

ASIAN SOUND CULTURES 3

ART MEETS SCIENCE,
PERFORMANCE MEETS TECHNOLOGY

PROGRAMME

1-3 SEPTEMBER 2026

TOHOKU UNIVERSITY · SENDAI



Practical Information

All times are in Japan Standard Time (JST, UTC+9).

1 September: Hybrid conference day, online and on-site.

2–3 September: In person at TOKYO ELECTRON House of Creativity, Katahira Campus, Tohoku University, with online viewing available.

Participation markers indicate exceptions to the default format for each day:

● = presenting in person on Day 1; ○ = joining remotely on Days 2–3

The evening reception and Koto and Shamisen Performance on 2 September are on-site only and will not be streamed.

Parallel sessions will take place on Days 2 and:

Room A: House of Creativity, 3rd Floor, Lecture Theatre

Room B: Sakura Hall, 2nd Floor

Acknowledgements

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Organised by

Asian Sound Cultures Project

Co-hosted by

Center for Integrated Japanese Studies (CIJS), Tohoku University
Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University
Tohoku Forum for Creativity, Tohoku University

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Conference Convenors

Iris Haukamp, CIJS, Tohoku University—Lead Convenor and Conference Organiser
Christin Hoene, Maastricht University—Co-Convenor
Martyn Smith, The University of Sheffield—Co-Convenor

Local Organising Committee—CIJS, Tohoku University

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Programme Overview

All times are in Japan Standard Time (JST, UTC+9).

DAY 1: Sound across distance: voice, body, healing, archive

(Tuesday, 1 September, online & on-site)

Time	Programme item
08:30-09:00	Reception / Coffee / Informal gathering
09:00-09:15	Brief Welcome and Online Orientation
09:15-10:30	Session 1: Voice & Mediation (Chair: <i>Iris Haukamp</i>) • From Cinema to Gramophone: Mediating the Voice of the Japanese Benshi (<i>Kerstin Fooker</i>) • A Voice Seen and Unseen: How a Ghost Intervenes at the Courtroom in the Cantonese Musical <i>The Impossible Trial</i> (2022) (<i>Hedy Law</i>) • Pornographic Pleasure and Pain through Textual and Acoustic Consumption of Chinese Boys' Love Stories (<i>Linshan Jiang</i>)
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:15	Session 2: Sound, Embodiment & Platform Cultures (Chair: <i>Ajjana Thairungroj</i>) • Gig Workers as Performers: Navigating Embodied Labour in Algorithmic Soundscapes in Bangladesh (<i>Ala Uddin</i>) • Ojima Yoshio's Music for Spiral: Composing 'Shizukesa' (<i>Matt Stefanyszyn</i>)
12:15-13:15	Lunch Break
13:15-14:15	Online Workshop: Sonic Imagination of Asia: Magic's Acoustic Construction in Digital Games (<i>Miaotong Yuan & Digimonk</i>)
14:15-15:45	Session 3: Sound, Healing & Disciplining Bodies (Chair: <i>Christin Hoene</i>) • Sonic Affiliation and Communal Chanting as a Narrative Medicine Practice (<i>Yanan Liu</i>) • Musicality to Obedience: Order, Excess, and Embodied Listening (<i>Saumya Sahni</i>) • The Silent Voice of Subtitles: Neutrality, Character Voice and Sonic Identity in Japanese Anime (<i>Lisa Sanders</i>)
15:45-16:15	Coffee Break
16:15-17:45	Session 4: Media Histories & Sonic Innovation in Asia (Chair: <i>Iris Haukamp</i>) • From Airwaves to Turntables: How EP and LP Records Challenged Radio Music Monopoly in Sri Lanka (<i>Manoj Alawathukotuwa</i>) • Incantations: Sound Ecologies in Contemporary Cinemas of South Asia (<i>Nikhil God</i>) ● • Reading <i>The Indian Listener</i>: On Radio in India from 1935-1947 (<i>Christin Hoene & Vebhuti Duggal</i>) • Voices in the Crackle: A Case of the LSI Sound Recordings (<i>Suvani Suri</i>)

DAY 2: Sound in place: environment, text, margins, empire

(Wednesday, 2 September, in-person, online viewing is available)

Time	Programme item
08:00-08:30	Registration / Coffee
08:30-08:50	In-person Welcome and Practical Information
08:50-09:00	Break / transition
09:00-10:30	Session 5: Sonic Histories & Colonial Mediations (Chair: <i>Jina Kim</i>) · Listening to Occupation: Sound, Authority, and Agency in Japanese and American Newsreels in the Philippines, 1942–1946 (<i>John Adrianfer Atienza</i>) ◦ · Sonic Technologies of Ferry Travel: Infrastructure, Mediation, and Popular Song across Korea and Japan (<i>Jiyeon Auo</i>) ◦ · Voices of Japanese Silent Cinema Across Borders: Cases from Hawaii and Los Angeles (<i>Kotaro Shibata</i>) · The 'Sound' of Japan in <i>Nippon</i> (DE, 1932) (<i>Adrian Wood</i>)
10:30-11:30	Introduction to Permanent Exhibition (<i>Heikki Vastiala & Gleb Rogozinski</i>) & Extended Coffee Break
11:30-13:00	Session 6: Sound, Text & Literary Cultures (Chair: <i>Shashank Aswathanarayana</i>) · Sonic Technologies and Inclusive Reading in Contemporary Korean Fiction (<i>Jina Kim</i>) · Sounds of Endless Field: Narrating Vietnamese Contemporary Literature on Streaming Platforms (<i>Tiến Phát Nguyễn</i>) · Sound, Silence, and Deep Listening in Kamo no Chōmei's <i>Hōjōki</i> (<i>Ashton Lazarus</i>)
13:00-14:30	Lunch Break
14:30-16:00	Parallel Sessions Room A: Session 7: Acoustic Environments & Urban Soundscapes (Chair: <i>Hannah Dahlberg-Dodd</i>) · Your 'Noize', My Music - The Interplay between Soundscapes and Discourses in the Korean Mountain Hiking Experience (<i>Lena Mason</i>) · The Soundscape of Shibuya Scramble: How a Place Creates Sound, and How Sound Creates a Place (<i>Aybike Girgin</i>) · Breathing Death: Sonic Entanglement in Bangkok's Queer Raves (<i>Rory Fewer</i>) · Sensing Forgotten Sound and Noise of a Japanese town through an Interstice of Deformed Vision (<i>Masayuki Iwase</i>) Room B: Organised Panel 1: Sound and Singularity: Resisting Centralised Thainess through Regional Audio Cultures (Chair: <i>Kornphanat Tungkeunkunt</i>) · Lateral Practice and Decentralised Sound: Reflections on Chiang Mai's Sonic Art Scene from the 2010s to the Present (<i>Thatchatham Silpsupan</i>) · The Ritual Sounds and Digital Music in Isan Culture (<i>Jaruwan Duangkhamchan</i>) · Sound from the Deep South, Sound from Students (<i>Pongthep Jitduangprem</i>) ◦ · Sound, State, and Singularity: Decolonising Sound from Below (<i>Kornphanat Tungkeunkunt</i>)
16:00-16:10	Brief Break
16:10-16:55	Screening and artist talk: 'Earth Is All Melody': Speculative Worldbuilding through Soundscape (<i>George Cloke</i>)
16:55-17:15	Break / transition
17:15-18:45	Evening Reception including a Koto and Shamisen Performance (17:30–18:00, <i>Philip Flavin</i> and <i>Misako Ise</i>). On-site only

DAY 3: Sound at the boundaries: wellbeing, art-science, voice, memory

(Thursday, 3 September, in-person, online viewing is available)

Time	Programme item
08:30-09:00	Registration / Coffee
09:00-10:30	Session 8: Music, Memory & Cultural Politics (Chair: <i>Luca Milasi</i>) - Between Local Pride and Critical Distance: External Perspectives on Cantopop (<i>Leongkat Lei</i>) 'The Sun Sets Over the Great Continent': commemoration in song of postwar Manchurian repatriation (<i>Marjorie Dryburgh</i>) - Contending with Style: Sound Knowledge Through a Punk Magazine (<i>Robert Dahlberg-Sears</i>) - My Phoninary Japan: On the (Inter-) Subjectivity of Sonic Signifiers of Japaneseness (<i>Oliver Seibt</i>)
10:30-10:45	Coffee Break
10:45-12:15	Session 9: Sound at the Art-Science Boundary (Chair: <i>Robert Dahlberg-Sears</i>) - Sonifying a Central Asian Big Solar Furnace: Transforming Infrastructure into Sonic Experience (<i>Heikki Vastiala</i>) - Acoustics of the Muchukundeswara Temple (<i>Shashank Aswathanarayana</i>) - The Genealogy of 'Sound Art' in 1990s Japan: A Case Study of Xebec Hall as a Mediating Hub (<i>Katsushi Nakagawa</i>) - The Question of Transmediality in Takemitsu's Early Tape Music (<i>Marin Escande</i>)
12:15-13:45	Lunch Break
13:45-15:15	Parallel Sessions Room A: Session 10: Sound, Wellbeing & Pedagogy (Chair: <i>Tianyuan Huang</i>) - Embodied Sound Learning: Circle Singing as a Methodology for Inclusive Language and Music Education (<i>Giuseppe Pantano</i>) ◦ - Sound, Harmony, and Healing in Iqbal's Poetry: Exploring Aesthetic, Musical, and Spiritual Dimensions (<i>Hafiz Muhammad Farooq Abdullah</i>) - Chirping for a Harmonic Society: Avian Motifs and the Cultural Politics of Sound in Japanese Railways (<i>Christoph Reichenbaecher</i>) Room B: Organised Panel 2: Vocal Subversions: Renegotiating Body, Genre, and Identity in Japanese Mediated Performance (Chair: <i>Luca Proietti</i>) - Material Voices in a Digital World: Embodied Subjectivities in Vocal Synth Creative Practice (<i>April Wei-West</i>) - The Sonic Uncanny Valley: Noise, Vocaloid, and Deconstruction in Hatsune Kaidan (<i>Luca Proietti</i>) - Constructing Cyberspace in Hirasawa Susumu's Interactive Live Show through the Disembodied Voice (<i>Korino Bursens</i>) - Transgender Voice as Freedom in Japanese Anime Film (<i>Nemo Martin</i>)
15:15-15:45	Coffee Break
15:45-17:15	Roundtable: Sound and Wellbeing in Japan: Art, Science and Lived Experience (Chair: <i>Nick Luscombe</i>) Speakers: <i>Nick Luscombe, Junichi Shimizu, Jamie Kass, Jamila Rodrigues, Nicholas Luscombe</i>
17:15-17:30	Closing Remarks & Conference Wrap-up

Abstracts

DAY 1:

Sound across distance: voice, body, healing, archive

Session 1: Voice & Mediation

09:15-10:30 / Chair: **Iris Haukamp** / *Tohoku University*

From Cinema to Gramophone: Mediating the Voice of the Japanese Benshi

Kerstin Fooker / *University of Hamburg*

The ephemeral screen-side performances of Japanese benshi—silent film narrators for cinema audiences in the early twentieth century—occupied an ambivalent space between oral live performance, visual technology and cultural mediation. Scholars have variously viewed them as a continuation of Japanese oral traditions (Anderson), a connection between West and East (Musser & Komatsu), as mediators of modernity (Standish), or as performers of colonial identities in colonised Korea and Taiwan (Kim, Chui). Yet another facet of benshi performances has re-emerged more recently with increased archival digitisation efforts and provision of public access to gramophone records featuring benshi performances from the 1920s and 1930s for home entertainment.

This paper explores such benshi recordings and the implications of the complex shift from live, site-specific storytellers contextualising silent cinema, to technologically mediated voices consumed privately through the gramophone. This shift not only altered performance styles and narrative strategies through the constraints and possibilities of studio recording, but it also liberated the performance genre from the filmic medium and the cinematic space, even while still firmly drawing on their conventions. I argue that benshi recordings should be situated among broader Asian sound-based practices that dissolve the worn binaries of visibility, modernity and the 'West' vs. orality, tradition and 'Asia' and synthesise these elements into a new performance genre and mediated art form while drawing on the voice as a mediated, mobile, and now archival artefact.

A Voice Seen and Unseen: How a Ghost Intervenes at the Courtroom in the Cantonese Musical *The Impossible Trial* (2022)

Hedy Law / *University of British Columbia*

In the award-winning Cantonese musical, *The Impossible Trial* (premiered in Hong Kong in 2022 with a re-run in Shanghai, Beijing, and Hong Kong in 2025) by composer Leon Ko and librettist Chris Shum, the plot features a ghost who assists a trial lawyer only to avenge his death. This paper analyses the extensive opening trial scene in which the ghost offers assistance to the defendant in a court trial, pointing out flaws in the complainant's argument and providing additional evidence that neither the defendant nor the complainant is aware of its existence. Central to this musical is the presentation of this ghost as a supernatural being in the otherwise realistic trial scene. How does this musical create the theatrical effect of this ghost?

This paper borrows the concept of the acousmatic—a sound one hears without seeing its source—to analyse the ghost's intervention in this trial scene. Theorised by Pierre Schaeffer (1966) and further conceptualised by film theorist Michel Chion (1994, 1999, 2009), the acousmatic sound provides a helpful framework for understanding the cause of a sound and its effects on the listener (Kane 2014). This musical employs theatrical and musical effects to complicate the acousmatic sound by making this spectre's voice seen and unseen. I argue that this musical ingeniously deconstructs the ghost's supposedly acousmatic sound by presenting him as the visible source of his own voice while simultaneously inviting spectators to imagine his presence onstage as spectral, a liminal existence between the mortal world and the supernatural one.

Pornographic Pleasure and Pain through Textual and Acoustic Consumption of Chinese Boys' Love Stories

Linshan Jiang / *Missouri State University*

Boys' Love (BL) is a genre of popular culture that originated in Japan in the 1970s. Among its various subgenres, the "school of pain" (*itai kei*) has gained increasing attention since the 2010s. This subgenre frequently incorporates themes of violence, particularly sexual assault, as a central plot device. In other words, these BL stories often include scenes depicting BDSM, physical pain, and psychological trauma. Fans of these fantastical BL stories experience erotic arousal and pleasure through novels and audio dramas, engaging in autoeroticism without feeling a connection to social reality. This trend is also prevalent in the Chinese BL community, where it is referred to as "abuse stories" (*nüewen*). In recent years, authors such as Huaishang and Shuiqiancheng have become particularly renowned for their contributions to this subgenre in online networks.

This paper explores fans' fascination with this specific subgenre through the comments and posts on various platforms of online literature, audio dramas, and social media. Key questions addressed include: What makes this BL subgenre so compelling to readers and listeners? How does the consumption of BL stories fulfil the pornographic desires of fans? By analysing these BL stories from the perspective of fans' textual and aural consumption, I argue that this subgenre challenges conventional understandings of sex and sexuality and creates a kind of desirable sexuality. Additionally, in relation to the ongoing feminist movements in China, it prompts a societal reevaluation of China's reproductive policies and conventional family structures. The consumption of pain-infused BL narratives not only makes sexual desires attainable but also serves as a medium for broader social reflection.

Session 2: Sound, Embodiment & Platform Cultures

11:00-12:15 / Chair: **Ajjana Thairungroj** / *Tohoku University*

Gig Workers as Performers: Navigating Embodied Labour in Algorithmic Soundscapes in Bangladesh

Ala Uddin / *University of Chittagong*

This paper begins with the idea that gig workers in Bangladesh move through the city as if performing on an unseen stage shaped by apps, alerts, traffic noise, and the expectations of distant customers. What this suggests is that platform labour now produces a distinct kind of embodied experience where sound, movement, and technology constantly overlap. The study examines how delivery riders, rideshare drivers, and on-demand service workers navigate these dense soundscapes and how their bodies become points of tension between algorithmic pressure and human limits. Grounded in cultural anthropology, the paper draws on theories of embodiment, performance, and digital labour to frame gig work as a choreography written by algorithms but enacted, adjusted, and sometimes resisted by workers themselves.

The research draws on qualitative and ethnographic fieldwork in Dhaka and Chattogram, supported by a brief survey to trace wider patterns. The central question asks how gig workers perform their labour within technologically mediated sound environments and how these conditions shape their sense of agency, time, and self. Findings show that workers internalise notification tones as cues for action, treat GPS voices as authoritative companions, and tune their bodily rhythms to the volatile tempo of platform demands. The argument is that gig work operates as an embodied performance requiring constant displays of speed, emotional control, and acute listening. The study's significance lies in highlighting the sensory and embodied dimensions of platform labour, offering new ways to rethink worker rights, platform design, and the lived realities of algorithmic economies.

Ojima Yoshio's Music for Spiral: Composing 'Shizukesa'

Matt Stefanyszyn / *SOAS, University of London*

Designed by celebrated architect Maki Fumihiko for the Wacoal Lingerie Corporation, the *Spiral* building was completed in 1985 and presaged the coming of Japan's booming bubble economy. A multipurpose arts and culture space in the heart of Tokyo, *Spiral's* design included specially composed environmental music (*kankyō ongaku*) which would be played throughout the building, shaping its atmosphere in line with its architectural character. More than 40 years later, the

soundtrack composed by Ojima Yoshio continues to reverberate around the building. Yet, in the intervening years, the currents of economic and technological change have fundamentally reshaped visitors' relationship between sound, space, and meaning within *Spiral*.

As one of the oldest examples of environmental music still in existence in its original context, *Spiral* offers a unique opportunity to interrogate the sonic design philosophy of Tokyo's pioneering *kankyō ongaku* composers. Despite now enjoying a hitherto unprecedented level of worldwide interest, little serious attention has been paid to the philosophical and aesthetic principles which undergird this unique approach to sound design and composition. By exploring the music of *Spiral*, we will see how the paradoxical notion of 'composing silence' not only builds upon the work of pioneering figures such as John Cage and Brian Eno, but offers a unique conceptual challenge to the commercial imperatives of branded space in the twenty-first century.

Online Workshop: Sonic Imagination of Asia: Magic's Acoustic Construction in Digital Games

13:15-14:15 / Host: **Miaotong Yuan** / *Communication University of China*

Speaker: **Digimonk** / *Tencent IEG Global*

This workshop anchors on the acoustic construction of magic in digital games, a novel research focus of Asian sound culture studies. It builds a bridge between the humanities-oriented sound culture research framework and practical game sound design technologies, with a dual focus on Asian sonic imagination and digital immersive interactive technology. Taking Asia's cultural imagination of magic as the core thread, the workshop explores how intangible magical cultural connotations are transformed into tangible acoustic expressions in game media, based on four academic dimensions of sound culture studies: cultural imagination, sound narrative, spatial construction, and identity & memory. Magic is much like physics; it takes diligence and a touch of talent to master. Sorcery demands the right time, place, and people: *Fa* (dharma) is the cultivation of theories and foundational fundamentals, while *shu* (skill) refers to the methods of casting sorcery.

Inviting industry expert Digimonk for an interdisciplinary dialogue, the guest will present audio-visual demonstrations of typical game clips and sound design project snippets during the talk, offering concrete and intuitive examples to dissect the practical design logic behind magical sound. We delve into how immersive sound effects, 3D spatial audio and real-time interactive audio techniques shape the acoustic expression of magic, and how to embed Asian cultural genes into magical sound design to break the homogeneity of Western expression in the field. The core dialogue is structured around the four aforementioned academic dimensions, exploring the cultural coding of magical sound symbols, the narrative function of magical sound in game interactive storytelling, the construction of virtual acoustic space for magic scenes, and the shaping of player identity and memory through magical sound. The Q&A session opens exchanges with online participants on interdisciplinary topics such as the art-science integration in game sound design and the innovation of Asian sonic expression in digital media. This workshop realises cross-border dialogue between sound culture scholars and game sound industry practitioners, enriches the research connotation of Asian digital sound culture, and provides practical references for game sound design practice. It shares the latest research and practice progress of magical sound design in the Asian context and builds a communication bridge for interdisciplinary and industry-academic exchanges in the field of Asian sound studies.

Session 3: Sound, Healing & Disciplining Bodies

14:15-15:45 / Chair: **Christin Hoene** / *Maastricht University*

Sonic Affiliation and Communal Chanting as a Narrative Medicine Practice

Yanan Liu / *Sun Yat-sen University*

Deeply rooted in Asian spiritual and cultural traditions from Han and Tibetan Buddhism to Hindu Vedic practices, communal chanting represents a sophisticated and participatory acoustic technology for collective meaning-making. This paper examines these practices through the lens of Narrative Medicine while shifting the analytical focus from the purely physiological measurement of sound to its role as an intersubjective narrative practice. Drawing on the pillars of attention, representation, and affiliation, the acoustic synchrony achieved during communal chanting

facilitates a profound narrative reconstruction of illness. For patients trapped in the chaos narrative of chronic pain or terminal illness, where suffering often eludes linguistic expression, the act of aligning breath and vocal resonance with a collective body serves as a non-verbal co-authoring of a shared sonic landscape.

Utilising the methodology of close listening, this paper examines the prosody of illness, specifically the transition from the fragmented and hesitant breath of an isolated individual to the steady and harmonious pulse of a chanting group. This leads to a state of sonic affiliation where the self is re-authored within a grander and culturally grounded communal story. By analysing specific vibrational stories within Asian healing settings, the paper demonstrates how sound creates a sacred space that bridges the gap between the biological body and the storied self. Ultimately, these Asian acoustic traditions offer an art-and-science model for modern healthcare by suggesting that true healing occurs through the resonant reclamation of the voice within a collective narrative.

Musicality to Obedience: Order, Excess, and Embodied Listening

Saumya Sahni / *The Sarai Programme—CSDS (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies)*

While the audition of sermons is understood as an embodied ethical performance that enacts a moral and bodily progression, music, by contrast, is seen as merely an emotion-inducing source, which is incapable of producing the same structured discipline, ethical engagement, or transformative effects that sermons produce (Hirschkind, 2006). I take this work forward by centring music as an active medium of embodied discipline and collective formation. I examine how H pop songs in religious processions structure bodily attention, structure morally, create collective identity and produce an affective atmosphere. Hindutva Hate music (hypernationalist, Islamophobic songs which further Hindu Nationalism) is often communally played in processions at religious festivals. People dance to the tunes of the songs blaring from the music systems, while in the procession, they are joyous in their aggression. My entry point to the phenomenon was: What kind of listening does it encourage?

The rhythmic quality of the songs resembles nursery rhymes. They both have a sustained rhythm, never reaching a crescendo, but have consistent peaks and troughs. The listener is also a co-performer, often compelled to repeat phrases. This creates an inner harmony and creates musicality to their obedience. Digital ethnography of the DJ accounts associated with such events on Instagram suggests that the bass and the vibrating quality are foregrounded in marketing. This aligns well with how the songs are composed: they are highly compressed, as the spectrograms and waveforms suggest, which renders them suitable for such speakers. It drowns out the noise and allows the song to be heard above all. The songs are designed to be played in public. While the nursery rhyme nature of songs creates order, the songs played on the strong bass music systems create excess. The listening experience emerges in this tension between order and excess. This approach highlights that alignment with the ideology of Hindutva is not only discursive but also learned and reinforced through repetition, embodiment, and collective affective experience.

The Silent Voice of Subtitles: Neutrality, Character Voice and Sonic Identity in Japanese Anime

Lisa Sanders / *Tokyo University of Foreign Studies*

In Japanese anime, character identity includes a carefully designed sonic resource: character voice. The way characters use language is a vital indicator of their backgrounds, personalities, and motivations, making character voice central to characterisation. For non-Japanese-speaking audiences, however, access to this sonic identity is typically mediated through subtitles. Although subtitles are written rather than acoustic, they operate as a “silent voice” that shapes perceptions of characters alongside the original soundtrack. Despite their crucial role in guiding character interpretation, current professional subtitling norms prioritise neutrality, flattening or erasing features of character voice in favour of short, standardised subtitles optimised for legibility. This results in a significant loss of deliberately crafted meaning for audiences who rely on subtitles to access the nuances of character voice in the original dialogue.

Drawing on examples from contemporary Japanese anime, I examine recurring patterns in the treatment of dialect, register, and stylised speech in subtitles, focusing particularly on how these features are neutralised. I then present an alternative subtitling approach, based on existing translation strategies, that seeks to preserve aspects of character voice without compromising subtitle legibility. This approach prioritises the retention of character voice and challenges the

assumption that subtitles must be neutral in order to be legible. Since it actively shapes how voices travel transnationally, I argue that subtitling should be understood not purely as a superficial linguistic transfer, but as an act of cultural mediation and a site for negotiating sonic identity.

Session 4: Media Histories & Sonic Innovation in Asia

16:15-17:45 / Chair: **Iris Haukamp** / *Tohoku University*

From Airwaves to Turntables: How EP and LP Records Challenged Radio Music Monopoly in Sri Lanka

Manoj Alawathukotuwa / *University of Peradeniya*

The history of music recording in Sri Lanka begins with gramophone technology and later expands through radio broadcasting, cinema, cassette tapes, compact discs, and digital media. The arrival of gramophone records in the early twentieth century marked a decisive shift in Sri Lankan musical culture by creating a commercial music market and a structured music industry. Under the influence of North Indian classical and light-classical traditions, this recording culture introduced standardised song forms, professional singers, and studio-based production practices. Initially, access to gramophone technology was largely limited to the urban middle class, shaping elite musical taste and consumption patterns. With the emergence of radio broadcasting, recorded music became more widely accessible. Early radio programming depended heavily on gramophone discs, but over time, Radio Ceylon developed a tightly regulated musical culture dominated by North Indian aesthetic ideals.

Through institutional rules and audition systems, radio authorities promoted an “art song” tradition while marginalising Western-oriented popular and group-based musical forms. As a result, many Western-influenced music groups were denied radio airtime and institutional recognition. In this context, EP and LP records emerged as an alternative technological and cultural platform. These formats enabled musicians excluded from radio to produce, distribute, and popularise their work independently. EP and LP records facilitated the rise of Western-oriented group songs and diversified Sri Lanka’s musical soundscape, weakening the monopoly of radio as the primary gatekeeper of musical taste. This paper investigates how EP and LP records functioned as disruptive media technologies that challenged radio authority, reconfigured musical power relations, and contributed to the emergence of plural musical cultures within the Sri Lankan music industry.

Incantations: Sound Ecologies in Contemporary Cinemas of South Asia

Nikhil God / *Jawaharlal Nehru University* •

This paper examines how contemporary South Asian films construct sensory ecologies through the dynamic interplay of sound and image, positioning cinema as a medium that mediates relationships between bodies, environments, and technologies of perception. Moving beyond visual primacy, it foregrounds sound as central to how films register ecological, social, and affective worlds shaped by uneven development, environmental change, and technological mediation across the region. Drawing on sound studies, film theory, and interdisciplinary scholarship on sensory perception, the paper argues that recent South Asian visual cultures mobilise sonic textures such as ambient sound, noise, nonhuman voice, and silence to generate ecological modes of attention that go beyond narrative frameworks. Through close analysis of selected films, it traces how sound works alongside visual composition to evoke multisensory engagements with landscapes, infrastructure, and nonhuman presence.

In doing so, the paper highlights cinema’s capacity to function as a site where artistic practice intersects with scientific and technological mediation around sensing, environment, and mediation. Methodologically, the paper combines audiovisual analysis with theoretical perspectives on sensory ethnography to demonstrate how South Asian cinema articulates alternative ecological imaginaries grounded in embodied listening and environmental attunement. By framing film as a sensory technology that captures and organises ecological experience, the paper contributes to emerging interdisciplinary dialogues across sound studies, visual culture, and art and science collaborations.

Reading *The Indian Listener*: On Radio in India from 1935-1947

Christin Hoene / *Maastricht University* and **Vebhuti Duggal** / *Centre for the Study of Developing Societies*

This talk focuses its attention on *The Indian Listener*, a publication that was brought out by the Indian Broadcasting Service from the end of 1935. The publication, which was modelled on the BBC's *The Listener*, became an important record of broadcasting during the 1930s and 40s. In this talk, we propose an examination of the publication up to 1947, trying to read it against its grain by looking at how imperial publications are repurposed in (post)colonial settings. Debra Cohen's (2012) work frames *The Listener* through intermediality as a form that brings together radio and print, reading and listening. Cohen also pays attention to how different modalities of listening/listener-ships came about, and she identifies the problem of analysing the publication, such as that *The Listener* is difficult to classify. Our examination of *The Indian Listener* builds on Cohen's framework and turns its attention to the publication to consider (i) its role in the annals of radio broadcasting in India; (ii) how the audience was being figured through *The Indian Listener*, and (iii) how radio produced itself as a trace in print.

To address (i), we will analyse how the broadcasting of Hindustani music features in the pages of *The Indian Listener*. The establishment of All India Radio (AIR) in 1930 arguably transformed Indian classical music from a highly aestheticised art to an instrument of cultural expression and nationalist sentiment. In broadcasting Hindustani music, All India Radio thus served as a platform that subverted British cultural dominance by promoting Indian music as part of a broader nationalist agenda. This also allows us to think about a precursor to the 'citizen-listener' (Alonso 2023, 2015), who, post-Independence, would choose the Hindi film song. To address (ii), we will analyse articles and programming notes that address rural listening and comment on the placement of radio sets in rural areas. To conclude, our analysis in part (iii) will get at the heart of the intermediality of *The Indian Listener*. In its pages, it combines a plethora of different modes of presenting radio, ranging from programme schedules to advertisements, from text to images of studios and radio personnel, from information to entertainment. It reminds us of the need to think also about print as a source for the study of sound, especially in a colonial frame, where such histories are often ephemeral.

Voices in the Crackle: A Case of the LSI Sound Recordings

Suvani Suri / *Independent artist*

What happens when the "sound object," understood in its historical, material, and ontological dimensions, encounters archival acoustics? This paper examines the unstable relations between sound, source, and listening body when sound is not treated as a fixed object but as a contingent event shaped by inscription, preservation, and replay. While the sound object has often been theorised as discrete and self-contained, the archive introduces temporal drag, mediation, and displacement, complicating any stable notion of sonic thingness. Through the case of the audio recordings in the Linguistic Survey of India (1903–1928), and the processes of capturing colonised voices, the paper interrogates how listening shifts when voice circulates through storage technologies, institutional frameworks, and acts of reactivation. What forms of relationality emerge when the source is obscured, deferred, or fragmented? How does the listening body become implicated in reconstituting what appears as an object?

Rather than affixing sound to a defined form, experience, or process, this paper proposes a model of situated listening in which sonic phenomena unfold across material supports, historical conditions, and embodied reception. In this framework, sound is neither purely object nor ephemeral trace, but a relational field that exceeds its containment. By destabilising the objecthood of sound through the lens of archival acoustics, the paper opens a space for rethinking how sonic knowledge is produced, mediated, and heard.

DAY 2:

Sound in place: environment, text, margins, empire

Session 5: Sonic Histories & Colonial Mediations

09:00-10:30 / Chair: **Jina Kim** / *University of Oregon*

Listening to Occupation: Sound, Authority, and Agency in Japanese and American Newsreels in the Philippines, 1942–1946

John Adrianfer Atienza / *University of the Philippines Diliman* ◦

Newsreels, short films reporting on current events, constituted a major cinematic form during both the Japanese occupation and the American reoccupation of the Philippines from 1942 to 1946. Distinguished by their use of actuality footage, newsreels relied not only on moving images but also on carefully constructed sound to shape wartime perception. Beyond the familiar “voice-of-God” narration, these films deployed marching rhythms, national anthems, and recorded war sounds through music and sound editing as integral elements of their persuasive power, producing affective forms of wartime narration.

This paper examines the use of sound in Japanese newsreels (‘Nippon News’ and ‘New Philippines News’) and American newsreels (a U.S. Treasury Department reel) related to the Philippines produced during the Second World War. Focusing on a set of related newsreels that shared comparable footage, the study traces how Japanese, Americans, and Filipinos used, curated, and re-edited sound to align with distinct wartime objectives. Through multimodal historical analysis, the paper demonstrates how sound functioned as a technological practice that articulated imperial authority, ambivalence, and local agency during the war period. By foregrounding sound as a central analytic category in newsreels, this study contributes to sound studies in Asia, particularly within Japan–Philippines studies and Second World War scholarship, demonstrating how moving images and newsreels can be approached as acoustic archives. In doing so, it offers insights into historical sound cultures and the role of sound in shaping wartime narratives in Asia.

Sonic Technologies of Ferry Travel: Infrastructure, Mediation, and Popular Song across Korea and Japan

Jiyeon Auo / *University of Pittsburgh* ◦

In colonial Korea, imperial Japan constructed the Busan–Shimonoseki ferry route as a key maritime corridor. Historical narratives have portrayed Koreans as dispossessed migrants, transported through mobility systems designed to serve imperial interests. This logic—casting Koreans as subjects acted upon rather than as agents—has shaped popular music historiography. In debates over *t’ŭrot’ŭ*, Korean scholars have questioned whether the genre derived from Japanese *enka*, frequently framing musical similarity through a one-directional narrative of cultural influence. Building on Pak Chinsu’s (2025) argument that *t’ŭrot’ŭ* and *enka* developed through shared infrastructures, this paper shifts attention to the sonic technologies and material conditions that shaped how these genres sounded and were felt. It argues that sonic forms forged within colonial infrastructures—ferries, ports, and recording technologies—travelled along imperial routes and continued to mediate musical production in postwar Japan.

Through a close analysis of Jang Se-jŏng’s 1937 recording ‘The Ferry Departs’, a *t’ŭrot’ŭ* song centred on the Busan–Shimonoseki route, the paper shows how metallic timbre and vocal delivery—including what Williams (2018) terms melodramatic irruption—are attuned to the affective and temporal rhythms of ferry travel. It further traces how the same melody later travelled into postwar Japan, where it was re-recorded by Sugawara Tsuzuko in 1951, when *enka* was redefined as a national genre. Ultimately, this paper argues that *t’ŭrot’ŭ* and *enka* emerged as fraternal sensibilities shaped through shared infrastructures of colonial mobility, repositioning popular song as an archive of infrastructural experience and technological mediation in modern Korea and Japan.

Voices of Japanese Silent Cinema Across Borders: Cases from Hawaii and Los Angeles

Kotaro Shibata / *University of Tokyo*

Silent cinema functioned as a medium of sound insofar as the absence of recorded sound necessitated live sonic supplementation. The auditory dimensions of silent film exhibition, however,

varied significantly according to both the country of production and the context of reception. Western films, which exerted considerable influence within the global film market, tended to be accompanied by Western music, whereas films produced in other national contexts were typically exhibited in conjunction with local musical practices. Japanese cinema, similarly, was accompanied primarily by Japanese music and, moreover, by the live narration of benshi performers. As Japanese films circulated beyond the national sphere, they were exhibited not only in colonial territories but also within immigrant societies. In these contexts, the vocal practices emblematic of Japan's silent era—most notably benshi narration—were themselves transmitted overseas and received as culturally emblematic expressions of “Japan,” particularly within Japanese immigrant communities.

This paper examines cases in which local cultures of voice shaped auditory practices at screening venues in two Japanese immigrant communities in Hawaii and Los Angeles. Focusing in particular on the practice of benshi narration, biwa song and *rōkyoku* narration, the study considers how Japanese films were exhibited in these contexts and investigates the ways in which distinctive forms of vocal and musical accompaniment emerged.

The ‘Sound’ of Japan in *Nippon* (DE, 1932)

Adrian Wood | Independent Researcher in association with **Wayne Arnold** | University of Kitakyushu

When Carl Koch's *Nippon* premiered in Europe in 1932, audiences encountered synchronised Japanese dialogue, music, and sound effects crafted as authentic representation. When sound cinema had reshaped film culture in Europe and N. America, *Nippon* functioned not merely as a visual representation of Japan but as an acoustic construction for European audiences. This paper examines how Koch's acoustic portrayal was constructed. Drawing on existing scholarship (Haukamp, Sierek, et al.) and archival research into the German, French, and lost Dutch versions, we analyse the soundtrack created in Germany for its prelude and the three abridged silent Japanese films.

By reconstructing the production process, including both credited and uncredited collaborators, we assess how technological constraints and dubbing practices shaped what European audiences understood as “Japanese sound.” Particular attention is given to issues of authenticity in the creation of the soundtrack. The production potentially relied on the sound effects libraries of Berlin film studios, while synchronisation challenges were addressed in the conversion of silent film sequences into a talkie. It also considers the possible integration of the ‘Eastphon’ discs prepared for the 1930 Japanese re-release of *Big City: Labour Edition* (Daitokai: Rōdō-hen, dir. Kiyohiko Ushihara, 1929) into Koch's portmanteau film. By situating *Nippon* within early 1930s debates over sound, dubbing, and national cinemas, I argue, with the use of extracts and original contemporaneous sound recordings made in Japan, that the film did not accurately transmit Japan directly but rather acoustically re-engineered it.

Permanent Exhibition / Installation: Uzbekistan Solaris: A Sonic Revelation

10:30- | **Heikki Vastiala** | Aalto University and **Gleb Rogozinski** | Omni Audio Oy

At the heart of our sound installation stands the Big Solar Furnace (BSF) of Uzbekistan, a monumental scientific facility in the Tien Shan mountain range. Built during 1981–87, this colossal apparatus comprises a vast heliostat field and a 47 × 52 m parabolic mirror capable of generating extreme temperatures for materials research. Although the BSF remains a unique instrument and a symbol of sustainable energy potential, its interaction with solar energy has largely remained inaccessible to human perception—embedded in data streams, control systems, and physical structures rather than audible experience. Through experimental recording techniques, data-based sonification methods, and interdisciplinary research conducted in Uzbekistan during 2025–2026, we have explored the furnace as a vibrating architectural body, a generator of material signatures, and a dynamic thermodynamic process.

The sound material includes structure-borne recordings, sampled audio, and digital synthesis modulated by data extracted from the furnace, making otherwise inaccessible sonic phenomena available for listening. By translating the furnace's structural behaviour, material properties, and operational processes into sound, the installation creates a listening situation in which the physical structures and processes of the furnace can be encountered through sound. Rather than

documenting the furnace, the installation explores how artistic and scientific methods can reveal alternative perspectives on large-scale technological systems and their surroundings.

Session 6: Sound, Text & Literary Cultures

11:30-13:00 / Chair: **Shashank Aswathanarayana** / *Ahmedabad University*

Sonic Technologies and Inclusive Reading in Contemporary Korean Fiction

Jina Kim / *University of Oregon*

This paper reads Kim Geum-hee's *첫여름, 완주* (*First Summer, Wanju*) (2025) as a contemporary experiment that reactivates the audiobook's longstanding accessibility mission for print disabled audiences while expanding literary form. Conceived and released first as a multi-voiced audiobook by Muze Publishing's "Listening Novel Project" (April 2025) before it was published in print form, the project's design and donations to the National Library for the Disabled foreground a disability centred publication pipeline that privileges listening communities from the outset. I situate this case within global audiobook histories and technologies: from 1930s "talking books" on long-playing records for blind readers founded by the U.S. Library of Congress and American Foundation for the Blind to the standardised Digital Accessible Information System's (DAISY) creation of digital talking books, which introduced navigable structures, synchronised text audio, and device-agnostic distribution for print disabled readers. In Korea, accessible reading infrastructures now include the National Library for the Disabled (est. 2012) and the National Digital Library's disability support programs, aligning with DAISY era commitments to equitable access.

Bridging disability studies and literary sound analysis, I show how *First Summer, Wanju* mobilises audiobook affordances through ensemble performance, spatialized ambience, and dramaturgic pacing, thereby reconceptualising "reading" as embodied listening, reshaping narrative voice, focalization, and character interiority. The production's radio drama aesthetics (full cast, original music) mark a shift from derivative "books on tape" toward audio native literature, even as it inherits the disability access lineage that moved from vinyl to cassettes, CDs, and now digitally distributed, navigable formats. I argue that audio-first fiction reorients Korean literary studies toward acoustic embodiment and inclusive reception, troubling textual primacy and reframing author-narrator-listener relations. Ultimately, *First Summer, Wanju* demonstrates how artistic practice (performance-driven writing) and technological design (platforms, standards, libraries) can advance sound studies' concerns with access rights and literary practice.

Sounds of *Endless Field*: Narrating Vietnamese Contemporary Literature on Streaming Platforms

Tiến Phát Nguyễn / *University of Giessen*

This paper investigates Vietnam's emerging sonic literature landscape, where streaming platforms are aiming to fundamentally reshape reading experiences. By harnessing digital capabilities, these platforms are about to revive oral narrative traditions for contemporary audiences, bridging ancient storytelling methods with modern technology. The study focuses on a critical analysis of *Endless Field* (Cánh Đồng Bất Tận) by Nguyễn Ngọc Tú, produced by streaming services (Fonos, Voiz). These productions exemplify how sonic literature transcends conventional audiobooks by integrating preproduced regional soundscapes, from authentic environmental to cultural audio elements, with contemporary prose. The result creates an immersive acoustic environment that transforms solitary reading into a multisensory experience, situating listeners within the narrative's physical and emotional geography.

This paper evaluates the intersection of performance artistry and technological innovation. It highlights both aesthetic achievements, such as enhanced emotional resonance or cultural authenticity, and the challenges encountered during production, including narrative failures, e.g. the failure of narrative choice. These specific findings illuminate broader tensions between artistic vision and platform capabilities. Furthermore, the analysis extends beyond this single case study to address fundamental questions about technology's role in shaping emergent art forms. As streaming platforms democratize access to sonic literature while simultaneously imposing structural constraints, they reveal complex relationships between scientific advancement and artistic expression. This work contributes to the conference dialogues by examining how technological infrastructures influence creative practices, and conversely, how artistic experimentation pushes

technological boundaries. Ultimately, the paper positions Vietnamese sonic literature within global conversations about digital turns and the evolution of narrative forms.

Sound, Silence, and Deep Listening in Kamo no Chōmei's *Hōjōki*

Ashton Lazarus / *University of Utah*

This paper examines the sensorium found in Kamo no Chōmei's *An Account of my Hut* (*Hōjōki*, 1212). The account has long captivated readers with its vivid depiction of a society in turmoil and subsequent discussion of eremitic life. Chōmei's text brims with sensory experience—especially sight, touch, and sound—which gives it a piercing urgency. We hear the breakdown of order in the roaring wind, wailing beggars, and an earthquake that resounds like thunder. When the narrator escapes the capital for the hills to subsist in a simple hut, his soundscape fills with music: bird and insect song, the rustle of the wind in the trees, and his own solitary musicking on the biwa and koto. These auditory experiences invariably transport his mind elsewhere, disrupting his solitude and causing him to question his progress towards cessation. The account concludes with inner turmoil: after berating himself for his ignorance and laziness, he responds by intoning the name of Amida Buddha two or three times.

With its sounds, silences, and different ecologies of listening, this text is not only an earwitness account (writing that captures a soundscape, according to R. Murray Schafer (1994:8)). It also engages deep listening, described by Pauline Oliveros as coming from “noticing my listening or listening to my listening and discerning the effects on my bodymind continuum, from listening to others, to art and to life” (2005:xxiv). Chōmei's account does not simply preserve past sounds—it shows how listening is a form of attention indispensable to spiritual insight.

Session 7: Acoustic Environments & Urban Soundscapes

14:30-16:00 / Chair: **Hannah Dahlberg-Dodd** / *Tohoku University*

Your 'Noize', My Music - The Interplay between Soundscapes and Discourses in the Korean Mountain Hiking Experience

Lena Mason / *The University of Copenhagen*

In this paper, I explore how the sound of others is perceived in the Korean mountain hiking experience. My main argument is that this sound represents a discursively ambiguous sound that is both wanted and unwanted at the same time. Using soundscape theory and discourse analysis as a conceptual framework, and employing soundwalks as a methodological tool, two different discourses emerge as crucial to how the sound of others is attributed meaning. The dominant narrative surrounding nature experiences is the discourse of silence, which frames the sound of others as unwanted noise. However, in my analysis, I also found traces of an alternative discourse of connectedness, through which the sound of others retains social value. Significantly, I found that these two discourses can be at play at the same time.

Challenging binary thinking, I introduce the concept of 'noize' to capture how a sound may be simultaneously wanted and unwanted as different discourses intermingle. By conceptualising the sound of others as discursively ambiguous 'noize', this paper identifies three potential mediating factors in the interplay between soundscapes and discourses in the Korean mountain hiking experience, namely the amount of sound and sound saturation, the idea of sound immersion and sense of community, and the temporal variation of sound as seen through the analogy of music. Taken together, these mediating factors suggest that balance becomes key when it comes to how the sound of others is experienced and evaluated within the Korean mountain hiking soundscape. Finally, possible limitations and prospects for future research are considered.

The Soundscape of Shibuya Scramble: How a Place Creates Sound, and How Sound Creates a Place

Aybike Girgin / *Recent graduate from The University of Copenhagen*

Shibuya Scramble Crossing is known as the busiest pedestrian crossing in the world and has become an iconic location in Tokyo, Japan. But what is it that makes this particular crossing so special? In this paper, I argue that one of the decisive factors behind the crossing's popularity is the sensory experience of sound. Despite sound constituting a prominent sensory dimension of the crossing, it remains an underexplored area in research.

Drawing on theoretical perspectives on sound and place, I analyse the influence of sound on Shibuya Scramble as a place, as well as how it transitions from being a non-place to becoming a place rooted in historical, cultural, and identity-forming contexts. Based on an understanding of contemporary urban Japan as a “sound-saturated society,” I discuss which sounds are actually present and audible in the soundscape of Shibuya Scramble, and how these sounds have the potential to become ambient sound. For this purpose, I have developed various sound categories that make it easier to identify sounds within a soundscape and establish a deeper understanding of which sounds shape the auditory experience of Shibuya Scramble. To contextualise the presence of these sounds at the crossing, I also present Shibuya’s commercial history as well as the crossing’s current status as a tourist attraction. The conclusion of this paper is that Shibuya Scramble as a place creates sound, and that sound simultaneously helps create Shibuya Scramble as a place.

Breathing Death: Sonic Entanglement in Bangkok’s Queer Raves

Rory Fewer | *University of California, Riverside*

This paper performs a close reading of two raves in Bangkok that featured music by DJ Nuh Peace and took place alongside larger gallery exhibitions, Dan Lie’s *Patience* (2025) and Pansan Klongdee’s *Forever Love Soul Engine* (2026). Lie’s work features towers of flowers gathered from Bangkok’s Pak Khlong Talat market, which are allowed to slowly decay in the exhibition space over the span of a month. Klongdee’s work presents a funeral ritual for a BMW E34 recovered from a junkyard in Bangkok, whereby the car’s gradual dismantling becomes a soundscape that speaks to its purgatorial position between object and material. On an evening during Thailand’s general election, Nuh Peace opens one of these raves by screaming into a microphone: “No future! No future for you!”

Drawing on frameworks from new materialism, I argue that Nuh Peace’s performances activate a molecular entanglement between sound, body, car, and flower through the “deep time” of air. The textural density of Nuh Peace’s sound, pumped through speakers that make its vibration physically detectable, both emulates and enacts the inhalation of “death” as those particles carrying the smell of rot and oil enter the lungs of ravers. By focusing on sound as a material process, I suggest that these raves serve as an attunement to the always-constant act of “breathing death,” a form of sonic entanglement that illuminates a temporality oriented toward the de/re/composition of matter. I conclude with an analysis of what this temporality of “no future” means in the context of Thailand’s politics.

Sensing Forgotten Sound and Noise of a Japanese Town Through an Interstice of Deformed Vision: An Anti-Ageist and Anti-Ableist Experiment in Sonic Materialist Art

Masayuki Iwase | *Non-affiliated scholar-artist (formerly the University of British Columbia)*

The paper is based on my short experimental docufiction featuring my 80-year-old father, who lives alone in Okazaki (Aichi, Japan) and who suffers from advanced vision loss resulting from glaucoma and Alzheimer’s disease. Because of these diseases, he is medicalised and pathologised based on a deficit model and paternalism, and he is confronted with social exclusion, being a visually impaired, demented nuisance in his family business and a digitally unconnected, analogue elder behind the times.

The docufiction depicts his routine life captured by a modular action camera mounted on his forehead. Throughout, its frame is edited to resemble the symptoms of his glaucoma, boldly hollowing out to actualise his iris with a narrow vision field developing hazy, blacked-out spots. Through the restricted optical field, the audience perceives the milieu and chaos he experiences. Concomitantly, it is through such an interstice of deformed vision that the audience encounters sound and noise heard and produced by him, including his waddling while holding on to something, his stress with using a flip phone, his viewing of 6 AM TV news, and his smoking of a cigarette with a cup of coffee brewed by a much older, tireless master at the old-school *kissaten*. The docufiction is an anti-ageist and anti-ableist experiment in amplifying such forgotten sound and noise material to the socially excluded, disabled senior living in the city amid technological advancement and information and service acceleration. It is a sonic materialist art destabilising what sounds overly familiar by unfolding pre-personal flow and intensive forces of sonic sensations.

Organised Panel 1: Sound and Singularity: Resisting Centralised Thainess through Regional Audio Cultures

14:30-16:00 / Organiser & Chair: **Kornphanat Tungkeunkunt** / *Thammasat University*

Thatchatham Silpsupan / *Chiang Mai University*; **Jaruwan Duangkhamchan** / *Thammasat University*; **Pongthep Jitduangprem** / *Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music*; **Kornphanat Tungkeunkunt** / *Thammasat University*

In Thailand, the concept of "singularity" evokes a potent nationalist ideal: a singular, legitimate form of "Thainess" anchored in the language, culture, and sonic aesthetics of Bangkok. Yet defining Thainess proves deeply problematic. Thailand prides itself on independence during the colonial era, enforcing neither foreign nor colonial languages on its commoners. Contrary to the postcolonial era, Siamese elites once celebrated Western ideas and technology, but history demanded heavy investment in Thainess discourse—whose actual referent remains unclear (Winichakul 1996). Thai authorities have instead discursively defined "un-Thainess" to clarify its opposite, utilising ethnicity to forge a "We-self" (Thai) versus "other" (e.g., Northeastern Thais, often referred to as Isan people, who are labelled as "Lao" by central Thais). Standard Thai, as Bangkok's dominant variant, permeates media, education, and public discourse, marginalising regional and minority soundscapes.

This panel, "Sound and Singularity," interrogates how such centralisation—bolstered by nationalist policies—sparks resistance across Thailand's North, Northeast, South, and Central regions. Four scholars illuminate how local audio practices challenge this hegemony, reshaping Thai identity: Thatchatham Silpsupan will share insights into the sound artists of Chiang Mai and how their work resists the dominance of Standard Thai. Jaruwan Duangkhamchan will discuss the intersection of ritual sounds and digital music within Isan culture. Pongthep Jitduangprem will take us to the southern province of Pattani, where he examines local music practices and their resilience in the face of cultural centralisation. Kornphanat Tungkeunkunt will discuss the relationship between sound and the state from a non-colonial perspective, examining the implications of decolonising sound from below in the Thai context.

"Sound and Singularity" therefore explores three perspectives that challenge the centralisation of the Thai state: Chiang Mai sound artists, Isan ritual sounds, and the soundscape of Pattani. These perspectives highlight how the cultural practices in society are shaped more by the context of diversity than by the state's push for singularity. Each of these areas strives to maintain its own unique identity within its respective space, even as it navigates the broader pressures of centralisation.

Screening and Artist Talk: Earth Is All Melody (모두의 멜로디): Speculative Worldbuilding through Soundscape

16:10-16:55 / **George Cloke** / *SOAS, University of London & Flau Records*

This presentation will explore acoustic approaches to speculative worldbuilding through my soundscape work 'Earth Is All Melody', which was realised as part of the Futures of Listening programme at Asia Culture Center (Gwangju, South Korea). Futures of Listening endeavoured to investigate the future of sound, noise and space in Asian urban environments. The practice-as-research project 'Earth Is All Melody' weaves field recordings, audio interviews and non-human polyphonies into a speculative soundscape of an ecological utopia.

Drawing on discussions held with Korean environmental activists, scientists, disability rights campaigners, poets, science fiction writers and urban planners, this sonically envisioned future city celebrates community, multi-species interconnection and listening reciprocity. Listeners are guided through different 'zones' of a future eco-city via a fictional sustainable transport system, voiced by Jennifer Clyde, the narrator who voices the actual Seoul metro system. Other collaborators featured within the soundscape include "Korea's Leading Young Environmentalist" Cherry Sung, renowned poet & #MeToo activist Choi Young-mi and Korean Sign Language artist LIHOO, who interpreted the full soundscape into KSL. Additional sonic inspiration is derived from The Gwangju Human Rights Charter, which champions goals of inclusion, accessibility and sustainability in developing a more hopeful future. In this presentation, I will outline how acoustemology, attentive listening and research intersecting science, technology and urban design philosophies helped render a future cityscape through sound.

Evening Performance: Koto and shamisen

17:30–18:00 / **On-site only** (presented as part of the evening reception)

Performers: **Philip Flavin** (shamisen, voice) & **Ise Misako** 伊勢美佐子 (koto, voice)

Programme

Sode kōrō 袖香炉

Comp. Minezaki Kōtō 峰崎勾当, late 18th century

Shamisen and voice: Philip Flavin

Ama obune 海女小舟

Comp. anon., mid-19th century

Shamisen and voice: Philip Flavin; koto and voice: Ise Misako

Kōjō no tsuki 荒城の月

Comp. Taki Rentarō 瀧廉太郎 (1879–1903); arr. Ōhira Terumi 大平光美

Koto: Ise Misako

Haru sandai 春三題 (Movements 1 & 2)

Comp. Nagasawa Katsutoshi 長沢勝俊 (1923–2008)

Shamisen: Philip Flavin; koto: Ise Misako

Ise Misako – Biography

Ise Misako was born and raised in Sendai and started learning the koto under her mother. She then entered the Seiha Conservatory of Music in Tokyo to further her studies of *sōkyoku-jiuta* and worked under two of the seminal figures in modern Japanese music: Nakashima Yasuko and Gotō Sumiko. She also studied *jiuta shamisen* under Miyako Michiko. After graduation, she returned to Sendai, where she continues to perform. In recognition of her abilities, the prefectural government twice sent Ise to perform in Korea. She is also an active instructor in Sendai, where she has established a studio for the promotion of Japanese music. Her efforts have been recognised by the Seiha School of Music headquarters in Tokyo, and she now functions as an advisor to the Seiha governing body.

Philip Flavin - Biography

After graduating with a degree in International Relations and Japanese, Philip Flavin entered the Seiha Conservatory of Music in Tokyo to pursue *sōkyoku-jiuta*, chamber music for koto and shamisen. After completing his studies, he performed professionally with appearances at the National Theatre in Tokyo, Japanese National Radio and Television, and performances throughout the country. He later entered the graduate programme in Music at the University of California at Berkeley, where he completed his Ph.D with a focus in ethnomusicology in 2002. He subsequently received a Social Science Research Council-sponsored post-doctorate at the Kyoto City University of Fine Arts, where he continued to conduct research in *sōkyoku-jiuta* as well as further his understanding of other genres of Japanese music, in particular Noh and Chikuzen biwa. In 2006, he was invited to participate in an Australian Research Council-funded project on the impact of modernity on Japanese music and relocated to Melbourne, Australia, where he worked for Monash and Melbourne Universities. Now residing in Kyoto, he continues to perform and write, his recent publications focusing on the newly developing aesthetics of *sōkyoku-jiuta* during the pre-war period, music of the Japanese avant-garde, and translations of contemporary Japanese theatre works.

DAY 3:

Sound at the boundaries: wellbeing, art-science, voice, memory

Session 8: Music, Memory & Cultural Politics

09:00-10:30 / Chair: **Luca Milasi** / *Tohoku University*

Between Local Pride and Critical Distance: External Perspectives on Cantopop

Leongkat Lei / *The University of Sheffield*

This paper foregrounds external and outsider perspectives in critical engagements with Hong Kong popular music, situating Cantopop within broader cultural, historical, and political contexts. Mainstream narratives often frame Hong Kong pop as a site of cultural achievement, emphasising resilience, technical skill, and emotional immediacy, while privileging romantic themes, depoliticising social and historical rupture, and relying heavily on adaptations of Japanese pop songs. Focusing on external figures such as Lo Ta-yu and other non-local contributors, the study examines how distance from Hong Kong's commercial and ideological constraints enabled direct engagement with colonial history, urban space, and political uncertainty—issues largely muted in mainstream production.

Internal cases, including post-1993 *Beyond*, serve as a contrast, showing abstraction, emotional withdrawal, and existential reflection rather than explicit social critique. Key questions addressed include: 1. How do outsider perspectives articulate social and historical critique differently from mainstream Cantopop? 2. What does reliance on Japanese pop adaptations reveal about structural constraints in local production? 3. How do internal cases negotiate political and social pressures through abstraction rather than direct critique? 4. In what ways does positionality shape the capacity for cultural critique and dissent within Cantopop? By juxtaposing insider and outsider positions, the paper re-evaluates Cantopop not only as a cultural achievement but also as a field structured by silences, mediated dissent, and contested engagement with sociopolitical change.

'The Sun Sets Over the Great Continent': commemoration in song of postwar Manchurian repatriation

Marjorie Dryburgh / *The University of Sheffield*

The song, 'The Sun Sets Over the Great Continent', commemorates the slow, arduous (and in some cases unsuccessful) homecomings of civilian Japanese who lived in north-east China/Manchuria in 1945. Repatriate stories, although less visible than survivor stories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, have been told in shorter and longer memoir texts, drawings and manga, museum exhibitions, news broadcasts and filmed interviews. The song—a new medium for this conversation—concludes a book published in 2024 that reimagines a repatriate story in word and image, co-produced between wartime and postwar generations (Ebina Kayoko, 1933–2025; Chiba Tetsuya, b.1939; [Takahashi] Kumiko, b.1954; Tanaka Kazue, b.1987).

In this paper, I will consider how the song works as a memory text. Studies of music in postwar commemorations and examples of commemorative songs from across the twentieth century show that music is widely used—but also occasionally resisted—in public war commemoration. As a historian who works primarily with words-on-paper, I recognise that some stories are more readily embedded in social memory than others; as a listener, I am struggling to avoid the conclusion that some modes of performance may be better adapted to that embedding, for example, if musical languages cross boundaries of generation and taste less easily than written texts. Nonetheless, in inviting us to remember and empathise with the traumas of repatriation, 'The Sun Sets Over the Great Continent' also raises questions about who that imagined listener is and how they are to be engaged in the work of public memory.

Contending with Style: Sound Knowledge Through a Punk Magazine

Robert Dahlberg-Sears / *Sophia University*

Magazines relating to musical topics in Japan are a commonly available form of musical knowledge production and circulation. Though the digital transition in publishing, which began in the 2000s, has greatly altered print publications as a source of breaking news, regularly printed magazines

remain an authoritative source of in-depth and insider information, such as interviews, criticism, and discussions of sounded cultural performance. In this paper, I introduce the singular musical magazine devoted to punk music in Japan, *Punk Rock Issue Bollocks*, its development, and how it functions to construct a canon for punk music in Japan while contending with narratives of an international punk canon. Written, edited, and published by and for punks and available in select retailers, *Bollocks* offers an accessible representation of punk music in Japan.

Drawing on data from the 15 years of the magazine's publication history, this paper offers insights into what types of punk music are made representative of the style in Japan. Considered alongside the developmental history of punk in Japan, which performers represent punk music offers insights into the construction of particular styles (genre) of sound knowledge and discourse. This paper acts as merely one example of how magazines and literary representations of music can be usefully called upon in considering listener valuation and reception of sound performances.

My Phoninary Japan: On the (Inter-) Subjectivity of Sonic Signifiers of Japaneseness

Oliver Seibt / *University of Amsterdam*

It was in the mid-1980s that I first encountered Japanese musicians. I was a big fan of the British band Japan, on whose 1980 album *Gentlemen Take Polaroids* Sakamoto Ryūichi appeared as a guest musician, who, with lead singer David Sylvian, released the two songs "Bamboo Houses" and "Bamboo Music" as a single two years later. Of course, the paratextual framing (a picture of Sakamoto and his name on the cover, the term "bamboo") contributes to these two songs sounding more Japanese to me than the earlier album track ("Taking Islands in Africa"), which was also co-written by Sakamoto and Sylvian. But why did "Bamboo Houses" sound so much more Japanese than "Bamboo Music"? At that time, I had never (consciously?) listened to "Japanese music". So, where did my very vague idea of what "Japan" sounds like come from, against which I measured the "Japaneseness" of these songs? Had the two musicians followed through on their words and used bamboo instruments for the recordings of their later songs, the explanation would have been obvious. But all the sounds are synthetically generated; no natural sound, nothing that sounds like bamboo, was used. Why did some of these synthetically generated, previously unheard (because they could not be produced until the advent of electronic musical instruments) sounds sound more "Japanese" to me than others?

Around the same time, a new generation of electronic musical instruments spread from Japan: digital FM-based synthesisers, most notably the Yamaha DX7, whose novel sounds, often described as crystalline, bell-like and percussive, were to have a lasting influence on global pop music in the 1980s. In a simultaneously cultural-historical and autoethnographic manner, I will examine how shared (synesthetic) cultural stereotypes, objectively given technological developments, and my historically embedded, individual encounters with the small segment of Japanese popular music that was available in Germany in the early 1980s interact in my assessment of its "Japaneseness".

Session 9: Sound at the Art-Science Boundary

10:45-12:15 / Chair: **Robert Dahlberg-Sears** / *Sophia University*

Sonifying a Central Asian Big Solar Furnace: Transforming Infrastructure into Sonic Experience

Heikki Vastiala / *Aalto University* (project developed with **Gleb Rogozinski**, *Omni Audio Oy*)

This paper presents an interdisciplinary study bridging sound art, data science, and sustainable technology through the sonic exploration of Uzbekistan's Big Solar Furnace—a monumental yet sonically unexplored landmark of Central Asian scientific heritage. The project explores the furnace through both its material vibrations and scientific data, investigating how sound can offer new ways of engaging with large-scale technological structures. Our approach integrates structure-based listening, phonographic recording, and multiple sonification and sound art techniques into a coherent system. We employ (1) architectural phonography to capture the furnace's inherent vibrations and structure-borne sounds; (2) spectral and algorithmic data mapping to convert scientific parameters—such as material emission spectra and thermal readings—into structured sound using the Csound audio programming language; and (3) the original Audiograffiti platform to spatialize and dynamically orchestrate these sonic layers into an interactive, location-aware installation accessible both on-site and via online streaming.

The work yields two key outcomes. First, it creates an adaptive sonic portrait of the furnace, combining its material resonances and scientific parameters into a generative musical composition and an intuitive interface for process awareness. Second, it outlines a transferable artistic research methodology for mediating industrial-scale infrastructures through listening, sound, and data, offering a new model for science communication and public engagement. By situating a Central Asian research facility within global discourse, this project contributes to sound studies and art-science practice, demonstrating how auditory representation can make advanced green technology both perceptible and poetically resonant for diverse audiences. This synthesis of technical precision, material listening, and artistic expression fosters a deeper cultural connection to sustainable innovation.

Acoustics of the Muchukundeswara Temple

Shashank Aswathanarayana / *Ahmedabad University*

The Chola dynasty had a tremendous impact on religious art and architecture in South India. Over 100 temples in the Kaveri River delta from the 9th–10th centuries C.E. are classed as "early Chola temples." The period is also important as it was during this time that Tamil hymns began to be incorporated into Tamil liturgy. Historians, therefore, emphasise the need to examine the development of early Chola temples. Of the existing studies, the focus remains on the temples' exteriors, as the interiors are strikingly unadorned. Concurrently, the acoustics of South Asian religious architecture remain underdeveloped, leaving these temples largely unexamined.

The Muchukundeswara Temple in Kodumbalur in present-day Tamil Nadu is an excellent example of an early Chola temple. This Shaivite temple was built in the 10th century C.E. and is largely unaltered aside from shrines added in the 14th–15th centuries C.E. It also assumes prominence as its location is associated with the Shaivite saint Idankazhi Nayanar. In this paper, we analyse the impulse responses and decay curves measured at the Muchukundeswara temple. Our analysis includes both standard acoustical parameters, such as T30, C80, and D50, as well as non-standard parameters, such as resonance quality and resonance width. We find that the acoustics of this space differ significantly from those of other temples studied in the region. These findings suggest a possible shift in temple architecture during the early Chola period.

The Genealogy of "Sound Art" in 1990s Japan: A Case Study of Xebec Hall as a Mediating Hub

Katsushi Nakagawa / *Yokohama National University*

This paper provides a historical case study of the genealogy and conceptual development of "sound art" (*saundo āto*) in Japan, focusing on the activities of Xebec Hall in Kobe during the 1990s. While the term began to appear in the Japanese art scene in the 1980s, its popularisation and discursive stabilisation were significantly shaped by the experimental practices of the following decade. Xebec Hall, established by a professional audio manufacturer (TOA), functioned as a critical hub where diverse sonic practices intersected. These included avant-garde performances, world music, computer-network music, contemporary academic music, and sound installations within the context of visual arts. I argue that at Xebec, the term "sound art" was employed as an "umbrella term"—a flexible conceptual framework capable of encompassing these heterogeneous practices that blur the boundaries of traditional categorisation.

This presentation aims first to provide a general overview of the emergence of sound art in Japan; second, to report on archival research regarding Xebec Hall's influential role in fostering technological and artistic collaborations; and third, to analyse how the usage of "sound art" in the 1990s reflected a specific cultural and technological climate in Japan. By examining Xebec Hall as a site where "performance meets technology," this study contributes to a broader understanding of Asian sound cultures and the localised evolution of sonic terminology in a global context.

The Question of Transmediality in Takemitsu's Early Tape Music

Marin Escande / *Tokyo University of Foreign Studies*

This paper examines transmediality in Tōru Takemitsu's early tape works. In the 1950s and early 1960s, several of Takemitsu's compositions circulated across radio drama, cinema, theatre music, and concert presentation. Rather than understanding these shifts as secondary adaptations, I argue that the works themselves were constituted through this process of transmedia migration. When material initially conceived for radio, stage, or film is later rearranged as autonomous tape music (or vice versa), traces of its prior media situation persist. Patterns of pacing, montage, spatial articulation,

and sonic characterisation retain residual dramaturgical functions inherited from narrative and theatrical frameworks. These compositional features cannot be fully accounted for within a purely musical logic; they emerge from earlier intermedial configurations that continue to structure the work from within.

Drawing on theories of intermediality and transmedial circulation, I propose the notion of “dramaturgical sedimentation” to describe how successive media contexts accumulate within a single piece. Methodologically, the paper undertakes an archaeology of the media environments surrounding these works, excavating the layered contexts—radiophonic, cinematic, theatrical—that inform their formal organisation. Takemitsu's early tape music thus appears not as a set of stable musical objects, but as stratified formations shaped by movement across media. By foregrounding this migratory and archaeological dimension, the paper repositions Takemitsu within the dynamic postwar media ecosystem in which sound operated as a mobile, recontextualisable medium.

Session 10: Sound, Wellbeing & Pedagogy

13:45-15:15 / Chair: **Tianyuan Huang** / *Tohoku University*

Embodied Sound Learning: Circle Singing as a Methodology for Inclusive Language and Music Education

Giuseppe Pantano / *Roma Tre University* 

This paper examines Circle Singing as an embodied sound-based practice positioned at the intersection of artistic performance, disciplinary learning, and inclusive pedagogy (Pantano & Rizzo, 2025). Developed by Bobby McFerrin, Circle Singing relies on collective vocal improvisation to create a dynamic ecology of listening in which participants—arranged in a circle and guided by an expert—experience overlapping vocal patterns, polyphonic textures, and spontaneous vocal interplay. Within this multisensory environment, sound operates simultaneously as artistic expression, cognitive stimulus, and relational medium, becoming a vehicle for recognising identity, alterity, and belonging. Such dynamics resonate with phenomenological accounts of embodied perception (Varela et al., 1993; Gallagher, 2005; Araya, 2017) and with intersubjective meaning-making (Husserl, 1996, 2000). Moreover, music has long been recognised as a resource for fostering inclusion (UNESCO-KACES, 2010), while improvisation supports flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) and distributed attention (Sawyer, 2012).

Building on this framework, an empirical mixed-methods study was conducted at Roma Tre University with 188 students (EG, $n = 104$; CG, $n = 84$) between October 2025 and January 2026. The laboratory investigated how embodied vocal practice contributes to the development of disciplinary competences—specifically English pronunciation and musical perception—while enhancing wellbeing and socio-relational engagement. Two standardised digital tools supported data collection: PROMS, assessing aural perception skills, and SpeechAce, providing AI-assisted feedback on phonetic accuracy. Preliminary results indicate statistically significant improvements in both musical and linguistic competences, alongside heightened bodily awareness, reduced performance anxiety, and an expanded sense of belonging. The study proposes Circle Singing as a sonic pedagogy that bridges artistic creativity, technological mediation, and inclusive education, resonating with broader sound cultures in which vocality, embodied participation, and communal interaction play a central pedagogical role.

Sound, Harmony, and Healing in Iqbal's Poetry: Exploring Aesthetic, Musical, and Spiritual Dimensions

Hafiz Muhammad Farooq Abdullah / *Allama Iqbal Open University*

Muhammad Iqbal (9 November 1877–21 April 1938) is widely recognised as a major poet-philosopher of the subcontinent whose thought-oriented poetry has shaped intellectual and spiritual discourse in South Asia. However, alongside its philosophical depth, Iqbal's poetry demonstrates a powerful sonic and musical dimension that has received comparatively less critical attention. This paper examines the role of sound, melody, rhythm, and acoustic harmony in Iqbal's poetry and explores how these elements relate to human mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Through close reading and textual analysis of selected poems and verses, the study argues that for Iqbal, poetry is not merely an intellectual or ideological expression but also an aesthetic and auditory experience that directly engages human consciousness.

The structured use of rhythm, repetition, oratorical cadence, and melodic flow in his poetry produces an affective impact that operates beyond semantic meaning, influencing the listener's emotional and psychological state. The paper assumes that sound, when meaningfully integrated with melody and thought, has a profound effect on the human mind and emotional balance. In Iqbal's poetry, sonic patterns evoke feelings of hope, self-awareness, movement, and purposefulness, qualities that are closely associated with positive mental health and inner stability. Rather than leading towards despair or passivity, the soundscape of Iqbal's verse encourages self-confidence, inner strength, and conscious engagement with life, thereby contributing to psychological and spiritual growth. Situated within the broader theme of Sound, Health, and Wellbeing, this study highlights how poetry and musical expression in the South Asian intellectual tradition have historically functioned not only as artistic forms but also as sources of inner harmony and human well-being.

Chirping for a Harmonic Society: Avian Motifs and the Cultural Politics of Sound in Japanese Railways

Christoph Reichenbaecher / *Nanzan University*

Japan's railway stations regularly broadcast melodic bird calls from platforms. These calls serve as functional cues for navigating the infrastructure. Beyond that, these sonic motifs invite deeper consideration within the framework of sound culture. This paper examines the use of avian sounds in three concrete examples as a mediated form of environmental design that intersects technology, memory, and social order. Most surprisingly, many stations use electronically composed, stylised calls inspired by species such as the Japanese bush warbler (*uguisu*), sparrow (*susume*), or cuckoo (*kakkō*), rather than playing field recordings of local birds. These common species are culturally associated with seasonality, rural landscapes, and poetic tradition.

This paper draws on soundscape theory and media anthropology, arguing that these signals domesticate the railway environment by introducing a pastoral acoustic reference. The otherwise mechanical, densely populated space acquires a softened, affective atmosphere. This approach reduces passenger stress and encodes instructions in culturally resonant auditory forms, such as guiding visually impaired people. In some cases, melodies are customised to reinforce local identity while maintaining network-wide coherence. Simultaneously, the simulated naturalism of these calls reveals tensions between authentic and artificial environments. "Nature" on the platform appears technologically produced and standardised. The bird sounds function as an operational signal and as a sonic symbol of harmony between modern infrastructure and imagined nature. This paper situates these auditory practices within broader Japanese aesthetic traditions that value seasonal awareness and subtle environmental cues, thereby illuminating how everyday transit spaces become sites of cultural expression through sound.

Organised Panel 2: Vocal Subversions: Renegotiating Body, Genre, and Identity in Japanese Mediated Performance

13:45-15:15 / Organiser & Chair: **Luca Proietti** / *SOAS, University of London*

Luca Proietti / *SOAS, University of London*; **April Wei-West** / *SOAS, University of London*; **Korino Bursens** / *Tohoku University*; **Nemo Martin** / *Kanazawa University*

Within the ever-expanding ecosystem of contemporary Japanese media, the "voice" emerges as a central means of aesthetic, subjective, and social communication, recast as a radical site of cultural and biological subversion that exists as a potent liminal space. Vocal performances mediated through technology act as a threshold where the physical reality of the human body is problematised by the material possibilities of the digital.

This panel investigates how mediated vocalities, ranging from the disembodied and robotic to the synthetic and transgressive, serve as the primary architects of new, transformative realities that challenge the status quo. By moving past the expectation of a "natural" or "human" source, these performances leverage the voice as a tool for post-human agency and social critique. Whether through the materialisation of virtual idols, the descent into a "sonic uncanny valley", the creation of shared cyberspace, or the reclamation of identity through "monstrous" non-conforming performance, the vocalities explored here offer a profound critique of how we perceive the "human" in an increasingly digitised and fluid cultural environment. Collectively, this panel argues that the

voice is not just an auditory phenomenon but a powerful intermediary that facilitates the socio-musical formation of identity and provides a site of resistance against institutional systems of injustice.

April Wei-West employs a new materialist perspective to locate the “body” within vocal synth practices like Vocaloid and Synthesizer V, arguing that virtual idols are afforded a materiality through an extensive network of fan-made creative practices (production, illustration, remixing), which enables their agency as fan-worshipped entities, with the voice becoming a means of cultivating virtual worlds where musical and technological experiences facilitate embodied human-technology connections. Luca Proietti examines the radical collaboration between the noise band Hijokaidan and the virtual idol Hatsune Miku, subverting Miku’s “pre-valley” state where her synthetic timbre evokes empathy by subjecting her “near-human” voice to abrasive distortion and chaotic instrumentation, reconfiguring the pristine “kawaii” idol into a ghostly residue to expose the fragility of manufactured icons and the spectral nature of the digital voice as a site of deconstructive beauty. Korino Bursens investigates a multimedia concert series by Hirasawa Susumu in which a computer interface voiced by a robotic, disembodied voice serves as the communicative anchor between artist and audience, arguing that the performance transcends both parties into a virtual state, thereby constructing a cyberspace that mirrors the discursive interactions of the internet. Nemo Martin considers the “transgender voice” in anime musical films to reclaim “monstrosity” and difference as sources of power by portraying shifting gender practices as a necessary tool for protagonists to dismantle institutional injustices and express their boundary-crossing selves, embodying a radical “transgender euphoria” to break free from societal norms mirrored by the real-life identities of their voice actors, using the voice as a vehicle for liberation.

Roundtable:

Sound and Wellbeing in Japan: Art, Science and Lived Experience

15:45-17:15 / Organiser & Chair: **Nick Luscombe** / *MSCTY Japan*

Nick Luscombe / *MSCTY Japan*; **Junichi Shimizu** / *Sony Human Interaction Team*; **Jamie Kass** / *Tohoku University*; **Jamila Rodrigues** / *OIST*; **Nicholas Luscombe** / *OIST*

This interdisciplinary roundtable brings together artists, scientists, technologists and anthropologists to explore connections between sound and wellbeing in contemporary Japan. Framed within Art meets Science, Performance meets Technology, the discussion examines sound as both diagnostic tool and therapeutic intervention—revealing the health of ecosystems, communities and individuals, while also shaping emotional states and perceptual experience. Japan offers a compelling context for such inquiry. From highly technologised urban soundscapes to rural and maritime acoustic environments, everyday life is saturated with carefully designed, contested and evolving sonic ecologies.

The roundtable considers how sound mediates relationships between people, place, and technology, and how it can support or undermine individual and collective wellbeing. Through discussion and demonstration—including live spatial audio, field recordings from Okinawan waters, and acoustic biodiversity data—the panel explores how acoustic environments can be measured to assess stress, attention, mood and social cohesion, and how sound can be intentionally designed to influence these states. Nick Luscombe (DJ, sound artist, Director MSCTY Japan) will demonstrate how intentional sound design and music programming shape emotional states and collective memory. Through examples from broadcast, spatial audio and live events in Japan’s clubs, galleries and festivals, he explores how sound becomes a tool for connection and resilience in post-pandemic contexts. Junichi Shimizu (Sony Human Interaction Team) will demonstrate spatial audio technologies deployed in therapeutic, educational and workplace settings. By enhancing immersion and perceptual realism, these systems can deepen emotional engagement and alter cognitive processing—but also raise questions about who controls listening environments and access to sonic wellbeing. Jamie Kass (ecologist, Tohoku University) will present acoustic monitoring as a diagnostic tool, revealing ecosystem health and environmental change. As species ranges shift with climate change, soundscape analysis offers early warning signals of biodiversity transformation, connecting sonic data to conservation assessment. Jamila Rodrigues (anthropologist, OIST) will share recordings from Okinawan fishing communities who diagnose climate change through shifting soundscapes: altered wind patterns, changing wave rhythms, and declining marine life. For fishers, sonic perception serves as both livelihood knowledge and register of environmental loss. Nicholas

Luscombe (computational biologist, OIST) will address measurement and modelling questions: how do we quantify acoustic environments across scales? What can sound data reveal about organismal stress, ecosystem function, or human wellbeing that other metrics cannot capture?

Together, the roundtable proposes that sound is infrastructural: it structures environments, encodes cultural meaning, and mediates relationships between humans and nonhuman worlds. By making sound audible throughout the session, the discussion foregrounds listening as both diagnostic method and therapeutic practice, asking how Japan's diverse sonic cultures might inform new frameworks for understanding wellbeing in an era of ecological and technological change.

ASC3 in Keywords

A starting snapshot of the conference, drawn from the programme and abstracts.



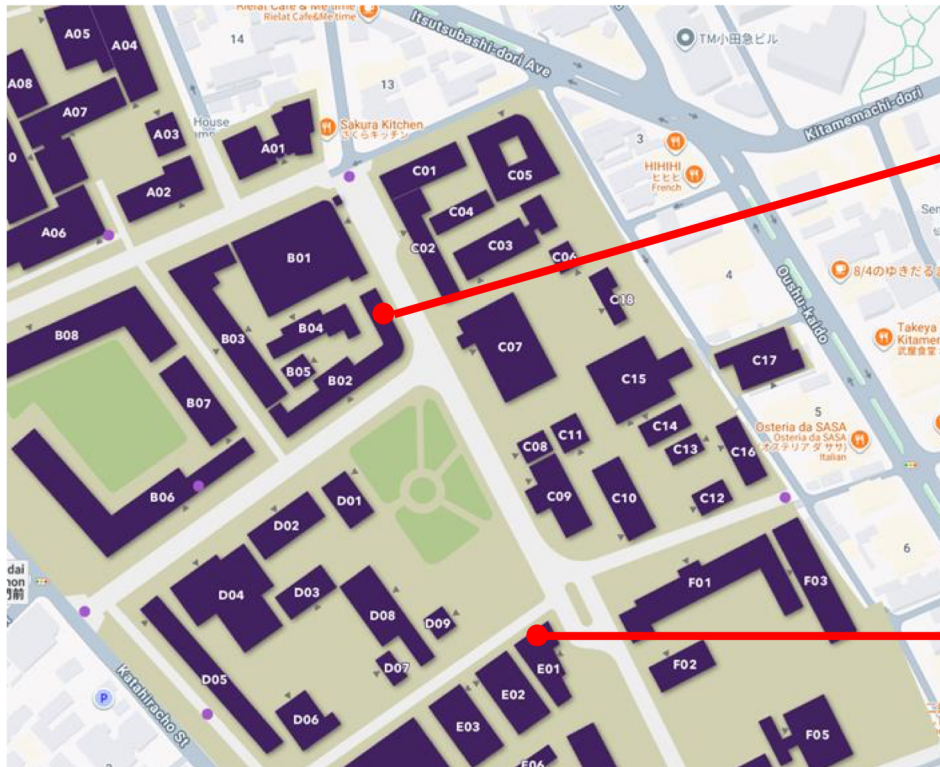
As ASC3 unfolds, what words would you add?

Share up to three keywords or short phrases by **15:00 JST on Thursday, 3 September**. Your contributions will be added to this original set to create a collective closing word cloud.



<https://forms.gle/UFcS1AnozfrLGxcg6>

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