

SALLE DE CONFÉRENCE – PHILHARMONIE

MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER

# Symposium

The global musical instrument  
market: making, trading  
and collecting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century  
and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

LIVE ON PHILHARMONIE À LA DEMANDE



CITÉ DE LA MUSIQUE  
**PHILHARMONIE**  
DE PARIS

Ivory and tropical woods sawn in European factories, pianos exported as far as Oceania, collections brought back from the colonies: the market for musical instruments went global in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The rise of trade routes and steam navigation hastened the globalization of markets of the raw materials used in making instruments, which became an industrialized, mass-production process. European instruments won new markets in the Americas early in the century, followed by Asia, Africa and Oceania in the wake of colonization. At the same time, instruments presented as “exotic” and “savage” enriched European public and private collections, especially in the museums that were being created across the continent from Paris to Berlin. Exhibited and silenced, these instruments served a Darwinian project based on a view of non-European cultures as primitive and participated in the construction of racialized colonial cultures in the imperial powers, colonies and dominions.

Musical instruments stood at the crossroads of several globalized markets on which Europe rose to dominance in the nineteenth century: the materials used to make them; “ethnographic” objects; manufactured goods; African and Asian art; and travel souvenirs. The joint study of markets and collections, which grew in parallel and fed off each other during the period, aims to map the flows of instruments, the places and the players who put them into circulation from the perspective of a global history of music and material cultures. Purchasing and export data sheds new light on the history of European musical instruments, such as those in collections of non-European cultural property. It highlights the dynamics of musical globalization even before the invention of sound recording. Like artists, sheet music and concert halls, musical instruments have been powerful vectors of cultural exchanges while serving the colonial project and manufacturing musical “otherness”.

The symposium will explore the global musical instrument market’s various facets from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Historians, musicologists and curators explore the journey of instruments around the world through three themes: collections and empires, trade and manufacture, exchanges and appropriation of sounds.

### Comité scientifique :

Anais Fléchet (Sciences Po Strasbourg),

Alexandre Girard-Muscagorry (Musée de la musique – Philharmonie de Paris),

Giovanni Giurati (La Sapienza University, Roma),

Anne Lafont (École des hautes études en sciences sociales, centre de recherches sur les arts et le langage, Paris),

Thierry Maniguet (Musée de la musique – Philharmonie de Paris),

Marie-Pauline Martin (Musée de la musique – Philharmonie de Paris),

Gabriele Rossi Rognoni (Royal College of Music, London),

Léa Saint-Raymond (École normale supérieure, PSL, Paris),

Ariane Théveniaud (Paris-Saclay, CHCSC),

Saskia Willaert (Musical Instruments Museum, Brussels)

*Coproduction Cité de la musique – Philharmonie de Paris, Center for the Cultural History of Contemporary Societies (Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines University) with support from the Graduate School Humanités et Sciences du Patrimoine Paris-Saclay and the CNRS programme « Accueil en résidence dans les musées ».*



# PROGRAMME

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9.45 AM

Greetings and introduction

**Marie Pauline Martin** (director, Musée de la musique, Philharmonie de Paris)  
**Anaïs Fléchet** (Contemporary History professor, Sciences Po Strasbourg)

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Session 1

## COLLECTIONS & EMPIRES

Session chair: **Alexandre Girard-Muscagorry** (Musée de la musique, Philharmonie de Paris)

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10.00 AM

**Ariane Théveniaud** (CHCSC, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Paris-Saclay), *The Role of Colonial Agents in the Constitution of French Instrumental Collections: the Case of West African Lutes Acquired by the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (1880-1910)*

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10.15 AM

**Louis Petitjean** (École d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie de la Sorbonne, Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne), *Circulation of Musical Instruments in the Indochinese Peninsula. Colonial and Scientific Networks (1883-1902)*

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10.30 AM

**Joana Peliz** (Centre for the Study of the Sociology and Aesthetics of Music, University of Lisbon), *Non-European Instruments in the Collection of the Artist Alfredo Keil: Methods of Acquisition and Significance*

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10.45 AM

Questions Time

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11.00 AM

Break

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11.30 AM

**Keynote - David R.M. Irving** (ICREA & Institució Milà i Fontanals de Recerca en Humanitats, CSIC, Barcelona), *Cultural Identity, the Environment, and Industrial Modernity: Global-Historical Perspectives on Musical Instruments in the Long Nineteenth Century\**

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12.15 AM Question Time

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12.30 AM Lunch Break

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## Session 2 EXCHANGES & APPROPRIATIONS

Session chair: **Martin Guerpin** (RASM-CHCSC, Université d'Évry, Paris-Saclay)

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2.00 PM **Dr Michael Lea** (University of Sydney), *Antipodean Aspirations – the early European musical instrument trade in Australia\**

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2.15 PM **Francis Lapointe** (Laboratoire d'histoire et de patrimoine de Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal), *Musical Instrument Making and Trade in Pre-industrial British North America: the Case of Montreal, 1800-1851*

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2.30 PM **Rym Mansour** (Institut Supérieure de Musique de l'Université de Sousse, Tunisie), *The Repercussions and Discourse Surrounding Pianos Invented for Arabic Music in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

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2.45 PM Questions Time

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3.00 PM Break

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## Session 3 SOURINDRO MOHUN TAGORE, A MAKER OF COLLECTIONS

Session chair: **Gabriele Rossi Rognoni** (Royal College of Music, London)

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3.15 PM **Guillaume Lecoester** (Musée de l'Armée, Paris), *The Making of Tagore Collections: Outline of a Distribution Strategy*

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3.30 PM **Fañch Thoraval** (Musical Instruments Museum, Brussels, UCLouvain), *The Musical Box of Rajah Sourindro Mohun Tagore (MIM inv. 1946): Mediating the Other and the Self in the British Raj in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

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3.45 PM

Questions Time

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**Session 4**

**A WORLD ECONOMY OF INSTRUMENTS**

Session chair: **Thierry Maniguet** (Musée de la musique – Philharmonie de Paris)

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4.00 PM

**Fanny Gribenski** (New York University, Department of Music), *The Elephant in the Piano: Music, Ecology, Empire\**

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4.15 PM

**Anais Fléchet** (Sciences Po Strasbourg), *Tropicalizing Pianos: the Conquest of American markets in the Nineteenth Century*

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4.30 PM

**Jimena Palacios Uribe** (Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, Mexico), *Mexico City as a bastion of musical instruments international trade (1870-1910): companies, commercial agents, and objects\**

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5.00 PM

Questions Time

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5.15 PM

Conclusions

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6.00/7.00 PM

**Private visit of the Musée de la musique** (Cité de la musique - Philharmonie de Paris)

\*Oral Presentation in English

# ABSTRACTS

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## SESSION 1 – COLLECTIONS & EMPIRES

**Session Chair:** Alexandre Girard-Muscagorry, curator, Musée de la musique – Philharmonie de Paris

10.00 AM

**Ariane Théveniaud**, conservator, PhD student at the Centre d'histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines, Paris-Saclay

*The Role of Colonial Agents in the Constitution of French Instrumental Collections: the Case of West African Lutes Acquired by the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (1880-1910)*

From the last quarter of the nineteenth century, musical instruments appeared in instructions encouraging French travellers to bring back collections of ethnographic objects, which were gathered from 1878 at the musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro. Colonial soldiers and administrators became major suppliers of objects, and large collections of musical instruments from the territories conquered by France in West Africa were added to the museum. These instruments, which included a large number of lutes, were often associated with griots, musicians with complex and varied functions who were the subject of caricatured descriptions in European publications from the seventeenth century onwards. The aim of this paper is to take a closer look at how these instrumental collections were built up, by examining the people involved in their circulation and the sometimes violent contexts in which the instruments were taken. More generally, this study examines the place of the musical instruments within the colonial 'collecting' processes set up by European museums at the end of the nineteenth century.

10.15 AM

**Louis Petitjean**, École d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie de la Sorbonne, Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne University

*Circulation of Musical Instruments in the Indochinese Peninsula. Colonial and Scientific Networks (1883-1902)*

Musical instruments from South-East Asia, and particularly from the Indochinese peninsula, were relatively rare in European collections before the second half of the nineteenth century. It wasn't until French and British colonisation became more entrenched, around the end of the 1880s, that musical instruments from the peninsula were transferred to Europe on a larger scale. Interest

in these objects was stimulated by a European scholarly community inclined towards orientalism and interested in the archaeology and religious ethnography of the region. The Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1889, which erected the famous Annam and Tonkin pavilion, was a pivotal moment in the circulation of these objects and knowledge about them. This paper will attempt to highlight this by comparing the organological and scientific issues with the geopolitical stakes of the European presence in Indochina in the decades 1880-1890.

10.30 AM

**Joana Peliz**, PhD student, Center for the Study of the Sociology and Aesthetics of Music, University of Lisbon

### ***Non-European Instruments in the Collection of the Artist Alfredo Keil: Methods of Acquisition and Significance***

Alfredo Keil (1850-1907) was one of the most important figures in nineteenth century Portuguese culture. Interested in museology, he concentrated on building up several collections, including a collection of musical instruments, which today forms an important part of the collection of the Museu Nacional da Música in Portugal. Although he is today best known as the composer of the Portuguese national anthem, he was a renowned painter, and his operatic works are central to the history of Portuguese music. His work has often been described as patriotic. However, his sense of patriotism was not limited to his artistic language, but also manifested itself in the way he acted as a citizen. According to Michel'angelo Lambertini (1862-1920), collector and musicographer, his collection included a considerable number of "exotic" instruments, which he saw as an important means of "studying the art of non-European countries".

Given that the Portuguese colonial empire at the time extended into Africa and Asia, the aim of this paper is to understand how this situation was reflected not only in the role that non-European instruments played in the collection, but also in their access, using Keil's non-European instruments as an example.

11.30 AM

Keynote

**David R.M. Irving** (ICREA & Institució Milà i Fontanals de Recerca en Humanitats, CSIC, Barcelona)

### ***Cultural Identity, the Environment, and Industrial Modernity: Global-Historical Perspectives on Musical Instruments in the Long Nineteenth Century***

Musical instruments, those prosthetic tools of humans' sonic self-expression, are cultural objects that have been studied from the perspective of many different disciplines. These include organology (in all its guises), musicology and ethnomusicology, art history and material history, archaeology



and anthropology, sociology and literary studies, and others besides. In the humanities and social sciences, musical instruments have long been bound up with studies of cultural identity. Specimens were displayed or exhibited in ways that could symbolise value judgments about their aesthetic value, their place in an organological pantheon, and their producers' or users' status in real or imagined social hierarchies, local or global.

With the increasing focus on the Anthropocene in music studies, some scholars have identified instruments as tools of empire: objects that are embedded in histories of the exploitation of natural resources, a centuries-long process of hegemonic acts that included the enslavement of millions of African people. Over the course of the long nineteenth century, unprecedented acceleration in extractivism and the emergence of new forms of industrialisation wrought irrevocable changes to the relationship between humans and the environment. Musical instruments were implicated in diverse ways, both in the materials they incorporated and in the ways they were used in social contexts. Meanwhile, new forms of mass production and trends in standardisation changed the way many people produced and consumed music. Yet these were not wholesale patterns of human behaviour, even within a single society. Certain individuals recognised the hegemonic and homogenising effects of industrial modernity, and sought in their study, making, and playing of musical instruments to recalibrate the ways that these objects act in our lives.

This lecture reflects on many of the themes raised by today's symposium, and explores how we can think about musical instruments in the long nineteenth century from the perspective of global history.

## **SESSION 2 - EXCHANGES & APPROPRIATIONS**

**Session chair:** Martin Guerpin, Lecturer in Musicology, RASM-CHCSC, Université d'Évry, Paris-Saclay

2.00 PM

**Dr Michael Lea**, University of Sydney

### ***Antipodean Aspirations – the early European musical instrument trade in Australia***

European musical instruments were imported and traded in Australia from the early days of European occupation in the late 1700s. By 1803 colonial newspapers reported that European instruments were being imported and sold in colonial Sydney. This trade pattern parallels that of the late 1700's Calcutta piano trade, analysed by Woodfield. From the 1820s larger retail businesses developed, importing and trading new and used instruments. By the next decade free-settler European-Australian makers also became established with several relying on skilled convict labour. Increasingly, some makers began using local resources rather than imported products, effectively adapting to their new environment. This adoption of local resources was

highlighted in colonial and international exhibitions; the appropriation of the cultures, resources and identities of dispossessed First Nations Peoples is also evident.

This paper looks at how European instruments were imported to and sold in Australia and how, despite growing competition from imports, some European-Australian makers made instruments from local materials. Documentary evidence, from convict lists to exhibition catalogues, reveals who many of these European-Australian makers were, the types of instruments made, and the materials used. Museum collections established from international exhibitions illustrate the rationale and colonial philosophies behind collecting instruments from European-Australian and non-European makers.

2.15 PM

**Francis Lapointe**, associate researcher at the Laboratoire d'histoire et de patrimoine of Montréal and the Québec University, Montréal

### ***Musical Instrument Making and Trade in Pre-industrial British North America: the Case of Montreal, 1800-1851***

Montreal is a city influenced as much by its Americanness as by its European cultural models and roots. It quickly became a hub of trade in North America after the Seven Years' War and a major trading center for the British Empire, while retaining a predominantly French population and strong ties with France. This dual Franco-British cultural tradition and its continental integration make Montreal a fertile ground for studying the musical trade in the 19th century from a global perspective.

Our study focuses on the importation of musical instruments and the emergence of local production of musical instruments during the first half of the 19th century in Montreal. Based on our master's thesis at the Université du Québec à Montréal, and drawing on a body of unpublished archives, our analysis highlights the impact of climate on the flow of musical goods from Europe and on the development of a local instrument-making industry.

By adopting a cross-border perspective, this paper will shed new light on the exchange of musical goods between Europe and North America in the pre-industrial era, in a colonial setting where various cultural influences were interwove.

2.30 PM

**Rym Mansour**, teacher researcher and member of the scientific advisory board at the Institut Supérieur de Musique, Sousse University

*The repercussions and discourse surrounding pianos invented for arabic music in the early 20th century*

The adaptation of pianos to Arabic music represents a point of convergence between two distinct musical universes, offering fertile ground for dialogue among multiple cultures. A musical transition from the late 19th to early 20th century is marked by the introduction of several pianos adapted or invented for Arabic music.

This presentation aims to explore some of these pianos and the reactions they elicited, highlighting the unique characteristics of pianos specifically designed to meet the aesthetic and technical requirements of Arabic music at that time. The reactions, ranging from enthusiasm to resistance, not only reflected the musical preferences of the era but also revealed profound cultural and social issues underlying these changes.

In particular, we will discuss the deliberations of the Cairo Congress of 1932, a crucial moment where discussions on the adaptation of Western instruments were at the heart of debates. These discussions provide essential insights into the tensions and aspirations accompanying the integration of new musical influences into a changing Arab society.

### **SESSION 3 - SOURINDRO MOHUN TAGORE, A MAKER OF COLLECTIONS**

**Session chair:** **Gabriele Rossi Rognoni**, curator, Royal College of Music Museum, London

3.15 PM

**Guillaume Lecoester**, curator, Musée de l'Armée, Paris

*The Making of Tagore Collections: Outline of a Distribution Strategy*

Sourindro Mohun Tagore (1840-1914), a figure of the Bengali renaissance, sent from 1872 until 1892 between one thousand five hundred and two thousand instruments to heads of state or collectors, thereby constituting the primary collection of Indian instruments in many museums, from the Music Museum in Paris to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, including the Museum of Musical Instruments in Brussels.

He took charge of their manufacturing in his own workshops, their reasoned selection, accompanied them with detailed notices, treatises touching on multiple aspects of Indian culture, served with more or less diligence certain recipients constituting what appears to be a real

diffusion strategy. This layout, by S. M. Tagore who was, at that time, a renowned musicologist, has since often been criticized. Its motivations are uncertain: epistemological, political, search for honors and recognition... But by its scale and its influence, this project is unique in its desire to shape a discourse on Indian music from one of its centers, Calcutta.

3.30 PM

**Fañich Thoraval**, researcher, Musée des Instruments de Musique, Brussels and Catholic University of Louvain

***The Musical Box of Rajah Sourindro Mohun Tagore (MIM inv. 1946): Mediating the Other and the Self in the British Raj in the Late 19th Century***

The MIM music box inv. 1946 that plays eight melodies composed by rajah Sourindro Mohun Tagore received an ambiguous reception when it arrived in Belgium in 1880. Unofficially celebrated as a genuine recording of Indian music, it was officially considered an integral part of the MIM's collection only two decades later. This intriguing discrepancy relies on commercial, technical, colonial, national and musical issues. This paper will first explore the conditions under which this musical box was produced in Switzerland and distributed in Kolkata, in Belgium and at various world's fairs. It will then discuss the use of music boxes as media in the colonial context of the last quarter of the 19th century.

## **SESSION 4 - A WORLD ECONOMY OF INSTRUMENTS**

**Session chair: Thierry Maniguet**, head of the conservation-research team, curator, Musée de la musique - Philharmonie de Paris

4.00 PM

**Fanny Gribenski**, assistant professor, Department of Music, New York University

***The Elephant in the Piano: Music, Ecology, Empire***

Around the turn of the 20th century, pianos were ubiquitous technologies across the world. Drawing on recent approaches to the global circulation of the instrument, my paper expands these discussions by tracing the connections embedded in pianos' materials. As a technology relying on commodities from the corners of the earth, the piano is reminiscent of what Lisa Lowe has called "the intimacies of [five] continents." Drawing on a wealth of archival documents held in Ivoryton and Deep River, CT, and at the Smithsonian Institution, my paper analyzes the activities of Pratt, Read and Co, and Comstock, Cheney and Co—the two companies that produced

ivory keyboards and ivory parts of piano actions for the entire US market between the 1850s and 1950s. I show that ivory mediated a series of encounters between environment and music cultures, as well as between East Africa, Europe, and the United States. From the warehouses of European and American traders in Zanzibar to ivory auction houses at London and Antwerp, and from these sites to American keyboard factories and consumers' homes, pianos' ivory enabled differentiated experiences of a globalizing world, revealing hitherto unexamined entanglements between music, ecology, and empire.

4.15 PM

**Anaïs Fléchet**, Contemporary History professor, Laboratoire interdisciplinaire en études culturelles (LinCS), Sciences Po Strasbourg

### *Tropicalizing Pianos: the Conquest of American markets in the Nineteenth Century*

From the early 19th century onwards, the Americas were a privileged export market for European piano makers. In New Orleans, Cuba, and Rio de Janeiro, instruments which had been designed mostly in English and French workshops, and occasionally in Germany and Austria, found their way into elite households. As symbols of European civilization, pianos served to reinforce social, racial, and gender hierarchies in patriarchal societies which were still largely shaped by slavery. Pianos also served as gateways to new repertoires, from compressed works of art to popular dances. They furthermore played a leading role in the genesis of the new African-American urban music.

But how were those pianos transported? My study, based on the Érard and Pleyel archives, traces instruments on both sides of the Atlantic through serial numbers and sales records to understand the growing role of the Americas in the global piano market of the nineteenth century. I am particularly interested in the "tropicalized pianos" developed by European piano makers and all the intermediaries involved in their arrival on the continent, from Boston dealers to piano carriers in Recife or Valparaiso.

4.30 PM

**Jimena Palacios Uribe**, PhD Student, Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, Mexico

### *Mexico City as a Bastion of Musical Instruments International Trade (1870-1910): Companies, Commercial Agents and Objects*

Mexico City has been the political, social, administrative, and cultural center of Mexico. It functioned as an articulating axis of lifestyles and ideas that represented progress, modernity, and civilization. In this context, musical instruments had an enormous value in all social strata, but their sale, distribution and trade had an unprecedented growth towards the last third of the

nineteenth century due to the participation of a complex network formed by transoceanic builders, musical entrepreneurs, foreign and local agents, musicians, among others. The instruments produced by the most renowned makers, first from Europe and later from the United States of America, arrived in the city to satisfy the yearnings of the growing Mexican bourgeoisie that longed to be linked to the world through music and fashionable instruments. This instrumental trade of a strong capitalist outline found a juncture with an improvement in maritime and land communications, with new powerful people in the government, as well as with the possibility of investing private resources to form what became the first music stores specialized in the sale of a great variety of musical products in the country. From then, many imported instruments coexisted with those manufactured in the territory and shaped the values of a society eager to cross to the promising 20th century.



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