

Summer Colloquy

Religious relations and sound

Online | Mondays from 3 July to 7 August. | 13:00 BST.



Featured image: The Šolajas with their family gusle.
Nadanići, Bosnia, 2012.
Courtesy of Safet HadžiMuhamedović.

Join the Cambridge Interfaith Programme online for six 90-minute sessions on the role of sound in the articulation of religious relations.

Anthropologists, philosophers, musicians and theologians will introduce you to their research of voice, music, poetry, instruments, language, sonic encounters and sacred soundscapes, as well as sound absences and conversions. From northern Africa and central Europe, to the Balkan and Pyrenean peninsulas and South Asia, each session introduces a different case study and its supporting methodology.

Participants will receive access to all the recommended readings. The programme is suitable for students, researchers and practitioners interested in sound and religion.

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About the Cambridge Interfaith Programme and the Colloquy

The Cambridge Interfaith Programme (CIP) is a University of Cambridge research centre based in the Faculty of Divinity. We hold a distinctive research and teaching expertise in the field of interfaith relations, traversing disciplinary boundaries and a wide range of research geographies.

The Summer Colloquy on **Religious relations and sound** is offered to participants with a sincere interest in learning more about approaches to studying and speaking about inter-religious relations and sound, whether that interest is academic, professional, or simply a matter of your personal curiosity.

We limit the overall number of places to ensure there is opportunity for all participants to contribute to discussion.

www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk

Colloquy dates

Monday 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 July, 13:00–14:30 BST

Monday 7 August, 13:00–15:00 BST

Costs

Successful applicants will receive a full fee waiver. There is therefore no charge for participation.

Time commitment and time zones

The colloquy will span six Mondays, with 90-minute scheduled sessions on Zoom. The final session will include an extra 30 minutes, to distribute certificates of participation, share information about the Cambridge Interfaith Research Forum, and hear from all participants.

Sessions will begin at 13:00 British Summer Time (GMT+1). This should be equivalent to 08:00 EDT, 14:00 CEST, 17:30 IST and 22:00 AEST.

Participants are expected to attend all timetabled sessions. You should notify us in advance of any issues with this requirement.

Preparation and requirements

There will be one item of required pre-reading (or listening) before each session. These items will be provided in advance, so that participants have time to read and absorb.

There is no required level of prior knowledge. Participants will be expected to engage with academic (theological, philosophical, anthropological) concepts and theories.

You will need access to a computer and a basic Zoom account.

How to apply

The Application Form can be downloaded from the Cambridge Interfaith Programme website: www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk

Return your completed form to cipcolloquy@divinity.cam.ac.uk by 20 June 2023.

Spaces are limited. In your application, you should describe succinctly why you are interested in the topic of the colloquy and how you might benefit from participation. The applications of students of interfaith relations and audible religious practices may be prioritised.

If there is a very high quantity of applications, the Colloquy may close to new applicants at an earlier date. In such circumstance, we will provide a 24-hour warning via the Cambridge Interfaith Programme's social media channels and on our website.

Recognition and accreditation

A certificate of attendance will be issued to those participants who attend each session and participate in the discussion. There is no other credit for participation.

Colloquy schedule

Overview of dates and topics

Date	Topic	Lecturer(s)	Preparation
3 July	Introduction to Sound relations	Colloquy convenors	Journal article
10 July	Ambivalence, paradox and eschatology in J.S. Bach	Dr Giles Waller	Journal article
17 July	The Spanish-Morocco corridor: music, politics and anti-extremist cultural policies	Dr Vanessa Paloma Elbaz	Book chapter
24 July	Get(ting) into the flow of reading: language and material force in a liberal Talmud Torah classroom	Dr Anastasia Badder	Journal article
31 July	Indo-Islamic quests for God: sonic affiliations, structural dissonances	Dr Ankur Barua	Blog essay
7 August	Bosnian epics: interfaith soundscapes or theme songs for genocide? + Closing session	Dr Safet HadžiMuhamedović + Dr Iona Hine	Book chapter

NB July sessions will run from 13:00 to 14:30 BST. The 7 August session will include an extra 30 minutes, finishing at the later time of 15:00 BST.

Schedule by date

3 July: Sounding relations—an introduction

13:00 Welcome (Dr Iona Hine)

13:10 Sounding relations (Dr Safet HadžiMuhamedović)

13:25 Welcome to the Cambridge Interfaith Programme (Professor Esra Özyürek)

13:35 Colloquy structure and the work of CIP (Dr Iona Hine)

13:45 Participants' introduction

Recommended reading

Barbara Cooper (1999) 'The strength is in song: Muslim personhood, audible capital, and Hausa women's performance of the Hajj'. *Social Text* 60: 87–109.

10 July: Ambivalence, paradox, and eschatology in J.S. Bach

Speaker: Dr Giles Waller

13:00–13:45 BST, with 45 minutes for discussion.

This session will examine Bach's cantata BWV 66, *Erfreut euch ihr Herzen*. We will explore how the musical setting of a text can mediate, sustain, and point beyond theological and philosophical contradictions and paradoxes. Bach's cantata, written for the second day of Easter in 1724, stages a dramatic dialogue between a pair of voices, marked in the score as 'Fear' and 'Hope'. 'Hope' sings of confidence in the resurrection of Jesus as the underpinning of human joy in the renewal of life. 'Fear', however, sings words that directly contradict those of hope. At the level of the text, their dispute is largely unresolved. How does our understanding of this theological tension change when we hear the musical setting of these voices? What role does a pervading 'mood' play in our understanding of representation in music? And in what sense might this allow us to appreciate Bach as a Lutheran theologian? How does music relate to our understandings and experience of faith and doubt?

[Recommended reading](#)

Jeremy Begbie (2000) 'Resolution and salvation', *Theology, music and time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 98–128.

[About the speaker](#)

Dr Giles Waller, a Research Associate and Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity, is a core member of the Cambridge Interfaith Programme team. His research and teaching focus on Christian doctrine, literature, music, poetry, and philosophy.

[[More about Giles \(via the Faculty of Divinity website\)](#) (divinity.cam.ac.uk)]

17 July: The Spanish-Morocco corridor: music, politics, and anti-extremist cultural policies

Speaker: Dr Vanessa Paloma Elbaz

13:00–13:45 BST, with 45 minutes for discussion.

Spain and Morocco share land and aqueous borders, in addition to having pockets of populations living in each other's countries. Linguistically, culturally, and musically they are, and have been for centuries, deeply intertwined. This lecture will discuss how music and politics have been used in recent years to stem radicalisation by celebrating musical policies of religious and cultural diversity.

[Recommended reading](#)

Vanessa Paloma Elbaz (2021) 'The Bright Side of Identity: Music, Crossing Borders and the War on Terror'. In D. Benmayer and R. Taylor (eds) *Age of Confidence: The New Jewish Culture Wave*. Jewish Renaissance 20th Anniversary Volume. Cheltenham: The History Press

[About the speaker](#)

Dr Vanessa Paloma Elbaz is a Research Associate at the Faculty of Music, University of Cambridge and Peterhouse, currently working on [Musical Encounters Across the Strait](#)

[of Gibraltar](#). An active member of the Cambridge Interfaith Research Forum, she has an international performance career as a singer of Moroccan Jewish repertoires. *The New York Times* described her as “a kind of one-woman roving museum of her own”.

[[More about Vanessa \(via the Faculty of Music website\)](#) (music.cam.ac.uk)]

24 July: Get[ting] into the flow of reading: language and material force in a Liberal Talmud Torah classroom

Speaker: Dr Anastasia Badder

13:00–13:45 BST, with 45 minutes for discussion.

As part of their Jewish education, the students of a Liberal Talmud Torah school in Luxembourg learn to read Hebrew. Entering the classroom expecting to engage Hebrew in the same ways they do other foreign languages at home and school, the students are surprised and frustrated to find that Hebrew works differently. Speaking to recent anthropological work on the materiality of language (Shankar & Cavanaugh 2012) and inspired by new materialist perspectives on literacy (Dagenais 2019), this lecture traces students’ language learning journeys, focussing on the material forces—including music, voice, and ambient sound—required for successful literacy performances and effective ritual practice in this Talmud Torah school.

[Recommended reading](#)

Anastasia Badder (2022) ‘I just want you to get into the flow of reading’: Reframing Hebrew proficiency as an enactment of Liberal Jewishness’. *Language & Communication* 87: 221–230.

[About the speaker](#)

Dr Anastasia Badder is a Research Associate in the Faculty of Divinity and an active member of the Cambridge Interfaith Programme team. Her work ethnographically explores contemporary Jewish lives and languages in Europe.

[[More about Anastasia \(via the Lucy Cavendish College website\)](#) (lucy.cam.ac.uk)]

31 July: Indo-Islamic quests for God: sonic affiliations, structural dissonances

Speaker: Dr Ankur Barua

13:00–13:45 BST, with 45 minutes for discussion.

In this lecture, Ankur will outline some liminal spaces from South Asia which are osmotic interfaces for styles of Hindu and Muslim poetry which sing of the divine reality as the innermost beloved of the human heart. These sonic spaces are, however, encased in long-range sociohistorical asymmetries variously characterised by adaptation, affiliation, contestation, and opposition. So, can music conquer all or is

music just a frivolous pastime when the real world keeps on burning? Think through such questions—and perhaps sing along too—with Ankur.

Recommended reading

Ankur Barua (2022) 'Bhakti Beyond Borders: Sufi Serenades in Love's Laboratory' (Blog essay). [Journal of the History of Ideas blog](https://jhiblog.org/2022/12/07/bhakti-beyond-borders-sufi-serenades-in-loves-laboratory/). [https://jhiblog.org/2022/12/07/bhakti-beyond-borders-sufi-serenades-in-loves-laboratory/]

About the speaker

Dr Ankur Barua is Senior Lecturer in Hindu Studies, Faculty of Divinity. His primary research interests are Hindu philosophical theology and Indo-Islamic styles of sociality.

[\[More about Ankur \(via the Faculty of Divinity website\)\]](https://divinity.cam.ac.uk/) (divinity.cam.ac.uk)]

7 August: Bosnian epics: interfaith soundscapes or theme songs for genocide?

Speaker: Dr Safet HadžiMuhamedović

13:00–14:00 BST (including discussion).

In the south-eastern corner of Bosnia, divided groups of Muslims and Christians recount memories of a peculiar single-stringed instrument, gusle, twenty years after the beginning of a genocidal war. Safet extends their narratives to discuss the epic songs of the Balkan highlanders as not only the framing devices for a shared and syncretic cosmology in a harmonious society, but also as vehicles for ethnonationalism and religious hatred.

Recommended reading

Safet HadžiMuhamedović (2021) *Waiting for Elijah: Time and encounter in a Bosnian landscape*. Oxford: Berghahn (Read chapter 'The epic unconscious').

About the speaker

Dr Safet HadžiMuhamedović is an anthropologist based at the University of Cambridge, where he holds courses on religious encounter and conflict and runs the [Shared Sacred project](https://shredsacred.com/) (shredsacred.com). He is Research Associate in Anthropology at the Faculty of Divinity, the Director of Studies and Bye-Fellow at Fitzwilliam College, and a CIP-affiliated Researcher.

[\[More about Safet \(via the Faculty of Divinity website\)\]](https://divinity.cam.ac.uk/) (divinity.cam.ac.uk)]

7 August: Closing session

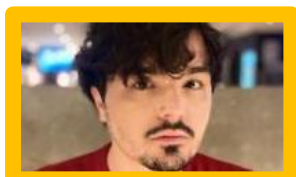
14:00–15:00 BST. *Please note the later end time.*

Led by Dr Iona Hine (Communications and Programme Manager with the Cambridge Interfaith Programme), this session will introduce participants to the Cambridge Interfaith Research Forum and its alumni network. We will also distribute certificates

of attendance, and co-create a CIP Summer playlist for 2023 (as befits a sound-themed colloquy).

Sessions may be recorded and uploaded to a Virtual Learning Environment to watch again. Recordings are intended to allow participants to catch missed content (e.g., because of a medical appointment or an internet connection issue). For reasons of confidentiality, small group discussion will not be recorded, and session recording may be paused on occasion.

Summer School Convenors



Dr Safet HadžiMuhamedović

Teaching Associate in Anthropology of Religion
Director of Studies and Bye-Fellow, Fitzwilliam College



Dr Iona Hine FHEA

Communications and Programme Manager
Cambridge Interfaith Programme



Dr Giles Waller

Sultan Qaboos Research Associate, Cambridge Interfaith
Programme

Contact us

By email: cipcolloquy@divinity.cam.ac.uk

On Twitter: [@CamInterfaith](https://twitter.com/CamInterfaith)

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CamInterfaith/>

Terms and Conditions

Make sure to carefully read, understand and accept the Terms & Conditions of the Summer Colloquy 2023 before making an application. The Terms & Conditions are published on the CIP website. They outline policies, rules and regulations regarding: Data Protection; Data Retention; Cancellations by CIP; Dignity Policy; Disability Policy; Equality and Diversity Policy; Freedom of Speech; Health and Safety; Student Complaints Procedure; CIP Admissions Complaints and Appeals; and Student Disciplinary Procedure.

We look forward to welcoming you.