

Graduate Student Profile

Raj Singh, York University



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Raj Singh is a fourth-year PhD student in the Department of Music at York University.

After graduating with an Hons. Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature, Raj went on to earn an Hons. Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Music.

She completed four years of flamenco guitar lessons as an undergraduate student, after which Raj entered the Master's program in the Department of Music at York University in order to further her studies. Under the supervision of Dr. Michael Marcuzzi, her Master's research focused on Afro-Peruvian percussion, specifically the cajón.

Raj's field research took her to Peru, where, in an attempt to learn more about its history, she participated in cajón workshops and conducted interviews with cajóneros (cajón players). She learned how to play the cajón from prominent cajóneros and culture-bearers of Afro-Peruvian music. Having learned from Jose Luis Carrillo and Jesus "Cochecho" Ballumbrosio, Raj turned her research to examine the role and place of the cajón in Afro-Peruvian music and identity, and what it meant to Afro-Peruvian communities when musicians like Paco De Lucia incorporated the cajón into Flamenco.

Raj's PhD research focuses on Indigenous Modernity, and how Inuit musicians in Canada innovate and recontextualize traditional music by incorporating contemporary musical forms to include new realms of lived experiences. Her research thus far has led her to conduct fieldwork in Baker Lake, Nunavut. Raj is currently working with prominent Inuit musicians such as Saali, and is also working with young, up-and-coming musicians like Nelson Tagoona. Her dissertation will examine how artists like Saali and Nelson, among others like William Tagoona, Ungava and Charlotte, and Kevin Qamaniq, have paved, and continue to pave the way for Inuit musicians and artists to experiment and redefine traditional forms of cultural expression.

Raj's interests also include teaching and learning in higher education, and her involvement with the Teaching Commons at York University led her to publish (forthcoming) a manual of best teaching practices for Teaching Assistants leading non-major music students at the university level. She also serves as the student representative and advisory board member of the Mid-Atlantic Popular American Culture Association (MAPACA).