Graduate Student Profile

Heidi Chan, York University

Figure 1: Heidi Chan.

Heidi Chan is a third-year doctoral student in Ethnomusicology at York University, Toronto. She has an Hons. BA in Religious Studies (Buddhism) and Philosphy from the University of Toronto, and completed a second Hons. BA in Music and a Masters Degree in Composition from York University.

As a musician, Heidi was a long-time member of Toronto-based Japanese drumming ensemble Nagata

Shachu, original drummer for rock band The Cliks, and has collaborated with various dance and theatre collectives across Canada, Hong Kong, and Europe. While living in Hong Kong (2007-2012), she was involved as a live multi-instrumentalist for theatre director Tang Shu-wing's experimental production of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, which toured Norway, Poland, and Beijing, before playing at London's

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre for its 2012 Globe to Globe festival (in tandem with the London Summer Olympics). In 2014, she was invited by Shakespeare's Globe to join as a live musician on their three-month tour of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* across Asia and Russia. She currently performs in Toronto with Japanese folk ensemble Ten Ten, electronic duo Deenzi (with Andy Yue), as a solo electronic artist under the name Bachelard, and continues to collaborate with various artists across disciplines as live musician and sound designer. She has performed at various festivals and performance series in Toronto including Summerworks, Somewhere There, 416 Improvisors Festival, X Avant, Eclectic Electrics, Tracks Could Bend, Coexisdance, and the Audiopollination series at Array Music. She also continues to conduct Japanese taiko drumming and flute workshops across Canada and the U.S.

Research

My current academic research hopes to bridge my interest and experience in both traditional/acoustic and electronic music performance practices. I am currently engaging in two major approaches to the phenomenon of virtual "ethnic" instruments – software music programs that emulate traditional acoustic instruments that can be "played" using hardware controllers and interfaces. First, I am interested in answering the fundamental question: what happens when a traditional instrument becomes virtualized into a software program? Through interviews with developers, users, industry professionals, as well as discourse analyses of marketing material, product reviews, discussion forums, and my own experience as a user and product specialist at various music retailers in Canada, I hope to develop an ethnography of the virtual "ethnic" instrument: how they are created, circulated, used, and fundamentally exist in the world. Areas of study through this approach include digital sampling practices, musical transculturality and hybridity, commercialization and commodification of software musical instruments, and various discourses on the concept and usage of the term "world music".

My second proposed approach to the study of virtual "ethnic" instruments is a more phenomenological/technological one, looking at the ways in which the assemblage of tools that comprise digital and computer-based musicking shape individuals' experience of the instrument that has been sampled and represented as a software computer program. Themes that are explored through this line of inquiry include notions of instrumentality, mapping, the affordances of digital musical tools, and the materiality of computer-based music-making. I have recently taken graduate courses in Science and Technology Studies, which have opened up my research to include frameworks that critically examine the anthropological and epistemological dimensions of technology, knowledge systems, and even the social infrastructures under which we live that often have an invisible but profound influence on how we perceive, classify, and engage with the things and people around us.

Publications/Conferences

2017 May. The Millennium Chinese Orchestra: Playing Tensions of the Old and New. *Canadian University Music Society Annual Conference 2017 Canada 150: Music and Belonging*, Toronto, Canada.

2017 April. Kotos and Taikos and Gongs, Oh My!: Tracing the presence of ethnic sounds in early commercial digital synthesizers and samplers. *Digital Folk Conference*, Sheffield, UK.

2016. GarageBand's Virtual Chinese Instruments. (music software review). *Association for Chinese Music Research newsletter* (Fall 2016)

2016. Life Enriching Music Enriching Life: A Short Tour with the Millennium Chinese Orchestra. *Canadian Folk Music* 49 (4): 8-11

2014. "A Musical Journey Beyond All Borders" – A case study of Toronto Japanese drumming ensemble Nagata Shachu. *Canadian Folk Music* 47 (4): 25-30.

2013 October. Exploring Nadai – The Concept of Beat Subdivision in South Indian Music. Paper presented at the 13th International Music Theory Conference – Principles of Music Composing: The Phenomenon of Rhythm, Vilnius, Lithuania.

2013 June. Identity, Adaptability, and Transformation: An Interview with Trichy Sankaran. Paper presented at the Canadian Society for Traditional Music, Edmonton, Alberta.

Contact: heidiwychan@gmail.com

Music: www.soundcloud.com/hotelbachelard