  
Laura Brackney      Adjunct Professor of Music Theory, Texas State University. 2022–  
Devin Arne      Assistant Professor of Composition, West Chester University. 2021–  
Adjunct Professor of Music, Cape Cod Community College. 2020–2021.  
Ziyu Wang      VAP of Composition, SUNY Potsdam. 2023–  
Jessica Dodge      Adjunct Professor of Music Theory, Mesa Community College. 2023–2024.  
Riley Braase      Adjunct Professor of Music Theory, Chandler-Gilbert CC, 2024–

Research assistant supervision

Graduate      Nicholas G. Jordan      Kah Yan Lee  
Undergraduate      Mizuki Asano      Nicholas Botz      Alex Meixner  
Sarah Core      Jaclyn Connor      Brett Page

## Outreach and volunteer activities

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- 2023 Graduate Student Performance Analysis Showcase at Arizona State University.  
Public music theory forum hosted by students in MTC 591 Performance Analysis.
- 2021 “Popular-music Guitar Performance: Interdisciplinary approaches.”  
Guest lecture to MHL 394, instructor Dr. Christi Jay Wells
- 2020 “Audio transcription techniques.”  
Guest lecture to MTC 223, instructor Dr. Kristina Knowles  
“Using the terminal to scrape text and links from websites.”  
Open-access tutorial presented to the SMT Music Informatics Interest Group
- 2018 Graduate Music Student Association – Ohio State University  
“What is Music Cognition?” Second-Year Transformational Program
- 2017 – 2020 Capital Pride Band, volunteer – Columbus, OH
- 2018 “Guitar (Hero) Performance and Musical Space.”  
Franklinton Friday at the OSU STEAM Factory
- 2015 – 2017 Graduate Music Research Symposium – Amherst, MA  
Creator and founder; Co-chair for Music Theory
- 2014 El Sistema String Instructor, Demetrious Johnson Foundation – St. Louis, MO

## Professional development

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- 2023 Workshops in Music Theory Pedagogy — Vancouver, BC, Canada
- 2021 Project Spectrum Guest Speaker Workshops — online  
“Critical Perspectives on Diversity Committees”
- 2018 Society for Music Theory Graduate Student Workshop – San Antonio, TX  
“Issues in Popular-Music Analysis,” with Nicole Biamonte  
Engaging Students Un-conference @ OSU STEAM Factory – Columbus, OH  
Diversity and Implicit Bias Awareness Program – Ohio State University  
“Open Doors” “Implicit Bias” and “Race/Ethnicity” workshops
- 2017 MTSNYS Graduate Student Workshop on Music Theory Pedagogy – Geneva, NY  
“Preparing music theory instructors of the (very near) future,” with Anna Gawboy
- 2016 Society for Music Theory Graduate Student Workshop – Vancouver, BC  
“Meter and Form in 19th Century Music,” with Richard Cohn

## References

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- Anna Gawboy, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Music Theory  
Ohio State University  
Email: gawboy.2@osu.edu
- Daniel Shanahan, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Music Theory  
Northwestern University  
Email: daniel.shanahan@northwestern.edu
- Nicole Biamonte, Ph.D. Professor, Music Theory  
McGill University  
Email: nicole.biamonte@mcgill.ca
- Christopher White, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Music Theory  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Email: cwmwhite@music.umass.edu

Additional contact information available upon request.