

RYAN THOMAS SKINNER, PH.D.

Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

Columbia University – New York, NY

2003-2009: Ph.D. Student

- Ph.D. Thesis: “*Artistiya*: Popular Music and Personhood in Postcolonial Bamako, Mali” (defended and recommended for distinction on 24 April 2009)
- M.Phil., Ethnomusicology (2006)
- M.A. Thesis: “Jeliya in New York City: An Ethnography of Space, Travel, and Practice in Urban America” (2005)

Institut des Sciences Humaines & Institut National des Arts – Bamako, Mali

2006-7: Wenner-Gren Foundation and SSRC-IDRF Scholar

2000-1: Fulbright-IIE Scholar

- Wenner-Gren/SSRC sponsored dissertation research project: “Sound and Subjectivity: Music, Modernity, and *Mògòya* in Postcolonial Bamako”
- Fulbright project: “The Voice of the Kora: A Study of Contemporary Mandingue Griot Oral Tradition”

Carleton College – Northfield, MN

1996-2000: French and Francophone Studies Major

- Senior Thesis: “Visions de l’Enfant Noir à l’École Blanche: Une étude méthodologique des perspectives historiques, anthropologiques, et littéraires de l’enseignement colonial français”
- B.A., *magna cum laude*

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

2009: Distinction for Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University

2009: Independent Book Publishers Association Benjamin Franklin Award (winner, multicultural literature)

2009: Midwest Book Awards (finalist, child/young adult fiction)

2009: National Indie Excellence Awards (finalist, children’s fiction)

2008-9: Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Writing Fellowship

2008-9: Whiting Dissertation Writing Fellowship, Columbia University*

2008: Columbia University Summer Research Grant, Dept. of Music

2007-8: Columbia University Dissertation Writing Fellowship, Dept. of Music

2006-7: Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Research Fellowship

2006-7: Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Field Research Fellowship

2006-7: FLAS Fellowship for Arabic language study, Columbia University†

* This fellowship was declined, though top-off funding was granted.

- 2005-6: Columbia University Graduate Study Fellowship, Dept. of Music
 2005: Columbia University Summer Research Grant, Dept. of Music
 2005: Institute of African Studies Leitner Family Summer Travel Grant
 2004-5: Columbia University Graduate Study Fellowship, Dept. of Music
 2003-4: FLAS Fellowship for Bamana language study, Indiana University[‡]
 2000-1: Fulbright-IIE Fellowship for research in Mali
 2000: Departmental Honors in Francophone Studies, Carleton College
 2000: Distinction for Senior Thesis, Carleton College

PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES, ESSAYS, BOOK CHAPTERS, AND REVIEWS

- “*Faso and Jamana: Provisional Notes on Mande Social Thought in Malian Political Discourse, 1946-1979*,” co-authored with Brandon County, in *Mande Mansa: Essays in Honor of David Conrad*, eds. Stephen Belcher, Jan Jansen, and Mohamed N'Daou (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2008)
- “Celebratory Spaces Between Homeland and Host: Politics, Culture, and Performance in New York’s Malian Community,” in *Migrations and Creative Expressions in Africa and the African Diaspora*, eds. Toyin Falola, Niyi Afolabi, and Adérónké Adésolá Adésànyà (Carolina Academic Press, 2008)
- “Bamako Grooves,” *Mixed Magazine* Nr. 2: 68-69 (2007)
- “Determined Urbanites: Diasporic *Jeliya* in the 21st Century,” *Mande Studies* 6: 139-162 (2004)
- “Civil Taxis and Wild Trucks: The Dialectics of Social Space and Subjectivity in *Dimanche à Bamako*,” *Popular Music* 29/1 (2010), in press
- Sound Review of *Bush Taxi Mali* (Sublime Frequencies 2004), *The Journal of American Folklore*, in press
- “Notes on Islam and Popular Musical Expression in West Africa,” Online essay for the *Muslim Voices: Arts and Ideas* festival in New York City, Published May 2009 (www.muslimvoicesfestival.org)

PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

- *Sidikiba’s Kora Lesson*, a children’s book written and illustrated by Ryan T. Skinner (Beaver’s Pond Press, 2008): www.sidikibaskoralesson.com

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- “The Ethics of *Ambiance*: Sound, Sociability, and the Global Imagination in Bamako, Mali,” presented for the panel “Public Sounds, Public Spaces,” at the 2008 meeting of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco, CA, 21 November 2008
- “Artists, National Belonging, and State Patronage in Postcolonial Mali,” presented at the “1968: A Global Perspective” conference at the University of Texas at Austin, TX, 11 October 2008
- “*Nyamakalaw* and *Dabakalaw*: Labor and the Meanings of ‘Independence’ in Mali’s Première Région Économique, 1953-1968,” co-written with Brandon

[†] This fellowship was declined.

[‡] This fellowship was declined.

- County and presented at the Seventh International Conference on Mande Studies in Lisbon, Portugal, 24-27 June 2008.
- “Making *Mali Kunkan*: Performance, Piracy, and the Production of Musical Liveness in Contemporary Bamako,” presented for the panel, “Who’s Listening? The Politics of Aurality in Urban Spaces,” at the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Columbus, OH, 27 October 2007
 - “The Aesthetics of *Malidenya*: Popular Music and Nationalist Narratives in Mali and the Soudan Français (1946-2006),” co-written with Brandon County and presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association in San Francisco, CA, 17 November 2006. This paper was presented again at the New York Historians of Africa Workshop at Princeton University, NJ, 29 January 2007
 - “Between Home and Host-Country: Politics, Culture, and Performance in New York’s Malian Community,” presented at the Movements, Migrations, and Displacements in Africa conference at the University of Texas at Austin, TX, 24 March 2006
 - “Celebratory Spaces between Homeland and Host: Memory, Work, and Play in New York’s Malian Communities,” presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Atlanta, GA, 20 November 2005.

PUBLIC LECTURES AND COLLOQUIA

- “Malian Popular Music: Mande *Jeliya*, Aesthetics and Itineraries,” University of Texas at Austin (Dept. of Music), TX, 21 April 2009
- “La musique malienne d’aujourd’hui: formes, esthétiques, directions,” University of Stockholm, (Institutionen för franska, italienska, och klassiska språk), Sweden, 26 March 2009
- “Mande *Jeliya* in the 21st Century,” Baylor University (Dept. of Music), TX, 20 February 2009
- “The Mande of West Africa: A Culture in Transition,” Carleton College (Dept. of Romance Languages), MN, 14 November 2008
- “The Good, The Bad, and The Artist: The Ethics of Aesthetics in Bamako Popular Music,” Texas A&M (Dept. of Performances Studies), TX, 23 February 2008
- “Living (or ‘Getting By’) in Bamako: An Ethnomusicological Encounter,” Columbia University (Center for Ethnomusicology), NY, 21 September 2007
- “Modibo Made Airplanes His Shoes: The Postcolonial Context of Jeli Fa-Digi Sisòkò’s *Son-Jara* Epic,” Columbia University (Core Curriculum), NY, Spring 2004 through Fall 2006
- “Civil Taxis and Wild Trucks: The Political Poetics of Personhood in *Dimanche à Bamako*,” Columbia University (Center for Ethnomusicology), NY, 14 October 2005
- “*An Ka Wuli Ka Fasobaara*: Migrant Communities and the Aesthetics of Malian Nation-Building, 1960-2005,” Carleton College (Dept. of Romance Languages), MN, 16 May 2005

TEACHING AND RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

2006: French Instructor, Austin International School in Austin, TX

2005-6: Assistant to the Director, Center for Ethnomusicology, Columbia University

- Maintenance of audio-visual archives and media lab

- Organized and prepared program activities: colloquia, guest lectures, class events
- 2004-6: Private Kora (21-stringed West African harp) Instructor, Columbia University
- 2003-6: Guest Lecturer for *African Civilizations*, Columbia University
 - Taught classes on music and nationalism in Sub Saharan Africa
- 2005: Teaching Assistant, *Music and Language*, Columbia University
 - Assisted class lectures and held office hours
- 2004: Teaching Assistant, *Music Humanities*, Columbia University
 - Assisted class lectures and held office hours
 - Planned and taught classes and prepared midterm and final exams
- 2002-3: Board member of the Society of Folk Music and Dance in Stockholm, Sweden
 - Organization and development of local, national, and regional concert events
 - Production of the 2003 Jalibengo Kora Festival
- 2002-3: Created and administered the non-profit organization Lebån? Lupen!
 - A group sponsoring traditional West African storytelling and music in Sweden
- 2002-3: Kora instructor, Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan in Stockholm, Sweden
- 2002-3: French and English Teacher at Tallbohovskolan in Jakobsberg, Sweden

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Scholarly guide for Afropop Worldwide's nationally syndicated *Hip Deep* radio program, "Mande music in New York City," broadcast in two parts in February and March 2009: www.afropop.org
- Member of the group *Two Rivers* (Ryan Skinner: kora; Dov Stucker: guitar) whose self-produced album "Bafilabèn" was released in November 2008: www.bafilaben.com

LANGUAGES

- English: fluent
- French: fluent
- Swedish: fluent
- Bamana: advanced proficiency
- Arabic: beginner

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2008: Ethnographic and archival fieldwork on popular music, postcolonial history, and personhood in Bamako, Mali
- 2007: Documentary Research with *La Symphonie de la Kora*, on tour with Festival Mundial, The Netherlands
- 2006-7: Ethnographic and archival fieldwork on popular music, postcolonial history, and personhood in Bamako and Kita, Mali
- 2005: Preliminary fieldwork on popular music and urban cultural identity in Bamako and Kita, Mali
- 2005: Arabic Language Study at the Arabic Language Institute in Fez, Morocco
- 2003-4: Fieldwork among Malian and Guinean communities in Harlem and the Bronx, New York City
- 2002-3: Research among Senegambian communities in Stockholm, Sweden
- 2000-1: Study of kora pedagogy and performance in Bamako, Mali

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Urban African Culture
- World Music, Popular Music
- Ethics and Aesthetics
- Subjectivity, Identity, Personhood
- Social Thought and Theory
- Anthropology of Sound and Listening
- Postcolonial African History
- Diaspora, Migration Studies

AFFILIATIONS

- Society for Ethnomusicology
- American Anthropological Association
- African Studies Association
- Mande Studies Association
- Institut des Sciences Humaines (Mali)
- Institut National des Arts (Mali)