



ETHNOTES

SEM News

the society for
ethnomusicology

This fall's annual conference of the **Society for Ethnomusicology** will be held in Washington DC, mere days after the US Presidential Election. Other conferences that took place in the days following previous elections – Tucson AZ in 2004 comes to mind – were notable for the number of participants showing interest in moving to Canada! It will be interesting to gauge the mood this time round! [\[Link to program\]](#)

Our faculty and graduate students will be well represented this year, as usual. Among them, Professor **Farzaneh Hemmasi** will be giving a paper called "Fellow Sufferers: Addicts, Fans, and Ordinary Citizens in Iranian Popular Music Activism." **Polina Dessiatnichenko** will present "Improvising Post-Soviet Azerbaijani Identity in the Moment of Performance." **Hamidreza Salehyar** will talk about "Embodying the Battle of Karbala: The Negotiation of Cultural Memory in Post-Revolutionary Iran." **Nadia Younan** will present "(Re)Mapping Assyria: Performing Stateless Nationhood in Assyrian '*Sheikhan*' Song and Dance Practice" on the panel Politics and Agency. **Nate Renner** presents "Ainu Music, Environmentalism, and Indigeneity in Multicultural Japan." **Stacey Udarchik's** paper is "Laughing at Mental Illness: Humour in Portrayals of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder in Popular Music." **Nil Basdurak** will present "Imagining the Past in Contemporary Practice." And **Yun Emily Wang** will be on a panel sponsored by the Association for Chinese Music Research; she will supply one of three case studies exploring Shu-Mei Shih's concept of "Sinophone."

SEM will also be full of our alumni, including recent Master's graduate **Tamara Rayan** who will talk about "Reform through Recitation: An Examination of the Islamic Feminist Counterpublic."

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As always, you can find our more through [our website](#) as well as our Blog, Facebook and Twitter. Click on the image below to go directly to the Blog.

ethnotes

Ethnotes is the ethnomusicology newsletter at the University of Toronto

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Josh is Back ... Soon!

Professor Joshua Pilzer is due to return to Toronto any day now following his sabbatical and parental leaves. It was during that leave that Mari Niamh Pilzer was born on November 9, 2015, in Matsuyama, Japan. In this photo below, Mari is watched by her brother Ren as they play on the floor of the House of Peace in Hapcheon, South Korea, in August 2016.



As for other activities, Josh writes:

I made my yearly trip to Korea for the month of August, and on returning to Japan have been writing quite a lot of this book in the past few months. It is rather challenging, holistic work – I’m an ethnomusicologist, bringing a musical and anthropological perspective to a range of victims’ artful activities – art classes, pottery, exercise, testimony, and others, beyond although of course not excluding music. It seems I have a lot to say, even though I’m so far from my comfort zone, which, let’s face it, is one thing ethnomusicology can be about – getting out of your comfort zone, or making that zone markedly uncomfortable.

I wrote the chapter “Music in Korea” for the textbook *Excursions in World Music*. I think most of us who try to turn intensive research into textbook materials find the process frustrating, especially because of the reduction in terms of quantity and complexity that this requires. But I had some tricks that I used to try and get around essentializing and other potential pitfalls of such reduction.

Continued on page 3...

Josh’s SSHRC Insight Development Grant

Congratulations!

Josh has been awarded a three-year **SSHRC Insight Development Grant** for the project “On the Thresholds of Music and Society.”

The project investigates how those who suffer social marginalization and traumatic experience make use of music and its related expressive practices and activities. Josh focuses on Korean survivors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and their children. The project is based on in-depth, long-term ethnographic fieldwork in both Korean and Japanese in Hapcheon, South Korea, colloquially known as “Korea’s Hiroshima,” and Hiroshima, Japan.

In this project, Josh attempts to discover how these people act musically as a means of reckoning with their experiences, forging identity, community, and social memberships, and cultivating abilities and expressive powers. He uses the term “act musically” rather than “make music” because he is interested in more than just formal music-making.

The research is leading directly to his second book, which is tentatively titled *The Art of Making Life Work in “Korea’s Hiroshima.”* It is an ethnography of song, verbal art, and related practices among the very large but largely unknown community of Korean victims of the atomic bombings of Japan. These people are children and grandchildren of Koreans taken to Hiroshima during the Asia-Pacific War (1931-45) to work in the Japanese military industrial complex.



Saijo Aki Matsuri (Saijo fall festival) *danjiri* (lantern palanquins) and *omikoshi* (portable shrine palanquins) carried and dancing around in the water at the culmination of the festival, October 2015.

I've spent the sabbatical year working on Japanese language, studying Japanese music and society, attending cultural festivals such as the one pictured above, and doing other things to get me ready to be a Japan scholar. All my work previously concerning Japan has been about Korea-Japan relations, and I think I'm ready to be able to do research in Japan only when I want to. I found a place where I might do a project – Oshima Island, near Takamatsu, which a leprosarium that was under quarantine until the late 1960s. There are lots of singers there, and the streets are lined with speakers that play songs that map the island and which the sight-impaired use to navigate.

As part of the effort to become a Japan scholar, I started a research project on American bluegrass music in Japan, based on the scenes in Matsuyama and nearby Imabari, two towns in the Southwest. This is my first try at a project based exclusively – or almost exclusively – in Japan. It's also my first attempt at collaborative research – I'm doing it with a dear friend and bluegrass scholar, Jonathan T. King of the University of North Carolina, Asheville. I'm having to play catch-up, learning lots of repertoire and playing a lot faster than is my wont. Somehow, all this seems rather natural – not ironic, I mean – that a Tennessee guitar player should be learning bluegrass in Japan. Hopefully I will get a chance to talk about this and my other fieldwork projects in an Ethnomusicology roundtable later this year. Rather different from my usual sort of thing, but intensive and people-oriented as always.



A 'banjo chain' performance of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," Matsuyama, Japan, June 2016.

Alumni News

Dr Meghan Forsyth (PhD 2011) is the Project Coordinator of the Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media and Place (MMap) and Interim Director of the Bruneau Centre for Excellence in Choral Music at Memorial University of Newfoundland, as well as Lecturer and Adjunct Professor in Ethnomusicology and Popular Music Studies.

In June 2016 she opened an interactive exhibition that she curated on Acadian dance traditions at le Musée acadien de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard (the Acadian Museum of P.E.I.). [Link: [School of Music | News](#)]



Dr Parmela Attariwala (PhD 2013) had a book chapter published: "Time to Change the Curriculum: Revaluing Improvisation in Twenty-first Century Canada" in Ajay Heble and Mark Laver's edited collection, *Improvisation and Music Education: Beyond the Classroom* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

In the winter term of 2017 Parmela will be in Brandon, Manitoba, as the Stanley Knowles Distinguished Visiting

Professor in Public Policy. She is looking forward to teaching, researching and performing!

And Parmela continues to perform widely. She has been doing a lot of work with dance recently, and has been featured in a profile in Cusp Magazine).



Dr Andy Hillhouse (PhD 2013) is Artistic and Executive Director of the Harrison Festival of the Arts, a nine-day roots music/multidisciplinary arts festival in British Columbia. He talks about the connection between his research and work in an item appearing in the latest [SEM Student News](#).



Sepideh Raissadat

After a leave of absence, Sepideh is back in Toronto to continue her doctoral studies. Here, she reports on her recent activities that include an album, a funding for a musical project, a concert and a TV interview in Germany.

I completed an album called “Persian Songs” that is the result of my collaboration with the great percussion ensemble Nexus. Our collaboration also produced five concerts in Toronto, Kitchener, Ottawa, San Antonio TX and Woodstock NY. Andrew Timar wrote a review of the album for [WholeNote](#) magazine. Also, there is an [extract on YouTube](#) from the concert in San Antonio, at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in November 2015.



I also received substantial funding for my musical project called “Rameshgari” from the Hawaii-based [Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute](#). I have been working on this project since January 2016. It is about reviving a form of *tasnif*-composition that has been almost forgotten since 1979, and which involved collaboration between composer, singer and lyricist. Since it was very much in practice in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, this collaborative way of composing



ballads (*tasnif*) was considered outdated after the Revolution, and the role of the lyricist almost disappeared from the musical scene. Our own Faculty of Music and the Near & Middle Eastern Civilization Department are also partly supporting this project.

The four outcomes of “Rameshgari” are an album (which will be released soon), a [website](#), a short article on the history and process of this kind of composition, and finally [a concert at Walter Hall](#) that took place on September 17, 2016.

Lastly, during my stay in Germany this past year, I was interviewed on a [German TV channel](#) about my activities and about Persian music. It is in English and also contains a brief performance.



Student News

Yun Emily Wang writes: In addition to my SEM paper (see page 1) I will be presenting a paper on puns and Mandarin camp talk in the Chinese queer



diaspora at Race-ing Queer Music Scholarship, a special symposium in conjunction with AMS/SMT in early November in Vancouver. Then, the week after SEM I shall be in Minneapolis for the American Anthropological Association conference where I will be giving a paper titled “Technologies of Song and Aging in a Chinese Geriatric Center in Multicultural Toronto.”

Nadia Younan will present not only at SEM but also at the Middle East Studies Association in Boston. Her paper “Assyrian Traditional Dance, Stateless Nationalism, and the Body as Material Object” will feature in the panel titled “Nationalism and its Alternatives: Minorities and their Material Culture in the Middle East.” She tells us she’s really



looking forward to performing in this year’s “Christmas in Assyria” concert, organized by the Centre for Canadian Assyrian Relations. The concert is mainly comprised of Assyrian music, along with a few Christmas tunes. There will be a variety of local artists performing, and they will perform several traditional dance numbers. Headlining the event is the renowned Assyrian singer Evin Aghassi. The concert will be an opportunity to showcase and promote Assyrian arts and

heritage in Canada, as well as to raise funds for Assyrian refugees. Do join us on Sunday, December 11, at 6:30pm in the Rose Theatre, Brampton, ON. (Photos here, courtesy of Stella Rezgo, are of last year’s concert.)



Gabriela Jiménez attended the Canadian Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Calgary, Alberta this past May. She presented a paper titled “Versioning the ‘Gay Friendly, Feminist Global City’: (Trans)feminist and Queer Musical Performances and the Gentrification of Mexico City’s Historic Center” at the joint IASPM Canada & US conference as well as at the Sexuality Studies Association conference.

An updated version of Gabby’s article “Electro Hop in 1980s Los Angeles and Its Afrofuturist Link” (*Black Music Research Journal*, 2011) will be published in the anthology *Freedom’s Frontier: African Americans in the West from Great Migration to Twenty-First Century* (2017, University of Oklahoma Press).

Ryan Persadie presented his paper “The Queens of Soca and Chutney: Trinidadian Identity, Douglarization and Inter-racial Collaboration,” at the 17th Annual Graduate Symposium in Music at the University of Western Ontario, London, ON.



International Doctoral Workshop

Polina Dessiatnichenko, who is currently teaching Ethnomusicology as a part-time lecturer at Tufts University in Boston, recently attended the Eighth International Doctoral Workshop in Ethnomusicology (June 21-25, 2016) in Hildesheim, Germany. She joined graduate students from Canada, the USA and Europe (Ireland, England, France, Italy, Greece, etc...) to introduce their research to each other and form important connections. She tells us that the organization was immaculate, and the five days were filled with stimulating presentations, discussions, group activities, and even a workshop on throat singing! Student participants lodged together in a downtown hotel with a bar and a restaurant where discussions lasted well into the night. One of the highlights of the workshop was enlightening feedback from participating distinguished scholars and ethnomusicologists Prof. Philip V. Bohlman (University of Chicago), Prof. Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (Universidade Nova de Lisboa), and Prof. Raimund Vogels (Universität Hildesheim). Collaboration with fellow students also proved to be very fruitful, as new projects, panels, and even conferences were planned for the future.



Polina (centre with bright horizontal stripes) and other participants at the International Doctoral Workshop, including U of T alumna Ameera Nimjee (in black, right of centre). Philip Bohlman is at the very back, left; Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco is second from left seated at the table, and Raimund Vogels is to the right of Ameera.

World Music Ensemble Concerts 2016-17

Thursday 1 December 2016 7:30pm

Iranian Music Ensemble (Khavarzamani)

Klezmer Ensemble (Katz)

Japanese Taiko Ensemble (Nagata)

Thursday 30 March 2017 7:30pm

African Drumming & Dancing (Dunyo)

Latin American Percussion (Duggan)

Steel Pan (Cullen)

Walter Hall, Faculty of Music, free admission

Who's That Guy?

We've received a few enquiries about the profile photo of **Dennis Lee** → → → that appears on our website. It was part of a project for a full-length album he did in 2014 with his seven-piece experimental jazz band **Kids Eat Crayons**, entitled "Dogs at Play Among the Ruins." Dennis wrote all the music, lyrics, arrangements, and played drums. On this page are some other images of the band as well as the album cover. You can also click on the symbols at right to listen to the entire album and see a video on YouTube.



Nasim Niknafs



Prof. **Nasim Niknafs'** article based on her ongoing research on the music teaching and learning practices of unofficial rock musicians in Iran, "In a box: A narrative of a/n (under)grounded Iranian musician," has been recently published at the journal of Music Education Research. Her chapter, "Popular music and (R)evolution of the classroom space: Occupy Wall Street in the music school," co-authored with Dr Liz Przybylski (University of California Riverside), will be appearing in the book *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Music Education* in December 2016. It engages with issues of power hierarchy and spatial relationships within popular music education. Nasim's work on "Collective Action" will also be appearing in *Encyclopaedia of Music and Culture*. As well, Nasim has recently been awarded the Faculty Mobility Grant to be the researcher in residence at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany, in December 2016. While conducting her research, Nasim has been presenting at scholarly conferences including the International Society for Music Education in Glasgow, Scotland, and International Conference on Narrative Inquiry in Music Education in Urbana-Champaign, IL.

As the coordinator of the Graduate Colloquium of Music Education, Nasim is expecting to host Dr Joe Abramo, Assistant Professor of Music Education at Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut (October 2016), Dr Patrick Schmidt, Associate Professor of Music Education at Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University (November 2016), and Dr Sidsel Karlsen, Professor of Music Education, Hedmark University College in Norway (January 2017). She invites all ethnomusicologists to join the music educationists for these colloquia.

Farzi Hemmasi

Prof. **Farzaneh Hemmasi** has been very active of late (as if bringing up energetic twins wasn't active enough already!). Farzi won backing from the Jackman Humanities Institute for two projects: the first is a sponsored Working Group to support a cross-campus, interdisciplinary reading group comprising both faculty and graduate students under the banner "Critical Approaches to Middle East Studies: Subjects, Culture, Political Formations"; the second is a Program for the Arts Grant in support of a symposium and performance event around the theme of "Rhythms of Social Change: Time, Rhythm, and Pace in Performance." The symposium and performance will take place in the JHI Building in January 2017.

In addition, Farzi has two new publications coming out in 2017: "Iran's Daughter and Mother: Iranian Pop Icon Googoosh and Nostalgia for the Modern" will appear in the flagship journal *Popular Music*, and "Googoosh's Voice: An Iranian Icon in Silence and Song" is a chapter that will appear in a volume entitled *Voices of Asian Modernities* (ed. Andrew Weintraub, University of Hawaii Press).

In addition to presenting at SEM (see page 1) Farzi will also be at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Minneapolis. Her talk is titled "Suffering Together, Healing Together: Addiction, Recovery, and Intimacy in Transnational Iranian Music and Television."



Farzi with Io, enjoyin' the ride!

Jeff Packman

Prof. **Jeff Packman** and his wife Prof. **Danielle Robinson** (York University) have won a **SSHRC Insight Development Grant** for their project “Sounding and Moving São João: A Critical History and Contemporary Mapping of the Musics, Dances, and Discourses of Bahia’s Festas Juninas.” Jeff writes:

During most of the year, Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, is enlivened with its unique mixture of local and national musics: *samba*, Brazil’s national music from Rio de Janeiro, *MPB*, a nationalized music associated with the urban middle classes, and *axé* music and *pagode*, Salvador’s primary carnival genres. But, each June, this familiar soundtrack pauses and instead the city is filled with the sound of accordions, straw-hatted adults, children with drawn-on freckles, and the smells of roasted corn and boiling peanuts during an annual harvest festival that idealizes all things rural. This dramatic shift, in the wake of carnival, moves the city away from its celebrated African Diasporic history and culture towards “Caboclo” (Indigenous and European) heritage associated with the generalized Brazilian northeast.

This shift is rendered all the more significant, if one considers that Bahia’s famous “carnival of the people” has now morphed into largely an international and national tourist attraction, whereas this annual celebration in June, the *festas juninas* (June festivals) and its music, the northeast Brazilian genre knows as *forró*, have become hometown favorites: many locals flee from carnival now but flock to celebrations in honor of São João, São Pedro, and Santo Antônio, the three saints that comprise the series of events most Brazilians now gloss collectively as “São João”. Children and adults alike, from all classes and racial backgrounds, eagerly embrace *forró* music and its related dances, dress up like “country” folk, and come together at public and private events to celebrate not only the saints, but also that season’s harvest by eating traditional foods from the region. A lovely family-friendly holiday, to be sure, but from where do these idealized memories of the rural and bucolic past come given that this state hosted some of the largest slave plantations in Latin America? How can the contemporary descendants of slaves and masters come together each June – and in the weeks both prior and after – to celebrate farming and rural ways of life and to wax nostalgic about the good old days?

We aim to partner with local knowledge bearers to better understand the particular and at times bewildering history of São João in Bahia so that we can track how it became the festival it is today as well as appreciate its shifting resonances among contemporary participants. Our hope is that this project will offer new perspectives on post-colonial race and class relations, both past and present, as exemplified and intensified through festival activities. During the five *festas juninas* we have experienced since 2004 in the course of fieldwork for other projects we have noticed steadily increasing nationalization, mediatization, and commercialization. Such dramatic change has become a topic of debate among Bahians, whose São João sensibilities are steeped in a longing for rural simplicity and therefore viewed as incongruous with new modes of celebration. Attending to this aspect of the *festas juninas*, we believe, offers humanities scholars a means of understanding various tensions related to “cultural expediency,”

George Yudice’s notion for thinking about how expressive culture can be used as a political and economic resource. In the face of unequal distribution of the benefits of the June Festivals’ expediency, we are especially interested in tactical attempts to harness their potential for self-empowerment and inclusion by diverse and marginalized groups of people.



Festa junina, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

“A Place in This World”: Music and Belonging / Canada 150

IASPM-Canada Annual Conference

University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, May 25-27, 2017

Deadline for abstracts: November 30, 2016

Send submissions to: iaspmcanada2017

In a queer dance club, a Black Lives Matter or Idle No More protest, at the Tragically Hip’s “farewell” concert this past August, in the context of Canadian confederation or elsewhere, music is a powerful means through which participants can enact a sense of belonging. Of course, as demonstrated by Brexit, the Syrian refugee crisis, celebrations of Canada’s 150th birthday (branded as “Canada 150”), and activism on behalf of murdered and missing indigenous women, any enactment of belonging also carries with it a series of struggles over who is included and excluded, over whose voice and experiences matter. Music is integral to these processes of inclusion and exclusion.

2017 marks the 150th year of confederation in Canada and thus the theme “Music and Belonging” is particularly resonant. While we do not wish to limit the scope of the conference to issues related to this anniversary, it does seem timely to trouble and interrogate themes of national identity and belonging. The very constitution of Canada is predicated on important debates of belonging where music was often the central aesthetic form (for example Jean-Baptiste Labelle’s 1868 *Cantate: La Confédération* celebrated the union, while folksongs like “The Anti-Confederation Song,” from 1869, articulated some of the anxieties around forming a nation). More recently, music in Canada has provided a powerful means through which participants can enact a sense of belonging, whether to an affinity group, a political movement, or a nation.

Our theme encourages participants to explore questions of musical belonging in a wide range of contexts. How does music shape national belonging, particularly in Canada, a settler colonial nation with complex racial and language politics, as well as a music industry shaped by multinational forces? How does music shape communities and counterpublics on dance floors, concert venues, and parade routes? How do archives and methods shape our sense of what music matters? How does musical performance and policy draw boundaries around the human and between people?

Our questioning of music and belonging resonates with what it means to carry out music scholarship in Canada in the context of a joint meeting between the International Association for the Study of Popular Music – Canada Chapter (IASPM), the Canadian Society for Traditional Music (CSTM), the Canadian University Music Society (MusCan) and the Canadian Association of Music Librarians, Archives and Documentation Centers (CAML), May 25-27 at the University of Toronto. Each organization will develop its own program, but we will come together for some panels and plenaries to ask questions around the central theme of belonging. We are also collaborating with the North American chapter of PoP Moves (“Performances of the Popular”), an international research group that focuses on popular dance, and so we encourage papers exploring the relationship between music, dance and belonging in popular culture.

We encourage questions of musical methods and methodologies as they relate to the themes of belonging, and research approaches working across diverse practices of ethnography, archival studies, textual analysis, and other types of analysis and critical investigation. Also, with Black Lives Matter Toronto and Toronto Pride as recent events encouraging debates over belonging and activism, we encourage papers that relate academic work to public spaces and engagement with diverse communities.

As this is our annual conference for IASPM-Canada, we also encourage proposals of any popular music topic, and we hope to include the widest array of scholarship in the field as possible.

Possible paper and panel topics might include:

- *Sounds of belonging*
- *Legal contexts: copyright, CanCon, communal ownership, and the courts*
- *Music recording, production and cultural history*
- *Popular music and dance: bodies on the dance floor*
- *Fandom and musical communities*
- *Politics of gender, ethnicity, and nationality (including "The Great White North")*
- *Live music! Dance and music in venues, festivals, local and transnational scenes*
- *Music and 'silence': the absence of music or types of music, or various exclusions of marginalized voices*
- *Materiality, value and belonging: museums, archives, collections*

Abstracts of individual papers, workshops, performances and other presentations should be no longer than 300 words. Panel submissions should include a title and abstract for the panel (300 word max.) as well as titles and abstracts for the individual papers on the panel. All abstracts for a panel should be submitted together. Abstracts will be adjudicated individually so it is possible for a panel to be accepted but not an individual paper.

Each abstract should also include a short biography of the author (100 words max.) including the institutional affiliation and email address of each author. Each abstract should also include five keywords.

Submissions in French and English are acceptable. All submissions must be submitted as a single Word document with the author's last name as the document file name. Do not submit your proposal as a PDF File.

Proposals will be blind reviewed. The program committee consists of:

- Mary Fogarty (Chair)
- Christina Baade
- Kate Galloway
- Eric Hung
- Maria Murphy
- Mei-Ra St-Laurent

Papers will be limited to 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes of questions. Other presentations will be limited to 60 minutes. All participants must be members of IASPM-Canada. Membership information is available on [this website](#):

For questions about the conference, send an email to the program chair, [Mary Fogarty](#), or to local organizing chair, [Robin Elliott](#).



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF POPULAR MUSIC CANADA