

Melissa Kagen

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Candidate, German Studies, **Stanford University** 2011–2016
- Adviser: Adrian Daub
 - Certificate in Digital Humanities: Analyzing the Stanford Code Poetry Slam through Critical Code Studies
 - Teaching workshops: ACTFL in writing proficiency (WPA) and oral proficiency (OPI) (2012-2014), Berkeley DAAD workshop (2015), Heidelberg Fortbildungskurs für DAF-Dozenten und Germanisten (2015), Courses at the Goethe Institut in Freiburg and Berlin including C1 exam certification (2012-2014)
- M.A., Humanities, **University of Chicago** 2009–2010
- Adviser: Na'ama Rokem
 - Thesis: "Jewish National Identity in 1840: Der 'Fliegende Jude' and the Promise of Redemption in Heine and Wagner"
- B.A., Honors in Literary Arts, magna cum laude, **Brown University** 2005–2009
- Adviser: Meredith Steinbach
 - Thesis: "Asylum"
 - Semester abroad, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

DISSERTATION & RESEARCH INTERESTS

- **"Alle Wege der Welt": Wandering in Jewish German Opera in the early 20th Century.** Committee: Adrian Daub (German Studies), Thomas Grey (Musicology), Russell Berman (German Studies), Matthew Wilson Smith (German Studies), Stephen Hinton (Musicology). My dissertation focuses on German/Jewish wandering in modernist opera, looking at how the separate myths of the Wandering Jew and the German Wanderer in the 19th century grow increasingly unassimilated in early 20th century operas by Franz Schreker, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Arnold Schoenberg, and Kurt Weill.
- **Research Interests:** 19th–21st centuries, theater and performance studies (opera, music, video games, new media), wandering forms (digressive literature, pedestrian performance, walking simulators), eco-fiction and film, apocalypse, digital humanities, space and literary mapping, politics and religion in artworks

PUBLICATIONS

- "Walking Simulators, #GamerGate, and the Gender of Wandering in Video Games"**
Forthcoming in *Nerds, Wonks, and Neo-cons*, ed. Jonathan P. Eburne and Benjamin Schreier, The Years Work Series. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.
- "The Wanderer as Soldier: Robert Walser's *Der Spaziergang*, Switzerland in World War I, and Digression as Occupation"**
Accepted with revisions at *German Quarterly*
- "Zombie Parsifal: Undead Walkers and Postapocalyptic Stagings"**
Revised and resubmitted at *Opera Quarterly*
- "Controlling Sound: Musical Torture from the Shoah to Guantanamo"**
The Appendix 3.1 (2013): Web. 20 August 2013.

INVITED GUEST LECTURES

- Code Poetry Slamming and the Performative Web**, Web Summit, Lisbon, Portugal November 2016
Musically Mapping Controlled Space, University of Minnesota February 2013
Musical Geographies of Torture, Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA November 2012

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- "Analyzing the Stanford Code Poetry Slam through Critical Code Studies,"** Digital Humanities 2016, Kraków, Poland. July 2016
- "Meyerbeer's Monarchs as Shaped by their Cities: *Ein Feldlager in Schlesien, Vielka, and L'étoile du Nord*,"** International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music, University of Oxford. July 2016
- "The Path: Red Riding Hood and Wandering Video Games,"** MLA Convention, Austin. January 2016
- "Place and Placelessness in Arnold Schoenberg,"** MLA Convention, Vancouver. January 2015
- "Wandering in Video Games,"** MLA Convention, Vancouver. January 2015
- "Words, Music, and Politics in *Der Jasager*,"** GSA Conference, Denver. October 2013
- "Musical Geographies of Torture,"** *Music in Detention* Conference, Göttingen University. March 2013
- "Musical Memory in Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra*,"** *Hauntings* (Graduate conference), University of Michigan. October 2012
- "Music and Torture: a spatial history,"** *Music on the Edge* (Graduate conference), University of California at Santa Barbara. May 2012

DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Certificate in Digital Humanities

I've done the required coursework in introductory programming, digital humanities, and new media theory. As a capstone project, I am currently building a digital site to close read, analyze, and perform many of the poems from the Stanford Code Poetry Slams. The project will closely analyze each work and present it in several side-by-side forms: first as plain text, then as compilable code in a modified IDE, followed by an analysis of the text and whatever output is generated from compilation, and finally showing multiple videos of its performance.

Stanford Code Poetry Slam, Director

I co-founded and direct the Stanford Code Poetry Slam series (CPS 1.0 in November 2013, 1.1 in February 2014, 2.0 in January 2015, Hack-a-slam in May 2015, and CPS 3.0 in February 2016). We accept international submission of code poems in any language (computer or human), then select finalists and invite them to present their poem however they want (through vocal performance, compiling the program, creating a video, etc.) followed by a group discussion. The CPS series has received significant press coverage and inspired similar events at universities internationally. See <http://tinyurl.com/codepoetryslam> for more information.

The Musical Geography of Auschwitz

I coded a musical map that spatially visualizes where different songs were heard and performed in Auschwitz–Main Camp and Auschwitz–Birkenau. Visitors can visually explore these interactive maps, listen to clips of the songs, and read descriptions of the music (taken from survivor testimonies). The project resulted in several guest lectures, conference presentations, and a publication comparing musical torture in Auschwitz and Guantánamo.

Poetic Thinking Across Media Web Tool

I designed a new web tool for a pedagogical annotation website. My tool made the website responsive to and reflective of the course themes, so that it wouldn't only be a forum for annotating and posting comments, but also a developing course text itself. The tool visualized how students moved online from one course to another, displaying their "journey," in conjunction with the course theme of "orientation."

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant. Stanford University. Poetic Thinking Across Media (COMPLIT 154B)

Fall 2014

This comparative literature course was co-taught with Professor Amir Eshel and

considered how poetic works across media raise personal, communal, ethical, and political dilemmas. Students were encouraged to think poetically in a newly created annotation webspace (Lacuna Stories). I led discussions on literary, filmic, and new media texts, responded to student writing assignments, and designed a tool for Lacuna Stories to encourage students to think poetically online as well as in writing and speaking. Taught in English.

Co-Instructor. Stanford University. What is German Literature? (GERMAN 131)

Fall 2013

This survey course was co-taught with Professor Kathryn Starkey as part of the Teagle Project. Students learned about German cultural and literary movements from 1800 through 2000, cultivated writing and speaking skills in German, and developed analytical and creative talents through class debates, performances, and presentations. I helped to design the syllabus, gave lectures and interactive lessons on Heine, Celan, Dürrenmatt, and Borchert, co-wrote midterm and final exams, co-created lesson plans, and directed theater activities (scoring monologues, analyzing and performing scenes). Taught in German.

Instructor. Language Center, Stanford University

2012–2015

Taught intensive undergraduate German language course sequence, focused on oral, reading, and writing proficiency, based on national ACTFL assessment standards. Designed and executed 5 hours of lessons/week, graded all work, and met with each student individually multiple times. Also taught conversation courses meeting 1 hour/week. Each course contained 6–18 students.

- Novice–Intermediate conversation (GERLANG 020A)
- Intermediate Mid–Advanced High (GERLANG 021)
- Intensive 3–week version of Gerlang 003 (GERLANG 05C)
- Novice High–Intermediate Low (GERLANG 002)
- Intermediate Low–Intermediate Mid (GERLANG 003)
- Novice High–Intermediate Low (GERLANG 002)
- Novice Low–Novice Mid (GERLANG 001)
- Novice–Intermediate conversation (GERLANG 020A)

Spring 2015
 Winter 2015
 Summer 2014
 Fall 2013
 Spring 2013
 Winter 2013
 Fall 2012
 Spring 2012

Instructor. Program Coordinator and Curriculum Designer. Fluent City, NYC

Summer 2011

Taught intensive introductory German language conversation courses to adults in Manhattan and Brooklyn, focused on oral proficiency. Each course was 3 hours/week for 10 weeks. Taught a total of ~50 students. Initiated the German Language Program at Fluent City and wrote the textbook for German levels 1, 2, and 3.

Drama Instructor, Oceanhill Collegiate Charter School

2010–2011

Taught drama to groups of 5th graders for the 2010-2011 school year at a school in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, NYC. Directed and accompanied on keyboard musical productions of student work, *Peter Pan*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*.

Teaching Assistant. Brown University. German 15

Spring 2009

Taught sections 3x/week for an accelerated introductory German course, in conjunction with Professor Aminia Bruggemann’s seminar/lectures 2x/wk.

OPERA DIRECTION AND DRAMATURGY

As stage director and dramaturg for Stanford Opera Workshop, I've had the opportunity to design and produce many operatic productions, starring students from the Stanford Music Department. I've worked on these pieces in many different capacities, doing everything from choosing the individual songs and scenes that will comprise a production, blocking scenes, teaching improv and acting technique to students, designing and constructing sets, creating and collecting prop and costume pieces, stage managing, and working with professionals from the San Francisco Opera.

- **Don Giovanni, Director**

May 2016

This will be a site-specific production of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, performed outdoors in the forested area around the Stanford mausoleum. Inspired by Punchdrunk’s *Sleep No More*, the piece will be a-linear and interactive: the

audience members will be given black masks and candles, scenes will be performed within a 1 km radius, and the audience will be set loose to observe and interact with any props or characters they'd like.

- **Le Nozze di Figaro, Director** **May 2015**

In this pedestrian performance of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, I directed 16 scenes in different locations around Stanford campus, interconnected by a walking tour led by Figaro. In our modernized version of the story, Figaro and Susanna are young Stanford alums returning to campus for their wedding, the Count is a startup tycoon whose success has gone to his head, and Cherubino is a lovestruck undergrad. I conceptualized the project, wrote and received the grant, co-wrote the script, cast and mentored student performers, produced, stage directed, mentored the undergraduate music director, accompanied on rehearsal piano, assisted the stage manager, co-designed and acquired props and costumes, and communicated with university administrators regarding space usage.
- **Die Fledermaus, Stage Director & Set Designer** **Feb. 2015**

With support from Stanford Live, we created a production of *Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss II, with main roles sung by Stanford students and SF Opera professionals, a chorus and orchestra composed of community members from Stanford and from the German International School of Silicon Valley, and set management and lighting design by SF Opera professionals. See Stanford Daily review at <http://www.stanforddaily.com/2015/02/24/die-fledermaus-hilarious/>
- **Stanford on Avon, Stage Director (Arts Intensive Program Assistant)** **Sept. 2014**

We performed excerpts from the following Shakespeare-inspired works: Verdi's *Falstaff*; Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; Berlioz' *Béatrice et Bénédicte*; Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*; Bernstein's *West Side Story* and Elton John's *The Lion King*. The final product was a staged production, written and performed by our team.
- **Romeo and Juliet, Stage Director, Set Designer, & Stage Manager** **Nov. 2013**

This production intermingled Gounod's opera and Bernstein's musical, portraying different Romeos and Juliets together. Condensing the story allowed a fundamental message to emerge more clearly: innocent love succumbing to prejudice and hatred. By alternating between the opera and the musical, we created a story that mixed elements of each - the elegance of a waltz with the gritty roughness of a street fight.
- **Genevieve de Brabant, Stage Director & Set Designer** **May 2013**

This project involved scenes featuring the unfortunate Queen Genevieve de Brabant. The central focus of my staging was a canopy bed, which served as a reminder of Genevieve's supposed adultery, a backdrop to the scenes taking place in a forest, and provided an intimate, feminine setting for the scenes at court. Between the scenes, professors from Art History, German Studies, Religious Studies, and Musicology gave 5-minute presentations about different aspects of the myth.
- **Opera-tions, Stage Director & Stage Manager** **Feb. 2013**

I stage directed the third piece and was the stage manager for all three pieces, each of which examined a different aspect of the process of making opera. In *First Night*, which was commissioned for this production, I filmed the actual audience entering the auditorium and then projected that film while the singers performed their parts as opera-goers attending a premiere.
- **Mozart on the Make, Stage Director (Arts Intensive Program Assistant)** **Sept. 2012**

This production was created during Arts Intensive, a 2-week period in September in which undergraduates with little to no experience focus intensively on improving in an art form. I directed the students in a production of Mozart pieces, which were tied together loosely by an abstract storyline about a magic feather (symbolizing both love and creative composition).

▪ **Der Jasager, Dramaturg & Concept Designer**

As the concept designer and dramaturg for *Der Jasager*, I imagined the piece set in an ant colony, emphasizing the totalitarian message of Brecht/Weill's work and giving the piece an unsettling otherworldliness. Each character, including the chorus (students and parents from a local German school), was given an ant mask, which they then removed to confront the audience in the final number. Various aspects of ant biology were woven into the piece and an Entomology professor spoke on a panel with a Musicologist and a Brecht scholar after one of the performances.

Feb. 2012

GRANTS AND AWARDS

▪ **Stanford Arts Institute Student Grant**

For production of a site-specific performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

May 2016

▪ **DAAD Short-Term Research Grant**

For archival research and working with colleagues in Köln, Berlin, and Nürnberg

September 2015

▪ **Spring Graduate Student Grant Competition**, Stanford Europe Center

For archival research at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek

May 2015

▪ **Graduate Research Opportunity Grant**, Stanford University

For researching operatic staging in Frankfurt

May 2015

▪ **Graduate Student Travel Grant**, Modern Language Association

Funding to give two papers at the MLA convention in Vancouver, BC

January 2015

▪ **SPARK! Grant**, Stanford Arts Institute

For production of a pedestrian performance of Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*

March 2014

▪ **Code Poetry Slam Series**, Stanford Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages

Departmental funding to found and run the CPS series

2013-2016

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Digital Humanities Professor Search Committee

As the DLCL graduate student representative on the search committee, I read and responded to over fifty applications for a tenure track professor position. I met numerous times with the committee to share opinions and observed the candidates at their on-campus interviews.

Conference Organization

For each conference, my responsibilities included: co-conceptualizing the theme, building and/or populating a conference website, communicating with presenters, arranging travel details and catering, working with administrators in the DLCL and the Stanford Institute for the Arts, arranging and testing technology, ensuring smooth transitions during the event, moderating panels, and participating in the conference (for example, giving a blitz talk at *Urban Jungles*).

▪ **Heroism in the Age of Beethoven**, German Studies & Musicology

Single day conference moderated by Stephen Hinton, Blair Hoxby, and Adrian Daub. Speakers included Michelle Fillion (University of Victoria), Nicholas Mathew (U.C. Berkeley), William Meredith (Director of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies, San José State University), Thomas Pfau (Duke University), Alex Rehding (Harvard), and Stephen Rumph (University of Washington).

▪ **Urban/Jungles**, DLCL graduate conference

3-day conference during which we moderated panels of graduate students presenting their work on the relationship of individuals and communities to the "wilderness." We sought presentations that

explored the representation of urban/jungles through multiple forms of media (i.e. literature, film, the visual arts, television, and theater) and through a variety of approaches (literary or cultural studies, historiography, sociology, ethnology, philosophy, and anthropology).

- ***Opera after Freud***, German Studies & Musicology
3-day conference interrogating the elective affinities between Freudian psychoanalysis and fin-de-siecle opera in light of the severance of that affinity later in the twentieth century. Participants included Thomas Grey, Brian Hyer, Lawrence Kramer, Paul Robinson, Richard Leppert, Lydia Goehr, Peter Burgard, Jessica Payette, Charles Kronengold, Heather Hadlock, Daniel Albright, David Levin, Mary Ann Smart, Gundula Kreuzer, Ryan Minor, Adrian Daub, Bryan Gilliam, and Stephen Hinton.

LANGUAGES AND SKILLS

Human Languages: German (near-native), Spanish (intermediate), French (intermediate)

Computer Languages: Java, Python

Web Design: HTML, CSS, JavaScript

Music: classical piano, harpsichord, classical voice

Theater: stage direction, production, stage management, set/props/costume/concept design, dramaturgy, supertitles, rehearsal accompaniment

MEMBERSHIPS

German Studies Association

Modern Language Association

American Association of Teachers of German

American Comparative Literature Association