

Ryan C. Thompson
thom1754@msu.edu
Curriculum Vitae
(last updated January 2024)

Education:

Ph.D in Musicology, University of Minnesota, 2017

Dissertation: Interactivity in Game Audio: Instances in which Listening Improves a Player's Gameplay

Committee: Peter Mercer-Taylor, David Grayson, Sumanth Gopinath, Scott Lipscomb

MA in Musicology, University of Minnesota, 2013

Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS), Iowa State University, 2008

Awards:

- Michigan State University Outstanding Community Service Award, 2022

Publications:

- Invited contribution to Journal of Sound and Music in Games, retrospective on “The Music of Midgar” and the role of public musicology, co-authored with Dana Plank, Julianne Grasso, and Karen Cook (anticipated publication Fall 2024)
- “A Conversation with Chase Bethea,” chapter commissioned for forthcoming book edited by Will Gibbons, Karen Cook, and Fanny Rebillard (anticipated publication Fall 2024)
- “Revisiting the Classics: *Kingdom Hearts III* as a JRPG Remaster,” chapter commissioned for forthcoming book edited by Dana Plank and Lisa Scoggin, April 2023)
- “Video Games, Performance, and Algorithmic Processing of Music,” chapter commissioned for *The Oxford Handbook of Public Music Theory*, ed. Danny Jenkins (October 2022)
- “Media and Information (MI) 291: Introduction to Video Game Audio,” chapter commissioned for *Teaching the Game: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Game Course Syllabi*. Co-authored with Dana Plank, Julianne Grasso, Karen Cook, and Matthew Thompson, edited by Rick Ferdig (Fall 2021)
- “Game Music Beyond the Games,” chapter commissioned for *The Cambridge Companion to Video Game Music*, ed. Tim Summers and Melanie Fritsch (anticipated publication Spring 2021)
- “NACVGM 2020 Retrospective: Thoughts on Organizing a Digital Conference,” invited contribution to the Journal of Sound and Music in Games, Volume 2, issue 1 (January 2021).
- Book review of *Unlimited Replays* by William Gibbons, commissioned for American Music (Spring 2020)
- “Operatic Conventions and Expectations in *Final Fantasy VI*,” chapter commissioned for *Music in the Role-Playing Game: Heroes and Harmonies*, ed. William Gibbons and Steven Reale (2019)

Teaching Experience:

Michigan State University:

- Instructor for MI 402, “Topics in Game Studies: Video Game History,” Spring 2024, Fall 2023, Spring 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021
- Instructor for MI 235, “Intro to Video Game Audio,” Fall 2023
- Instructor for MI 334, “Esports and Online Broadcasting,” Fall 2023, Spring 2023, Fall 2022, Spring 2022, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Fall 2020
- Instructor for MI 491, “Special Topics: Issues in Game Audio,” Spring 2023, Spring 2021
- Instructor for MI 491, “Special Topics: Issues in Game Audio Studies,” Spring 2024, Spring 2022
- Instructor for MI 491, “Special Topics: Intro to Wwise Audio Programming,” Spring 2024, Spring 2022, Spring 2020
- Instructor for CAS 496, “Advanced Media Project Design,” Spring 2020
- Instructor for CAS 396, “Game Audio Seminar,” Spring 2020
- Instructor for MI 291, “Special Topics: Intro to Video Game Audio,” Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019
- Instructor for MI 891, “Special Topics: Creativity and Fandom in the Digital Age,” Spring 2019
- Instructor for MI 291, “Special Topics: Introduction to Online Broadcasting,” Fall 2019, Spring 2019, Fall 2018
- Instructor for MI 396 (also as CAS 396), “Special Topics: Video Game Audio,” Spring 2020, Fall 2018
- Instructor for MI 491, “Special Topics: Video Game History,” Fall 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Spring 2019, Fall 2018

University of Minnesota:

- Teaching Assistant and Recitation Instructor for “Music and Society”, Fall 2014
- Teaching Assistant for “Introduction to Music”, Spring 2014, Fall 2013
- Teaching Assistant and Recitation Instructor for “Rock II: 1970 to Present”, Spring 2013, Spring 2012, Spring 2011
- Teaching Assistant and Recitation Instructor for “Rock I: Rock Music to 1970”, Fall 2012, Fall 2011, Fall 2010

Conference Presentations:

- “Blue Robots, Red Demons: A Study of Capcom's *Gargoyle's Quest*,” presented at AMS Music and Media Study Group as part of the American Musicology Society's annual meeting, 2022.
- “Remixes, Remasters, and Remakes: Audio Decisions Surrounding Retro Revivals,” presented at GameSoundCon, October 2022.
- Invited presenter for Live Streaming Symposium: Communities of Play, hosted by University of Wisconsin Milwaukee College of Letters & Science, April 2021.
- “Articulating the Soundscape of the Super Nintendo Era: Style and Technique in 1990s Roleplaying Games,” presented at GameSoundCon, October 2019.

- “Putting the ‘E’ in Esports: Analyzing Music Videos from *League of Legends*,” presented at the *North American Conference on Video Game Music*, 2019
- “Live Demonstration of XSplit Broadcaster Software for Capture and Streaming,” presented at a joint meeting of the *American Musicological Society* and the *Society for Music Theory*, 2018
- “Using Music-Driven Video Games to Describe Musical Performances,” presented at the *North American Conference on Video Game Music*, 2018
- “Timing is Everything: Relationships Between Ludic and Musical Rhythm in Modern Video Games,” presented both at *AMS Midwest*, Winter 2016 and the *North American Conference on Video Game Music*, 2017
- “Cooperative Play: Toward Establishing a Ludomusicological Canon”, presented at *Music and the Moving Image*, 2014
- “Audio in Competitive ‘eSports’ Video Games”, presented at the *North American Conference on Video Game Music*, 2014
- “Operatic Conventions and Expectations in *Final Fantasy VI*”, presented at *Music and the Moving Image*, 2013
- “Listen to My Story: Communicating Game Narrative Through Game Audio,” presented at both *Video Games as Text; Text as Play*, 2012 and *Music and the Moving Image*, 2012
- “Communicative Music in Video Games”, presented at *Music and the Moving Image*, 2011

Public Musicology:

- “Kudomusicology: A Ludomusicology Literature Review,” invited guest, May 2022. Series hosted by Dana Plank. twitch.tv/musicologess
- “Nothing is True: Music in the Assassin’s Creed Franchise,” *vgmtogether* 2022. Co-presenters include Julianne Grasso, Dana Plank, and Karen Cook.
- “The Music of Midgar,” panel organizer and co-presenter, *vgmtogether* 2021. Co-presenters also include Julianne Grasso, Dana Plank, Karen Cook.
- “Ludomusicology: The Scholarly Study of Video Game Music,” presented at *MAGFest* 2019 alongside Julianne Grasso, Dana Plank, Karen Cook, and Steven Reale.
- “The State of Game Audio Studies in Academia,” presented at *GameSoundCon*, October 2018.
- Host and manager of a weekly *Twitch.tv* Ludomusicology-focused stream performing live commentary on game audio as gameplay is broadcast to an Internet audience, February 2017 -- present. Live events hosted at twitch.tv/bardicknowledge and archives at youtube.com/rtbardic
- Invited presenter at the *Cleveland Game Expo*, October 2015. <http://clevelandgamingexpo.com/>
- Session organizer for “What Scholars Can Offer Industry: Game Music Education and Research”, a three-day roundtable at the *Game Developer’s Conference*, March 2015. <http://schedule2015.gdconf.com/session/what-scholars-can-offer-industry-game-music-education-and-research-day-3>
- Panel coordinator for “Talking About Music in Games,” *GlitchCon* 2015
- Panelist for *OverClocked ReMix* at *Gamer’s Rhapsody*, November 2014

- Invited Presenter at the Minnesota State Fair, with Glitch Gaming and the University of Minnesota, August 2014
- Invited Demonstration for President Kaler and other guests at the University of Minnesota 2014 Doctoral Research Showcase

Popular Press appearances and contributions:

- “*Final Fantasy IV – VI Pixel Remaster: A Unified Style for Classing Gaming,*” article written for GameGrooves, July 2022. <https://www.game-grooves.com/gazette/ffpr2>
- “*Final Fantasy Pixel Remaster: Expanding Upon the Classics,*” article written for GameGrooves, August 2021. <https://www.game-grooves.com/gazette/ffpr>
- Interviewed for podcast “Enhance Life with Music,” December 2019
- Interviewed for “Music is the Secret Weapon of Mario Speedrunners,” October 2018. <https://kotaku.com/music-is-the-secret-weapon-of-mario-speedrunners-1829531275>
- Contributor, “How music makes Captain America a hero and Superman a mope,” November 2016 <https://www.polygon.com/2016/11/21/13707200/captain-america-as-superman-the-music>
- Author, “How sound helps us follow League of Legends games,” dissertation excerpt published on The Rift Herald, November 2016 <http://www.riftherald.com/2016/11/3/13498082/lol-sound-audio-clues>
- Guest Appearance on Top Score: a podcast of Classical Minnesota Public Radio, July 2015 <http://www.classicalmpr.org/story/2015/07/30/a-musicologist-s-look-at-final-fantasy-vi>
- Interviewed for “Spira Unplugged: Behind Final Fantasy 10 HD’s Remastered Soundtrack”, March 2014. <http://www.polygon.com/2014/3/18/5498016/final-fantasy-10-hd-remastered-soundtrack>
- Interviewed and profiled for “Researching Video Games: An Interview with a Gaming Musicologist,” July 2012 <http://www.gameinformer.com/b/features/archive/2012/07/04/studying-game-music-an-interview-with-musicologist-ryan-thompson.aspx>

Service and Leadership:

- Staff member at OverClocked ReMix, 2024 – present
- Conference host, North American Conference on Video Game Audio, 2024
- Satirical talk, “Sounding Ascension: Getting High in Video Games,” presented at AMS / SMT Afterdark as part of joint meeting of the American Musicological Society and the Society for Music Theory, 2023.
- Executive board member, Society for the Study of Sound and Music in Games, 2021 – present
- Head judge for Audio Spotlight Award, Indiecade 2021 – 2023
- Interim Director of Esports, Michigan State University, 2021 – Fall 2022
- Conference host (online), North American Conference on Video Game Audio, 2020 – 2021
- Program committee, North American Conference on Video Game Audio, 2020 – present
- MSU ComArtSci Faculty Impact, Staff Impact, and Outstanding Leadership Award committee member, representing M&I, 2020-2021 academic year.

- Served as judge for Audio Spotlight Award, Indiecade 2020
- Elected as national co-leader of the Ludomusicology Study Group under the American Musicological Society, January 2020.
- Co-organizer of yearly satirical *AMS Afterdark* paper session at *American Musicological Society*, November 2016-present.
- Satirical talk, “An Argument Against the Development of Ludomusicological Cannons,” presented at *AMS Afterdark* in Vancouver, November 2016.
- Board member, Society for the Study of Sound and Music in Games, 2016 – present
- AMS Ludomusicology Study Group, member-at-large 2016 – present
- Editorial Board member for *Journal of Video Game Sound and Music* (journal of the UK-based Ludomusicology Research Group, see www.ludomusicology.org), 2016 – present
- Staff member at OverClocked ReMix, Fall 2015 – present
- Elected graduate student representative to the Graduate Education Council (advisory board to the Dean of Graduate Education), Council of Graduate Students, University of Minnesota, 2012 – 2014
- Guest blog for Ludomusicology Research Group, July 2014
<http://www.ludomusicology.org/2015/10/19/overclocked-remix-forum-for-ludomusicology/>
- Guest Blog for Musicology Now, January 2014
<http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2014/01/conference-report-video-game-music.html>

Technical Skills and Related Positions:

Technical Skills:

- Proficient with XSplit Broadcaster and Open Broadcaster Software, allowing for both professional-quality recording – e.g., for presentations and demonstrations – and live broadcasts of video game play, including commentary
- Proficient with Finale music notation software, and familiarity with Sibelius
- Proficient with Audacity and Windows Movie Maker, processing audio and video files
- Some familiarity with other music production software, including FL Studio, Logic, and Garage Band
- Knowledge of game libraries, and mechanics of, and experience with, nearly all current and historical gaming hardware systems

Games Journalism:

- Freelance contributor to Polygon.com and therifthermal.com, November 2016 – present
- Writer and reviewer for XBLAFans.com, 1 year – including press access to the 2013 Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3)
- Writer and reviewer for TehPwnGaming.com (today glitch.mn), 1 year