



# Oregon Humanities Center

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*Spring 2021*

## Environmental historian explores life in the Arctic

Climate change and other alterations to the Earth caused by human activity are often described in apocalyptic terms: as Armageddon, or the end of the world. Nowhere is this more true than in the Arctic, where the rates of warming are twice that of temperate regions and have been visible for decades.

Bathsheba Demuth will explore the Chukchi Peninsula, in far eastern Arctic Siberia, in her 2020–21 Clark Lecture “The Reindeer and the End of the World” on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at noon (PDT) [via Zoom](#).

The indigenous Chukchi people have traditionally been herdsman and hunters of reindeer; those who live along the coasts of the Arctic Ocean, the Chukchi Sea, and the Bering Sea have custom-

arily hunted sea mammals such as seals, whales, walruses, and sea lions.

Russia launched a series of vigorous military campaigns against the Chukchi in 1729. The Chukchi put up a ferocious resistance and, when surrounded, they frequently committed mass suicide rather than surrender. By the 1760s, the Russian



government decided that the cost of vanquishing the Chukchi was too high in terms of money and troops and ended the war on the condition that the Chukchi cease attacking Russian settlers and pay the *yasak* (the yearly tax that native Siberians paid in furs).

In the 1930s, the Chukchi were

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**Bathsheba Demuth**

Photo: Peter Goldberg

## Musicking conference returns virtually in April

After a hiatus in 2020 due to COVID-19 the [School of Music and Dance's Musicking Conference](#) returns virtually April 12–15, 2021. In addition, the conference

will host the [Society for Seventeenth-Century Music's](#) (SSCM) annual conference April 15–18.

The Musicking Conference seeks to cultivate student and community interest in early music and historical performance practice studies by combining scholarship, education, and performance. This year's conference will include a presentation on a recent critical edition of the works of Antonio

Vandini, a lecture concert on early music of Central and South Americas, and a keynote address on “The State of Early Music in 2021” with Musicking Director and cellist, Marc Vanscheeuwijck.



**Elinor Frey**

In addition to Vanscheeuwijck, Elinor Frey, a leading Canadian-American cellist and researcher, will be a featured artist. She will give a masterclass and a live-streamed concert “Imperfect Circle” with her Baroque quartet Pallade Musica, which includes Tanya LaPerrière, Baroque violin, Esteban La Rotta, theorbo, and Mélisande McNabney, harpsichord. “Im-

perfect Circle” looks to 17th-century Italian Baroque music to explore ideas relating to the circle, a symbol of idealized perfection, while simultaneously confronting the imperfections of our natural world.

The SSCM conference will include panel presentations by a wide array of scholars from around the world including a free joint session with Musicking titled “Diversifying Early Music Pedagogy” on Monday, April 12. Registration is required for the conference (\$50, \$40 for students) [sscm-sscm.org/meetings-conferences/2021-annual-meeting](http://sscm-sscm.org/meetings-conferences/2021-annual-meeting).

The Musicking Conference, cosponsored by the OHC's Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities, is free and open to the public. For more information and viewing information go to: [blogs.uoregon.edu/musicking/2021-conference-schedule](http://blogs.uoregon.edu/musicking/2021-conference-schedule).

## UO's Prison Education Program wins Mellon grant

The University of Oregon's [Prison Education Program](#), directed by Shaul Cohen, received a \$481,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to increase its educational programming in prisons around the state. The award will build on the work the Prison Education Program has done since 2007 to serve incarcerated Oregonians and to offer UO students an opportunity to take classes in a range of subjects and to learn with and from their incarcerated classmates.

The award will fund three separate initiatives that will help increase access

to higher education courses, lectures, and materials in facilities across Oregon.

The Prison Education Program will be able to train additional faculty members from the humanities to offer their classes in prisons, which enables the program to offer more courses and a greater



Shaul Cohen (center)

depth of subject matter inside prison walls.

The funding will also allow the Prison Education Program to broadcast more UO programming on televisions throughout all 14 prisons in Oregon. The program has been airing

Oregon Humanities Center's [UO Today](#) show and lectures since 2019.

In addition to the OHC, the program partners with the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics and the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art to give incarcerated Oregonians access to community programs that are recorded on campus. The award will also allow the program to hire a former inside student, who earned a bachelor's degree through the UO while incarcerated, to manage Prison Education Program TV.

The third component of the Mellon award is a pilot program that will offer educational materials to incarcerated individuals in isolated settings within the prisons, including solitary confinement and mental health units.

The Prison Education Program grew out of the UO's Inside-Out Program, started in 2007 by former OHC Director Steven Shankman, which offered credit courses that included a mix of UO students and incarcerated students. Hundreds of UO students and more than 1,000 incarcerated students have gone through the program since its inception. The UO program has grown to be one of the largest in the nation.

*This story was excerpted from Around the O.*

## Former fellow awarded NEH grant

Tara Fickle, associate professor of English, has been awarded a 2021 NEH fellowship for her project "Behind *Aiiieeeee!*: A New History of Asian American Literature."

The fellowship will fund the research, writing, and digital development of a book examining the publication history of one of the first anthologies of Asian American literature, [Aiiieeeee!](#)

In the eyes of mid-twentieth-century white America, "Aiiieeeee!"—so often seen on the silver screen and in comic books—was the one-dimensional cry of Asian America, their singular expression of all emotions—it signified and perpetuated the idea of Asian Americans as inscrutable, foreign, self-hating, undesirable, and obedient. *Aiiieeeee!* is an anthology published in 1974. The editors reclaimed that shout, outlining the history of Asian American literature and boldly drawing the boundaries for what was truly Asian American and what was white puppetry. The third edition was published in 2019 with a new foreword

written by Fickle.

"Behind *Aiiieeeee!*" gives readers, especially students, the resources and contextual information they need to fully appreciate *Aiiieeeee!* and the field of



Asian American cultural production more broadly. This will be done through a combination of traditional and non-traditional media platforms, including a scholarly monograph and a series of critical essays. At the heart of the project is a digital humanities component, in the form of a digital edition and

companion.

Fickle was a 2017–18 OHC Ernest G. Moll Faculty Research Fellow. That project led to the publication of her first monograph *The Race Card: From Gaming Technologies to Model Minorities* (NYU Press, 2019), which explores how games have been used to establish and combat Asian American racial stereotypes. The book won the 2020 American Book Award given by the Before Columbus Foundation.

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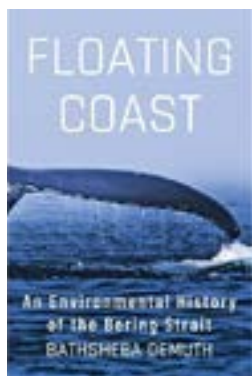


## Demuth *continued from page 1*

forced into Soviet economic collectives which disrupted their indigenous life-ways. The Chukchi Peninsula became a region of mines and gulags. It's a place that has experienced radical changes with Russian contact, the founding of the Soviet Union, and then with its dissolution.

Weaving a story of devoted Bolsheviks, Chukchi nomads, and herds of reindeer, Demuth will ask what kinds of narratives suit the empirical experience of radical change, what is lost when we emphasize rupture, and what is gained by paying attention to the ruins left by past ways of living as we face a transformed Arctic and planet.

Bathsheba Demuth is an assistant professor of History and Environment and Society at Brown University. She is an environmental historian, specializing in the lands and seas of the Russian and North American Arctic. She is interested in how the histories of people, ideas, places, and non-human species intersect. Her interest in northern environments and cultures began when she was 18 and moved north of the Arctic Circle in the Yukon. For over two years, Demuth



mushed huskies, hunted caribou, fished for salmon, tracked bears, and otherwise learned to survive in the taiga and tundra.

Demuth's book *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait*, published in 2019, offers a comprehensive history of Beringia, the Arctic land and waters stretching from Russia to Canada. These frigid lands and waters became the site of an ongoing experiment: How, under conditions of extreme scarcity, would modern ideologies of capitalism and communism control and manage the resources they craved?

Demuth's lecture is free and open to the public. Registration is required to participate in the live Zoom event. Register at [ohc.uoregon.edu](https://ohc.uoregon.edu). The talk will be recorded and available for viewing on the OHC's YouTube channel. For more information contact [ohc@uoregon.edu](mailto:ohc@uoregon.edu).

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## Pianist is artist-in-residence in spring

The [School of Music and Dance](#) (SOMD) and the [Oregon Bach Festival](#) (OBF) welcome pianist and activist Lara Downes as artist-in-residence during spring term with cosponsorship by the OHC's Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities. Downes will teach MUS 408/508 Audience Engagement, and will participate in three public events.

We are living through a time of transformation, reckoning, and reimagining—joining together in a historic cultural shift towards greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts. As a performer and activist, Downes shines a light on the visionary work that will define the next stage of this journey.

The Audience Engagement class aims to train music students how to engage with audiences through public speaking and designing interactive performances. Downes will teach this course with inclusion as the focus point for audience engagement.

Downes will give a talk "Uncovering Lost Treasures" on Friday, April 23, 2021



at 2 p.m. (PDT) online for the SOMD's THEME colloquium series. She will speak about her experience discovering unknown music by composer Florence Price, and her collaboration with musician J. Michael Cooper.

Downes will give an OBF concert preview "Holes in the Sky" on Friday, May 7, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. (PDT) online. As part of OBF's virtual 2021 season, she will present a virtual concert "Holes in the Sky," a project that celebrates the power of female creativity. The concert will feature newly discovered works by Florence Price and other women composers.

On Wednesday, May 19 and Friday, May 21, 2021 Downes will participate in a master class and discussion "Music by Black Female Composers" at 10 a.m. (PDT) online. These workshops will involve students from a piano pedagogy class and teachers from the Eugene chapter of the Oregon Music Teachers Association.

For more information go to [music.uoregon.edu](https://music.uoregon.edu).

## Faculty advocate for the humanities

Six UO humanities faculty participated in the 2021 [National Humanities Alliance's](#) (NHA) Humanities Advocacy Day on March 10th, asking Congressional staff for funding to support federally funded humanities research programs such as the National Endowment for the Humanities. These budgets are funded annually through appropriations passed by Congress. Participants included Tara Fickle, English; Nathalie Hester, Romance Languages; Daniel Rosenberg, Honors College; Maram Epstein, East Asian Languages and Literatures; Riki Saltzman, Oregon Folklife Network; and David de Lorenzo, Special Collections and University Archives.

Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) now chairs the appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over NEH, NEA, the Na-

tional Archives, and other small independent programs for the arts and humanities, giving the state of Oregon important visibility on these funding issues.

In addition, David de Lorenzo and an Oregon community college faculty member joined representatives from Princeton, Vanderbilt, and the University of Iowa to meet with the staff director to Senator Merkley's subcommittee. He appreciated meeting the Oregon constituents.

In past years, UO has had only one or two participants in the annual NHA meeting and follow-up advocacy day. The cost of travel coupled with the timing during dead week or finals has been a barrier to attendance. This year's virtual event led to increased participation. Membership in the NHA is funded by the UO President's Office.



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## Stephon Alexander blends the worlds of theoretical physics and jazz music

Stephon Alexander, professor of Physics at Brown University and the President of the National Society of Black Physicists will give a talk “What a Scientist Learned from Jazz about Innovation” on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 4 p.m. (PDT) via Zoom as a guest of the UO Physics Department. The event will be hosted by the OHC and sponsored by the OHC’s Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities.

Alexander, who was born in Trinidad and moved the U.S. at eight, is a theoretical physicist specializing in cosmology, particle physics, and quantum gravity (String Theory and Loop Quantum Gravity). He has held previous appointments at Stanford University, Imperial College, Penn State, Dartmouth, and Haverford College. He is Executive Director of the Harlem Gallery of Science and an Affiliate Professor in Africana Studies at Brown.

Alexander, a jazz saxophonist, also explores interconnections between music, physics, mathematics, and technology through recordings, performance, teaching, and public lectures. He has performed and collaborated with Will Calhoun, Brian Eno, Marc Cary, Vernon Reid, Ronnie Burrage, and Jaron Lanier. He authored the book *The Jazz of Physics: The Secret Link Between Music and the Structure of the Universe* published in 2017, which uses jazz to answer physics’ most vexing

questions about the past and future of the universe. Following the great minds that first drew the links between music and physics—a list including Pythagoras, Kepler, Newton, Einstein, and Rakim—*The Jazz of Physics* reveals that the ancient poetic idea of the “Music of the Spheres,” clarifies confounding issues in physics.

The lecture is free and open to the public. The Zoom link will be posted at [ohc.uoregon.edu](http://ohc.uoregon.edu) on April 20.

