

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title: **Narratives of Music and Modernity in 19th Century Colonial Calcutta**

Project Number **HSS0759**

Monash Main Supervisor
(Name, Email Id, Phone) **Adrian McNeil**
adrian.mcneil@monash.edu *Full name, Email*

Monash Co-supervisor(s)
(Name, Email Id, Phone)

Monash Head of Dept/Centre (Name,Email) **Catherine Hope**
cat.hope@monash.edu *Full name, email*

Monash Department: **Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music**

Monash ADRT
(Name,Email) **Rita Wilson**
rita.wilson@monash.edu *Full name, email*

IITB Main Supervisor
(Name, Email Id, Phone) **Suddhaseel Sen**
suddhaseel@gmail.com *Full name, Email*

IITB Co-supervisor(s)
(Name, Email Id, Phone)

IITB Head of Dept
(Name, Email, Phone) **P.L. Trivedi, HoD**
hod@hss.iitb.ac.in, trivedi@hss.iitb.ac.in *Full name, email*

IITB Department: **Humanities and Social Sciences**

Research Clusters:

Research Themes:

Highlight which of the Academy's CLUSTERS this project will address? <i>(Please nominate JUST <u>one</u>. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)</i>		Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address? <i>(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)</i>	
1	Material Science/Engineering (including Nano, Metallurgy)	1	Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture
2	Energy, Green Chem, Chemistry, Catalysis, Reaction Eng	2	Infrastructure Engineering
3	Math, CFD, Modelling, Manufacturing	3	Clean Energy
4	CSE, IT, Optimisation, Data, Sensors, Systems, Signal Processing, Control	4	Water
5	Earth Sciences and Civil Engineering (Geo, Water, Climate)	5	Nanotechnology
6	Bio, Stem Cells, Bio Chem, Pharma, Food	6	Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research
7	Semi-Conductors, Optics, Photonics, Networks, Telecomm, Power Eng	7	<u>Humanities and social sciences</u>
8	<u>HSS</u> , Design, Management	8	Design

The research problem

Define the problem

In the late nineteenth century, Hindustani music encountered Calcutta's public sphere. As a consequence, this diverse musical tradition, which had been predominantly in the hands of hereditary occupational castes and communities of musicians, came face to face with the bustle of social and cultural experimentation and innovation which defined the "Bengal Renaissance". Hindustani music was carried there as much through

the migration and agency of the professional lives of the 'Ustads from the North' as it was through the forces of coloniality and modernity that intersected in Calcutta at that time. Music was not unaffected by the larger intercultural dynamic that characterised Calcutta at the time. Over the next four or five decades its practitioners were compelled to innovate a series of social, performance-related and pedagogical responses through which to negotiate the challenges to the tradition presented by this encounter. These series of responses bring into focus a number of significant issues. One of these is related to the translation of a wide range of musical practices and sensibilities from one cultural domain to another. Prompted by modernity, Hindustani music was recast linguistically, socially and performance-wise in Calcutta. This led to intercultural intellectual responses (European and Indian) – but also a less recognised intercultural social engagement between individuals from different communities of hereditary musicians. Subsequently, the range of intercultural challenges for music (in terms of language, material culture, social organisation, performance practice and transmission of knowledge) was formidable. Along with efforts of building a nation state, a nationalist narrative for a "classical" tradition of music was created. For many reasons, the nationalist narrative effectively excluded or largely ignored the pre-modern hereditary social dimension to Hindustani music. As a consequence, the issue of the hereditary custodianship of music by occupational specialists, and the significance of processes of interculturality in 'classical music' remained outside of the historical imagination of the nationalist narrative. Recently some efforts have been made to document counter narratives to the national narrative, but so far these have been restricted to the lives and descendants of some individual blood lineages of hereditary musicians. Further documentation and critical engagement with the hereditary social fabric and various forms of interculturality of the musical world of 19th century Calcutta is needed.

Project aims

Define the aims of the project

This project aims to frame, shape and understand the role of interculturality as a generating creative factor in the musical life of late 19th century Calcutta, be that in Hindustani classical music or in other genres such as Rabindra Sangeet, popular music and so on. For Hindustani classical music, this line of inquiry aims to consider the impact of interculturalism on its social organisation, performance practice, and the transmission of its musical knowledge. It seeks to generate further understanding about the diversity of practice and cultural syncretism during this pivotal point in the tradition's musical past. It aims to do this by generating documentation of, and critical engagement with, the diverse range of intercultural responses and efforts mostly ignored or forgotten in the national narrative. Outside of classical music, the project aims to identify and critically analyse interculturalism as a creative force and impetus behind the creation of new approaches to popular and art musics.

Individual projects may adopt an interpretive approach to the broad topic including, but not limited to, one or more of the following threads:

- Hereditary Musicians, Migration and Social Fabric
- Modernity and the Institutionalisation of Music
- Institutional and Individual Agency in the Transmission of Knowledge
- Remembrance/memorialization/orality
- Translating selves/translating practices, notation, performance
- Traditional Practices and Social Relations in the Public space/Public claims
- Contested territories/Contested memories,
- Places, Spaces, Performance practices
- The Rise of Poet-Composers
- Music and Print Culture

Expected outcomes

Highlight the expected outcomes of the project

We hope (1) to make productive inroads into diversifying the historical imagination of 19th century Calcutta's musical past; (2) to locate and document relevant primary and secondary text based, oral, recorded and visual material; (3) to form, shape and address questions of how this can provide greater historical depth and nuance which can highlight a more diverse past for Hindustani music; and (4) to contribute to contemporary intercultural practice through historical grounding.

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

Describe how the project will address the goals of one or more of the 6 Themes listed above.

While this project is primarily located in the disciplines of Musicology and Cultural History, the field of

enquiry is not internal to one discipline solely and it needs to be navigated and mapped in conversation with other disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences, viz. Ethnomusicology, Anthropology and Performance Studies and so on. Thus, it will be collaborative and interdisciplinary in nature.

Capabilities and Degrees Required

List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.

An MPhil in History, Anthropology, Sociology, Cultural Studies, English, Music, Arts and Aesthetics. Relevant musical background and knowledge of Bengali an advantage.

A proposal, no longer than 1000 words, with a specific topic and indicating research questions, has to be submitted. **An application without a relevant proposal will not be considered.**

Potential Collaborators

Please visit the IITB website www.iitb.ac.in OR Monash Website www.monash.edu to highlight some potential collaborators that would be best suited for the area of research you are intending to float.

N/A

Select up to **(4)** keywords from the Academy's approved keyword list (**available at <http://www.iitbmonash.org/becoming-a-research-supervisor/>**) relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Humanities, Misc/ Uncategorized (From approved list)

Music, History, Nationalism, Representation (Additional suggestions)