

Proposal to Advertise a Doctoral Fellowship in Music and Ecology

The Department of Musicology at the University of Oslo invites applications for a doctoral fellowship in music and ecology. The successful candidate will work on an independent project that develops a critical orientation toward the relationships between music and sound, on the one hand, and ecology and environment, on the other. We welcome proposals dealing with any musical genre or tradition, any geographical area, any time period, and any subfield within broadly cultural approaches to music and sound. The successful candidate will develop an empirically grounded project that brings music and ecology together with critical and political perspectives drawn from one or more of the following areas: ecocritical musicology and soundscape studies; environmental and/or energy humanities; postcolonial, anticolonial, decolonial, and/or colonial studies; race, gender, and/or disability studies; political economy and/or political ecology; ecological or environmental studies of media and/or infrastructure.

Why This Fellowship? Why Now?

We have been asked to justify why a doctoral fellowship should be allocated to a particular field. I do not think that field-specific justifications are helpful ways of deciding where IMV should allocate its resources. That is why my grounds for justifying a doctoral fellowship in music and ecology are based, rather, in a conviction that IMV resources such as these fellowships should be allocated in terms of the kind of department we want to be, the kinds of contribution to the world that we wish to make, and the kinds of critical questions and forms of knowledge we hope to develop.

It is clear that environmental degradation and stewardship are among the defining issues of our times. Music researchers and teachers are addressing such questions—indeed, the development of ecologically oriented musical thought and scholarship is among the most pressing matters in music research and teaching today. Yet, so far, these questions and their perspectives are underrepresented at IMV. This doctoral fellowship represents an opportunity to strengthen IMV's globally leading role in research and teaching on music and ecology—in producing critical and political research that is adequate to the complexities of our current global situation.

Additionally, the Oslo School of Environmental Humanities is an extremely lively initiative in HF more generally (not to mention the wider University through its emerging connections with UiO:Energy). IMV is represented in the working group at OSEH, but music research and teaching are still somewhat of a novelty in that context. A doctoral fellowship in music and ecology would not only fortify the connections between IMV and OSEH: The highly active and interdisciplinary environment at OSEH would also be a very exciting and solid research group for such a doctoral fellow to call a home away from home.

Another reason to move in this direction has to do with the equality and diversity mandates at UiO. By explicitly searching for a candidate who will address political issues such as race and colonialism in the context of music and ecology, and by leaving the position open enough that we might draw candidates working on such issues in and/or from contexts other than the so-called global north, IMV could do more than symbolically address global politics of in/equality and diversity (e.g. through altering our curriculum). We might also devote more of our intellectual space and human resources to such issues. Although decolonization is a complicated idea that means different things to different people, one thing decolonization is *not* a metaphorical or strictly symbolic act.

Finally, although I am aware that we cannot attach these positions to specific supervisors, and although this may not constitute an appropriate justification in this context, Devine's research topics related to this potential fellowship is now visible enough in the public sphere and the world of music research that he is regularly approached by possible doctoral candidates about the possibility of supervision. Given the Norwegian system for doctoral training, Devine unfortunately has to turn away all these candidates.