

Ethnomusicology at the International Centre for Music Studies, Newcastle University

Overview

The International Centre for Music Studies (ICMuS) is one of the main departments in the UK for ethnomusicological studies. A particular strength of ICMuS is that staff combine hands-on musical experience with academic study, and engage with world music through approaches and methodologies that are pluralist and often boundary-crossing. Broadly speaking, interests include popular, folk and classical repertoires.

Since the appointment of **Goffredo Plastino** in 2001, ICMuS has continued to signal its commitment to ethnomusicology through the successive appointments of **Nanette de Jong**, **Desmond Wilkinson** and **Simon McKerrell**. In addition, other staff are also engaged in ethnographic work and/or study world musics of diverse kinds: **Ian Biddle**, **David Clarke** and **Bennett Hogg**. Between them, they cover the Mediterranean, North Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, the Caribbean, South America, Eastern and Western Europe, South Asia and Black Americas.

Teaching

ICMuS welcomes applications for doctoral studies in any of the areas in which its full-time staff specialise.

The undergraduate curriculum includes the study of ethnomusicology from the first year: *Understanding World Music* introduces students to the academic study of world music; *Ethnomusicology* is an advanced module which focuses on ethnomusicological theories and methodologies as well as on audio-visual works; *The Traditions of These Islands* and *Folk Music Studies* provide a historical and critical approach to English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh folk music.

Elective modules vary from year to year; a typical menu might include *Caribbean Music and Identity*; *Fieldwork*; *Improvisation* (ethnomusicological analysis of improvisation and improvisatory practices); *Mediterranean Musics*; *Music and Globalization* (ethnomusicological debates on world popular musics); *Organology: Musical Instruments and Cultures* (ethnomusicological analysis of world musical instruments); *Studying Black Music* (musical practices engaged within and across the Black/African Diaspora); *Studying Vernacular Music* (which focuses on ethnomusicological theory and methodology); *The Scope of Irish Traditional Music*.

Other ICMuS staff contribute with their teaching to widen and strengthen further the disciplinary perspectives: ethnomusicological issues are discussed by Bennett Hogg in his modules *Creative Practice* and *Noises, Sounds and Gestures: Experimental Improvisation and Electroacoustic Composition*. Other genres and scenes of ethnomusicological interest, such as flamenco, fado and music in the holocaust, are explored by Ian Biddle in some of his modules.

At the postgraduate level, ethnomusicological approaches are the cornerstone of the taught module *Advanced Studies in Ethnomusicology and Traditional Music*, an elective module within the research-based MMus degree.

Performance Practice

ICMuS is the home of the unique Folk and Traditional Music BMus Honours programme, with performance-based modules taught by ethnomusicologists Simon McKerrell (Highland-, Border- and Uilleann-pipes) and Desmond Wilkinson (Irish flute), and by world-renowned performers such as SANDRA KERR (voice), Catriona Macdonald (Shetland fiddle), and Kathryn Tickell (Northumbrian small pipes, fiddle).

Other modules focus on world music performance: *World Music in Practice*, led by Nanette de Jong, explores a variety of contexts, including salsa (Latin America), mbira (Zimbabwe), samba and bossa nova (Brazil) and gamelan (Indonesia), with opportunities for students to specialise in one of them; *Indian Music in Practice*, led by David Clarke, focuses on Hindustani classical music, chiefly practically based, but providing also theoretical perspectives; instrumental tuition is offered by Vijay Rajput (vocal) and Shahbaz Hussain (tabla).

Research

ICMuS ethnomusicologists have diverse area specialisms, including world class research into the musical cultures of Africa, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Brittany, England, Ireland and Scotland, as well as advanced research into ethnomusicological theories, methodologies and perspectives. Current research interests include:

IAN BIDDLE is a cultural theorist and musicologist. His current research deals with music in the holocaust. He is co-founder and co-editor of ICMuS's online journal *Radical Musicology*, and co-founder of the interdisciplinary holocaust and genocide research group.

DAVID CLARKE is a practitioner in the khyal vocal style; his research includes analytical, aesthetic and ethnographic studies on North Indian classical music and British South Asian communities.

NANETTE DE JONG — music and culture in the African diasporic experience, especially in Central and Southern Africa; American Jazz; Caribbean music. Dr de Jong is currently Principal Investigator on a grant from the European Union, which is establishing training programmes for women and youth in South Africa and Zimbabwe: the grant is currently supporting an exchange programme involving Newcastle University students travelling to Southern Africa to conduct research and teach music workshops at area schools and colleges.

SIMON MCKERRELL — sectarianism; Scottish traditional musics; music and the body; somaesthetics; ethnomusicological conceptions of mode; digitalization and e-learning in musical communities.

*GOFFREDO PLASTINO — ethnomusicological theory; history, practice and theory of field recordings; world popular music scenes and practices; world jazz and improvisation; folk and popular music of the Mediterranean; organology and world music instruments; music and literature. Dr Plastino is currently coeditor (with Franco Fabbri, University of Turin), of the *Routledge Global Popular Music Series*.*

DESMOND WILKINSON — music and identity; traditional and world music performance; musical traditions of Ireland, Brittany and North America; Irish and Celtic studies; the Francophone diaspora; the vernacular music of North Africa.

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