



# Ethnomusicology

A world of music

"I already knew there was a whole world out there, but ethnomusicology has opened my eyes, and allowed me greater freedom in the ways I view and analyse music. The best thing is that any music cultures, and people from any place, can be studied using ethno methods - even music at home. That to me is exciting!"

Irene Hundleby  
PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology

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Ethnomusicology is sometimes described as the study of people making music, or the anthropology of music. It is the study of music in its broader cultural context that examines music's uses, meanings, functions and values. It seeks to understand music from the perspective of those who actually make and listen to it. This often entails talking to musicians and audiences, as well as observing and participating in performances. At Otago, our ethnomusicology courses enable students to put theories and methods into practice through a variety of scholarly and creative activities, including hands-on workshops on Japanese, Indonesian, African and Pacific instruments. Students can also study these instruments through performance pathways.



## Why study Ethnomusicology at Otago?

At Otago, we do not distinguish between one type of music and another in terms of its importance. Every type of music we teach we regard as equally worthy of study. We mix genres and styles in our theoretical studies because we can learn a great deal about one style by studying another.

The University of Otago's Music Department was New Zealand's first music department, and continues its excellent reputation through the quality and variety of courses offered and the international quality of its staff.

We also offer students the chance to play Javanese Gamelan, Japanese koto, Taiko, Taonga Pūoro, Ukulele and African Drumming as practical studies in ethnomusicology, either as stand alone papers or within a specific area of study.

At the higher levels (4th year and above) students of ethnomusicology undertake research in an area of music that interests them and in which we can offer expert supervision. Areas of staff expertise include Māori, Pacific and Asian musics, popular music, music migration, globalisation and localisation. You can undertake research in ethnomusicology at honours, masters and doctoral level.

### Background required

An interest in studying the musics of the world. No musical experience required.

### A minor in Ethnomusicology

While one or two ethnomusicology papers can be taken to complement a degree, ethnomusicology can also be taken as a minor subject as part of a degree.

The minor comprises five papers selected from a number of music and Māori Studies papers. This minor can be included in any Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Commerce, Theology, Science or Applied Science degree.

Although ethnomusicology is not a major subject, the Department of Music at Otago also offers many other options for studying music, including a Bachelor of Music degree (MusB), or music as a major subject in the Bachelor of Arts degree (BA).

### Career Opportunities

- Cultural agencies (government and NGOs)
- Recording industry
- Education (all levels)
- Community education and development
- Archives, museums and libraries
- Creative industries (including composition and performance)
- Cultural research projects
- Applied research projects

Many of our graduates have gone on to successful careers in the music industry, and sometimes the type of employment our graduates find is seemingly unrelated to music.

Music teaches, and requires, so many intellectual and life skills, which can be utilised in a variety of ways.

These are the sorts of skills that are highly valued by employers:

- Communication skills
- Oral and written skills
- Creative thinking and problem-solving skills
- Ability to cooperate with others (teamwork)
- Skills which build personal confidence

## PROFILE

### Irene Hundleby

PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology

I came to University because of my lifelong love for music. Before I took MUSI 325 (Ethnomusicology) I had no idea what an ethnomusicologist even did. Within my first few lectures, I quickly realised that ethnomusicology wasn't only interesting to me – but that this study involved many of my favourite things in life – people, cultures and music.

I have always loved to travel, and been excited by the different places I could travel to through music, books and movies. In ethnomusicology I found a subject that embraced alternative ways of looking at music, and the varied perspectives of other cultures and ways of being.

Culturally, I identify as a Solomon Island-New Zealander. Solomon Islands is a very multicultural place, with over 70 languages and cultures with connections to many other parts of the Pacific. Growing up in New Zealand as part of a diverse Solomon Island community, I participated in the celebrations and music of many other Pasifika cultures including Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Rarotongan and Papua New Guinean music cultures. As I delved into ethno

study I realised that I had the opportunity to be an advocate for indigenous voices.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Music (Hons), I was awarded an Otago PhD scholarship and began my doctoral study of Women's music in North Malaita, Solomon Islands. As part of my study I have been back to my other home, Lau Lagoon – Baelelea, to interview my friends and family about our cultures and to share our music, histories and ideas. It is both exciting and a privilege.

My bicultural perspective, my travels and life experiences have helped me realise that there are still many varied perspectives on music cultures that have barely been presented to the world. That's why I'm here – I want to be a part of those conversations and music experiences. There's a whole world of music out there!



For questions about  
Ethnomusicology  
[otago.ac.nz/music](http://otago.ac.nz/music)

