

*Empowering communities  
to forge musical futures  
on their own terms*

# **SUSTAINABLE FUTURES FOR MUSIC CULTURES**

Towards an ecology of musical diversity

*'(There's) a real problem in terms of the continuity of traditions, and you could say, "Well that's OK, it's natural, music always changes." The problem is it's not really an even playing field, it's not as though these are just disappearing, they're being disappeared: there's an active process in the disappearance of many traditions around the world.'*

**Tony Seeger,**  
**University of California**

*'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,**  
**University of Otago**

*'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, President,**  
**Society for Ethnomusicology**

*'With the collapse, or the evolution, of the current music industry, it's somewhat of a challenge for musicians because they are not able to record albums in the same way with an advanced sort of studio and set-up. (...) It's a moving target; things are changing so rapidly right now. But the one thing that's clear is the old ways don't work.'*

**Jon Kertzer, Microsoft**



## SAFEGUARDING MUSIC CULTURES

*Sustainable futures* responds to widely acknowledged challenges to musical diversity due to changes in global ecosystems for music, particularly over the past five decades. UNESCO has initiated a suite of policies and activities emanating from the recently ratified Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

More specific to the discipline, the International Music Council report on *The protection and promotion of musical diversity* (IMC, 2005) provides insight into the myriad influences on cultural heritage that need to be considered for music under siege. Technological developments, political inertia, infrastructural challenges, socio-economic change, failing educational systems, and loss of prestige constitute reasons for the decline of many musics, as do famines, wars, racism, and the forced displacement of people.

These insights are confirmed and complemented by the work of leading scholars and activists who touch upon issues of sustainability from various perspectives. Korean music expert Keith Howard argues: "while music will change over time, and I'm not denying that it should, it's important to find strategies to... give (local states and local groups) the power to promote, preserve, and maintain their musical heritage, allowing that heritage to develop but to maintain their sense of identity and belonging..."

Small island culture researcher Phil Hayward believes that "observing [music cultures] is not really a worthy enterprise in itself—unless it's connected with a greater sense of activism, an active sense of agency, of ability and responsibility to engage with the way things change under the forces [of] both globalism and time."

While there is a wealth of valuable initiatives to document music in need of safeguarding, as well as numerous examples of support short trajectories or single events, these efforts do not always provide sufficient basis for the actual survival of musical styles as part of an unbroken, living tradition, which many will argue is a key condition for maintaining the essence (explicit and tacit, tangible and intangible) of specific styles and genres.

In order to contribute to sustainable futures in this way, there is a need for musical styles to be examined in close collaboration with the communities themselves; not only for their histories and 'authentic' practices, but also for their dynamics and potential for recontextualisation in contemporary settings, which includes considering new musical realities, changing values and attitudes, as well as political and market forces.

## APPROACH AND OUTCOMES

The project uses an innovative approach to understand the dynamics of musical change and survival, based on five key domains common to almost all musical ecosystems: *learning music; musicians and communities; contexts and constructs; infrastructure and regulations; and media and the music industry*. Nine core case studies emphatically represent both endangered and 'successful' forms of musical expression, as 'success stories' of the latter may well inform strategies towards sustainability.

By analysing specific aspects in each of the domains across the case studies, the project will deliver an innovative, well-documented and globally tested model to identify and describe a wide range of factors that co-determine musical diversity and sustainability. In that way, the project can contribute to a vibrant and diverse musical life in communities across the globe, and by extension to their sense of identity and wellbeing.

In addition to reports on each case study and the overall report, the key outcome of the project will be a freely available, user-friendly online template, which will be of direct practical use to communities to forge musical futures by diagnosing underlying issues and addressing them on their own terms.

Focusing on issues of sustainability, and cross-referencing these with similar and contrasting situations in other parts of the world, this resource will contribute to targeted initiatives to preserve important intangible cultural heritage for future generations. Such initiatives can be completely initiated and executed by the community itself, or designed and carried out in partnerships with others, such as governments, NGOs or universities.

*Our jobs as sympathetic and supportive outsiders is properly that of an on-request caretaker and facilitator, but not as an arbiter of what should be preserved and what should not be.*

**Richard Moyle,**  
**University of Auckland**

*We need to enable culture-bearers to... be the transmitters, straight from the heart, straight from the soul, straight from the experience that is theirs, that they've lived and that they can impart, perhaps more effectively than those who are intermediaries, who can only read about, listen to, try to translate, the experiences of others...*

**Patricia Campbell,**  
**University of Washington**

## MUSICAL ECOSYSTEMS: FIVE DOMAINS

### LEARNING MUSIC

This domain examines the balances between informal and formal training, notation-based and aural learning, holistic and analytical approaches, and emphasis on tangible and less tangible aspects of musicking. It explores developments in learning and teaching from master-disciple relationships to self-directed web-learning, as well as connections to non-musical activities, philosophies and approaches.

### CONTEXTS AND CONSTRUCTS

This domain assesses the social and cultural contexts of musical traditions. It examines recontextualisation, cross-cultural influences, authenticity and context, as well as musical tastes, aesthetics, cosmologies, identity, prestige, gender issues, and obstacles such as poverty, prejudice, racism, stigma, restrictive religious attitudes, and issues of appropriation.

### MEDIA AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

This domain addresses large-scale dissemination and commercial aspects of music, including recordings, radio, television and internet (e.g. downloads, Podcasts, YouTube, and MySpace), as well as live performance formats and the evolving role of audiences (including consumers of recorded product), patrons, sponsors, funding bodies and governments who 'buy' or 'buy into' artistic product.

### MUSICIANS AND COMMUNITIES

This domain examines the role and position of musicians within the community. 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, portfolio careers, community support, tenured employment, freelancing, and non-musical activities.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATIONS

This domain primarily relates to the 'hardware' of music: places to perform, compose, practise and learn -including virtual spaces-, and availability of instruments. It also examines the extent to which regulations are conducive or obstructive to a blossoming musical heritage, including grants, artists' rights, copyright laws, sound restrictions, and laws limiting artistic expression.



## CASE STUDIES

Carefully selected for their diversity in history, present forms, dissemination, transmission and vitality, nine in-depth case studies will yield the core data for *Sustainable futures*: Australian Aboriginal music, Balinese gamelan, Hindustani music, Mexican mariachi, SamulNori from Korea, music from the Amami islands, traditional music of the Viet people, West African percussion, and Western classical opera. In addition, a study of Capeverdian music in Rotterdam will provide insight into drastic recontextualisations in contemporary urban settings. A brief description of four featured traditions illustrates their focus and diversity:

### AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL MUSIC

Aboriginal people are deeply concerned about survival of their performance traditions, some of which have already been irretrievably lost. Yet maintaining performance traditions in a rapidly changing world is a complex task. Traditionally, learning takes place through 'total immersion', but this has been disrupted by massive social upheaval. This study will document tradition-bearer's views on the state of their music and current preservation efforts, and identify future initiatives and processes for implementation.

### BALINESE GAMELAN

Alongside contemporary realities that result from the tourist industry and exposure to forms of music from other parts of the world, there is a strong desire to revive and preserve music from the past in Bali. Often this desire is linked to aspects of contemporary Balinese cultural politics, to intentions to educate children, to the need to assert identity, and to an ideology of historicising types of music. This case study investigates ways in which these agendas interact in the preservation and development of the music culture.

### AMAMI ISLAND MUSIC

While valued as an important marker of Amami identity, local music is faced by a number of factors common to small island regions internationally. Amami, in particular, has shown resilience to the marginalisation of local culture. The revival in 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 outcomes. This cases study aims to explore the interaction between local preservation and development strategies, and their relation to national and international processes and agendas.

### WESTERN CLASSICAL OPERA

From the perspective of the five domains, Western Classical Opera is one of the least sustainable musics in the world, with almost insurmountable obstacles in terms of required infrastructure, training of participants; and educated and affluent audiences. Yet, it has managed to sustain itself fairly successfully for 410 years, supported by prestige in a wealthy and dominating culture. This case study investigates its future in the modern world, focusing on training, repertoire, styles of presentation, and marketing.

## CORE RESEARCH TEAM

Dozens of researchers and hundreds of musicians will be involved in the research for *Sustainable futures*, which will be coordinated by the following scholars:

**Professor Huib Schippers** (Griffith University) is an acknowledged leader of large action research projects dealing with musical diversity. He has a broad, hands-on experience of more than thirty years in most of the domains under consideration.

**Professor Keith Howard** (University of Sydney) is a leading scholar on Korean music and culture, a well-respected author on music education, and contributor to the UNESCO Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

**Associate Professor Linda Barwick** (University of Sydney) is an expert on Indigenous Australian music and language, as well as Director of PARADISEC, dedicated to the preservation of endangered cultures.

**Associate Professor Peter Dunbar-Hall** (University of Sydney) is a leading scholar of music education, who has published extensively on Balinese gamelan, Indigenous popular music, and cultural diversity at large.

**Professor Phil Hayward** (Macquarie University) is one of the first Australian protagonists of engaged musicology, with a focus on music of small island cultures, on which he has published extensively.

**Dr Hakan Lundström** (University of Lund) is Dean of the Malmö Academy of the Arts, President of the International Society for Music Education, and a scholar of Asian music.

**Professor Patricia Shehan Campbell** (University of Washington) is one of the leading figures on the intersection of music education and ethnomusicology, with an extensive track record in projects, publications and lectures.

**Dr Richard Letts** (International Music Council) is the President of the International Music Council and has a long history of engagement with issues of regulations and infrastructure for music across the world.

**Professor John Drummond** (University of Otago) has a long track record in composition, opera, music education, as well as a deep involvement in cultural diversity.

**Dr Myfany Turpin** (Griffith University) is the central Research Fellow on the project. She is a scholar of Indigenous Australian music and languages, with a focus on language and music maintenance.



## SUPPORTING MUSICAL DIVERSITY

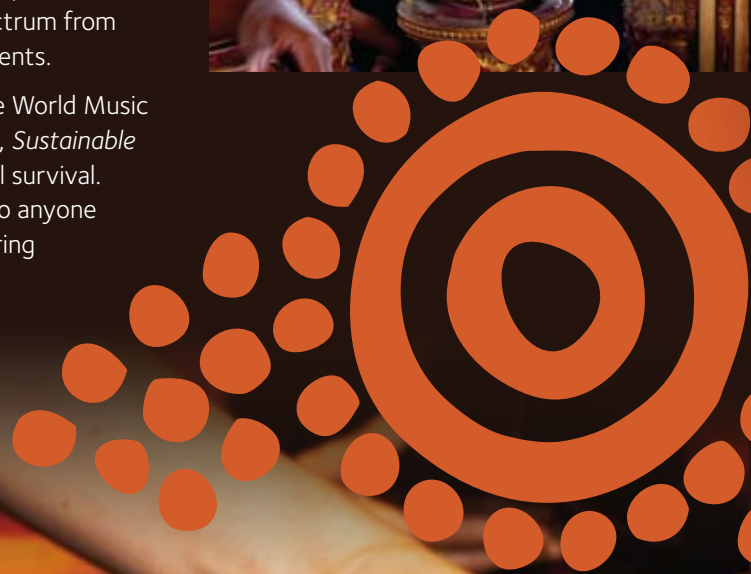
With the developments in migration, travel, and technology over the past fifty years (probably the most significant period of musical change in the past two millennia), musical diversity has simultaneously come to our ears *and* under threat. Almost anywhere in the world, music from myriad backgrounds is accessible live in concert or in community settings, through radio and television, on CDs and cassettes, by downloads and streaming. We take this musical wealth for granted, just as most people can casually decide between a variety of tastes in food when craving different tastes on their palate.

However, at the same time, many 'small musics' are in danger. Globalisation is causing much music—in the words of the leading ethnomusicologist Tony Seeger—to actively "be disappeared" by non-musical influences and powers, a process that goes well beyond the dynamics of musical styles and genres emerging and disappearing 'organically' as a result of gradually changing tastes or circumstances. This phenomenon is causing a substantial reduction in the diversity of music we can access and enjoy; now, and even more so in the future.

A better understanding of the 'ecosystems' of music cultures can help to address this situation. In all music cultures, the interplay between a large number of musical and non-musical factors is decisive for longevity of genres and styles. This includes the relation to communities, systems of transmission, and dissemination through media and industry, as well as more intangible factors such as underlying values and prestige.

The five-year, five-million dollar project *Sustainable futures for music cultures* seeks to identify the key triggers in these ecosystems, taking the views and priorities of the communities that live the music as a dynamic principle reference. It does so by conducting nine detailed case studies across the spectrum from 'endangered' to 'flourishing' music cultures on four different continents.

Built on a partnership between the International Music Council, the World Music & Dance Centre, the Music Council of Australia and six universities, *Sustainable futures* aims to develop new insights into the mechanics of musical survival. The results will be made freely available in a user-friendly format to anyone with access to the World Wide Web, with the purpose of empowering communities to forge musical futures on their own terms.



## PROJECT PARTNERS

International Music Council  
World Music & Dance Centre  
Music Council of Australia  
Griffith University  
The University of Sydney  
Southern Cross University  
University of Otago  
Lund University  
University of Washington

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Dr Richard Letts (Australia)  
Mr Garry Neil (Canada)  
Drs Oscar van der Pluijm (The Netherlands)  
Mr Ian Harvey (Australia)  
Professor Tony Seeger (USA)  
Professor Liane Hentschke (Brazil)

## INTERNATIONAL SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD

Professor Salwa Castelo-Branco (Portugal)  
Dr Subra Chaudhuri (India)  
Professor Ursula Hemetek (Austria)  
Dr. Krister Malm (Sweden)  
Professor Svanibor Pettan (Slovenia)  
Dr John Sloboda (UK)  
Mr Robert Singerman (USA)  
Dr Einar Solbu (Norway)  
Professor Frans de Ruiter (The Netherlands)  
Professor Ramon Santos (Phillipines)  
Professor Tran Quan Hai (Vietnam)  
Professor Deborah Wong (USA)

## PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

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 and Dance Centre** (WMDC) is a platform, centre of expertise, course provider, and meeting point for music and dance from all parts of the world. It offers professional courses in five world music traditions, music and dance courses for amateurs, additional training and refresher courses for professionals, and research in the field of world music.

The purpose of the **Music Council of Australia** (MCA) is to bring together all sections of the music community in order to advance a diverse and vibrant musical life throughout Australia. To achieve this, MCA, independently and in partnership, gathers and provides information, conducts research, undertakes advocacy, ensures representation in relevant forums, and initiates and realises projects that advance musical life.

Sustainable Futures is led by the **Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre** (QCRC), Griffith University, which has gained considerable reputation in Australia and beyond as a node of innovative music research. Its work is closely linked to contemporary practice, as well as developments in society, technology and the musical landscape itself.



## SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

While the research for *Sustainable futures* has been funded by the Australian Research Council and the partner organisations, there is a continuing need for seed funding to enable communities to act upon the outcomes of the project. To that end, a charitable foundation has been established: the Musical Futures Foundation has been incorporated in the Netherlands in May 2009.

Donations to help communities forge their musical futures are welcome through the *Musical Futures Foundation*, Account no.707270057 - ASN Bank, The Hague, the Netherlands. BIC = SNSBNL2A / IBAN = NLO4 SNSB 0707 2700 57

In Australia, private and corporate donations can be made directly to the Griffith Fund. For further information, please contact [qcrc@griffith.edu.au](mailto:qcrc@griffith.edu.au) or visit our website.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND PROJECT UPDATES

[www.musecology.griffith.edu.au](http://www.musecology.griffith.edu.au)



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

