

Ambrose Research Conference 2024

Arts Session Abstracts

Arts Session 1 – The Art of Performance: Considering the Roles of Composers and Audiences (Room A2133)

John Matthew Cabalsa, “Saviour of the Nations, Come: A Presentation and Analysis of an Original Composition”

“Saviour of the Nations, Come,” by student composer John Matthew Cabalsa, was conceived as a project for a composition class at Ambrose University in 2021. It is based on the Advent hymn *Veni, redemptor gentium* by Ambrose of Milan (337–397 A.D.), and its original orchestration was for choir, piano, saxophone, and acoustic guitar. In June 2023, the score was rearranged to accommodate a full-sized chamber orchestra, and this rearranged work was presented at Ambrose University’s Christmas program, “Rejoice: Christmas at Ambrose,” held on December 8, 2023. This presentation deals with issues of creativity, inspiration, and analysis with respect to the particular composition methods and techniques employed in this piece, along with a discussion of its form and orchestration. I will also discuss the two-year process of composition that brought the piece to its final version today. I will demonstrate in this presentation that the compositional process, along with the musical elements present within the work, reflect the theological concept of hope and anticipation for the Saviour of the nations to deliver us from the oppression of sin.

Alyssa Michaud, John Glanville, Anna Konrad, “Creating Concert Culture: How Fan Behaviour at the Taylor Swift Eras Tour Movie Highlights Audience Co-Creation in Concert Experiences”

The success of Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour dominated headlines in 2023, crashing Ticketmaster’s servers, boosting host cities’ economies, and earning Swift the title of Time’s “Person of the Year.” In October 2023, the singer added a new medium to her list of cultural conquests, releasing the highest-grossing concert film of all time. In her Eras Tour film announcement on social media, Swift told fans, “Eras attire, friendship bracelets, singing and dancing [is] encouraged.” While this invitation prompted some fans to enthusiastically prepare for a participatory concert experience, many argued that these “obnoxious” and “inconsiderate” behaviors would violate movie theatre etiquette.

During the film’s early weeks, the atmosphere at Eras movie screenings varied widely. Fan participation transformed many theatres into temporary Eras Tour concert venues complete with friendship-bracelet-trading, screaming, and dancing, while other theatres housed placid and uneventful movie screenings. In this paper, we draw on ethnographic research and participant observation to show how audience preparation and investment can play a vital role in the co-creation of a concert experience. We show how the range of Eras Tour movie experiences depended not on the unvarying on-screen concert itself, but on the ways in which fans gradually negotiated the collective behavioral codes of their own unique events. Drawing on research in fan studies that shows how fans hold the power to co-create culture, this research offers a contribution to an unfolding conversation in performance studies, which reveals the ways in which audiences bring a performance to life with their attention and investment.