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YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY



International  
Centre for  
**Community  
Music**



International Centre for Community Music (ICCM)

# Connect with us

## Who are we?

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The ICCM is a global forum for research and scholarship in community music.

There are 3 strands to our work:

**Research:** Developing collaborative partnerships to increase the body of knowledge associated to community music.

**Teaching and Learning:** Contributing to the growth and development of community music teaching and learning locally, nationally, and internationally.

**Events:** Creating opportunities and platforms for partnerships, conversations, and knowledge exchange.

Visit our website to find out more  
[yorks.ac.uk/iccm](https://yorks.ac.uk/iccm)



## Our projects

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The ICCM leads and collaborates on a range of community music research projects. These include:

### The Music for Childhood Well-Being Initiative

Working in partnership with Northwestern University, US and the Buffet Institute for Global Affairs, this project examines the use of music as an intervention for mitigating stress and increasing the wellbeing of children globally. Adopting an innovative research approach, the project seeks to understand the effect of group singing and breath work with children.



### Ethno Research

The ICCM worked in collaboration with global youth music non-profit, JM International, on a 4-year research project. The focus was on Ethno World, their international programme for folk, world, and traditional music, aimed at young musicians. The research explored the hypothesis that the Ethno programme provided and the transformational sociocultural and musical significances for those that engaged in its activities.

### Singing for Health Research Network

In 2023, the ICCM launched the Singing for Health Research Network. This network connects researchers investigating the effects of singing on wellbeing and health, along with musicians and health professionals leading singing groups in communities and social care settings. The network is led in partnership with the Royal College of Music, London, and in close association with the UK Singing for Health Network.

Explore our projects more: [yorks.ac.uk/iccm-projects](https://yorks.ac.uk/iccm-projects)



## Annual ICCM Student Research Symposium

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The ICCM has been hosting its annual Student Community Music Research Symposium since 2015. The conference attracts delegates from across the UK and internationally. Run by current students, the symposium is an opportunity for student researchers to present their work and an opportunity to network with others.

Previous themes have included:

- Boundaries of practices
- Critique, not criticism: Why we ask the questions we ask
- The ethics of community music research

Presenters at the ICCM Student Research Symposium are given the opportunity to publish in Transform: New Voices in Community Music, an open-access, online, peer-refereed journal for emerging scholars working in the field of community music.

[www.transformiccm.co.uk](http://www.transformiccm.co.uk)

## Partnerships

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The ICCM regularly collaborates with external partners on community music research projects and events. Students connected to the ICCM benefit from these partnerships through guest lectures, online events, and opportunities to contribute to wider research projects. Some recent collaborators include:

- Wilfred Laurier University, Canada
- Northwestern University, USA
- Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt
- University of Macedonia, Greece
- JM International
- MOVE, JM Norway
- Free University Bozen-Bolzano, Italy
- SoundLINCS, UK
- Sound Sense, UK
- Singing for Health Network, UK
- The University of Arts, Iceland
- More Music, UK

## How to be involved

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Research opportunities are offered through MRes and PhD.

Recent areas of exploration include:

- Disability and identity
- Social activism
- Trauma-informed practice
- Community music after COVID-19
- Music-making at open mics sessions
- Military veterans and the development of musical identity
- Finding queer joy through community singing
- Community music and its interrelation with cultural policy

We are currently finalising the scholarships and bursaries available. These are a form of financial aid which you do not need to pay back. Please contact us for further information. [l.higgins@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:l.higgins@yorks.ac.uk)

### Apply now

Find out more about the MRes and PHD opportunities at York St John University.

[yorks.ac.uk/researchdegrees](http://yorks.ac.uk/researchdegrees)



## Case studies

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### Rory Wells, PhD candidate

“ I joined the ICCM on the Masters programme after completing my undergraduate degree. My study considered community music as activist-musicianship, informed by my work in refugee and sanctuary seeking communities in the UK and internationally. This led me on to my PhD studies where I am exploring the community music movement as a form of social and political activism.

Being part of the ICCM has been hugely valuable not just academically, but has also really helped me solidify, improve, and challenge my own practice as a community musician. I have been able to stay in-tune with, and contribute to, cutting-edge conversations on democratising and challenging taken-for-granted paradigms in music-making across the globe. ”

### Ruth Currie, Lecturer

“ I joined ICCM as a part-time PhD researcher in 2015. At this time, I was self-employed as a music education and cultural sector evaluator and project manager, working with publicly funded organisations on a wide range of projects with social impact aims. Undertaking my PhD at ICCM offered an environment where I could explore my practice in different ways, which both challenged and enriched my professional life. Being part of a passionate international research community of musicians, educators and cultural workers provided me opportunities that I hadn't encountered before.

Being a postgraduate researcher through the ICCM offers space to connect and explore big questions in critical ways as part of a supportive community, alongside the potential to lead and contribute to academic events. Since completing my PhD in 2021, I have continued to work as part of the ICCM community, editing the postgraduate journal Transform and leading on funded research. I have gone on to work in higher education as a Lecturer where a big part of my job is the professional development of postgraduate researchers. ”

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### Jo Gibson, Alumni researcher and Research fellow

“ I joined ICCM as a PhD researcher in 2015. I was keen to better understand my musical doing with others including its relationship to wider systems and power structures. I explored this through my PhD titled Making Music Together: The community musician's role in music-making with others via a practice research strategy. After my PhD, I worked with ICCM as a Research Associate, alongside my practice. It was a memorable time of feeling believed in. Being part of a research community and having opportunities to learn through experience, such as supporting the coordination of student symposiums and developing events, was invaluable. I currently work as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Guildhall School of Music of Drama, for their Music for Social Impact project and I look forward to returning to York St John as an Institute for Social Justice Research Fellow. ”



## Led by Professor Lee Higgins

The senior editor for the International Journal of Community Music (2007-2021) and author of Community Music: In Theory and In Practice (2012, OUP), Thinking Community Music (2024, OUP), co-author of Engaging in Community Music (2017, Routledge) and co-editor of The Oxford Handbook of Community Music (2018).

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