

Rehanna Kheshgi
Associate Professor of Music
St. Olaf College
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Ethnomusicology, University of Chicago, June 2016

Dissertation: “Sounding Rural Modernities: Gender, Performance, and the Body in Assam, India”
Committee: Dr. Kaley Mason (Chair); Dr. Philip V. Bohlman, Dr. Tarini Bedi, Dr. Robert Kendrick
Specializations: South Asian Music and Dance, Gender and Sexuality Studies

M.Mus. Ethnomusicology, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, June 2007

Thesis: “*Bihu* Abroad: Exploring Authenticity Through an Assamese Diaspora Festival”
(Awarded Distinction)
Supervisor: Dr. Richard Widdess

B.A. Goshen College (Goshen, IN): Music Performance, Voice, June 2004

EMPLOYMENT & TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Associate Professor	Department of Music, St. Olaf College, Fall 2018-Present
Postdoctoral Scholar	Fulbright-Nehru Postdoctoral Scholar in India, Fall 2017-Summer 2018
Postdoctoral Fellow	Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University, Fall 2016-Spring 2017
Instructor	Music Department, The University of Chicago, Fall 2011-Spring 2016

SCHOLARLY / ARTISTIC WORK

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- 2023 “Queering Assamese Bihu Festival Performance.” *Feminist Review* 134: 1-6.
- 2022 “Crowning the Bihu Queen: Engendering a Rural Sensibility through Reality Television.” *Special Issue: Reality TV in South Asia: Performance, Negotiation, Imagination*. Amanda Weidman and Kristen Rudisill, eds. *Indian Theatre Journal*, 6(1): 41-58.
- 2017 “Navigating Generational Frictions Through Bihu Festival Performance in Assam, India.” *MUSICultures* 44(1): 48-73.

Book Chapters

- (2024) “Performing Youthful Desires: Bihu Festival Music and Dance in Assam, India.” *Music and Dance as Everyday South Asia*. Edited by Sarah Morelli and Zoe Sherinian. Oxford University Press. (In press).
- 2023 “Ethnomusicology.” *The Routledge Companion to Northeast India*, 150-155. New York: Routledge.

2018 “Performing Assam in Urban Spaces: *Bihu* on the City Stage.” In *Sounding Cities: Auditory Transformations in Berlin, Chicago and Kolkata*. KlangKulturStudien / SoundCultureStudies. Edited by Philip V. Bohlman, Sebastian Klotz, and Lars-Christian Koch. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Book Reviews

2021 *Musicophilia in Mumbai* by Tejaswini Niranjana, 2020. *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 80, No. 2: 19-21.

2013 *Unearthing Gender: Folksongs of North India* by Smita Tewari Jassal, 2012. *UCLA Ethnomusicology Review* Vol. 18, October 2013.

Performances

[“Fanka Soomaalida: An Evening of Somali Songs”](#) Urness Recital Hall, St. Olaf College. May 2024.
[Concert Program](#).

Courses Regularly Taught at St. Olaf College

Introduction to Musicology
Javanese Gamelan
Local and Global Musicking
Music, Gender, and Sexuality
Music of South Asia
Somali Community Engagement through Music

Conference Presentations

“Curriculum, Co-Curriculum, and Community Engagement: Learning and Belonging in Minnesota.” presented jointly with Sayidcali Ahmed and Miri Yang-Stevens (’27). Inclusive Excellence Summit. St. Olaf College, April 2024.

“Queering Assamese Bihu Festival Performance.” Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting. New Orleans, Louisiana, November 2022.

“Engaged Departments: A Collective Call into Community.” co-presented with Alyssa Melby, Program Director for Academic Civic Engagement at St. Olaf College. Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) Conference, hosted by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), Dallas, TX, March 2022.

“Embodied Sovereignty: Creating a Tribal Dance Grammar in Northeast India.” Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, hosted virtually by Indiana University, Bloomington, October 2021.

[“Encouraging Immigration Dialogue Through the Performing Arts”](#) presented jointly with student Ruby Erickson (’21). Joint Meeting of the Midwest Chapters of the Society for Ethnomusicology and the American Musicological Society, hosted virtually by the University of Iowa, April 2021.

“Crowning the Bihu Queen: Engendering Mobility through Reality Television.” Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, hosted virtually by Indiana University, Bloomington, October 2020.

Invited Presentations

[“Creating Community through Sound: An Invitation to Pursue Social Justice Work Here and Now.”](#) Social Justice Award Lecture. St. Olaf College, April 2024.

[“Somali Songs Website](#) and Community Engagement.” CILA & LITS Teaching and Learning Showcase. St. Olaf College, May 2024.

“Queering Assamese Bihu Festival Performance.” University of Minnesota School of Music Colloquium Series. Minneapolis, Minnesota, February 2023.

“Exploring Queer Potential in Assamese Bihu Performance.” Invited Zoom Presentation. Assamese NGO Anaajoree’s Weekly Lecture Series on Gender and Sexuality. June 2022.

“Engaged Research and Pedagogy with Somali Community Partners.” Invited Faculty Panel Presentation. Sponsored by the NEH grant “Reflecting on How to Create a Just World: Ethical Engagement with Community through the Humanities.” St. Olaf College, April 2022.

Invited Faculty Participant: Pedagogy Roundtable, Musicology Colloquium, University of Iowa, January 2022.

“Pedagogy Happy Hour” Co-Moderator. Joint Meeting of the Midwest Chapters of the Society for Ethnomusicology and the American Musicological Society, hosted virtually by the University of Iowa, April 2021.

“Creative and Destructive Feminine Power: Exploring Connections Between Blood and Sound in Assamese Performance” Colloquium Speaker Series sponsored by Music and Anthropology Departments, Macalester College Colloquium, St. Paul, MN, March 2020.

“Bodo Nritya: Embodying Indigenous Sovereignty through Dance in the Bengal Borderlands” American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting jointly with the Canadian Anthropology Society, Vancouver, BC, Canada, November 2019.

Seminar Participation

Practitioner-Scholar Community Seminar held virtually by the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE), March 2024.

Engaged Faculty Institute Workshop held virtually by Campus Compact, January 2023.

HONORS, AWARDS & GRANTS

[Social Justice Award](#), St. Olaf College, Spring 2024.

CURI funding for Somali Songs website development with Miri Yang-Stevens (’27), St. Olaf College, Spring 2024.

NetVUE Life on Purpose Grant for vocation-centered pedagogy project in Music 237, Fall 2023.

Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council (SEMACE) Grant titled “Somali Songs: Building Community through Sound” for community engagement work in Faribault connected to my ACE course. April 2023.

Stromseth Award, Stromseth Endowment for Intercultural and Interreligious Education, St. Olaf College, 2023.

Magnus the Good Collaborative Fellowship with Gudon Ahmed '25 titled “Education and Wellbeing in Minnesota-based Somali Communities.” St. Olaf College, 2022-23.

Community-Engaged Research, Creative Activities, and Scholarship Grant, St. Olaf College, 2021.

Stromseth Award, Stromseth Endowment for Intercultural and Interreligious Education, St. Olaf College, 2021.

Released-Time Grant to pursue the project, “Encouraging Immigration Dialogue Through the Performing Arts,” Institute for Freedom and Community, St. Olaf College, 2021.

Cassling Family Fund Faculty Innovation Award, St. Olaf College, 2020.

Magnus the Good Collaborative Fellowship with Ruby Erickson '21, St. Olaf College, 2020-21.

Fulbright-Nehru Postdoctoral Fellowship for research and teaching in India, 2017-18.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & OFFICES HELD

Co-chair, South Asian Performing Arts Section, Society for Ethnomusicology, November 2023-present.

Member, Society for Ethnomusicology
Member, American Musicological Society

Charles Seeger Student Paper Prize Committee Member, Society for Ethnomusicology, June 2022-present.

JaFran Jones Student Paper Prize Committee Member, Midwest Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology, April 2021-present.

Recording Reviews Editor, [*the world of music \(new series\)*](#), University of Göttingen, Germany, September 2016-July 2020.

Faculty Advisor, *Indian Melodies* Project, New England Indian Papers Project, Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University, October 2016-2017.

Reviewer, [*Folklore*](#), The Folklore Society, United Kingdom, March 2016-present.

Editorial Board Member, [*Ethnomusicology Review*](#), UCLA, 2014-2016.