

Editorial: Meet the new editorial team

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The first issue of *IASPM Journal* in 2026 is an open issue; it is also the first issue edited independently by a new editorial team of four: Ann Werner, Sudipta Dowsett, Sangheon Lee and Nassos Polyzoidis. In this editorial we present ourselves, our plans and aims for the coming three years with *IASPM Journal* and provide an overview of the articles included in the first issue of 2026.

Meet the editorial team

The editorial team for 2026-2028 consists of four people: Ann Werner, Sudiipta Dowsett, Sangheon Lee and Nassos Polyzoidis. Ann Werner (Professor in Musicology, Uppsala University, Sweden) is the editor and she has overall responsibility for the journal. A member of IASPM Norden since 2007, she served on the executive committee of IASPM International for two periods, and on the ethics committee for one, before taking on the role as editor of *IASPM Journal*. Werner's research interests lie in the intersections of music, gender and media. She has published on for example power, gender and race in music streaming and algorithmic culture, the uses of popular music in girl culture, and the equality work of the music industries after #MeToo. Her work draws on cultural and feminist theory and in the past few years she has conducted research projects about how institutions of music operate, both in higher music education and the performing arts.

Sudiipta Dowsett (Casual Academic at the University of New South Wales, Australia and from June 2026, Research Fellow in Ethnomusicology, University of Cologne, Germany) is an assistant editor, managing incoming submissions for the journal and supporting peer review for manuscripts within her areas of expertise. A member of IASPM Australia/New Zealand branch since 2018, Dowsett's research draws on collaborative, co-designed, and ethnographic methods to explore the decolonial capacities of hip hop as embodied practice in South Africa and Australia, highlighting its critical role in maintaining and revitalising Indigenous Ancestral modes of vocality and being. Her publications are grounded in anthropology and focus on embodiment in music performance contexts, intergenerational knowledge transfer, place-making and ecosomatics.

Sangheon Lee (Senior Research Fellow (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions), University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom) is an assistant editor, contributing to the journal's efforts to broaden its linguistic and regional scope, drawing on his multilingual and transnational academic background. Originally from South Korea, he studied and worked in France for thirteen years before relocating to the UK. He also reads German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian. Lee's research focuses on musical form, temporality, and philosophy in Anglo-American, Russian, and Central and Eastern European punk and post-punk contexts, with particular attention to themes such as nihilism, urgency, individualism, and asceticism. He is a member of IASPM UK & Ireland and Francophone Europe branches, and serves on the Executive Committee of IASPM International as Membership Secretary.

Nassos Polyzoidis (Adjunct Professor, University of Ioannina, Greece) is an assistant editor of *IASPM Journal*, supporting the journal's technical processes, platform management, and publication workflows. He teaches in the areas of popular and jazz music studies. His research focuses on the intersections of blues, *rebetiko*, and jazz, with particular emphasis on cross-cultural musical forms, harmony, rhythm, and performance practices. His work combines analytical approaches to structure and harmony with performance-based perspectives, and engages with questions of genre, identity, and intercultural exchange, including aspects of language and lyrical practice. He is an active member of the IASPM UK

& Ireland, and his current work spans both scholarly research and songwriting, drawing on and recombining elements from these traditions.

In 2025 the new editorial team worked together with the previous editorial team on issue 15 2 to promote learning-by-doing. By co-publishing the final issue of 2025, the new team acquired detailed knowledge of the work process and the platform *IASPM Journal* operated on. Working in the editorial team of *IASPM Journal* is something the team does in addition to their day jobs and without remuneration. Through the early stages of this editorial team's period, the team has taken time to get to know each other, get to know the board serving the journal, and discuss the priorities for the coming three years. *IASPM Journal* is a journal by and for the members of IASPM: therefore, we want it to mirror the different branches, disciplines, research topics, musics, methods, contexts, cultures and identities of IASPM. We aim to promote inclusivity across disciplines by expanding the word limit to a broader range: from 6,000-8,000 to 6,000-10,000 words (from May 2026), recognising that popular music studies scholars work in different fields that follow distinct publishing traditions and conventions. The journal's research tradition, largely shaped by Anglophone scholars, has made undeniably significant contributions, while also pointing to the need to further widen the scope of the journal and popular music studies at large. This has been addressed in several ways. For some time, it has been possible to publish in other languages than English in *IASPM Journal*. This is a policy we get questions about, but few articles are submitted in languages other than English and we would like to make this possibility more known. Further, we have welcomed special issues for 2027 and 2028 (see our latest cfp on the website) that aim to widen both the topics and the regions in focus.

To be inclusive is not an easy task. Cultural theorists have argued that being included, as inclusion is operationalised in diversity work, risks making women and racialised others tokens of an institution's success in being diverse while the norms excluding them remain in place (Ahmed 2012). Examining the spaces that create insiders, and invaders, means we have to investigate and critique the material and discursive rules that make some bodies feel out of place (Puwar 2004). This uneasy inclusion does not automatically challenge how power operates in a field—just because the representations become more diverse. Therefore, structural change for the journal, and systematic work with tools like language, word count, special issues and (possibly) a new essay format, we hope, will be more efficient to promote inclusion than any ambition or written policy.

Despite the ambitions of the editorial team, we still receive the submissions that come in—and we would like them to come from a wider range of places, persons, disciplines, and cover more popular musics. We invite everyone reading this editorial to consider which researchers and topics should be more present in *IASPM Journal*: and we encourage you to consider submitting this work to the journal. At the international IASPM conference in Paris we saw many new faces from around the world, and many younger scholars. We wish that they submit their work to us.

We do not want to claim the focus on inclusion to be new—work has been initiated by several editorial teams before us. Still, we aim to develop the strategies further. We will continue balancing between open issues and special issues, and all special issues will have an open section.

The first issue of 2026

Contributors to 16 1 represent different disciplines and are from different parts of the world. The issue includes such diverse methods as music theory and ethnography mirroring both an interest in the music itself and in the uses and circulations of popular music. This reflects a continued dialogue between analytical approaches centred on musical structure and those engaging with the social, cultural, and historical dimensions of popular music. Further, we hope that the issue points towards an ongoing effort within individual studies not simply to juxtapose these dimensions but to explore how each may render the other legible, contributing to the more demanding task of “deciphering the social within music itself”, as suggested by Adorno (2014) in *Ideen zur Musiksoziologie*.

The first article Bamle analyses how musical genre affects the expression of environmental sensibilities in contemporary song lyrics. Heavy metal and indie folk are concluded to be differently attuned towards environmental themes, with artists pursuing different lyric strategies to address issues like global warming and species extinction. Examining songs by heavy metal band Gojira and indie folk band First Aid Kit, Gojira’s songs reveal that the power aesthetics of heavy metal can accommodate explicitly environmental lyrics. Analysis of First Aid Kit lyrics show that indie folk songs can rely on an associative poetics generating environmental nostalgia, even without direct lyrical reference to environmental issues.

Herbst analyses the media and public discourse surrounding the symphonic metal concert *Organic Metal: Two Worlds Collide*, performed by Plague of Angels at York Minster. Drawing on critical discourse analysis of new coverage alongside netnographic engagement with online discussions, the article examines how the event became a site for negotiating the meanings and legitimacy of popular music within a sacred heritage setting. The analysis highlights tensions between heritage and sacrilege, inclusion and elitism, and community mission and commercialisation. In doing so, it shows how genre boundaries are contested when metal enters institutional spaces historically associated with religious authority, and how these debates unfold across both media narratives and participatory publics.

The following two contributions engage with musical temporality, addressing different questions through the circulation of sonic signs and the organisation of time within musical form. Bannister examines the “telegraphic anaphone” in 1960s–1970s popular music, drawing on Tagg and Clarida’s musematic analysis to explore how rapid, monotonal patterns associated with Morse code function as sonic representations of media “noise”. Engaging with McLuhan’s media theory, the article traces how this device mediates musical structure and signifies technological change, urgency, and communication. Through a series of case studies, Bannister demonstrates how the motif evolves across different musical and cultural contexts, from Motown and Nashville to European electronic music, before re-emerging in punk and hip hop.

Collins revisits the concept of golden section proportionality by extending its application from score-based classical analysis to the temporal organisation of recorded popular music. Critiquing bar-counting methodologies, he proposes an alternative approach based on elapsed time, through which key expressive

moments can be identified. Drawing on six case studies of works by Jacob Collier, the article demonstrates how such moments closely correspond to calculated golden section points, thereby rethinking musical proportion in relation to production practices and digital compositional environments.

Ekici employs inductive thematic analysis to examine democratisation in music production by comparing classical (CMP) and popular music production (PMP). PMP embraces technological innovations, fostering decentralised tools and platforms for diverse creators. CMP, however, prioritises fidelity to live performance and historical conventions, resisting democratisation due to institutional conservatism and power dynamics. Using data from 34 qualitative interviews with professionals, the study highlights the factors slowing down CMP's adaptation to technology. The article argues that democratisation of CMP would require cultural shifts and educational reforms, and that adoption of select PMP innovations could help.

Davidjants, Raju and Dundua analyse music activism through a non-representational approach, focusing on the Tallinn, Estonia branch of Rhythms of Resistance (ROR), an international anticapitalist network of percussion bands. They examine how music as embodied practice, along with the ethics of care localised in ROR Tallinn, generate affect and social relations that sustain endurance within social movements. They argue that these dynamics, alongside a distributed leadership model enact the movement's political aspirations beyond the transmission of a political message.

In "Back to the Future", O'Grady draws on practice research to explore the role of "popular music imagination" in the songwriting process, with a focus on 1980s aesthetics. Through analysis and reflection on both his own creative process and the experiences of well-known songwriters and popular songs he traces the interplay between imagined production capacities and genre aesthetics shapes studio-based composition, framing composition, production and recording as fluid and intertwined processes. In doing so, the article contributes to the emerging field of songwriting studies in popular music.

Finally, the issue includes two reviews and one report, each engaging with different dimensions of contemporary popular music studies. The reviews address recent publications from distinct but overlapping perspectives: one offers a sustained methodological reflection on current research practices in the field, interrogating the assumptions and limits underlying a wide range of analytical approaches, while the other examines the role of music journalism in shaping historical narratives and critical discourse around electronic music and technological innovation. Taken together, they highlight ongoing tensions between methodological reflexivity, historiography, and the mediation of musical knowledge across academic and non-academic contexts.

The report on the 2025 IASPM conference reflects on emerging intellectual directions within the field, identifying a renewed focus on recording as a central object of analysis, alongside broader concerns in mediation, technology, and the conditions under which music is produced, circulated, and understood. It further points to the increasingly polycentric character of popular music studies, marked by the growing presence of scholars from beyond traditional anglophone centres and the expansion of the field's conceptual and geographical horizons.

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