



SUSTAINABLE FUTURES FOR MUSIC CULTURES

**AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH TO
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**



The help that we give in terms of preserving the past and tradition of a culture is often very useful, but it's no use unless it's given back to the culture to use, so that members of the culture can learn how to use that and renew their own culture in their own way. Cultures don't stand still, they can't live in the past all the time.

JOHN DRUMMOND, PAST PRESIDENT INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Almost anywhere in the world, music from many backgrounds is accessible nowadays in online and recorded formats, or even live in concert and community settings. More people probably have access to more music than ever in the history of mankind. However, at the same time, many specific music practices are in danger.

In the words of leading ethnomusicologist Anthony Seeger, some aspects of globalisation have caused much music not just to disappear, but to actively 'be disappeared', well beyond natural processes of musical styles and genres emerging, changing and disappearing over time. This loss of music cultures has drawn international concern, as diminishing musical diversity is seen as having wider repercussions for the world's cultures, societies, and communities.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, UNESCO has been leading the way in calling for urgent initiatives to support expressions of intangible cultural heritage, raising awareness and inspiring large-scale action from Brazil to China.

It is no simple matter to address challenges to sustainability. Many different factors contribute to the health and continuing vitality of any music practice: the way it is passed on from generation to generation; the infrastructure it needs; the laws and regulations that affect it; how it interacts with media and the music industry; the wider political and social situation; as well as more intangible factors, such as how it is perceived by its own community and by outsiders.

The five-year international research collaboration *Sustainable Futures for Music Cultures: Toward an ecology of cultural diversity* (2009–2014) has sought to develop new and practical insights into how music practices survive at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Building on the ideas of scholars like Jeff Todd Titon, it has found that music cultures behave much like ecosystems, with a complex of forces either supporting or endangering the vitality of specific traditions genres, styles and practices.

Sustainable Futures has tried to map the most important of these by investigating nine diverse music practices, ranging from Balinese gamelan to Mexican mariachi, from Vietnamese ca trù to Western opera, from Hindustani raga music to Ewe dance-drumming from Ghana.

The insights gained from this exercise are now feeding back into the scholarly community through a number of academic publications in the field of applied ethnomusicology, and even more importantly, into communities across the world in order to empower them to forge musical futures on their own terms.

Professor Huib Schippers
Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre
Griffith University

We need to think outside the box. We need to think about people making music in contemporary environments: environments which are going to be commodified, and mediated, and globalised ... and part of the promise of this project is that it's going to find ways to enable those connections while still supporting the people who are making music.

DEBORAH WONG, PAST PRESIDENT, SOCIETY FOR ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

TOWARDS A MODEL

At the core of *Sustainable Futures* are nine case studies of music cultures across four continents (see right hand page).

Carefully selected for their diversity in geographical location, present formats, histories and modes of transmission, these case studies range from endangered to thriving forms of musical expression.

That was an important choice: where endangered musics highlight threats to sustainability, the more vibrant genres may reveal strategies towards revival and longevity.

By evaluating the musical vitality of these nine music practices according to five key research domains (see centre page), using over 200 questions, *Sustainable Futures* aimed to deliver an innovative, well-documented and globally tested model for identifying and describing a range of factors influencing musical sustainability and diversity.

The core of that model is represented in the figure on the next page: an overview of the key forces working on any music practice.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In addition to academic publications (see Project Outcomes), a key outcome of the project is soundfutures.org, an online template for helping communities to understand and confront some of the challenges to the viability of their music.

Among other things, the template allows communities to cross-reference their specific situation with similar situations in other parts of the world, and point to potential strategies for keeping their music strong for future generations.

Such strategies may be completely initiated and carried out by the community, or in partnership with governments, NGOs, universities, or other collaborators. But the choice lies with the culture bearers.

A sequel to *Sustainable Futures*, with Smithsonian Institution and five Universities as partners, is being considered for funding by the Australian Research Council: *Sound futures: Operationalising music sustainability* proposes to pilot the findings of *Sustainable Futures* working with seven communities in Indigenous Australia, Cambodia, Tanzania, China, Easter Island, Oman, and Bhutan in order to test and refine the model through action research.

[*Sustainable Futures*] makes important and sophisticated contributions to contemporary thinking about how certain traditions thrive and others disappear; it presents readers with an original comparative approach to examining musical traditions; and it provides a model for collaborative projects in ethnomusicology.

ANTHONY SEEGER, EMERITUS PROFESSOR UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES





MUSICAL ECOSYSTEMS: FIVE DOMAINS

While many initiatives dealing with cultural sustainability have approached music practices as artifacts rather than as dynamic parts of ecosystems, *Sustainable Futures* found that describing each music practice in terms of its place in relation to the myriad forces impacting on its sustainability delivers new and useful insights. The five domains (below) and the 'musical ecosystem' model (above) have proven a useful tool to facilitate this. For each practice, genre or tradition some of these forces will be prominent, while others may be weak or even irrelevant. Therefore, every practice can benefit from careful analysis to map all of these forces and their interplay to inform possible pathways to strengthen vitality and sustainability.

LEARNING AND TEACHING MUSIC

Teaching and learning processes are central to the sustainability of most music cultures. This domain explores themes such as the similarities and differences between informal and formal training, notation-based and aural learning, holistic and analytical approaches to music transmission, and live and online environments. It also explores how non-musical activities, philosophies and approaches intersect with transmission processes.

MUSICIANS AND COMMUNITIES

This domain focuses the role and position of musicians within their communities. It looks at the everyday realities in the existence of creative musicians, including the role of technology, media, and travel, and issues of remuneration through performances, teaching, tenured employment, freelancing, portfolio careers, community support, and non-musical activities.

CONTEXTS AND CONSTRUCTS

This domain encompasses the social and cultural contexts in which musical traditions develop and operate. It includes issues such as recontextualisation, cross-cultural influences and notions of authenticity, as well as issues of musical tastes, aesthetics, cosmologies, identity, prestige, gender issues, and obstacles such as poverty, prejudice, racism, stigma, restrictive religious attitudes, and issues of appropriation.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATIONS

This domain relates to the ways in which musical practices are affected by infrastructure and regulations. This might include places to perform, compose, practise and learn (including virtual spaces), and availability of instruments. It also examines the extent to which policies and regulations are conducive to a blossoming musical heritage, including copyright laws, sound restrictions, artists' rights, and laws limiting artistic expression.

MEDIA AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

This domain examines the dissemination, consumption and promotion of music, including recordings, radio, television and Internet, as well as commercial live performance formats. It documents the evolving role of audiences (including consumers of recorded music), patrons, sponsors, funding bodies and governments who 'buy' or 'buy into' artistic product.

CASE STUDIES



AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL MUSIC

Aboriginal people are deeply concerned about survival of their performance traditions, many of which have already been irretrievably lost. Yet maintaining these indigenous traditions in a rapidly changing environment is a complex task. Traditionally, learning took place through frequent exposure, but this has been disrupted by massive social upheaval. This case study documents culture-bearers' views on the state of their music and current preservation efforts, and identifies future initiatives and processes for implementation. *Research led by Linda Barwick, University of Sydney.*

MEXICAN MARIACHI

As a symbol of Mexican cultural identity, mariachi music is one of the liveliest and most expressive musical forms of all of Latin America. Travelling the pathways of immigration from its historical roots in Guadalajara to the United States, it has emerged as a major genre of live music in a surprising variety of locales. This case study examines a music genre that has not only sustained social movements but has been taken to new heights of technical proficiency and aesthetic creativity, both within Mexico and beyond. *Research led by Patricia Shehan Campbell, University of Washington.*

BALINESE GAMELAN

Alongside a vibrant tourist industry and constant exposure to forms of music from other parts of the world, in Bali there is a strong desire to revive and preserve music from the past. This desire is linked to issues of contemporary Balinese cultural politics, education, the need to assert identity, and to an ideology of 'historicising' certain types of music. This case study investigates ways in which these agendas interact in the maintenance and development of gamelan music in Bali. *Research led by Peter Dunbar Hall, University of Sydney.*



WE DANCE-DRUMMING FROM GHANA

While dance-drumming continues to be an important part of funerals, ceremonies and seasonal festivals in the southern Ewe region of Ghana, there is an increasing tension between the cultural norms that view traditional music as a free service to the community and the need for musicians to make a living. This case study investigates issues like prestige, transmission, and the potential of recording projects that impact on contemporary practice. *Research led by James Burns, University of Binghamton.*

HINDUSTANI MUSIC

The North Indian classical music tradition has lived through a series of drastic recontextualisations, moving from Hindu and Muslim places of worship to Moghul courts and the salons of courtesans before becoming the national music of refined middle class audiences. In spite of a long period of colonisation, Hindustani music is still the music of North India, and remarkably vibrant and resilient to outside influences. This case study seeks to understand the mechanisms of this success, as well as possible threats to continued flourishing into the 21st century. *Research led by Huib Schippers, QCRC/Griffith University.*

AMAMI ISLAND MUSIC

While valued as an important marker of identity, local music on the Amami islands faces a number of challenges common to many small island regions. Amami, in particular, has shown resilience to the marginalisation of local culture. The revival of local song – known as shima uta – over the last two decades has been dramatic, yet the policies of local recording companies, music schools and shima uta competitions have had complex effects. This case study explores the interaction between local cultural maintenance strategies and their relation to national and international processes and agendas. *Research led by Philip Hayward, Southern Cross University.*



SAMULNORI FROM KOREA

SamulNori is arguably the most popular music in Korea today. Emerging onto a Seoul stage in February 1978, it is a recent development of a much older tradition: the core repertoire takes much from the regional amateur and professional percussion bands that were once a common part of life in the Korean countryside. Today there are numerous professional and amateur, adult and children's groups, some retaining the original quartet line-up of two drums and two gongs. This case study explores the viability of the genre as the first generation of musicians considers retirement. *Research led by Keith Howard, SOAS/University of London.*

WESTERN CLASSICAL OPERA

Supported by prestige in a wealthy and dominating culture, Western classical opera has managed to sustain itself successfully for over 400 years. Its future in the modern world is less certain, as it faces competition from other forms of musical expression. Particular issues investigated in this case study include training, repertoire (the balance between traditional and new works), styles of presentation, marketing, and the strong reliance on external funding. *Research led by John Drummond, University of Otago.*

VIETNAMESE CA TRÙ

Ca trù is a form of chamber music of the Viet majority that flourished particularly in the northern part of Vietnam, but almost disappeared in the second half of the twentieth century due to its association with socially unacceptable environments. This case study centres on the recent revival of this endangered vocal genre, which is currently finding new life through ca trù clubs, festivals, and tourist-related ventures. *Research led by Hakan Lundstrom, University of Lund.*

PROJECT OUTCOMES

During its development, *Sustainable Futures* has featured on radio and in a wide range of publications, including *Music Forum*, *The Australian*, *Griffith Review*, *The Conversation*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The most significant scholarly outcome of the project is a 400-page volume with all the case studies and extensive backgrounds and implications of the project: *Sustainable futures for music cultures: An ecological approach* (Editors Huib Schippers and Catherine Grant) is due to be published by Oxford University Press in 2016. It was hailed by a reviewer as "the most comprehensive, strategically well positioned, broad-based, and authoritative publication in this field." A suite of other academic outputs emerging from the project have already come out, including:

Barwick, L., Laughren, M., Turpin, M. (2013). Sustaining Women's Yawulyu/Awelye: Some Practitioners' and Learners' Perspectives. *Musical Australia*, 35(2), pp. 191–220.

Bendrup, D. & Schippers, H. (Eds). (2015). *Sound futures: Exploring contexts for music sustainability*. Special edition of *the world of music* (new series).

Bendrup, D., Barney, K. & Grant, C. (2013). An introduction to sustainability and ethnomusicology in the Australian context. *Musical Australia* 35(2), pp. 153–158. Special issue: Music, culture and sustainability.

Boyu, Z., Hui, Y., & Schippers, H. (2015). The rise and implementation of intangible cultural heritage protection for music in China. In *the world of music* (new series), 4/1, pp. 45–60.

Grant, C. (2014). *Music sustainability: How language maintenance can help*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Grant C. (2014). Perspectives of Culture-Bearers on the Vitality, Viability and Value of Traditional Khmer Music Genres in Contemporary Cambodia. In *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 15, pp. 26–46.

Grant, C. (2015). Music endangerment as a wicked problem. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*. 21(7): pp. 629–641.

Hayward, P. (2015). "An Okinawan Romance: Lyrical Dialogue, Comedy and Music in Nabbie's Love." In Evans, M. and Hayward, P. (Eds). *Sounding Funny: Music, Sound and Comedy Cinema*, pp. 196–211. Sheffield, UK ; Bristol, CT: Equinox Publishing.

Howard, K. (2015). *SamulNori: Korean percussion for a contemporary world*. London: Ashgate.

Schippers, H. (2009). From ca trù to the world: Understanding and facilitating musical sustainability. In Bartleet, B. and Ellis, C. (Eds). *Musical Autoethnographies*, pp. 197–207. Brisbane: Australian Academic Press.

Schippers, H. & Letts, R. (2013). 'Community music and sustainability worldwide: Ecosystems of engaged music making'. In *Community Music Today*, pp. 284–298. Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Schippers, H. and Bendrup, D. (2015) Ethnomusicology, Ecology and Sustainable Music Cultures, In *the world of music* (new series), 4/1, pp. 9–19.

Schippers, H. (2015). Applied ethnomusicology and intangible cultural heritage: Understanding "ecosystems" of music as a tool for sustainability. In S. Pettan & J.T. Titon (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, pp. 134–157. New York: Oxford University Press.

Seeger, A. & Chaudhuri, S. (2015). The contributions of reconfigured audiovisual archives to sustaining traditions. In *the world of music* (new series), 4/1, pp. 21–34.



soundfutures.org

Perhaps the most significant outcome of *Sustainable Futures* is the website soundfutures.org. This website contains an overview of the history, background and approach of the project, summaries of the nine case studies, as well as additional audiovisual material, contributions, and resources.

Features include:

- A detailed description of the rationale and approach of *Sustainable Futures*, including the 200 questions that have guided the case studies and the 'musical ecosystems' model that emerged from the project.
- Summaries of each of the nine case studies with audiovisual material accumulated during the case study research, including interviews, musical examples, and photos.
- An online survey to 'self-diagnose' key aspects relating to sustainability for any tradition, using up to fifty succinct questions across the five domains.
- Room to contribute texts, videos, photos and other material on music sustainability initiatives across the world.
- An overview of the organisations and people involved in *Sustainable Futures* 2009–2014.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Griffith University
University of Washington
SOAS/University of London
University of Lund
University of Otago
Southern Cross University
University of Sydney
Music Council of Australia (now Music Australia)
World Music & Dance Centre
International Music Council

ORGANISATION

Sustainable Futures is an initiative of Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre (QCRC), which is dedicated to innovative music research with artistic and social impact, clustered around five focus areas: artistic research in music; music and communities; music learning and teaching; music and technology; and music, health and wellbeing.

In addition to the research leaders and their collaborators, three Research Fellows have ensured the progress of the project: Myfany Turpin, Daniell Bendrup, and Catherine Grant.

A large number of international advisors have given feedback before, during and after the project, including Anthony Seeger, Salwa el-Shawan Castelo Branco, Jeff Titon, Tran Quang Hai (and his late father Tran Van Khe), Richard Letts, Meki Nzewi, John Sloboda, Svanibor Pettan, Frans de Ruiter, Deborah Wong, Dan Sheehy, Rick Trimillos, Bruno Netti, Tan Sooi Beng, Einar Solbu, Tina Ramnarine, Ian Harvey, Ursula Hemetek, Krister Malm, Caroline van Niekerk, and Ramon Santos. For a full list and bios of the people involved in the project, see soundfutures.org/about-us

MUSIC INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The International Music Council (IMC) is a global network of expert organisations and individuals working in the field of music. Founded in 1949 by UNESCO, IMC is mandated to promote musical diversity and support cultural rights for all.

The World Music & Dance Centre (WMDC) is a performance platform, centre of expertise, course provider, and meeting-point for music and dance from all parts of the world. It offers professional and amateur courses in a number of world music and dance

traditions, life-long learning opportunities, and research in the field of world music.

The Music Council of Australia (now Music Australia) brings together all sections of the music community in Australia in order to advance a diverse and vibrant musical life. Independently and in partnership, Music Australia gathers and provides information, conducts research, undertakes advocacy, engages in relevant forums, and initiates and realizes projects that advance musical life.



For further information or additional copies of this brochure:

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