Fifth International Doctoral Workshop in Ethnomusicology

Center for World Music at the University of Hildesheim & Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media
26th – 29th June 2013

Wednesday 26th June, Timotheuskirche, Center for World Music, Hildesheim

17.30 Registration & Welcome
18.00 Dinner

Thursday 27th June, Timotheuskirche, Center for World Music, Hildesheim

9.00 Welcome Address by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich, President of the University of Hildesheim

Panel 1: City Spaces, Urban Ethnography
Chair: Prof. Dr. Johannes Ismaiel-Wendt (University of Hildesheim)

9.30 Alisha Jones (University of Chicago)
“This Prayer Is UnSpoken”: TONcX’s Redefinition of Authentic Worship and (De)Coding Queer Body Theology

10.15 Marija Dumnić (University of Arts in Belgrade)
Historical Aspects and Contemporary Performing Practices of Starogradska Muzika (Old Urban Music) in Belgrade

11.00 Coffee/Tea Break

11.30 Monika Schoop (University of Cologne)
Everyone is Digital Now!?: Music and Digital Technology in Metro Manila

12.15 Lauren Flood (Columbia University)
Do-It-Yourself Music Technology: Building and Becoming in New York and Berlin

13.00 Lunch

Panel 2: Musicians and Genre, Region and Nation
Chair: Prof. Dr. Matthias Rebstock (University of Hildesheim)

14.00 Argun Çakir (University of Exeter)
Understanding Dom Peripatetic Musicians in Nusaybin: An Adaptation-Based Perspective for Research into Peripatetic Musicians

14.45 Dorothea Suh (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg)
Sugungga - The Story of the Hare in the Underwater Palace in Korean P’ansori

15.30 Coffee/Tea Break

16.00 Sara Banihashemi (University of Hamburg)
Vocal and Instrumental Music of the Gilan

16.45 Yuiko Asaba (Royal Holloway, University of London)
The aesthetic of musical ‘dirt’: exploring mugre and Buenos Aires slang, Lunfardo, in Argentinian Tango performance

17.30 General Discussion
18.00 Dinner
19.30 Guided Tour of Hildesheim, Marktplatz, Hildesheim

Friday 28th June, Timotheuskirche, Center for World Music, Hildesheim

Panel 3: Migration, Diaspora, Transnationalism
Chair: Dr. Ulrich Wegner (University of Hildesheim)
9.30 Jasmine Hornabrook (Goldsmiths, University of London)
Diluted Divinity and the Diaspora: Authenticity and Hierarchy in Transnational Carnatic Music Networks
10.15 Evrim Hikmet Öğüt (Istanbul Technical University)
11.00 Coffee/Tea Break
11.30 Gertrud Maria Huber (University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna)
The Zither in America – a Cliche Kept Alive by Alpine Immigrants?
12.15 Joseph Browning (SOAS, University of London)
Cosmopolitan Natures: Music and Environment in the Global Shakuhachi Scene
13.00 Lunch

Panel 4: Composition, Creativity, Nation
Chair: PD Dr. Julio Mendivil (Center for World Music)
14.00 René Holley (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
Singing the European Union: Cultural Policy and its Constituent Voices in Germany
14.45 Charles Lwanga (University of Pittsburgh)
Mu Kkubo Er'y Omusaalaba: Bridging Ethnomusicological Research and Composition in Justinian Tamusuza’s String Quartet
15.30 Coffee/Tea Break
16.00 Mahsa Pakravan (University of Alberta)
The Concept of Tradition in Persian Music: An Analysis of the Impact of New Poetry on Persian Classical Music in Post-revolutionary Iran
16.45 Laryssa Whittaker (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Countering Inequality in South Africa through Music and Dance: The Field Band Foundation and Holistic Visions of Development
17.30 General Discussion
18.00 Dinner

Saturday 29th June, Timotheuskirche, Center for World Music, Hildesheim

09.30 Group Discussions
11.00 Coffee/Tea Break
11.30 Group Discussions
13.00 Lunch
14.00 Keynote Lecture: Prof. Tina K. Ramnarine
(Royal Holloway, University of London)
Orchestras, Memory, Comparison
Chair: Prof. Philip V. Bohlman
15.30 Coffee/Tea Break
16.00 Final General Discussion
18.00 Barbeque & Party
Presentation Abstracts

Alisha Jones (University of Chicago)

“This Prayer Is UnSpoken”: TONεX’s Redefinition of Authentic Worship and (De)Coding Queer Body Theology

Throughout his 2009 recording, UnSpoken, the artist TONεX explores the queer practices that he contends are embedded in Pentecostal Christianity. Although these practices are not openly discussed—either in Pentecostal churches or on gospel recordings—TONεX uses music and lyrics to exemplify the honesty toward which he believes all Christians should strive. In fact, this transparency about specific personal triumphs amounts to what TONεX considers a form of authentic worship, especially within church contexts that place a taboo on conversations about sexual and gender identity. To worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) is thus seen as a radical assertion of identity that has particular saliency within a Christian frame. What does it mean for TONεX to perform the unutterable with regard to gender and sexuality? In many ways, TONεX’s musical interpretation of authentic worship advocates a less sexually restrictive performance of faith. In this talk, I explore the performative strategies behind this creative process.

Marija Dumnić (University of Arts in Belgrade)

Historical Aspects and Contemporary Performing Practices of Starogradska Muzika (Old Urban Music) in Belgrade

Old urban music in Serbia is traditional practice of performing music in the cities, which has existed since the 18th century. Its music characteristics are major/minor scale, wide ambitus, single-part singing (with the possibility of accompanying voice existence), parlando rubato or methro-rhythm typical for certain dance (they can be also interchangeable), instrumental accompaniment (mostly with the tambura ensemble), song form of strophes with the chorus, while poetic texts are mainly lyrical. The creators of these songs are usually known – national romantic composers and poets, foreign popular composers, contemporary authors. Two major cultural influences determined this musical genre at its beginning: Oriental, which came with Ottoman Empire, and European, which came with Austro-Hungarian Empire. From the second half of the 20th century old urban music is permeating with newly composed folk music.

In this doctoral dissertation history and dispersion of old urban music in Serbia are studied (with parallels with surrounding, especially South Slavic countries as culturally connected through the history), and different performing contexts crucial for its vitality are investigated, too. Data about this musical genre are collected by archival work with rare media materials, and with documentation of the institutions and memoirs of persons important for sustainability of this genre (collected data are from the 19th century until today). Special attention is dedicated to the bohemian quarter Skadarlija in Belgrade, where this practice continuously exists for the whole century. This is the location of the fieldwork, which implies music recording at the taverns, interviewing of the musicians and surveying of the audience.

Specific position of the old urban music as negotiation arena of stated categories of art, folk and popular music in the context of cultural history in Serbia is especially questioned here. Despite long and continual existence and today’s vitality, this musical practice has not been the subject of larger ethnomusicological or musicological research. The aim of this work is to use the results of ethnomusicology and popular music studies for establishing regional (non-Western) popular music studies, precisely the Balkans music studies, and to illuminate one genre as the specific part of it. Contribution of this dissertation to the social community will be in promoting of the local urban culture and in networking of similar regional practices.
Monika Schoop (University of Cologne University)

Everyone is Digital Now!?: Music and Digital Technology in Metro Manila

Digital technologies – according to Timothy Taylor the “most fundamental change in the history of Western music since the invention of music notation in the ninth century” (Taylor 2001:3) – have had major impacts on musical practices, such as production, promotion, distribution and consumption. While many studies on music and technology have focused on the so-called West, countries outside of Europe and North America have largely been neglected. This study investigates the use of digital technologies for music promotion, production and distribution in Metro Manila, the capital region of the Philippines.

Back in the 1990s, recording an album in Metro Manila required the backing of a record company to cover recording costs and provide access to networks of promotion and distribution. In the last decade the rise of broadband Internet and ever-cheaper digital recording equipment have significantly changed musicians’ opportunities to operate independently. At the same time, digital technology has led to considerable restructurings of the music industry. Piracy caused many major labels to close down their Philippine offices. While the “big money” seems to be gone, niche markets have sprung up and several small labels – online as well as offline – successfully release their music. Other musicians have even decided to record and release everything by themselves. They distribute their songs via online platforms such as Bandcamp, use social networks for promotion, and raise funds with the help of the local crowdfunding platform. The study combines fieldwork in Metro Manila and online research to examine how people use digital technologies to promote, produce and distribute their music independently. It also takes into account how concepts of music and notions of “making it” change through these practices.

The research also aims at determining the current boundaries and limitations of digital technologies. Digital technology is often optimistically described as a democratizing force that enables literally everyone to “be indie.” But access is far from universal. In addition to monetary and infrastructural factors, certain skills are required to participate.

Lauren Flood (Columbia University)

Do-It-Yourself Music Technology: Building and Becoming in New York and Berlin

This study concerns the construction and circulation of sounds, objects, and ideas surrounding networks of musicians who build experimental musical instruments and electronic equipment in New York City and Berlin. “Do-it-yourself (DIY) music technology” encompasses a wide range of techniques and motivations, which I examine through the lenses of “hacking” and “folk technology.” Taken as a whole, this practice disrupts formal channels of production and consumption, actively reasserting the agency of individual creators and challenging notions of “high-tech” and expert knowledge. My project situates the DIY ethos within the historical trajectories of hobbyism, sound recording, and technological innovation, investigating how DIY music technology affects human-technology relationships by bridging the social, technical, and aesthetic realms.

My central research question is to determine how music technology, creativity, and knowledge production are linked and potentially transformed through the process of “doing it yourself.” Principally, I argue that the act of building these sonic objects is a rich, multi-layered process of becoming. As media formats become increasingly interactive and barriers to access and education about technology continually shift, the present is a crucial time to observe how the relationship between technology and the self is in flux. Since today’s fledgling tinkerers can become tomorrow’s mainstream producers, documenting that transition will shed light on the paths and structures of developing products and ideas, as well as the sociotechnical systems into which they are embedded. Ultimately, the project aims to provide an entry point for understanding contemporary sound technologies in various geographical regions and contexts.
Argun Çakir (University of Exeter)

Understanding Dom Peripatetic Musicians in Nusaybin: An Adaptation-Based Perspective for Research into Peripatetic Musicians

This paper is an extract from my PhD research which concerns the cognitive and cultural bases of the musical activities of the peripatetic Dom community in the town of Nusaybin, in southeastern Turkey. The Doms in the area are often referred to by the pejorative appellation “mitirb” and the community has very low social status. Although Doms have historically pursued a variety of subsistence activities, including among other sieve-making, knife-grinding and dentistry, they are most commonly known as musicians. The musicians of the community had long dominated the wedding-music market in the area, however, nowadays there is greater competition due to the increased number of active performers, including non-Dom musicians.

In this paper I argue that an understanding of Dom music-making must necessarily be based on an understanding of the way the Dom community interacts with their social, cultural, and ecological environments and the cognitive outcomes thereof. To achieve this I will refer to the limited existing anthropological literature in which such groups as Doms are identified to display a distinct kind of adaptation, that is, the peripatetic adaptation, and a structural-functional model of such adaptation is formulated. I will draw on data from my fieldwork in order to bring this model in terms with the reality of the field.

Dorothea Suh (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg)

Sugungga - The Story of the Hare in the Underwater Palace in Korean P’ansori

P’ansori can be described as an epic song, performed by a solo singer and accompanying drummer on a barrel drum. There are five surviving P’ansori being performed in and outside of Korea. The aim of my dissertation is the musical and literary analysis of the P’ansori Sugungga, the only animal fable among the five P’ansori, and to display the influence and importance of the story on Korea’s national identity.

The analysis of tonality, rhythmical patterns, special voice techniques and timbres are based on my transcription of Sugungga (recorded in 2011, Korea) and interviews with master artists and scholars, conducted in 2011 and 2012. My interdisciplinary research links folklore, musicology and history and will show the development of Sugungga: originating from the Indian Buddhist Jataka tales to Oral masterpiece in Korea.
Sara Banihashemi (University of Hamburg)

Vocal and Instrumental Music of the Gilan

In Iran there are thirty one regions in which more than ten different ethnic groups live, each with its own culture, language, art and of course music. One of these regions is Gilan in the north of Iran, at Caspian coast, with 2,404,861 (statistic of 2006) citizens. Two ethnic groups can be found here: Talesh in the west and Gilak in the east side. 46.9% of the population live in cities and 53.1% in villages. This small region, with its fascinating cultural identities, is the field of my Dissertation.

Folklore music of Iran, despite its varieties, is still an unknown field and needs much more attention from Ethnomusicologists before it goes lost forever. It is even too late for some kinds of these varieties, which do not exist anymore due modernity and urbanization. In my presentation I will explore the vocal and instrumental music and various methods of taleshi and gilaki singing and playing in Gilan. Records, films and pictures that I took through my fieldwork will help the audience to get a sense of this theme. This music depicts the lifestyle of nature-oriented people living in forests, mountains and coast of the Caspian Sea. It plays principally in Dastgah of “Shur” or “Dashti” and rarely in other Dastgahs of Persian traditional music.

My research focuses on the role of music in everyday life and its connection to the social activities and events. I would like to explore how important is music with its both repertoires, vocal and instrumental, on occasions such as wakes, rituals, sports and entertainments, marriage and religious ceremonies.

Yuiko Asaba (Royal Holloway, University of London)

The aesthetic of musical ‘dirt’: exploring mugre and Buenos Aires slang, Lunfardo, in Argentinian Tango performance

What makes a good Argentinian Tango performance? During my four years in Buenos Aires as professional Tango musician, this question arose persistently as I struggled to be a better performer. Meanwhile, in my everyday life, I found myself immersed in Lunfardo, the colloquial and rich slang of Buenos Aires. According to tradition, Lunfardo developed in the underworld of Buenos Aires around the late nineteenth century. While Tango is a genre that is immensely transnational in its origins and development, some social and cultural aspects of Tango are closely associated with Lunfardo, and as such, particular to Buenos Aires.

The essence of a good Argentinian Tango performance means one is creative with the score, and able to bring out elements that are not notated. Argentinian Tango musicians often refer this aesthetic value as mugre (the Spanish word for ‘dirt’ or ‘filth’) and as an element that is crucial in a good performance. Just as Lunfardo has become a quintessential aspect of colloquial Buenos Aires conversations, mugre and Lunfardo as social values have become deeply intertwined with one another throughout the evolution of Tango.

By exploring such issues, this presentation hopes to open questions about the social tensions as played out in Lunfardo and Tango. The presentation will also involve discussions of Lunfardo examples from Tango songs, and practical demonstration of how mugre is realized in violin performance.
Jasmine Hornabrook (Goldsmiths, University of London)

_Diluted Divinity and the Diaspora: Authenticity and Hierarchy in Transnational Carnatic Music Networks_

A discourse of authenticity underlies the music of the Tamil-speaking diaspora and the transnational Carnatic music scene. This discourse is manifest in musicians' articulation of the 'dilution' of music through diasporic adaptation, the development of 'orthodox' audiences outside South Asia and the aspiration for 'pure', 'divine' and 'virginal' classical performances. Through interconnected locales of South Indian classical music performance, an implicit concept of authenticity conditions the language and behaviours of diasporic musicians, concert organisers and touring virtuosos. The 'pure' is manifested in, for example, the 'star' Indian musician performing for the diaspora, the choice of repertoire of 'deep' classical pieces in Sanskrit or Telugu, and performances that engage a musically literate, 'developed' audience. The 'diluted' refers to the diasporic adaptations of the music, primarily the movement towards Tamil repertoire, popular and 'light' pieces, and towards arranged and rehearsed performances that are disconnected from the creative 'divinity' of the moment.

In this paper, I focus on the articulation of implied authenticity and hierarchy within Tamil-speaking musical communities in London. Drawing on in-depth multi-sited ethnographic research of transnational music networks and cultural identity, I discuss the underlying discourse in transnational performance and musical negotiation. In particular, I highlight how this discourse is evident in the interactions between India-based, diasporic and second-generation musicians. The paper argues that attitudes toward authenticity are not the result of cultural contact and hybridity in countries of resettlement. Rather, they reflect shifts in the function, audience demographic and meanings ascribed to transnational Carnatic musical performance.

Evrim Hikmet Öğüt (Istanbul Technical University)


Even though emigration from Iraq is not a new phenomenon, following the US invasion in 2003 this flow has gained speed. As religious minorities, Christian communities in Iraq are severely affected by the ongoing situation in the country. Among the countries that millions of asylum seekers and refugees from Iraq head toward, Turkey has functioned as a transit country for many Christian Iraqis on their way to their prospective destination points, mainly including the US, Canada, and Australia. Due to various parameters of the bureaucratic process this period can be prolonged from six months to several years.

As a result of the expanding human mobilization in the global world, migration and diaspora studies in ethnomusicology have been creating a growing body of literature. This literature focuses mainly on settled communities and their musical productions. Instead of focusing on permanent communities my dissertation, based on fieldwork which has been mainly conducted with the Chaldean Christian Iraqi community in Istanbul, deals with the role of music while the participants are in the process of being temporary inhabitants in a foreign land for an indefinite time period.

While the music that has been produced and listened to by the community is being examined in the dissertation, the role of music in helping the bear the daily life in “limbo” constitutes the central point. Among the concentration areas are the incorporation of the members into given networks through music, the use of music in self-representation, and reformatting the musical repertoire of the Chaldean Iraqi church in Istanbul.
Gertrud Maria Huber (University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna)

The Zither in America – a Cliche Kept Alive by Alpine Immigrants?

Social, intellectual and cultural America was decisively affected by the German speaking people who formed the largest immigrant body in the 19th century. It is therefore of no surprise that the popular German plucked stringed instrument called the zither also found its way to American shores. It is also not surprising that the zither thereafter underwent its own individual development in its new environment.

This modern mountain zither in its present form and style of playing has only emerged in the last two centuries as an acknowledged type of instrument. It is thus ironic that the zither should have become a major factor contributing to the special sense of identity felt by the descendents of these immigrants today. The zither with its characteristic tonal qualities now evokes a special sense of „home”, a fact that the entertainment industry has duly exploited.

These then are our views at the moment. Use of the following research methods is meant to shed light on the feasibility of our hypotheses: sound analyses, questionnaires, considerations involving pertainable socio-cultural events.

Audio-visually documented field research, transcriptions and analyses constitute the basic material with which I hope to establish the plucked zither as a source of identification emerging from collective memory and supposedly collective „made“ memory. Exemplary film segments and prominent zither personalities are utilized to demonstrate the synergies emerging from an old-world symbol and a new-world cliche.

Joseph Browning (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)

Cosmopolitan Natures: Music and Environment in the Global Shakuhachi Scene

My research explores the significance of “nature” - as social imaginary and material reality - in the emergence of the cosmopolitan shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute) scene outside Japan. Ideas about nature pervade understanding of this instrument's construction, performance contexts and sound. My work traces the transposition of this problematic trope amongst shakuhachi players in Europe, North America and Australia, where the music's history and geography are open to distinctly contemporary reinterpretation. Here, shakuhachi music increasingly occupies a hybrid space, rooted in landscapes inside and outside Japan and mediated through global travel, virtual communities and music technologies. I examine how connections between the shakuhachi, nature and cosmopolitanism are enacted through discourse, travel, performance, instrument-making, and the creation of recordings and new compositions. My ethnography highlights how this shared imaginary is enacted in diverse ways as musicians incorporate environmental sounds into recordings of traditional pieces, compose new music mimetic of American landscapes and animals, harvest US and Australian bamboo, and redesign instruments for a more “natural” sound.

My work follows moves within cultural geography, post-Latourian Actor Network Theory, anthropology and musicology (Gell, Born and others) to expand theorisation of the social by crediting the social agency of art objects, technologies, institutions and natural entities, as well as people. I draw on recent “environmental ethnomusicology” (Ramnarine, Guy, Post and others), whilst arguing that cosmopolitan musical practices have a crucial and so far neglected place within this emerging sub-field.
Reneé Holley (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

Singing the European Union: Cultural Policy and its Constituent Voices in Germany

The European Union, to survive and prosper, must foster a sense of European identity while not simultaneously maligning the cultures of its members. Germany, traditionally considered one of the greatest champions of the European project, faces growing concerns from its populace regarding the heavy burden it carries, as fellow EU members face financial ruin. This crisis thus requires a renewed focus on the policy mechanisms contributing to the construction of an EU supranational identity. My project takes music as a case study and seeks out musical voices, embodied by arts administrators and performers, and their consideration by cultural policy makers in Germany and Europe. In my dissertation, I will examine the musical lives of participants in Germany and how they relate to narratives of national and EU identity emerging out of cultural programs at the local, national, and international level. My project strives to answer two questions: First, how does the allocation of EU Culture Program funds influence the creative output of musicians and music organizations? Second, do these EU-funded initiatives actually support EU Cultural Program goals, such as fostering a sense of “European-ness,” and how do these policies influence those of Germany? I will gather qualitative data in Bonn by observing and interviewing employees of cultural organizations in the Haus der Kultur as well as area music makers and listeners. This project seeks to understand how music, as expressive culture, contributes to the agenda of European integration, as policy makers struggle to realize the EU’s motto: “United in Diversity.”

Charles Lwanga (University of Pittsburgh)

Mu Kkubo Ery’Omusaalaaba: Bridging Ethnomusicological Research and Composition in Justinian Tamusuza’s String Quartet

In the present century, Contemporary African Art music composers are preoccupied with the search for new musical idioms. In addition to describing contemporary music as “an extraordinary free and open-wide open-attitude towards all many possibilities, [Aaron Copland argues that] the present day composer obviously feels that he can write any kind of music in any style ... There are no limits anymore” (1968). In Africa, art music composers are developing contemporary idioms from traditional music and blending them with Western/European idioms, which were introduced on the continent by Christian missionaries. Similar to Béla Bartók’s approach, a methodology Akin Euba refers to as creative musicology, composers have embraced field research in order to attain deeper understanding of how music materials function and define sociological contexts and how they can be transformed into ‘ethno-compositions.’ Drawing from field experience as well as his educational background, Ugandan composer and scholar Justinian Tamusuza appropriates traditional Kiganda music materials into creative art music compositions. While using the first movement of his string quartet Mu Kkubo Ery’Omusaalaaba (In the Way of the Cross), this paper examines how Tamusuza’s approach to creative musicology bridges ethnomusicological research and composition. This will be arrived at through the lens of appropriation, with specific attention given to how the main theme, secondary theme, counter-melodic material, and Kiganda musical sonorities are employed to elaborate how interaction is a very important performance practice among the Baakisisimba musicians of Central Uganda.
Mahsa Pakravan (University of Alberta)

The Concept of Tradition in Persian Music: An Analysis of the Impact of New Poetry on Persian Classical Music in Post-revolutionary Iran

My research on Persian poetry and Iranian classical music intends to explore different definitions of the concept of tradition in Iranian culture, with specific focus on its various deliberations in Persian classical music (Musiqi-i sonnati Irani). Primarily, I plan to investigate the use of new poetry (She’r-e no) in Persian classical music in order to clarify the influence of different poetic genres and various styles of poetic delivery on audience members’ interpretations and attitudes towards the music. Thus, my study aims to investigate the impact of this phenomenon on both the concept of tradition and audience affinity for Persian classical music in post-revolutionary Iran.

Historically, the definition of tradition has been altered from a pro-religious to an anti-progressive concept in different time periods. While some Iranian musicians today consider authenticity (Esālat) the most important characteristic of Persian classical music, others value innovation and criticize tradition as a barrier in the process of creative music development. In this regard, it is clear that the enforced religious restrictions on music have brought about new challenges for musicians: namely the invention of tradition and innovation within tradition. In light of these challenges, I question the extent to which religious ideological beliefs in post-revolutionary Iran have placed Persian classical music in a unique position due to the aforementioned restrictions on music.

Throughout my fieldwork, I will be filming live performances of classical musicians in order to analyze their use of musical and poetic genres, as well as understand audience members’ affinity for this music. Furthermore, I will be collecting data through a cross-section survey, as well as interviewing famous musicians and conducting focus groups with audience members so as to gain a deeper understanding of musicians’ and audience members’ attitudes to classical music in modern-day Tehran. In conclusion, I believe that exploring the current attitudes toward the concept of tradition in Persian classical music will assist scholars in assessing the aspirations, limitations and potential of “progress” in Iran’s Persian classical music. More broadly, this study will devise a theoretical framework for comparable studies on other Middle Eastern musics. Finally, by bridging the academic fields of ethnomusicology and literature, my research will push for a more holistic view of arts in society, where different expressive forms, such as musical performance and literature, feed off of each other in their constant dialogue with socio-political issues and discourses of tradition and innovation.

Laryssa Whittaker (Royal Holloway, University of London)

Countering Inequality in South Africa through Music and Dance: The Field Band Foundation and Holistic Visions of Development

The national governments of post-apartheid South Africa have always asserted the potential value of the arts and culture sector to national identity, reconciliation, and human expression. Current national strategies, however, position arts and culture as the nation’s “new gold,” focusing almost entirely upon their economic potential through commodification to generate national revenue, provide income to the economically underprivileged, and to act as indicators of social wellbeing and stability that encourage international investment and economic activity.

Founded in 1997 as a response to the socioeconomic inequality that is the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, the Field Band Foundation (FBF) develops life skills, promotes health, and creates economic opportunities for youth in predominantly socioeconomically underprivileged communities across the nation through its musical training. Based on my research with the organization, I propose that it has unleashed a socioeconomic potential for music and dance that supersedes the vision of the South African government for arts and culture, and that it has achieved this by improving the multidimensional wellbeing of its participants, with effects both within and beyond the musical sphere. Although musical training is its core offering, leading many participants to careers in music, the FBF has a participatory and holistic approach to its work that counters inequality over the long term and at the individual level, whether or not participants ultimately become professional musicians. Its model, I suggest, offers new and transferable ways of conceptualising and realising the socioeconomic benefits and liberatory potential of music and dance education.