

**Cusick Suzanne G.**

## **Sound Ethics**

### **keynote lecture**

Ethics is the area of human thought that answers the question "how are we to live?" For feminist and queer thinkers like Irigaray, Foucault, Bennett, and Huffer, ethics necessarily assumes that we live in relationship to other entities. I argue that the premise made audible, sensible, and intelligible by the phenomenological presence of sound. There can be no logical distinction between sound-makers and sound-receivers, because we are all always already both, always already material entities vibrating in constant resonant response to each other, whether audibly or not.

This paper asks what kind of ethics (including ethics of sonic performance) could be derived from the premise that sound is a phenomenon and a medium that makes the premise of all ethics materially real. What, in short, could a sound(-based) ethics be?

### **Bio:**

Suzanne G. Cusick, Professor of Music at New York University, has published extensively on gender and sexuality in relation to the musical cultures of early modern Italy and of contemporary North America. Cusick's monograph *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court: Music and the Circulation of Power* received the 2010 book award of the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women. Since 2006, she has also studied the use of sound and sexual shaming in the detention facilities of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century's "war on terror." Her current project explores gendered, eroticized and politicized modes of hearing in Medicean Florence.

