Multipart Musicking, More-than-Human Interactions

A Joint Online Workshop of the ICTMD Multipart Music and Multispecies Sound and Movement Study Groups

November 6–7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

This workshop seeks to explore the intersections of these dynamic fields, bringing together researchers and artists to engage in a dialogue that bridges human and other-than-human musicking, sonic practices, and the broader ecological and cultural landscapes.

Multipart Music:
Multipart music is a collaborative mode of music-making that emphasizes the intentional, coordinated participation of distinct voices. It encompasses practices rooted in shared knowledge and values, where individual contributions interact to create a collective soundscape. Multipart music studies explore how these practices emerge, evolve, and resonate within various sociocultural and ecological contexts.

Multispecies Sound and Movement:
This Study Group challenges anthropocentric perspectives in music and sound studies by centering the voices of other-than-human beings and their sonic ecologies. It examines how humans and non-humans co-create, communicate, and interact through sound and movement, deepening our understanding of interspecies relations and the ecological dimensions of sound.

Academic and Artistic Committee:
- Dr. Robert O. Beahrs (Center for Advanced Studies in Music / MIAM, Istanbul Technical University, Türkiye)
- Dr. Alma Bejtullahu (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Germany)
- Dr. Giovanni Cestino (Università degli Studi di Milano, Italy)
- Dr. Christian Ferlaino (Università della Calabria, Italy)
- Dr. Mitra Jahandideh (Australian National University, Australia; University of Kurdistan, Iran)
- Dr. Yannick Wey (Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland)

Thursday, 6 November 2025

3:00-4:15pm Session 1: Interspecies Encounters and Activism

Marie Comuzzo & Heather Woodson-Gammon

Listening with Whales: Becoming Better Animals through Human-Whale Entanglements

Listening With Whales is a multi-layered digital project that invites people to explore whale song as both a site of knowledge and a call to reimagine human-ocean relations. This online platform functions simultaneously as a research tool and a community meeting ground where multiple ways of knowing converge, including scientific analysis (such as whale songs transcriptions), artistic response (art and music made with/in response to whale songs), ethnographic reflection from field work, and public engagement (such as art installations, crowd funding, and exhibitions). In doing so, we will also challenge the reprosexual gender norms in behavioral biology, and suggest alternative readings of whale sonic entanglements, including a more direct engagement with gender, analyzing how whale singing plays out in same-sex groups and in mother-calf interactions, an important area of study that builds on the broad research done on male singers.

Listening With Whales is a call to action: to listen differently across disciplinary and cultural divides in order to build a sonic multispecies commons where whales are kin and co-catalysts for change.While we hope that this project will contribute to our collective understanding of why whales sing, we are ultimately co-creating this space to inspire humans to become better animals, and to learn how to coexist and co-celebrate in reciprocity: towards perceiving life and nature not as extractive resources but as gifts to take care of as we collectively work together to create a better future. By presenting it at ICTMD we are hoping to gather insights and feedback on our project and incorporate any reflections that might spur from the conversations with our colleagues. Because this is foremost a platform we are building for our community, we want to be in conversation from.

Marie Comuzzo is an ACLS/Mellon Innovative Dissertation Fellow and a Ph.D. Candidate at Brandeis University. Marie's research examines how sound mediates the relationship between humans and whales and the political power that recognizing whales' vocalization as music had in ecological conservation and multispecies kinship within and beyond Western imaginaries. They also hold a Master's in Musicology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a Master's in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Brandeis University. She has presented at conferences in the United States, Aotearoa New Zealand, and has been invited to give talks in the US, NZ, and Italy.

Dr. Woodson-Gammon (Ph.D., NYU, 2023) works at the intersection of music and science, examining how musical practices and acts of listening become forms of embodied relation, temporal entanglement, and ecological attunement between humans and the more-than-human world. Her research attends to the ways sound endures and transforms across contexts of ecological ruin and rebirth, focusing on how sonic practices shape understanding, memory, and coexistence. She has presented at interdisciplinary conferences in the United States, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

Mili Vizcaíno & Maria Ilhéu

Stages for Interspecies Encounters: Concerts as Opportunities for Making Kin

Human life unfolds within multispecies communities, where interactions with non-human beings occur continuously, though often unnoticed or unacknowledged. Artistic practices, and musical performance in particular, provide a fertile ground for making such relations visible and meaningful. Concerts, as live and inherently collective events, can become arenas for encounters in which non-human presence not only intervenes in the human-centered experience but actively shapes the aesthetic, social, and ethical dimensions of performance.

This paper investigates examples in which the presence of non-human beings—whether animals, plants, or other environmental agents—altered the course of concerts, challenging musicians and audiences to engage in processes of negotiation, adaptation, and co-creation. These encounters invite a rethinking of live performance as a site where more-than-human participation is not construed as disruption but is instead welcomed as a source of enrichment. In this perspective, concerts become windows of opportunity for interspecies relationships, where difference is recognized as a catalyst for surprise, questioning, and transformation.

The responses of musicians are central to this process. When musicians act with attentiveness, openness, and intentionality, their choices can generate forms of ecomusicological activism. Such practices not only reframe the concert as an ecocultural event but also contribute to fostering ecological awareness and cultivating an ethics of care that extends beyond human concerns. By positioning musical performance as a site of eco-social practice, this paper highlights the capacity of musicians to act as agents of paradigm change, modeling modes of coexistence that resist anthropocentric assumptions.

Ultimately, this reflection argues that concerts, through their live, situated, and relational character, offer distinctive opportunities for integrating multispecies interactions into artistic practice. In doing so, they contribute to a broader cultural and ethical shift toward ways of being more responsibly and creatively entangled with the living world.

Mili Vizcaíno: (Singer, instrumentalist, composer, researcher, music teacher). She studied piano (Badajoz Conservatory, where she works as a jazz teacher). She holds a degree in Jazz (UEvora); a Master's degree in Jazz (ESML, with her thesis on Carnatic Music); a Diploma in Carnatic Music (SAM, India, where she was a Western music teacher); and a postgraduate degree in children's music education (UNL). She is a PhD candidate in Musicology at UEvora, with a dissertation on Ecomusicology. She has received awards such as INJUVE 2005, Sonora 2012, and Extremadura 2023. In recent years, she has collaborated with naturalists on the creation of ecomusicological repertoire.

Maria Ilhéu: Researcher and Associate Professor at Évora University Évora, Portugal. Coordinator of scientific and eco-social projects on the domain of Rivers Conservation. In the last decades as dedicated great investment on interdisciplinary projects about the education for sustainability and the reconciliation ecology with emphasis on nature-culture connectedness.
Action research projects:
HUMAN-NATURE: experiential education on the wilderness
ID-Nature: education for sustainability
ECOCREATIVITY: a strategy for environmental education
BEING STREAM: modes of connecting with the more than humans.

Elo Masing

Music with Birds: Notes from an Interspecies Collaboration

How might free improvisation become a space for kin-making across species? This presentation reflects on an ongoing collaboration between improvising musicians and two African lovebirds (Agapornis fischeri), focusing on the three-year process (2019–2022) that led to the interspecies album Music with Birds (Creative Sources / Maybee Records, 2022). Emerging at the intersection of multipart music and multispecies sound studies, the project asks how polyphony might be reimagined when human and avian voices co-create shared soundscapes.

Rather than a "case study," this work takes the form of a "kin study" (Kanngieser & Todd, 2020), attending to the singular identities and histories of the birds and people involved. The parrots' calls and movements were not background texture but active, shaping forces in the improvisations. Their sonic interventions transformed the performances into multipart musicking beyond the human, unsettling notions of authorship and intentionality.

Improvisation here is understood as radical openness: a readiness to respond to all sounds within the environment and to cultivate a mode of listening that resonates with LaBelle's (2018) discussion of sound as a force that unsettles visibility and nurtures "insurrectionary sensibility." Thus, listening becomes an embodied practice of solidarity and resistance. Simultaneously, the project confronts its own contradictions: the colonial histories of captive parrots, the problematics of "pet ownership," and the anthropomorphic frames through which humans interpret non-human behaviour. These tensions became part of the music itself—an embodied negotiation of proximity, difference, and responsibility.

By foregrounding both collaboration and critique, the project reimagines multipart musicking as a practice of ecological attunement and multispecies solidarity. While the album Music with Birds marks one outcome, the collaboration continues as an open-ended research practice—suggesting that improvisation with non-humans is not simply an aesthetic experiment but an ongoing ethical practice: a way of learning to live, listen, and world-build otherwise.

Elo Masing is a composer/free improviser/sound artist of Estonian origin, currently based in Berlin, Germany. Her music has been performed internationally by renowned soloists and ensembles, such as Estonian National Symphony Orchestra (EE), Ensemble L'Itinéraire (FR), Ensemble Adapter (DE), Ensemble Fractales (BE), Ensemble mmm... (Japan), Ensemble Synaesthesis (LT), Ian Pace (UK), James Aylward (AU/NL), and many others, and has appeared on labels such as Squeaky Kate, squib-box, CRAM, Creative Sources, and 577 Records. She holds a PhD from the Royal Academy of Music, London, where she explored the physicality of instrumental perfor(mance in chamber music.

4:30-5:30pm Session 2: Interspecies Collaboration in Multipart Settings

Angela Bellia

Between Anthrophony and Biophony: Exploring the Sonic Fabric in the Ancient World

Between Anthrophony and Biophony: Exploring the Sonic Fabric in the Ancient World
The research project AURAL: Exploring the PotentiAl of Immersive VirtUal ReALity for Experiencing Archaeological Soundscapes, aims to address a significant gap in ancient world studies, which have traditionally paid less attention to the sonic dimension of performative and natural contexts. Based on the premise that the historical soundscape was fundamental to the perception of identity and status, my work investigates how musicking in the ancient world was intrinsically connected to and shaped by its surrounding environment.

The project focuses on the analysis of ancient sonic ecologies, understood as the dynamic interplay of anthrophony (human sounds, including music), geophony (non-biological physical environment sounds), and biophony (sounds emitted by non-human living organisms). The objective is to explore how these elements interpenetrated, creating a rich and diverse sonic fabric that profoundly influenced social and cultural practices, including musicking. The project specifically included the study of the natural sound environment linked to performance spaces, some of which were closely connected to the sacred sphere.
Through the analysis of written sources, iconography, and archaeoacoustics, AURAL has investigated how the choice of specific locations for human activities could have been influenced by the search for particular natural acoustic characteristics.

This paper will focus on the case study of extra-urban sanctuaries dedicated to Demeter in the Greek West. Their placement in environments rich in specific geophonies (e.g., sounds of springs, wind) and biophonies suggests a deliberate intention to harness the natural sounds to amplify the sense of the numinous during ritual practices. The AURAL project also aimed to explore how the sonic experience in the ancient world was a complex and more-than-human interaction, where voices, instruments, and environmental sounds co-created a "soundscape" that can be understood through the lens of multipart sonic interactions.
This research offers a crucial historical perspective, enriching the contemporary dialogue on methodologies for cross-species inquiry in the field of sound studies.

Angela Bellia received her PhD at the University of Bologna. She is a researcher at the National Research Council (CNR), Institute of Heritage Science (ISPC). Her work concerns soundscape archaeology, aural architecture, sonic heritage, archaeoacoustics, digital heritage; archaeology of performances, sound studies, experienced ancient religious sound studies, sensory archaeology; archaeology of musical and dance performances, anthropology of music and dance, and archaeomusicology.

Ellan A. Lincoln-Hyde & Jenny Guilford

Climate of the Bells: Expanding Multipart Musicking Across Forest and Sea in the UK

Climate of the Bells is a collaborative performance work developed by The (In)Equal Temperament Project (Jenny Guilford and Ellan A. Lincoln-Hyde), originally commissioned for the for a King's College London 'embedded study day' in Epping Forest—a woodland shaped by centuries of multispecies presence and acoustic entanglement. The piece is built around a multipart structure that weaves together seasonal birdsong and adapted sea shanties, drawing attention to ecological rhythms and collective care. Originally by High Beech Church, Epping forest, the church's nautical design and setting on a prehistoric shoreline provided a unique frame through which forest and oceanic soundscapes could meet.

Now recommissioned for a new iteration at the University of Southampton, we are reimagining Climate of the Bells as a moveable and site-responsive work. This version will integrate the calls of seabirds and the sounds of maritime bells—local sonic features of Southampton's coastal identity—while retaining the multipart, interspecies structure of the original composition. Our aim is to create a performance that can resonate in multiple ecological and cultural environments while remaining grounded in place-specific sonic practices.

In this short presentation, we will outline the conceptual and methodological evolution of the piece, including its shift from site-specificity to adaptability. We are especially interested in exploring how the principles of multipart musicking—distributed authorship, responsive listening, and ecological attunement—can translate across species and settings. We invite feedback from participants on approaches to integrating other-than-human voices in dynamic environments, and on how mobile formats might foster sustained, multispecies collaborations in both performance and research.

Ellan A. Lincoln-Hyde is a research musicologist and multi-disciplined performing artist who has lived and performed in Australia, the US, China and the UK. Ellan uses their various instrumental talents (bassoon, mandolin, ukulele, bodhran and the uilleann pipes) to break down and otherwise distort barriers between musical genres. Ellan's production management work has included festivals, operas, theatre and international research conferences; they teach at King's College London and SOAS University of London.

Jenny Guilford is a composer and educator from Australia. With one of her earliest memories being fascinated by the sound of different sized saucepans, it's safe to say she has always been passionate about sound in all its vast potential. This passion, combined with a decided love of stories, led to the study of multiple instruments, forays into musical theatre and a decided hatred of being told something is impossible. Her music has been performed by amateur and professional groups alike, and she has also scored short films.

Federica Nardella

Multipart Musicking with Apex Predators: Cooperation and Hierarchy in Kyrgyzstan's Hunting with Golden Eagles

Exploring multipart musicking beyond the human, this presentation addresses the question of sonic interactions with predatory apex species and what musicking with predators might entail. My case study focuses on golden eagles and their hunting partnerships with men in Kyrgyzstan. It takes into account both intraspecies and interspecies vocal engagement and the contexts, landscapes and conditions they unfold in. These are discussed as a translation of the functions that humans and nonhumans perform on the landscape (Pegg 2024; Fijn 2011; Levin and Süzükei 2011), specifically in relation to village and mountain lives. The question of whether such engagements can be described as musicking is also critically examined (Duengen, Sarfati and Ravignani 2023). Essentially different from musical interaction with species such as humpback whales (Rothenberg 2011; South 2022) or dogs (Harrison 2021), interacting with predators who cooperate with humans involves a form of synchronicity. This can be described in terms of harmony, but nonetheless, lacks an explicitly aesthetic dimension. My argument is, therefore, that the vocal engagement taking place among eagles in the proximity and company of men, and the one happening between men and eagles, is a sonic translation of social structure and role distribution that enables the accomplishment of shared goals. These range from catching prey to carrying out tasks in the village and respecting social hierarchies and boundaries. Stretching the concept of musicking to include harmonious cooperation, an aesthetic dimension of the interaction - akin to multipart musicking - is, I suggest, strongly linked to such hierarchies, boundaries and roles. In particular, the way in which vocalities, sound and silence, as well as physical movements, are negotiated and coordinated in different moments, according to patterns.

Federica Nardella completed her AHRC-funded PhD in Ethnomusicology at King's College, London under Prof. Martin Stokes' supervision. She is an MMus Ethnomusicology graduate (SOAS) and holds a BA in English Literature & Creative Writing (Royal Holloway). In 2025, she was a Georg Forster Forum Fellow at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz.
During her PhD, she researched the late nineteenth-century Ottoman song form şarkı in relation to literacy, linguistics, language pedagogy, the emerging bureaucracy and the press. Her postdoctoral project explores the soundscape ecology of Turkic Central Asia and the use of vocality in constructing partnerships between eagle-hunters and golden eagles in Kyrgyzstan.

5:45-6:45pm Session 3: Ecologies and Interspecies Collaboration

Kate Galloway

Paw-Some Synths: Memetic Gesture, Experimental Sound Play, and the Cats at the Synthesizer Interface of Audiovisual Meme Culture

Scrolling my TikToks, Reels, and posts I encounter a marmalade cat dramatically pawing the air, pantomiming and performing an intricate Theremin solo, a tuxedo cat pawing synth pad in an EDM remix, and a throwback reshare of "Keyboard Kitty Creates Spooky Vibes" where a black cat stands on an electric piano and creates some "spooky music" by depressing cluster chords with their paws. Each video juxtaposes cats and electronic instruments, conflating the gesture and movement of active, curious cats with the playful timbral manipulation of sound that characterizes experimental electronic music. Certain genres, like electronic music, receive sustained memetic treatment as user-creators play with and circulate sounds, images, and ideas commonly associated with electronic music as a broad and varied music genre. Like the memetic treatment of the "jazz cat", resulting from their audiovisual framing the cats of electronic music memetics give off an air of reserved coolness, have a detailed encyclopedic generic knowledge, exhibit discerning taste, and they play with sonic possibilities. These are not just cat memes that happen to feature electronic music instruments and genre references, rather they are short-form audiovisual internet objects that are intentionally exploring ideas of musicality, vocality, gesture, performance through timbre, practices of remix, internet interfaces, and stagings of the nonhuman. Drawing on examples from my corpus of cats performing and playing with the instruments and sonic markers of electronic music and histories of cats and technological experimentation (Sterne 2012), I offer an exploration of the concerns and discomforts, the interfaces and instrumentality, and the affordances and choreographies around the ways in which we treat animals for human use across audiovisual internet culture (Galloway 2022; Maddox 2022). I use musical cats to illuminate debates about instrumentality within sonic cultural phenomena of the internet and human conceptions of musicality and listening.

Kate Galloway is Assistant Professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Her monograph Remix, Reuse, Recycle: Music, Media Technologies, and Remediating the Environment (OUP, forthcoming) examines contemporary soundwork that remixes and recycles sounds, musics and texts encoded with environmental knowledge. She also examines the creative and social phenomena of internet music communities and practices of listening to the internet, including musicking animal memes, fandom practices, and the online remediation and extension of sonic environments. She is co-editor of Taylor Swift: The Star, The Songs, The Fans (Routledge) and Music and Sonic Environments in Video Games: Listening to and Performing Ludic Soundscapes (Routledge).

Chiara Aquilani & Davide Monti

Helicona Project and Horse-Human interaction

This study presents the outcomes of a hybrid research, theoretical and experiential, into the interspecies relationship between humans and horses, emphasizing the communicative potential of music within this relationship. Drawing on the horse's multisensory sensitivity and its historical involvement in sound-based human practices – from warfare and labor to therapy – the project explores the capacity of music as a relational and epistemological tool. The intervention will present the results of a three-day field experiment conducted in Noceto (Parma), featuring improvised performances by Baroque violinist Davide Monti, founder of the Helicona Project. This project seeks to rebalance technical musical expertise with the expressive, affective dimensions of performance through an embodied, improvisatory pedagogy.
Rooted in what Jeff Todd Titon terms a "relationship epistemology," Helicona's methodology applies a "rhetoric of positive relation" structured around three phases – approach, following, and entrustment. The field experiment also considered variables such as horse temperament, physical setting, and interspecies agency. Historical dance tempi were aligned with gaits and musical archetypes from Renaissance and Baroque music, emphasizing body language as a communicative medium.
The experiment highlighted dual role of music: as a regulator of rhythm with calming effects on horses, and as an energetic conduit fostering kinesthetic empathy (Reynolds & Reason) and intra-action. Framed by ecological and post-humanist theoretical orientations – including eco-bio-zoomusicology, acoustic multinaturalism (Ochoa Gautier), and new materialism (Bennet; Newmark) – the study queries categories of music, language, and performance within a multispecies context. Drawing on concepts such as biosocial encounters (Davis & Maurstad) and flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Turino), the potential for music to create symbolic, mutually intelligible spaces across species is demonstrated. The findings propose a foundational step towards developing a semantic common ground re-empowering embodied archetypes and their relational meanings.

Chiara Aquilani holds a Master's degree in Musicology from the University of Milan. Her early work focused on the theoretical and compositional output of R. Murray Schafer and the concept of the soundscape. Her MA research explored the role of music in human–animal interspecies relationships through a theoretical-ontological, historical, and practical lens. Chiara collaborates with Helicona, an association dedicated to the study of relational dynamics and improvisation in performance contexts, and with eCoscience, specialized in bioacoustic analysis and environmental sound monitoring. She is also a co-founder of ITER Research Ensemble, a research-led choir "doing choral-led research".

Davide Monti is a violinist whose infectious energy and exceptional natural talent make him a truly compelling performer. As director, soloist, concertmaster, and chamber musician, his playing has been described as "phenomenal" with "incredible freshness," where every performance feels extraordinarily spontaneous and organic. His recordings—including Vivaldi's Four Seasons—have been hailed as "definitely one of the best versions of the decade."
Holding degrees from the Conservatory of Parma and the Conservatory of Verona, Davide has served as leader and soloist with numerous internationally renowned ensembles, such as the European Baroque Orchestra (EUBO), Il Tempio Armonico, Accademia Arcadia Australia, Ensemble Elyma, Tafelmusik Toronto, Les Voix Humaines Montreal, Camerata Brisbane, Kore in Poland, and Arparla (in collaboration with harpist Maria Christina Cleary).
Davide is passionate about the art of improvisation, where the experience of extemporaneous communication parallels other art forms such as theater, dance, fencing, and dressage. He regards the score as a canvas, with each performance emerging as a distinct and vital work of art. He has taught improvisation within historically informed practices across Europe, Canada, Asia, and Australia. As the Artistic Director of the International School of Improvisation – Helicona Project, he leads a multidisciplinary approach to musical improvisation that has evolved into a complex and fascinating system of strategies. Notably, the Helicona Project was recently awarded the REMA (European Network for Early Music) Cross-Border Project of the Year. Currently, as a teacher of Baroque Violin at the Cagliari Conservatory, Davide delights in "speaking" with his violin—a cherished Giuseppe Guadagnini instrument from the second half of the 18th century.

Ghilyana Dordzhieva

Calls, Songs, and Bonds: Human-Animal Communication in Mongolian Herding Culture

In this presentation, I will examine the communicative calls addressed to herd animals, with particular attention to milk incantations - specialized vocal practices performed to encourage animals to nurse their young. Drawing on fieldwork recordings with Kalmyk and Western Mongolian communities, the analysis considers the verbal, paralinguistic, and musical parameters of these practices, together with their accompanying actions and performative contexts. Of particular interest is the system of species-specific, non-lexical "call-words," which function both as pragmatic signals in herding and as etymological bases for verbs denoting domestication and human–animal relationality.
By highlighting notable melodic parallels between milk incantations and the Western Mongolian ut dun (long song), I propose that these practices should be understood not only as a pragmatic technology of animal husbandry but also as an implicit pedagogy of voice.

Ghilyana Dordzhieva, PhD, scholar-in-residence at the Mongol-American Cultural Association. In 2000-2006, she served as a lecturer at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, while also working as a senior researcher at the Centre for Folklore and Ethnography. Her contributions to the field include the CD album of Kalmyk folk music 'Tsagan', a book 'Kalmyk Long Songs: The story of the wedding song', and scholarly articles focused on the traditional music of Kalmyks and the Oirad group. Ghilyana has conducted fieldwork in Kalmykia, Mongolia, and China, with her recordings being archived in the World Music Archive at Harvard University and the Archive of Traditional Music at Indiana University in Bloomington.

Friday, 7 November 2025

3:00-4.00pm Session 4: Ecologies of Multipart Music

Yannick Wey

Never Alone? The Sounding Environment in 'Solitary' Musicking

My experience with performing, teaching, and researching traditional alpine horn music has led me to believe that while the instrument was traditionally played solo, it was never truly alone. This claim should be further elaborated and scrutinized.

Drawing on Hermann Ullrich's observation of the Alpine soundscape: "the tones, the sounds, the noises of nature per se, [...] from the wind, which can carry sound waves to considerable distances, the rushing of a stream, [...], to the sound of bells or bells of the herd ringing, to birdsong and other animal sounds", this presentation will open a discussion on how supposedly solitary musical practices are embedded within non-human soundscapes.

Alpine musicians considered natural sounds, such as waterfalls and echoes, to be integral to their music. Historical accounts suggest that people perceived waterfalls as possessing musical harmony rather than mere noise, providing a drone accompaniment for melodies. This belief influenced musical practices, prompting musicians to harmonize their singing and instrument construction with the water's sounds. The echo was also actively incorporated into musical play. This raises the question: What are the consequences of this framework, especially in the context of the contemporary trend of seeking musical experiences outside the conventional performance setting and the desire to connect with the sounding environment?

In this presentation, I will offer a brief historical survey of different perspectives on this topic, followed by a report on my own observations from practice. The discussion will focus on the seemingly contradictory desires for both tranquility and interaction with a rich soundscape of living and non-living beings.

Yannick Wey, musicologist, graduated from the Zurich University of the Arts (BA/MA) and the University of Innsbruck (PhD). He served as a research associate and lecturer at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts from 2015 to 2025. In 2023, he joined the Bern Academy of Arts as a post-doctoral researcher and became responsible for the research field 'Music and Cultural Heritage' at HKB in 2025. He currently serves on several boards and plays the traditional wind instruments of the Alpine region, alphorn and büchel.

Deyan Petrov

When Rhythm Speaks: The Djembe as Language and Mediator of Compressed Worlds. Rhythms of the Mandé Culture in West Africa

This project explores West African drumming traditions - particularly within the Mande cultural sphere - as living practices where musical instruments are not mere tools, but bearers of spirit, memory, and more-than-human relations. Rhythm can be understood as a "compressed world": a condensation of social relations, ecological memories, and spiritual codes into a vibrating form. The djembe, carved from sacred trees and covered with animal skin, does not only produce sound – it carries and unfolds these worlds, mediating between human communities, non-human agents, and ancestral presence.

Through the lens of multipart musicking, I approach the drum as a relational being that mediates between visible and invisible realms. Its body holds ecological memory: the forest it came from, the animal it carries, the ceremonies it has served. Playing it is not just performance - it is invocation, communication, and listening across boundaries.

Drawing from personal artistic practice as a djembe player and researcher, I trace how rhythm becomes a space of encounter - between humans, spirits, environments, and materials. In traditional contexts, the drum participates in rituals of healing, initiation, and community bonding, often seen as a voice for ancestors or translator between worlds.
This contribution proposes African drumming as a form of relational ecology: an embodied, sonic way of reweaving connection in times of ecological and cultural fracture. It invites us to listen not only to music, but to the more-than-human beings who co-create it. In doing so, it aligns with decolonial, ecological, and posthuman frameworks that seek to reimagine musical practice as a practice of care, reciprocity, and attention.

Deyan Petrov (aka 'Dizzy') is a drummer, educator, social researcher, and adventurer. He is recognized for his work in popularizing traditional African music, rhythms, instruments, and drum circles in Bulgaria and the Balkans. As a key figure in the development of the local roots rock, reggae, ska, tribal, and world music fusion scene, he has made significant contributions to contemporary music culture. Since 2024, Deyan has been a researcher and academic assistant at the Department of African Studies at Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski,' focusing on anthropology, mythology, art, and culture.

Gowreesh VS

Indie Music and Multipart Musicking at the Ziro Festival

This presentation examines the Ziro Music Festival of Arunachal Pradesh as a site of multipart musicking that includes more-than-human elements like landscape, weather, and local culture. Situated in India, this research explores how cultural events in the Anthropocene are reconfiguring both regional identity and human-nonhuman relations. Drawing from ethnographic observations, especially the festival's collaboration with the local Apatani tribe, this paper argues that the festival does not merely host performances but curates an immersive, multisensory environment where indie music functions as a "fulcrum" for a variety of activities.

My analysis will focus on how the festival's organizers and attendees engage in "event tourism" that commodifies local heritage while reconfiguring the regional economy of the Ziro village. I will explore how music, as a form of "aural architecture," constructs emotionally resonant spatial memories, blending sound, culture, and landscape. This research will demonstrate how the festival's distinct stages and activities, from impromptu hikes in the pine forests to attending a shaman's story, contribute to a unique collective soundscape and communal experience. At large, it will demonstrate how the principles of multipart musicking can be expanded to include non-human elements and how these interactions shape both cultural and ecological experiences.

Gowreesh V.S. is an PhD candidate and UGC Junior Research Fellow in Cinema Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His ongoing dissertation titled, Indie Rising: The Ascent of Indian Independent Music, focuses on music stardom, youth culture, sound technologies, and spectacularization of film and non-film music in post-globalization India. He has participated and presented papers in workshops and seminars like Comics, Cartoons, and Caricatures (Summer Institute Cologne, 2019), Sound Possibilities (online, 2020), Representation of Disability in Literature and Cinema (Delhi,2020) and Contemporary Indian Cinemas: Heterogeneities and Possibilities (Bhopal, 2020). He also researches paraliterature, besides being an illustrator and music practitioner.

4:15-5:15pm Session 5: Methodologies for Cross-Species Inquiry

Julianne Graper

The Sound of Science: Mediating the Species Binary at U.S. Bat Fests

How is the species binary enacted in sound? This paper explores the role of sound in performances of animal conservation, specifically focusing on bats. I draw from participant observation at four different bat conservation festivals: Bat Fest in Austin, TX; Bat Loco in San Antonio, TX; the Indiana State University Bat Festival in Terre Haute, IN; and Bat Fest in Gainesville, FL. Each festival involves science education and music in a range of combinations of live bats, live music, food, merchandise, and costuming. Each reifies sensory hierarchies in the perceived service of contributing to a conservation goal. I argue that anthropomorphic performances at such festivals, including songs in which festivalgoers imitate bats, ultimately uphold species hierarchies. A close examination reveals that even as festivalgoers engage in mimetic and empathetic gestures towards bats, they simultaneously maintain categorical distance based in phylogenetic relationships. The disconnect between discourse and practice in bat festival performances unveils problematic histories associated with the construction of the species binary (Boisseron 2018; Haraway 2008; Weaver 2021; Wynter 2000) and scientific studies of animal musicking (Mundy 2018; Steingo 2024). More broadly, this paper contributes not just to the rise in multispecies approaches to ethnomusicology but also to broader academic discussions about the status of "the human" in the humanities.

Julianne Graper (she/her) is an Assistant Professor in Ethnomusicology at Indiana University Bloomington. Her forthcoming book, Unbecoming Austin (University of North Carolina Press), addresses the role of non-human imaginaries in gentrifying spaces. She is also developing an edited volume, tentatively titled Ethnomusicology Beyond the Human with Oxford University Press. Graper's writing can be found in Sound Studies; MUSICultures; The European Journal of American Studies and in the edited collections Sounds, Ecologies, Musics (2023); Behind the Mask: Vernacular Culture in the Time of COVID (2023); and Songs of Social Protest (2018). Her translation of Alejandro Vera's The Sweet Penance of Music (2020) received the Robert M. Stevenson award from the American Musicological Society.

Annie Morrad

Through their understanding

How this contributes to a practical experiment using art practice.
What does the camera lens bring to the phenomenological gaze?
How does this contribute to a dialogue between non-humans and humans?

The initial idea from all the contributing beings is the desire for intercommunication through interaction. This art practice asks questions on how non-human and humans have dialogue together that creates a unique language created in the moment of the encounter. This in turn creates a dialogue between the final artwork and receiver. The French writer and theorist Nicolas Bourriaud writes that " ...art creates a space for the emissions of other species and for coactivities that entangle the human and nonhuman to become visible" (2022, 82).

These encounters enable practical experiment for co-productions between non-human avians and myself, exhibited in galleries and discussed in conferences and symposiums. Consequently, there is evidence that co-production and co-authorship with non-human animal species is achievable. This is not through a pre-decided intention, or music score which suggests a hierarchical position. In contrast, it is one that enables agency in all participants as subjects and not objects.
We, the non-human, Canada and Greylag Geese, Mallard Ducks and Urban Pigeons and myself make non-hierarchical, co-productions based on mutual empathy and respect . This use of a camera gives a 'specific agency' to their voice. The starting point, for all of us, is watching and observing and listening and hearing; from this, a communication bond is formed throughout our exchanges. Thereby, together we generate a dialogue between us. Bourriaud, quotes Viveiros de Castro when he explains art practice "....consists in establishing and/or translations between respective worlds of each natural species…by creating beneficial fluxes between humans and non-humans..." (2022, 108).

The following chapter explores the position that when working with a non-human species, empathy, deeper understanding and a widening of knowledge occurs. It demonstrates that through using art practice, the connection made through inter-species dialogue, emphasises an understanding. The saxophone is used as an independent 'voice' which engages with the receiver through visual texture, movement and tonality as well as the timbre of sound made from the recipient. The saxophone is not used to describe the aforementioned, for example in movement seen as dance. But to have a direct dialogue. One that through improvisation has a direct response as opposed to using a preempted script or music score. This is demonstrated in live presentations and performances. These embrace and emphasise the importance of 'practice lead' research in discovering new forms and developments of saxophone playing.

Dr Annie Morrad is an internationally exhibited artist, musician and lecturer.
My research is presented in book chapters, articles, conferences and symposiums.
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My art practice incorporates: music; installation; photography; painting; drawing; performance; video and sound. I also play tenor saxophone. I produce artwork that considers interaction, interconnection and encounters with non-human species.
I am opposed to speciesism (discrimination by a single species to any other species) and hierarchical concepts.

Shelina Brown

Listening with Uexküll: Biosemiotics, Music, and Multispecies Method

In what ways might Jakob von Uexküll's biosemiotics be useful to music scholarship today? And more broadly, what can we glean from early 20th-century biosemiotic models as we reimagine the boundaries of music, meaning, and species in our research?

Uexküll's concept of the Umwelt—each organism's unique perceptual world—has had a quiet but profound impact on fields ranging from ecology to critical theory. For Uexküll, the world is not objectively fixed but composed like a musical score, in which each organism plays its part in a contrapuntal whole. He imagines a kind of natural polyphony, where rhythm, tone, and sensory patterning create meaning across species boundaries. This is not merely metaphorical: for Uexküll, music is a structural and epistemological model for life itself.
Deleuze and Guattari famously take up Uexküll's ideas in A Thousand Plateaus, reframing the Umwelt within their theory of assemblages and the refrain. But what might it mean to return to Uexküll's musical thinking now, especially from the vantage point of musicology, sound studies, or the ecological humanities?

I'd like to open up a conversation that considers:
How might music—as structure, affect, or process—help us think through multispecies entanglements?
Can musical epistemologies challenge anthropocentric assumptions in research?
What are the risks and possibilities of modeling interspecies relations through sound?

This presentation will briefly introduce Uexküll's "musical" worldview, and open up dialogue as to how this might inspire new methodologies, ethics, and forms of listening in multispecies scholarship today.

Shelina Brown is an Assistant Professor of Musicology at the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati (CCM). Shelina completed her doctoral studies in Musicology with a concentration in Gender Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Shelina's master's thesis explored musical syncretism in Japanese enka song, while her doctoral dissertation shifted to consider the lasting impact of Yoko Ono's music and feminist activism. She is currently in the process of adapting this work into a monograph and public-facing digital lecture. One of her secondary research topics is multispecies methods in musicology, which emerged in conjunction with her research on Yoko Ono's 1971 film, Fly. CCM, Shelina teaches popular music studies and has developed courses on Critical Theory and Music, Gender Studies and Music, Yoko Ono, Feminist Methods, US Popular Music History, and Women in Rock.

5:30-6:30pm Session 6: Multipart Musicking Beyond the Human

Nicola Renzi

One, No One and One Hundred Thousand Mosquitoes: On Sonic Multitudes and Solitudes in the Sámi Juoiggus Tradition

Within the juoiggus vocal tradition of the Sámi in the European Arctic, even the tiniest creature has its own melody (luohti). Mosquitoes are each summer honored with a multitude of luođit due to the ubiquity and vital role in ecological knowledge. Each melody captures an essential quality of these buzzing fellow beings – so often underrepresented in musical literature because of the limited aesthetic value conventionally attributed to their sound. This paper focuses on two luođit that evoke mosquitoes within the juoiggus tradition. What distinguishes the two case studies is the contrast between singular and plural evocations of these dipterans. The first luohti represents the mosquito as a specimen, emphasizing its recognizable solitary buzzing around a human ear. In contrast, drawing from traditional ecological knowledge, the second luohti evokes multitudes of mosquitoes whose collective buzzing sets entire reindeer herds in motion every year from mid-June to late July. By comparing these traditional tunes with bioacoustic field recordings collected in Arctic marshes, the paper examines mosquito-swarm musicking as a multipart interaction with both aesthetic and ecological dimensions. The central question guiding the analysis is whether a swarming chorus of mosquitoes can be studied as a multipart expression. The findings suggest that the Sámi juoiggus tradition articulates both acoustic solitude and multitude through distinct melodic structures. Even within the monodic frame of a solo performance, the voice of a single juoiggus performer may carry the high-pitched whine of a lone mosquito or the dense, coordinated buzzing of a thousand-strong chorus.

Nicola Renzi is PhD in “History and Cultural Heritage” at the University of Bologna and at the University of Helsinki, with a dissertation in Anthropology of Sound titled “More-than-music: Echosystems, acoustemologies and histories of listening from Sápmi”. His research interests revolve around indigenous acoustemologies and musical virtualizations of the landscape, focusing on narratives produced in relation to the environmental crisis and transformations of landscapes. Since 2018, he conducts periods of fieldwork in the indigenous territories of Arctic Europe, where he investigates the history of juoiggus, and the sonic interactions between human and other-than-human beings – with a focus on human-mosquito relationships.

David De La Haye

The Pond Sessions

Building on the principles of multipart music, this new body of work emphasises the coordinated participation of distinct voices — but focusses on aquatic voices. Continuing my creative research into the underwater sounds of freshwater habitats, the project explores the soundscapes of local ponds through real-time, live hydrophone performance.

Presented as a video series, the work connects limnology (the ecological study of inland waters) to freely improvised music. A performer responds live to the subaquatic environment via hydrophone, establishing a collaborative method of music-making that occupies a liminal space between air and water. The resulting musical language is part biotic, part digital: lo-fi, glitchy electronics emerge in dialogue with a world that listeners, during Sonic Pond Dipping workshops, have likened to 'an underwater synthesiser.'

Importantly, the hydrophone recordings remain unedited, resisting the anthropocentric urge to sample, process, or ventriloquise. Human-musical improvisation explores what it means to listen and respond, rather than capture and quantise. Often overlooked, ponds offer a space to deepen interspecies relationships and find kinship with freshwater species. The work invites an embodied experience of the waterscape — and a reflection on the pool from which all life began.

David de la Haye is a sound recordist, composer, and music technician, recognised for his immersive underwater soundscapes. Blurring the boundaries between art and ecology, his key themes include micro-sound, improvisation, and more-than-human interaction with nature through hydrophone recording and bioacoustic technologies. His practice is supported by national conservation groups and he remains a frequent international collaborator and touring artist. Accolades include winning the Ivan Juritz Prize (2023) and Sound of the Year Award (2020), with a nomination for the Ivor Novello Composer Award (2022). He is Director of EcoSound CIC and holds a PhD scholarship in Music at Newcastle University.

Jesse Matas

What Belongs to All: Multi-Species Musicking with Stones

What Belongs to All: Multi-Species Musicking with Stones (a paper and accompanying song) engages relationships between stones and humans in a music-making process. The thematic focus of the project was the interplay of stones and other beings. This included interactions between stones and: trees, moss, grass, snails, bees, mushrooms, soil, air, water, noise, humans, birds, cars, planes, rivers and creeks, dynamite, other stones. Special attention was given to interactions between stones and humans. Specifically, the project traces the author's interactions with specific stones in a rare limestone alvar on the banks of the Grand River on the Haldimand Tract. Data was collected through nine trips into wooded areas with significant stony outcrops, escarpments, or cliffs. The main site was a walking trail in RARE Site, a private conservation project north of Cambridge, Ontario, a site visited six times. Data was also collected at three other sites, which were used as a contrast to the principal research site. The focus was on multi-species music making was specifically geared toward the songwriting process as research/performance process (rather than for e.g. the performative, or thematic aspects of the music). Thus, the resulting song became a skeleton for various arrangements, which are adaptable to new performance contexts. This project advances the field of multi-part musicking by incorporating stones into the writing process, as voice in songwriting, through empirical observation as well as consultation with local Anishinaabe knowledge keepers regarding stones as participants in the project. Specifically, it advances multi-part songwriting processes that include stones in their specific indigenous cultural context where actions were coordinated specifically to reflect and respect these local contexts.

Jesse Matas is a songwriter, poet and multi-instrumentalist from Treaty One Territory in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. For a decade, he toured extensively throughout North America and Europe, releasing three full length albums with his band Crooked Brothers. In more recent years he has toured solo, releasing a debut LP under his own name. Throughout this time, Jesse and the Crooked Brothers won or were nominated for several national awards including a Canadian Folk Music Award. He is currently completing a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba with a research focus on songwriting and stones.