

Proposal for Thematic Group: Sociology of Music

Introduction

In Australia and many other places, music has by far the widest engagement among the arts, and is involved in various aspects of life through an expanding range of technologies and practices. In contemporary society, music is at the intersections of art and commerce, transcendence and the everyday, mediation and immediacy, past and future. Participation in music cultures both reproduces and disrupts other forms of social identification and difference, including generations, nations, social classes, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Music is often significant in social and cultural change, and has been a bellwether for trends including gig-based labour, prosumption, and digitalisation. Accordingly, the sociology of music has developed as a distinct, diverse and dynamic field of study.

Aims and objectives (suitable for the website and other publicity)

This thematic group aims to advance the sociological study of music and musical cultures. While modern popular music studies has its roots alongside cultural studies, sociological studies of music have served as core texts since the establishment of this interdisciplinary field. Further, older disciplines such as ethnomusicology offer some of the earliest research on the sociology of music, and as musical cultures are always deeply social in context, sociology is a primary vehicle through which to investigate and explore them. More specific than Cultural Sociology, the Sociology of Music is concerned with the structures, practices, and motivations for music-making, production and consumption, and the role of music in society.

Justification of how the proposed TG is distinctive from the established TGs

Cultural Sociology TG has been established for a number of years and has hitherto provided a place for presentations and discussions focusing on (popular) music. In the interim, however, the sociology of music has continued to grow as a subdiscipline to the extent a dedicated Sociology of Music TG that is sensitive to the diversity and interdisciplinarity of music studies would serve this stream of sociology more effectively. Similarly, while the Sociology of Youth TG has in the past included the study of music-related youth cultures, the sociological and interdisciplinary study of music is no longer so closely tied to youth, due to changes in both music cultures and research priorities. There are also many emerging and established Australian music sociologists that currently do not have a point of entry into TASA and might otherwise feel that the organisation is inaccessible. This new TG would offer a natural point of contact for such scholars and could therefore serve as an important area of recruitment for TASA.

What the proposed TG will add to the association

The conveners and potential members that will feature within the membership of this proposed thematic group encompass a broad range of early, mid-career and established sociologists of music who have been consistently involved with TASA on several levels. Such a diversity of scholars and experience will strengthen the association and create a new avenue for further members to join. The TG will also assist in attracting more international scholars to attend TASA conferences given the growing global network of music sociologists and the enhanced opportunities for international collaboration that the TG will provide.

A nominated Convener and any Co-Conveners

Convener: Professor Andy Bennett

Co-Convenors: Dr Sam Whiting, Dr Ben Green, A/Prof Catherine Strong

Current financial members of TASA who have endorsed the proposed Thematic Group and have provided notice of their intended membership of it:

Andy Bennett
Ben Green
Catherine Strong
Sam Whiting
Michael Scott
Eduardo de la Fuente
Carl Johnson Anacin
Jessica Foenander
Devpriya Chakravarty
Fabian Cannizzo
Freya Langley
Steven Threadgold
Michael Walsh
Sarah Maslen
Hannah Fairlamb

Intending to join

Katrina Skewes McFerran, University of Melbourne
Alexandra Blok, Griffith University
Jordan Bain, Griffith University