

Institution: King's College London		
Unit of Assessment: 33b Music, Drama, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Resounding Societies: Restoration, Preservation and Performance of Lost or Endangered Music		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: January 2009 – July 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Emma Dillon	Professor of Music	From 2013
Katherine Butler Schofield	Senior Lecturer in South Asian Music and History	From 2009
Martin Stokes	King Edward Professor of Music	From 2012
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013 – 31 July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact

Resounding Societies was a research effort concerned with the restoration, preservation and performance of three under-represented musical traditions: *classical Arabic music*, especially Turkish and Egyptian traditions (c1800–1960); *South Asian music* in Mughal India and the British colonial Indian Ocean (c1600–1900); and *medieval European song* (c1100–1400). Lost or endangered through cultural suppression or passage of time, these traditions were revitalised through research by King's music scholars, who created a shared methodology based on critical, philological and performance-informed approaches. To the benefit of audiences, cultural institutions and performers worldwide, their research led to: changes in the preservation and presentation of music in libraries and museums; increasing awareness and appreciation of lost music through performance and programming; a change in performance practice and the creation of new opportunities for performers.

2. Underpinning research

The Resounding Societies research initiative was developed within the King's Music Department's wider research strategies in historical sound studies, ethnomusicology and performance-informed approaches, and through broader institutional support from King's Cultural Community. Namely: researchers sought to identify, interpret, restore and preserve sources for lost and endangered musical traditions housed in libraries, archives and museums across Europe, North America and Asia, to better understand their effects on past societies, and with a view to restoring them for performance today. Underpinning research was undertaken over an 11-year period (between 2009 and 2020), with King's researchers collectively receiving GBP1,253,867 funding from the British Academy, European Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust to support research and research collaboration with cultural stakeholders, such as the British Library and British Museum.

There were three interlocking features of the research methodology.

Identification and interpretation of new written and recorded sources

The identification of new sources (written and recorded) and the fresh interpretation of new and already known sources through critical, philological and ethnomusicological methodologies were at the heart of the research. Comprehensive study of 30 manuscript sources of *medieval European song* traditions revised the understanding of notation in early songbooks, raising new awareness of these sources as witnesses to lost features of vocal performance [1]. Researchers also identified many new sources. Analysis and transcription of lost recordings (records, cassettes and film soundtracks) of Turkish and Egyptian classical music resulted in the reconstitution for the first time of a forgotten strand of late 19th-century *classical Arabic music* [5,6]. The SHAMSA database 1.0 [4], which constitutes the largest single repository of primary written sources on Indian music and dance in the world, was the outcome of research to identify over 300 written sources c1700–

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1900 for the history and analysis of *South Asian music*, including North Indian (Hindustani) music and dance in Mughal and British colonial South Asia.

Inclusion of visual and literary sources for lost and endangered music

Diverse evidence not normally deemed ‘musical’ – owing to its lack of notation or transcribable sound – was an innovative feature of research, with researchers working in museums and libraries across Europe, North America and Asia to establish a new source-base for musicology. Identification and study of visual and literary representations brought to light lost biographical information about musicians and dancers, and evidence of performance in Mughal court culture, all recorded and interpreted in the SHAMSA database [4] and in podcasts *Histories of the Ephemeral* [3]. Research demonstrating relationships between music, material artefacts, and visual and literary representations resulted in new insights into the role of song in medieval European court culture [2].

Performance-informed approaches to restoration

Researchers sought to reimagine the sounds represented in the sources by developing a performance-informed approach. They experimented with transcription and arrangements of sources for performance, and used performance or collaboration with performers as an investigatory tool. This approach was exemplified in the *Histories of the Ephemeral* podcasts [3], which included performed experiments to restore lost melodies of Hindustani lyrics, including those in sources recorded in the SHAMSA database [4]. Research developed through collaboration with Oxford Maqam, a group dedicated to the revival of lost traditions of *classical Arabic music*, resulted in a new methodology for transcription, arrangement and performances of a lost repertoire of Egyptian Nahda era music [6].

3. References to the research

1. Dillon, E. (2015). Unwriting medieval song. *New Literary History*, 46, 595–622. [included as output in REF 2021]
2. Dillon, E. (2016). Sensing Sound. In M. Bagnoli (Ed.), *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe* (pp. 95–114). New Haven: Yale University Press. [included as output in REF 2021]
3. Schofield, K. (2018). *Histories of the Ephemeral* podcasts. 1: ‘The Courtesan and the Memsahib: Khanum Jan Meets Sophia Plowden at the 18C Court of Lucknow’ (2018, 28 November). Retrieved from [\[Link\]](#). 2: ‘A Bloody Difficult Woman: Mayalee Dancing Girl vs. the East India Company’ (2018, 28 November). Retrieved from: [\[Link\]](#) [included as output in REF 2021]
4. Schofield, K. and Lunn, D. (2018). The SHAMSA database 1.0: Sources for the History and Analysis of Music/Dance in South Asia, c. 1700–1900 [bibliographical database and digital collection]. Zenodo. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1445775 [database developed as part of the ERC-funded MUSTECIO, for which Schofield was main PI and curator]
5. Stokes, M. (2019). The Middle East in Music History: An Ethnomusicological Perspective. In R. Strohm (Ed.), *The Music Road: Coherence and Diversity in Music from the Mediterranean to India* (pp. 21–38). Oxford: Oxford University Press/The British Academy. [included as output in REF 2021]
6. Stokes, M. (2020). Sentimental Gesture and the Politics of ‘Shape’ in the Performance of Abd al-Halim Hafiz. In G. Borio (Ed.), *Investigating Musical Performance: Theoretical Models and Intersections* (pp. 185–97). Abingdon: Routledge. [included as output in REF 2021]

4. Details of the impact

The research findings and methodologies underpinning the Resounding Societies research initiative have brought new awareness, understanding and appreciation of lost musical traditions in three areas.

Changes in the preservation and presentation of music in museums and libraries

King’s research generated new knowledge about lost music through research on notated, literary and visual manuscripts and objects housed in national and international museums and libraries. Researchers engaged these cultural partners in their research process, serving also as consultants and contributors to public programmes, leading to changes in policies of preservation and presentation of music in these institutions.

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King's research and consultancies **informed curatorial decisions for exhibitions and gallery displays, to include new provision for music-related objects and performance.** In the 2015 Musical Wonders of India digital exhibition of musical instruments hosted by the Victoria and Albert Museum, King's research into *South Asian music* [3, 4] determined the selections of instruments exhibited, including many rarely seen on public display. According to the Curator of South Asian Art, the exhibition made instruments “*much more accessible to the public and [was able] to bridge the gap between the musical instrument as a visually beautiful yet static object and as a playable sonic entity*”, adding that King's research “*has been of great and ongoing value to the Museum in our understanding of the musical instruments and musicological manuscripts in our collection, which feeds through to the way we display and interpret those objects for our visitors*” [A]. Its success resulted in changes to the permanent display in 2017: as part of the rehanging of the South Asian gallery, the instrument display was redesigned to include items previously kept in storage [A].

King's research and consultancy on *medieval European song* likewise informed musical objects and gallery soundscapes used in the 2016 exhibition *Feast for the Senses* at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, and Ringling Museum, Sarasota, and were integral to exhibition planning at the British Museum from 2016 [1, 2] [B]. For British Museum Curator of the Late Medieval European Collection, the research illuminating links between visual arts and music [2] “*demonstrate[s] that thinking of these two strands of medieval culture as separate ... does a disservice to them both*”, a point that inspired the curator to “*incorporate a new approach to thinking about art and music in the Middle Ages at the British Museum*”. For example, it informed planning for the 2021 Thomas Becket exhibition by “*shaping my approach to music in the exhibition ... encompassing objects on display [and] actual music we aim to play in the space*” [B pp.41–45].

King's research also led to **changes in policy around preservation, performance and digital or visitor access to little-known musical sources and objects.** In October 2013, the University of Manchester's John Rylands Library put online a little-known Persian manuscript of music treatises for the first time, as a consequence of King's research for the SHAMSA project [4], which brought the significance of the manuscript to the library's attention [C]. For the Manuscript Curator and Archivist at The John Rylands Library, the research also revealed “*the wider untapped potential of the Library's Persian manuscripts collection*”, in line with the library's wider mission to “*promote the use and enjoyment of the collections by diverse audiences*”. This revelation contributed to a two-year appointment of a cataloguer dedicated to the digitisation of manuscripts in the collection [C].

Two national collections incorporated King's research into their educational programmes. At the British Museum, King's research demonstrating the relationship of objects and music in *medieval European culture* led to a series of three lecture-recitals, *Things that Sing*, in the Sutton Hoo gallery in 2017–19. These collectively drew over 1,500 visitors, benefiting the museum in achieving their goal of widening access to the collection and deepening audience understanding of the collections, as attested in audience feedback [B pp.3–40]. In 2018, the British Library hosted six public lectures on *South Asian music* culture, *Histories of the Ephemeral*, drawing on King's research into little-known manuscripts housed in the collection (included in the SHAMSA database, [4]), with audiences totalling 2,000 people. Between 2014 and 2019, the library also commissioned and hosted five guest blogs presenting King's research on their Persian manuscript collection, collectively receiving 9,298 hits to date and 5,140 shares on a range of social media channels [D pp.4–15]. For the Senior Curator of the Persian Collection, the live and mediated formats made areas of the manuscript collection that were relatively little known available for a wider public: it “*brought together several different types of audiences with varied research interest, thus making a significant contribution to the Library's public profile*”, she explained. It succeeded, too, “*in laying the foundations for possible future projects*” [D pp.16–17].

Increasing awareness and appreciation of lost music through performance and programming

King's research led to new possibilities for performance of lost and endangered music, to the benefit of international audiences, and of organisations dedicated to widening public awareness of under-represented cultures through music programming.

King's research devoted to the discovery and performance methodologies of *classical Arabic music* [5, 6], notably of little-known Egyptian Nahda era music, underpinned a collaboration with the ensemble Oxford Maqam **to promote awareness and appreciation of lost traditions through performance** [E]. The group's co-founder explains that, as well as identifying and interpreting sources of lost music, *"the contribution ... lies in the ability to hear, analyse and notate the music in western notation, which nobody else in the ensemble can do"* [E p.15]. Between 2013 and 2019, Oxford Maqam performed over 27 live concerts, radio broadcasts, workshops and lecture-recitals across Australia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Kuwait and the UK; and further reached audiences through their 2018 *Wax Cylinder* CD, YouTube presence and website, with the 63 YouTube videos receiving over 61,000 hits in the research period [E pp.4–14]. Bringing lost traditions alive benefited diverse audiences in different ways. For some, performances were a gateway to a new musical world, with listener surveys indicating intention to *"find out more about classical Arabic music"* as a result [E]. For others, they were a powerful connection to a lost musical heritage and to *"home"*. Vice President of the Egyptian Cultural Association in Melbourne, host to Oxford Maqam in 2018, reported the *"enormous and unbelievable"* reaction of listeners, many migrants to Australia from Egypt [F]. One said, *"I couldn't wait till the morning to share [the] music for all Middle Eastern migrants who love hearing tunes that bring back home,"* while another explained, *"I felt transported back in time to a very special moment in the history of classical Egyptian music"* [F]. Many saw it not just as *"reminiscent [of] their days in Egypt"*, but also as an opportunity *"to let the younger ones learn about it"* [F].

Research also **changed approaches to programming music**, notably within organisations concerned to widen awareness of under-represented areas of cultural history. Since 2015, King's research has informed programming for BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4 and World Service Arabic [G]. For the producer of the May 2020 BBC Radio 4 programme, 'Knight Fights Giant Snail', devoted to little-known medieval illuminated prayerbooks, King's research into *medieval European song* [1, 2], specifically as related to visual culture, helped her unlock the sound-world of the manuscripts and informed the musical selections played [G]. Music made the material come alive: *"simply seeing an image can feel remote but as soon as you realise there is a soundscape behind it brings the world to life and makes history feel more relatable and universal"*, in turn making rare material accessible to a wider audience [G]. King's research [3] also informed musical selections from British colonial India included in the BBC Radio 3 programme 'Forgotten Masters', relating to the 2019 exhibition of Company Era paintings at the Wallace Collection [G]. In January 2015, to mark the 77th anniversary of the BBC World Service Arabic, the programme's Director turned to Oxford Maqam's collaboration with King's research [5, 6] to develop a programme of lost *classical Arabic music*. For the Director, the group's contribution was *"perfectly suited"* to the anniversary mission to explore the Arabic radio music archive, since *"they are well known performers of a historical Arabic musical genre not commonly heard, particularly in live performance"* [G]. King's research has also shaped programming decisions at organisations promoting awareness of Arab culture. In 2018–19, Oxford Maqam performed in Kuwait at the invitation of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Centre, a venue and music conservatory promoting Kuwait's cultural heritage, the most significant of its kind in the Gulf. The centre's Music Director explained that the group showed him *"that there was a strong taste for Egyptian classical culture in Kuwait"*, shaping future programming decisions – *"these initiatives will certainly continue"* [H].

A change in performance practice and the creation of new opportunities for performers

King's research has expanded the musical horizons of performers by enriching and extending their historical knowledge of lost or endangered musical traditions, and the practice of their performance, leading to new opportunities.

Research led **performers to expand their practice, profile and performance opportunities**. One artist (harpsichordist) first encountered King's research into restoring and interpreting lost sources of *South Asian music* during her 2011–12 residency in the Foyle Special Collections Library at King's. This and subsequent collaborations informed her work on an 18th-century transcription of Hindustani airs for harpsichord in William Hamilton Bird's *Oriental Miscellany*, leading to the 2015 CD, *Oriental Airs*. She explains how King's research *"was vital to understanding the songs ... [leading to] insights which were an inspiration when performing the works, and greatly affecting my interpretation on the harpsichord"* [I]. The CD raised her international profile, reaching number 14 in the Indian Classical iTunes Charts in 2015, and winning the 2015 Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik for her *"fearless advocacy when it comes to"*

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unconventional discoveries” [I pp.3–5]. Two singers similarly benefited from King’s research methodology for musical restoration [1, 2, 5, 6]. One singer, a classically trained Egyptian opera singer, encountered King’s approach through workshops with Oxford Maqam, hosted as part of Dr James Whitbourn’s Music Egypt Project (2019–2022). For this artist, exposure to the group’s distinctive instrumentation and knowledge of *classical Arabic music* taught her to adapt her vocal practice in ways that are “*far from opera and classical music structure*”. The value of the performance methodology, she explained, was not only to open up new ways to sing, but also the opportunity “*to bring new cultural awareness through music by incorporating traditional Egyptian music with Opera*” [I pp.6–7]. For another singer and director, exposure to King’s research into *medieval European song* [1, 2] resulted in expansion of his performance practice. Between 2015 and 2019, collaboration with King’s researchers offered ways “*to break open the sources and try to build meaningful and beautiful music from the rubble*”, an approach he subsequently applied to training singers as director of his groups Ensemble Trouvère and Scherzo Ensemble. The methodology has “*given me the skills to research any historical repertory and confidently assemble a programme which is able to illuminate new features of that repertory whilst also being interesting and entertaining for the audience*” [I pp.8–11]. Use of the King’s approach to presenting rare medieval traditions has also led to performance opportunities at the British Museum and Mercers’ Hall, London, including as part of the 2020/21 events marking the 900th anniversary of St Thomas Becket [B].

King’s research also **changed approaches to music pedagogy**. Exposure to King’s methods [6] through Oxford Maqam led the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Centre to introduce classes in *classical Arabic music* performed in an authentic idiom at the Centre’s conservatory: the Director explains that “*we have made decisions about this curriculum in light of them*”, adding that their approach to learning, performing and improvising “*is unique in the Arab world*” [H]. As a full-time school dedicated to “*harnessing the musical talents of the children of Kuwait*”, new generations of students will now ensure lost aspects of Arab musical culture remain alive for future generations.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. Testimonial from: Curator of South Asian Art, Victoria and Albert Museum
- B. British Museum collaboration 2016–20, Things that Sing gallery lectures: audience numbers and feedback; testimonial from Curator of the Late Medieval European Collection
- C. Testimonial from: Manuscript Curator and Archivist, The John Rylands Library and Gallery, The University of Manchester
- D. British Library collaboration 2014–18, Histories of the Ephemeral lecture series, blogs and podcasts: online reach; testimonial from the Senior Curator of the Persian Collection
- E. Oxford Maqam collaboration 2013–20: summary of live and mediated performances; online reach; testimonial from co-founder
- F. Testimonial from: Vice President, Egyptian Cultural Association, Melbourne
- G. BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4 and World Service Arabic testimonials and emails
- H. Testimonial from: Director of Music, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Centre, Kuwait
- I. King’s collaborations with performers 2013–20: testimonials from three artists