



ETHNOTES

New Directions for *ETHNOTES* Note from the Editor

Following the richness and depth of the inaugural issues, this year we try to foreground the “notes” in *Ethnotes*. We envision this both in the brevity and in the intertextuality of the content. As such, pieces in this issue are excerpts aimed at giving the readers a taste, while full versions can be found on our [blog](#).

Thinking of “notes” as the candid snapshots of everyday life in the community, this year we also explore beyond the limits of the page by maintaining instant updates on [facebook](#) and [twitter](#), as well as presenting a dynamic and curated collection of short pieces on the blog. Enjoy!

Yun Emily Wang, Editor



News & Events...

...New Profs!

Joining our community this year as a full-time Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology is [Farzi Hemmasi](#). Also, the Jacyk Postdoctoral Fellow at the Munk Centre is ethnomusicologist [Maria Sonevytsky](#), who is affiliated with the Centre for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies. Welcome, Farzi and Maria!

...New Babies!

Speaking of new members, Professor Josh Pilzer and his wife Yukiko Amano became new parents summer past! Their baby boy Ren has allegedly already sung at the



Josh & Ren

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age of 8 weeks, which would make Blacking very proud. Maria Sonevytsky is also a new parent—born six days after Ren, baby Lesia has been exploring Toronto with Maria this Fall. Congratulations, Josh and Maria!

Grants & Awards!

Our [graduate students](#) have been very successful in many nationwide, highly competitive grants & awards applications. This fall we are excited to announce that Polina Dessiatnichenko is one of the sixteen inaugural [Weston fellows at the University of Toronto](#) to be awarded a substantial grant for field research in a global setting. Polina, Nate Renner, Sepideh Raissadat and Yun Emily

Wang were awarded Joseph-Armand Bombardier CGS Doctoral Scholarships, and Vanessa Thacker received a SSHRC doctoral award. Gabriela Jiménez was awarded the prestigious Connaught fellowship. Stacey Udarchik garnered a Master's SSHRC, and Gillian Stone an Ontario Graduate Scholarship. Sarah Riegler's zeal for the Indian *tabla* won her the Foundation for the Indian Performing Arts scholarship. Congratulations everyone!

...SEM 2013!

At this year's [Society for Ethnomusicology conference](#) (Indianapolis, November 14-17) many of our faculty and students will be presenting papers: Prof. Jeff Packman and Carolyn Ramzy will each be chairing panels; Prof. Josh Pilzer and Prof. Ken McLeod, Katie Young, Deanna Yerichuk (our good friend from the Music Education department!) and Yun Emily Wang will be giving papers.

...Scholarly Activities!

Prof. Jim Kippen spent time doing research at the British Library in May, and attended a meeting in London of team members working on the [Musical Transitions to European Colonialism in the Eastern Indian Ocean](#) project (funded by the European Research Council). Jim just chaired a panel session by the team at the 42nd Annual Conference on South Asia (Madison, WI, October 17-20).

Prof. Jeff Packman is co-guest-editing an issue of [Black Music Research Journal](#) with Xavier Livermon from the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas. The issue is tentatively titled *The Culture Industries in the African Diaspora*. Jeff and [Danielle Robinson](#), Associate Professor of Dance at York University, have collaborated on an article on *samba de roda* that is to come out soon with Palgrave. This project started its life as a colloquium presentation here at U of T! Jeff and Danielle's collaborative writing can also be found in [Bodies of Sound: Studies Across Popular Music and Dance](#) (2013).

...Community Gamelan!

Our artists-in-residence [Vaughan Hatch & Evie Suyadnyani](#) have been leading a community Balinese gamelan group on Sunday afternoons (2-4, Boyd Neel room). Members of the group range from music majors and non-music majors at U of T to professional engineers who also know their way around gamelan.

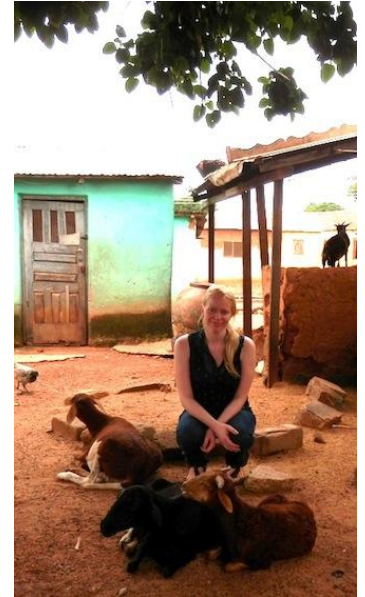
...Getting Connected!

For instant updates, reminders, and other fun tidbits on the ethnomusicology community at U of T, visit our [Ethnomusicology Website](#), follow us on [facebook](#), [twitter](#), or subscribe to our [blog](#), where informal features of community members as well as reports from academic events will be posted regularly! To submit, just send an email to ethnotes@gmail.com.

Brief Notes from the Field

[Katie Young](#) writes:

This past summer, supported by a Michael Smith Travel Grant, I spent time in southern Ghana researching music and tourism at various schools, cultural centres and events, including the Dagara Music Centre, University of Ghana, Big Milly's Backyard, the First Annual National Carnival and the National



Arts Centre. I also spent time in Ghana's northern region exploring the reach of Bollywood film music. I recently presented on this experience during one of the roundtable discussions, where I focused on this latter portion of my research, and I included a field-recording of one informant singing his favourite song from the 1982 film *Bhagavat* as well as a recent film clip of a locally produced Bollywood-inspired Ghanaian film. I am excited to continue researching on the transnational life of Bollywood film music in Ghana or among Ghanaian diasporas!



[Polina Dessiatnitchenko](#) writes: With the support of a Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement Award, I conducted preliminary fieldwork in Azerbaijan from February to June 2013. I took *tar* lessons and learned how to play *mugham*, inquired into the Azerbaijani experience of *mugham* through discussions with local people, visited archival repositories, and took courses about *mugham* at the Baku Music Academy. In my spare time I



meditated on the phenomenological question of the *mugham* mode of being-in-the-world, which is what I plan to write my dissertation on. Also, I had an opportunity to spend time with some wonderful Azerbaijani people, exploring the beautiful city of Baku, making pilgrimages to burial sites of Muslim saints, learning how to cook lamb in 100 different ways, and participating in some performances. You can watch an [informally shot video of one such performance online!](#)

Paolo Pietropaolo: alumnus & radio journalist

A prominent figure in radio journalism, alum Paolo Pietropaolo (@paolopp) has won a Peabody Award and two Prix Italia for his CBC radio show [The Wire: The Impact of Electricity on Music](#) and [Signature Series](#). In a phone conversation with *Ethnotes*, Paolo traced his journey back to Ethnomusicology at the U of T.

Hi Paolo! Can you tell us how you got into radio journalism after your time at U of T?

It's one of those things that kind of happened by accident. It was because of my music that I got into radio, but not just because of my music—it was specifically the World Music Ensembles. I graduated from U of T with my B.Mus. in what was History & Culture, but really it was



Ethnomusicology before there was a program. I then got a call from Kiyoshi Nagata, the leader of the Kiyoshi Nagata Ensemble (then the *taiko* ensemble at U of T, now known as [Nagata Shachu](#)). He said, "I have an opening in my group,

and since you did so well in my class last year and are such a great fit, I'd like to invite you to join the ensemble." I was so happy! What I really wanted to do at that time was to play—I had done four years of essay writing, which was great, but I was ready to perform. Playing *taiko* gave me the opportunity to perform, and I just really wanted to do it. It was the best call. I said, "Absolutely!" and joined the ensemble.

In the year 2000, I got accepted to do my Master's at UCLA, but this was the year when the Canadian dollar was 60 cents to an American dollar. It would have cost me a lot of Canadian dollars to go, and I didn't have that kind of money. I was also loving performing so much that I decided to keep playing *taiko* and working the day job in Toronto. A few months later, a producer at CBC was looking for new voices to try out on a show called *The Blues*. They were trying to get young voices that hadn't been heard on CBC to do something. They were trying out new ways to tell stories. This producer who used to use the library all the time approached me that fall, and she said, "Would you be interested in doing a story about your *taiko* playing?" And I said, "uh...sure, okay." And she said, "You could talk about how you got into it, interview a few musicians, record a rehearsal...." I jumped at the opportunity. That's how I got into radio!

Do you have any advice for grad students like myself from your perspective as a public ethnomusicologist?

I know how hard it is to get an academic job these days, I have friends [laugh]. If you are not one of those few who can follow the academic path, there are so many interesting things you *can* do with a background in ethnomusicology. I can list a few: journalism is certainly one of them, and there are all kinds of social applications that ethnomusicologists would be really good at. Listening to people, for instance, is a skill that ethnomusicologists have to have. There's a whole sector of work around social work, human work, music therapy, etc., where being able to listen is a great skill. My point is that there are just so many ways you can bring an ethnomusicological approach to your professional life, whatever that may be. I am really proud to have come from an ethnomusicological background, let's just put it that way [laugh]!

[Continue to read the complete version of our chat with Paolo...](#)

Farzi Hemmasi:

our new Assistant Professor in Ethnomusicology

[Farzaneh Hemmasi](#), our new Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology, joined our community this fall. On one fine Monday afternoon we had a lovely conversation with her about food, Toronto, ethnomusicology, and graduate school.



Hi Farzi! How is Toronto so far? What is your favorite thing about the city?

I lived here in 2006 for four months doing fieldwork, so it's not all new to me. I liked it then, and still do! I love the fact that the city is so international. And I love to eat, so I really like being able to eat almost any kind of food I want within biking distance from my house. It's really great!

Tell us about your book?

The book is about Iranian popular music prior to the revolution in 1978-79, and how a generation of musicians who began in popular music in Iran then moved to the LA area and began a music industry in exile that tried to preserve many of the qualities they felt were lost in the revolution. What I am looking at is the way that pop musicians and music producers—and to some extent TV producers—work to create a sonic and visual sense of a version of Iran that was in many ways opposed to what they believed was produced in the Islamic Republic. They make a sense of Iran for themselves—Iranians abroad—but in turn they also send it back to Iran to compete with official versions of Iranian culture. The big theme areas are memory, media, popular music, and migration and transnationality.

Occupy Wall St—The giant megaphone



Can you tell us about your project about the sound and music of Occupy Wall Street?

It began as an interest in the movement in general, finding myself there all the time, and being overwhelmed by the sound. The fact that you would hear the encampment before you saw it was what impressed me initially, especially in the already very noisy environment of downtown Manhattan with the noise of construction on the World Trade Center, and so on. Noise and sound were also a major part of the imagery and the discourse of the gathering—two guys made a giant papier-mâché megaphone to demonstrate their desire to be heard, while another guy wore a gag to symbolize how silenced he felt. A lot of the recordings I made were just walking through the space and hearing people chanting, hearing them going between chanting slogans to general assembly meetings, to actually singing, and so

forth. Kids born in the 1980s would be singing folksongs from the 1960s, which were first folksongs from the 1890s. That kind of layering was really interesting. I also



did a fair amount of hanging out at one end of the encampment that had a lot of drummers. That was where the drumming circle was—people would have five-hour jam sessions! At this point, the material is just...material, like field recordings and such. [I've put some of it online](#), but I am still deciding what I want to do with it.

What's your advice for grad students?

Make sure that you are doing something that you are passionate about, because you are going to have to live with it. Pursuing a PhD is kind of like getting married—you want to make sure you are in it for richer or for poorer, because you'll definitely face the poorer part, but hopefully be the richer for it. Figure out what you are good at, and capitalize on it as much as you can. Figure out what you are not as good at, and make sure you address it so that you are at least sufficient in those areas. Hang out with your fellow grad students when you can, and form your own identity as scholars—know who you are collectively and what you want to accomplish in your work. And then, you won't feel like the dissertation or the graduate experience is a long lonely road. Instead, you will feel like you are traveling with others. And that feeling makes a huge difference in the quality of life for many of us in this business.

[Continue to read the complete version of our chat with Farzi...](#)

Vaughan Hatch : World Music Artist-in-Residence

[Vaughan Hatch & Evie Suyadnyani](#) are our World Music Artists-in-Residence this fall. We checked in with Vaughan to make sure he likes Toronto, and then we digressed a little...

Hi Vaughan! How do you, Evie, and the kids like Toronto so far?

We love it! Folks are friendly, and it's easy to get around anywhere or to find stuff and do stuff... The U of T community is really welcoming and easy-going. People are always ready to answer our questions or help us out. The kids particularly love the black squirrels, and Castle Board Game Café on Spadina!

Any favorite places to eat yet?

We like to try stuff that you can't get in Bali—bagels, croissant, good cheese etc. We really enjoyed Indian at The Host the other day, which was highly recommended. I also like to just chill out with everyone at The Duke after those Thursday Ethno roundtable discussions!

Can you tell readers of Ethnotes how you got involved with Balinese gamelan?

This is a *very* long story, so I'll give you the condensed version! While studying archaeology at Otago University in New Zealand in 1996, I 'discovered' Javanese gamelan by joining their newly formed group, and started listening to recordings of gamelan music in the library (this is one of the best ways to learn and understand better gamelan music, by the way) and became particularly interested in the melodies and structures of Balinese court and archaic music. Little did I know that these types of art forms were actually extremely rare in Bali. The next year I applied for an Indonesian Government scholarship to study in Bali at the Denpasar Arts Institute (ISI). I found it 'difficult' to study there for a plethora of reasons, and ended up taking private lessons in villages with musicians who specialized in the styles of music that weren't offered at the institute. I quickly realized that these art forms were rare and endangered, as very few young Balinese were interested in or had even heard of these styles.



Vaughan with Evie & son Semara

I chanced upon buying some disused bronze gamelan instruments from a gong smith in a small village, which made up a court ensemble. These instruments were around 100 years old, and were going to be melted to make a new modern ensemble (*gong kebyar*). I slowly restored and retuned the set, then formed a group from the Balinese friends I had 'collected' in my travels in Balinese villages. All this time I was surviving by trying to work wherever I could, including teaching English. I got elderly teachers to instruct the 20-strong group in the rare court styles. After several years, we founded [Mekar Bhuana](#), a family-based conservatory that specializes in both rare Balinese court and archaic music and dance. We've put [a lot of this material on YouTube](#): check it out! The dance component was mainly the contribution of my wife, Putu Evie Suyadnyani, who is also a World Music Artist-in-Residence this semester. We now have ten gamelan ensembles (five of them antique) at Mekar Bhuana, and we document, study and perform rare and previously extinct Balinese music using these instruments.

I suppose the Western art music equivalent would be to play Mozart on period instruments. For Balinese music, as far as I know, this is the only place in the world where anybody does this kind of restored archaic practice.

[Continue to read the complete version of our chat with Vaughan...](#)