



**RELIGIOUS
SOUNDSCAPES**

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Published on the occasion of the exhibition “Religious Soundscapes” on view at Urban Arts Space, The Ohio State University from May 23-July 17, 2022.

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RELIGIOUS SOUNDSCAPES

What does religion sound like? Religious Soundscapes is an immersive audio installation presenting sounds from religious communities in the Midwest. Through a series of thematic and atmospheric audio collages, this exhibit invites visitors to listen to religion as an audibly complex social, spatial, political, and embodied phenomenon.

Religious Soundscapes was co-curated by Vicki Brennan (University of Vermont), Alison Furlong (The Ohio State University), Ely Lyonblum (University of Toronto), and Lauren Pond (The Ohio State University). It draws on eight years of research and production by the American Religious Sounds Project (ARSP) a collaborative, inter-institutional initiative co-directed by Amy DeRogatis (Michigan State University) and Isaac Weiner (The Ohio State University).

The ARSP is supported by a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation.

Special thanks to Paul Kotheimer (The Ohio State University) for audio engineering and technical support, and to the staff of Urban Arts Space for their assistance in planning this exhibition.

We are grateful to the following communities in Ohio & Michigan who shared their sounds with us for the ARSP archive and this exhibit:

Apostolic Church International Columbus Assembly	Jyoti Church Columbus	Solid Rock Church
Athletes in Action	MeshugaNotes	St. Ephram Malankara Orthodox Church
Beulah Baptist Church	MSU Hilllet	St. Gregory's Abbey
Bharatiya Hindu Temple	MSU Powwow for Life	St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
Christ the King Catholic Church	Nine Worlds Kindred	St. Stevan of Dechani Serbian Orthodox Church
Clowns Serving Christ Ministry	Noor Islamic Cultural Center	The Anointed Touch Ministries
Columbus Karma Thegsum Choling	Odisi Dance Club	The Magical Druid
Columbus Mead Hall	Okemos Presbyterian Church	The People's Church
Congregation Agudas Achim	OSU Indian Student Association	Three Cranes Grove Druid Fellowship
Council on American-Islamic Relations, Ohio	OSU Muslim Student Association	Transport for Christ
Douglas Blue Feather	Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church	United Methodist Church For All People
ECKANKAR Ohio	Pentecostals of East Lansing	Vedic Sewa Samaj Temple
Guru Nanak Religious Society	Raceway Ministries	Wat Buddha Samakidham Temple
ISKCON Columbus	Rushing Wind Biker Church	Winding Road Coven

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FOREWORD

What does religion sound like? This was the central question of the eight-year collaborative endeavor, The American Religious Sounds Project, that we co-directed from 2014-2022. During those years, we worked with students, scholars, community members, web developers, sound artists, designers, journalists, curators, and others to build a robust, unique sound archive on a multi-modal digital platform. We trained teachers in our audio recording and digital archiving methods so they could expand the work to their own institutions and communities, and we supported scholars working on their own projects at the intersection of sound and religion. One major initiative that we sponsored resulted in two public exhibits based on our archive. One of those exhibits was a partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Services (SITES) in poster form. The other was "Religious Soundscapes," a sound installation exhibited at the Urban Arts Space in Columbus, OH, from May 23 to July 17, 2022.

"Religious Soundscapes" provided an immersive experience for visitors to hear the sounds of religion. The four co-curators did exceptional work creating an exhibit that built on and elaborated key insights into religious sound, which were arrived at through several years of conversation among American Religious Sounds Project collaborators. The provocative and compelling collages they produced offered a creative, compositional response to the ARSP archive. They provided a very different way of engaging these materials than what was possible on the ARSP website. Most excitingly, the exhibit offered opportunities for individuals and communities from central Ohio to respond directly to the ARSP's work and enter into conversation with its creators. During the exhibition's run, we sponsored a number of public conversations, including special events with members of central Ohio's visually impaired community and the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio. As ARSP co-directors, we feel exceedingly grateful to the co-curators for facilitating these encounters and immensely proud of the wonderful work they produced. "Religious Soundscapes" offered a truly exceptional immersive experience that addressed the central question of the American Religious Sounds Project: What does religion sound like?

Amy DeRogatis and Isaac Weiner

INTRODUCTION

What does religion sound like?

This question animates the American Religious Sounds Project, a dynamic, multi-media endeavor to document and archive the sounds of religion in the United States as heard by students and researchers in Ohio and Michigan. In curating Religious Soundscapes we set out to not only offer an answer to this question but also to ask new ones that emerge from listening across the breadth and diversity of sounds in the ARSP archive. These include:

How do sound, space, and religion interact?

What kinds of religious experiences are made possible through sound and listening?

Religious Soundscapes was installed at The Ohio University's Urban Arts Space Gallery from May 24-July 16, 2022. The exhibition featured twenty audio collages played back through a variety of dynamic speaker installations and accompanied by creative interpretive texts that served to make sound accessible to hearing impaired visitors. Visuals were kept to a minimum, though related sound objects were presented in evocative displays that refer to the contexts in which the source audio was captured. This catalog documents that installation by including all exhibition texts, photographs, and links to audio files containing the collages. We have also included a teaching guide as well as some of the visitor reactions to the original exhibition.

It is worth noting the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on our plans for Religious Soundscapes. The inability to travel easily during 2020 and 2021 and the need for social distancing and other public health considerations meant that we had to develop creative solutions to enable visitors to listen to the collages without being able to use headphones. We also were unable to return to communities whose sounds are included in the exhibition for follow up and further collaboration before the exhibition was installed. The constraints of the pandemic also meant that we were unable to implement listening, sound recording, and storytelling workshops into our programming as we had hoped. We have included some teaching materials we developed to accompany the exhibition in this publication. We hope you will integrate our suggestions into your own classes, projects, and organizations.

All of these materials, including the installation itself, was created through a prolonged and intensive collaboration between the four curators, who together listened, conceptualized, wrote, planned, and created Religious Soundscapes. We also worked directly and indirectly with the many community members who allowed students and researchers to document their sounds.

In addition, we worked with a number of talented writers, sound engineers, graphic designers in order to realize our vision. These include Veronica Anne Salinas, who wrote the interpretive labels, Paul Kothheimer, who assisted with audio processing, and Shaylee Shepherd and Mackie Herrlinger who designed the logo and printed material to support the exhibit. We are also grateful to the staff of the Urban Arts Space, in particular Merijn Vanderheijden and Terron Banner, for helping us to make Religious Soundscapes a reality. Finally, this exhibition would not have been possible without Amy DeRogatis and Isaac Weiner, the creators of the ARSP, who shared creative suggestions, feedback, and material support throughout the entire process.

Vicki Brennan
Alison Furlong
Ely Lyonblum
Lauren Pond



BACKGROUND



As you read this catalog, click or scan the QR code to learn more and listen to the collages.

WHAT IS THE ARSP?

All of the sounds that you will hear in this exhibit were recorded as part of the American Religious Sounds Project, a collaborative research initiative co-directed by Amy DeRogatis (Michigan State University) and Isaac Weiner (Ohio State University). Through the development of an archive, a website, and curated exhibits the ARSP offers resources for studying and interpreting the diversity of American religious life by attending to its varied sonic cultures.



WHY LISTEN FOR RELIGION?

- **Listening presents religion as an audibly complex social, spatial, political, and embodied phenomenon.** It opens up our understanding of how religion is an experience and a practice as much as it is a tradition, a doctrine, or a belief.
- **Listening offers insights into the beliefs, values, orientations, and aspirations of religious communities.** Through sound, communities reveal what's sacred to them.
- **Listening for religion also provides new insight into how religious customs are shared within a community and with the public.** Religious sounds are experienced and shared even by those who might not consider themselves to be practitioners.
- **Listening complicates our understanding of where religion takes place.** We often associate religion with formal worship spaces like churches, temples, and mosques, but when we listen, we can notice it's audible in homes and public spaces, as well.

You might also hear sounds that you may not categorize as being “religious” upon first listening. These might include the sound of fish frying in preparation for a Lenten meal or footsteps of congregants marching as part of a pilgrimage. The collages also feature a number of “ambient” sounds such as traffic, wind, and chatter to emphasize how important these sounds are for creating the context in which people practice, discuss, or encounter religion.

In general, we used the following rubric to help identify a sound as religious:

Content: Does the sound contain references to religious texts, traditions, ideas, themes, events, and so on. Christmas carols are an interesting example here, because they are frequently sung by people who are not necessarily Christian even though their referent is to an explicitly religious holiday.

Context: Does the sound occur in a context that is explicitly marked as religious in some way? This can be understood in terms of explicitly religious spaces—such all the sounds heard in religious institutions (church, temple, mosque, shrine, and so on)—or in terms of how participants create a context for religious practice, such as the quiet moment that precedes a family's offering of “grace” before a meal.

Community: Does the community listening to, sounding, or identifying a sound identify it as religious? So, for example, a community might listen for the voice of their deity in the sounds of waves crashing on the shore.

HOW WAS THIS EXHIBITION MADE?

This exhibition features audio collages that highlight how listening for religion changes our understanding of religion in the United States. The collages feature sounds taken from field recordings made between 2014 and 2022 by students, archivists, community members, and researchers affiliated with the ARSP.

Each collage highlights how sound factors into religious experience. The curators made selections from the ARSP archive that point to key themes that emerge when we listen for religious sounds in distinct social spaces. These sounds were then put into conversation with each other in collages that use repetition, layering, and juxtaposition to highlight distinct yet also overlapping themes.

The exceptions to this creative practice of audio collage can be heard in two of the spaces of the exhibition: **Voices** and **Pandemic**. The recordings featured in **Voices** were intentionally combined to create a surround sound experience. These include recordings from a Wiccan chanting ritual, which were made in close collaboration with the community specifically for *Religious Soundscapes* and then woven together. The **Pandemic** space of the exhibition features playlists rather than collages, which reinforces how technology and spatial distance impacted religious practices overall during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SOUND COLLAGES AND INTERPRETIVE TEXTS

This exhibition emphasizes how a focus on sound and listening offers insights into how religion is practiced and experienced in the United States. The QR codes embedded in this book will take you to a website where you can listen to the sound collages assembled for the exhibition. We have also included interpretive texts on the website for each sound collage. These texts make the audio materials accessible to deaf and hard of hearing audiences.

The interpretive texts are more than a transcript of the words spoken or a list of the sounds that occur in the collages. The majority of the texts were composed by Veronica Salinas, who used qualities of written language and visual space in an attempt to convey some of the experience of hearing the collages. Evocative and poetic, these texts enhance the experience of engaging with this exhibition.

While we are unable to include all of the interpretive texts here, you can see fragments of some of these texts on pages 42 and 50 in this book. All of the interpretive texts are available on the website.

HOW DO I LISTEN TO AN EXHIBITION?

We are all familiar with looking at exhibits, but what about listening to them?

- **Listen actively and with curiosity.**
- **Engage with what you hear.**
- **Follow certain sounds and reflect on what they are, who they belong to, and what they mean.**
- **Listen and reflect on the sounds, and their importance, together.**

Consider approaching this exhibit by stopping occasionally in front of speakers to close your eyes and listen. Try to pick out certain sounds - instruments, voices, familiar and unfamiliar sounds. Read the interpretive text for each sound loop, and the descriptive text for each room. Listen beyond what sounds pleasant to you - what might this sound mean to someone else? What makes this sound religious?

I AM NOT RELIGIOUS. IS THIS EXHIBITION FOR ME?

Religious sounds are experienced and shared even by those who might not consider themselves to be practitioners. While some of the sounds you will hear in this exhibit are explicitly “religious”—you will hear evangelical pleas, personal prayers, and songs or chants about religious figures—they are not present here to advocate for any religious stance. Instead, you should consider how these sounds interact with the other sounds around them, how they are part of how religions are practiced, lived, and experienced in the United States.

Depending on who you are, you might find some of these sounds pleasant, compelling, disturbing, or even annoying. We encourage you to consider what leads you to feel that way, and to further think about how this emphasis on your experience of listening for religion transforms your understanding of what religion is.

CONTENT WARNING

Some of these audio collages include references to violence or prejudice based on religious, ethnic, cultural and/or gender identity. We acknowledge that these sounds may perpetuate harm by amplifying messages of hatred toward specific groups, and recognize the responsibility of presenting these sounds in the context of an exhibit hosted by a university. While these messages are fundamentally antithetical to our beliefs, we maintain the importance of bearing witness to these sounds, as they demonstrate conflict borne from religious and political convictions held by many in the United States.

Our statement of ethics regarding the recording, editing, and archiving of religious sound can be found on our website.





STREETSCAPE

Religious communities make themselves audible to others in public spaces. Through music, chants, and megaphones, religious sound echoes in the streets. Sound coordinates movement in parades and processions; it facilitates protests; it evangelizes and proselytizes. Move through this space as you would an everyday street.

LISTEN: How do religious communities use sound to announce their presence, claim space, assert belonging, and address others? Notice how religions in public can sound like harmony – and how they can sound like discord.



COLLAGE: PARADES & PROCESSIONS

Run time: 09:36

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on continuous loop through two Holosonic

Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speakers

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Procession for Our Lady of Guadalupe by members of Christ the King Catholic Church

Annual Pagan parade for Krampus, hosted by the Magical Druid



COLLAGE: RELIGION OUT LOUD

Run time: 06:47

Produced by Alison Furlong

Technology used: Played on continuous loop through two JBL EON 510 speakers

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Prayers over loudspeaker at Noor Islamic Cultural Center

Sounds of worship service outside The Anointed Touch Ministries

Meskel celebration at St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Timiket celebration St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Midday bells at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church

Vaisakhi puja at Wat Buddha Samakidham Temple



COLLAGE: ENCOUNTER & OUTREACH

Run time: 05:36

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology: Played on demand through singular Holosonic Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Street evangelists at Stonewall Pride Parade

Black Hebrew Israelites at Black Lives

Matter protest

Evangelist at Republican National Convention

Street evangelists and protesters at Republican National Convention

Street evangelist at Trump rally



COLLAGE: POLITICAL PROTESTS

Run time: 06:08

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology: Played on demand through singular Holosonic Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Protest against Muslim travel ban at Columbus airport

Protest against Dakota Access Pipeline

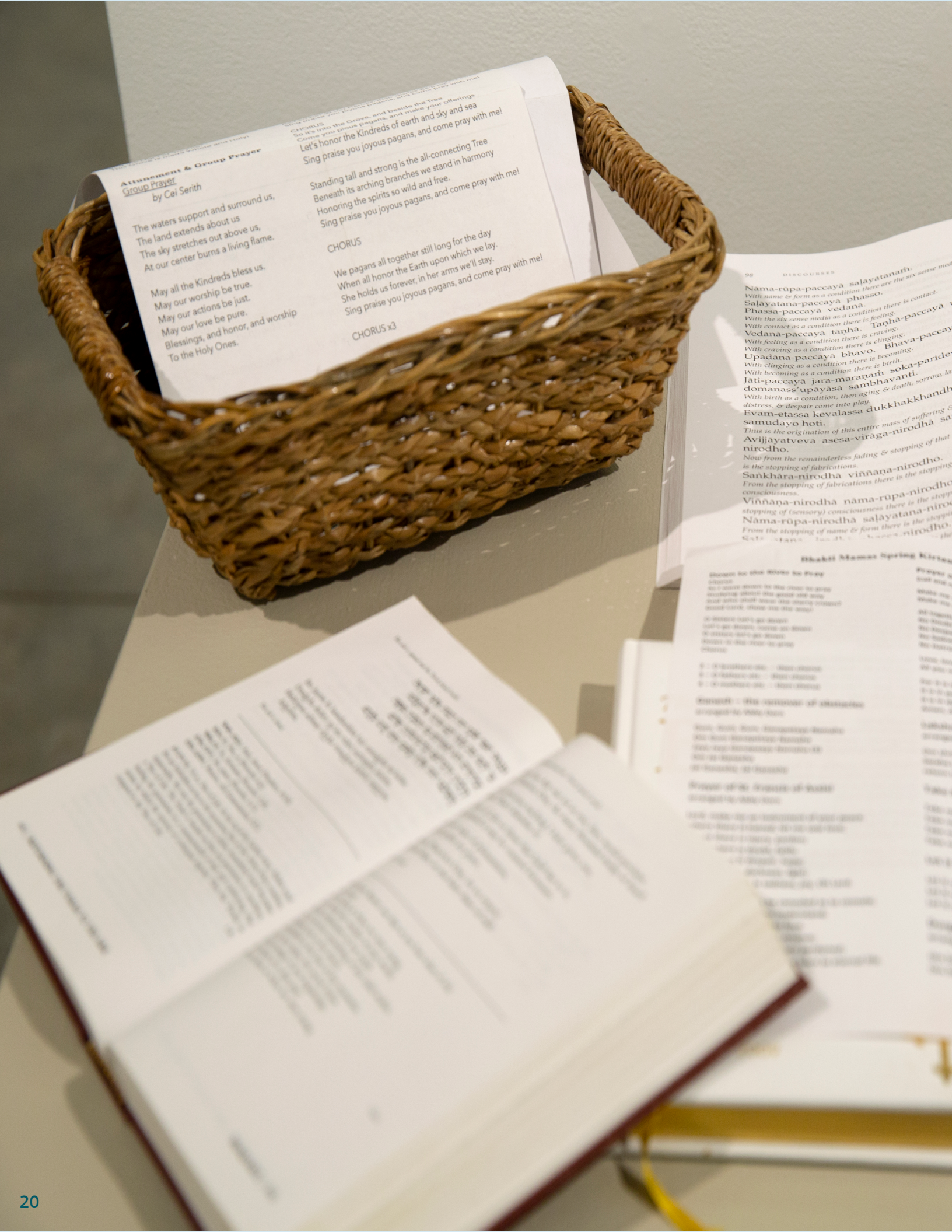
Black Lives Matter protest

Evangelists protest outside of Masjid Omar

Drummers at Republican National Convention

Westboro Baptist Church protesters and counter protesters outside of the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly

Shofar sounding at Republican National Convention



Attainment & Group Prayer
Group Prayer
by Cei Seith

The waters support and surround us,
The land extends about us,
The sky stretches out above us,
At our center burns a living flame.

May all the Kindreds bless us,
May our worship be true,
May our actions be just,
May our love be pure,
Blessings, and honor, and worship
To the Holy Ones.

Let's honor the Kindreds of earth and sky and sea
Sing praise you joyous pagans, and come pray with me!

Standing tall and strong is the all-connecting Tree
Beneath its arching branches we stand in harmony
Honoring the spirits so wild and free,
Sing praise you joyous pagans, and come pray with me!

CHORUS
We pagans all together still long for the day
When all honor the Earth upon which we lay,
She holds us forever, in her arms we'll stay,
Sing praise you joyous pagans, and come pray with me!

CHORUS x3

98 DISCOURSES
Nama-rupa-paccaya salayatanañ.
With name & form as a condition there are the six sense media
Salayatana-paccaya phasso.
Salayatana-paccaya phasso.
Phassa-paccaya vedana.
With the six sense media as a condition there is contact.
With contact as a condition there is feeling.
Vedana-paccaya tanha. Tanha-paccaya
With feeling as a condition there is craving.
With craving as a condition there is clinging.
Upadana-paccaya bhavo. Bhava-paccaya
With clinging as a condition there is becoming.
With becoming as a condition there is birth.
Jati-paccaya jara-maranam soka-paride-
domanass'upayasa sambhavanti.
With birth as a condition, then aging & death, sorrow, the
distress, & despair come into play.
Evam-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandh
samudayo hoti.
Thus is the origination of this entire mass of suffering &
Avijjayatveva asesaviraga-nirodha sa
nirodho.
Now from the remainderless fading & stopping of that
is the stopping of fabrications.
Sankhara-nirodha viññana-nirodho.
From the stopping of fabrications there is the stopping
consciousness.
Viññana-nirodha nama-rupa-nirodho
stopping of (sensory) consciousness there is the stopp
Nama-rupa-nirodha salayatana-niro-
From the stopping of name & form there is the stoppi

WORSHIP

Sound is central to how people practice religion. Communities may come together periodically to formally worship through song, prayer, recitation, chanting, or clapping. At other times, they gather for ritual social events, such as shared meals and community festivals, where the clanking of dishes, the hum of conversation, and the popping of food in hot oil create a soundtrack of convivial sociality.

LISTEN: The hum and buzz of a conversation, the beating of drums, the pop and sizzle as food hits hot oil—all of these sounds speak to shared spaces where religion is practiced. As you move through this space, notice what these religious sounds tell you about community identity, practices, and values.



COLLAGE: FORMAL RITUAL

Run time: 09:35

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology: Played on demand through singular
Holosonic Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Circle casting at Winding Road Coven

Bells at The People's Church

Easter service at St. Stevan of Dechani Serbian Orthodox

Diwali service at Bharatiya Hindu Temple

Worship service at Wat Buddha

Samakidham Temple

Sext prayers at St. Gregory's Abbey

Worship service at the Pentecostals of East Lansing church

Eid prayers at the Ohio Expo Center

Glossolalia during service at Apostolic Church International Columbus Assembly

Call and response during service at Jyoti Church Columbus

Peaching during United to Love Rally on the National Mall

Hymn at Beulah Baptist Church

Service at Guru Nanak Religious Society

Children's performance by Clowns Serving Christ ministry

Buddhist chant at Columbus Karma Thegsum Chöling Center

Pagan memorial service at Magical Druid store



COLLAGE: MOBILE MINISTRY

Run time: 10:19

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology: Played on demand through singular
Holosonic Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Ambient sounds at TA Travel Center truck stop

Worship service at Transport for Christ mobile chapel

BikerFest Sermon and ambient sounds at Rushing Wind Biker Church

Raceway Ministries prayers and ambient sounds at Shadybowl Speedway

Ambient sounds at Rushing Wind Biker Church and nearby venues

Ambient truck sounds



COLLAGE: MEALS

Run time: 04:58

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand through singular
Holosonic Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Meal preparation in the Guru Nanak Religious Society's communal kitchen

Lenten fish dinner preparations at St. Stevan of Dechani Serbian Orthodox Church

Maundy Thursday meal and blessing at Okemos Presbyterian Church

Shabbat meal and blessing at Michigan State University's Hillel center

CAIR interfaith iftar during Ramadan at Dublin Recreation Center



COLLAGE: FESTIVALS

Run time: 07:04

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand through singular

Holosonic Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Vaisaki puja at Wat Buddha Samakidham temple

Peace Circle gathering at Columbus Karma Thegsum Chöling center

Procession at St. Ephram Malankara Orthodox Church

Blessing of chapel grounds at St. Stevan of Dechani Serbian Orthodox Church

Bonfire during Meskel ceremony at St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Three Cranes Grove Druid service at Dublin Irish Festival

U2Charist at Dublin Irish Festival

Traditional music during festival at St. Stevan of Dechani Serbian Orthodox Church

Dunk tank at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church parish festival

Generators at Noor Islamic Cultural Center Eid festival





CAMPUS

College brings together people from a wide range of backgrounds, making campus a vibrant religious soundscape in its own right. The activities of student religious organizations, the chants of student protesters advocating for ideological causes, the entreaties of evangelists to students passing by – these parallel many of the themes heard elsewhere in this exhibit.

LISTEN: Notice the similar yet distinct ways that religion makes itself audible in the college setting. How does sound help construct identity and reinforce values for students?

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LISTEN: Notice the similar yet distinct ways that religion makes itself audible in the college setting. How does sound help construct identity and reinforce values for students?



COLLAGE: STUDENT GROUPS

Run time: 05:34

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand through two Panphonics Sound Shower mono loudspeakers

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Ambient sounds inside the Ohio Union

Sermon and prayers during meeting of Muslim Student Association

Invocation at Athletes in Action

Odissi Dance Club Indian classic dance practice

Drumming during Powwow for Life at Michigan State University

Music during African American Heritage Gospel Festival

Music and cheers during Indian Student Association's Holi celebration

Meshuga Notes a cappella rehearsal



COLLAGE: OUTREACH

Run time: 05:47

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand through two Panphonics Sound Shower mono loudspeakers

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Orton Hall chimes on the Oval

Abortion protest on the Ohio State Oval

Protest against Planned Parenthood

Street evangelists and students on the Ohio State Oval

Westboro Baptist Church protesters and counter protesters



OUTDOORS

People practice religion outdoors in parks, forests, caves, cemeteries, and other green spaces. Some communities interpret the sounds of water flowing or leaves rustling as religious in their own right. In other cases, blessings of water and invocations of nature-based deities are part of religion practiced outdoors. Religious communities may also incorporate the sounds of nature into their practices – for instance, using the high-pitched hum of singing bowls to mirror the buzzing of nearby insects.

LISTEN: How do religious sounds synchronize with the sounds of the outdoors? How does this affect religious experience?



COLLAGE: RELIGION OUTDOORS

Run time: 07:59

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand through two
Genelec 8010A Bi-Amplified Active Monitor speakers

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Ambient sounds at the LilyFest art and garden festival

Outdoor drum circle and healing gathering at Ash Cave

Singing bowl circle at Whetstone Park

Three Cranes Grove Druid procession at ComFest

Cleansing and chanting during Nine Worlds Kindred Midsummer ceremony

Ambient sounds during the annual Honor Our Veterans powwow

Procession during Dia de los Muertos festival at Greenlawn Cemetery

Native American flute performance by Douglas Blue Feather

Crickets and music at St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Meskel ceremony

Summer nighttime sounds in backyard





COMMERCE

Religion can be heard in commercial venues like restaurants, stores, and stadiums. Sometimes, the sounds of worship fill these spaces, like when a church service takes place at a movie theater. Other sounds are heard in the background of other commercial activities, such as when Christmas carols are played in stores. Religious sounds may also be commodities that themselves are bought and sold, like tickets to a Gospel concert or recordings of Buddhist mantras.

LISTEN: Notice how religion forms a soundtrack of commercial activity in America. How do these sounds transform the experience of buying and selling? How does their commercial context impact religious experiences?



COLLAGE: RELIGION FOR SALE

Run time: 05:46

Produced by Alison Furlong

Technology used: Played on demand through singular
Holosonic Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Holiday shopping ambient sounds at Easton Town Center

Hypnotherapy session at Universal Life Expo

Ambient sounds from Gift of Light Expo

Vibrational massage at Universal Life Expo

Columbus Karma Thegsum Chöling center film fundraiser

Tuning fork discussion at Gift of Light Expo

Explanation of Irish wakes at Dublin Irish Festival



COLLAGE: OHIO EXPO CENTER

Run time: 07:47

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand through singular
Holosonic Audio Spotlight 24iX directional speaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing: Ambient sounds at the Ohio State Fair

Cowboy Church service at the All American Quarter Horse Congress

Drepung Loseling monks chanting and creating sand mandala at Universal Life Expo

Prayers during Eid al-Fitr celebration

Belly dancers at the Columbus International Festival

Ambient sounds and Douglas Blue Feather flute performance at Gift of Light Expo

Vibrational massage at Universal Life Expo



VOICES

The human voice underlies many religious sounds and experiences. Whether formally trained or inexperienced, in practices both highly choreographed and completely spontaneous, the voice begins inside the body and projects outward, linking religious practitioners to each other and the divine.

LISTEN: How does singing, chanting, or even just vocalizing together in a shared space form a collective experience of participating in something larger than oneself? What do you feel, physically and emotionally, as you listen?



COLLAGE: VOICES

Run time: 09:17

Produced by Alison Furlong & Lauren Pond

Technology: Played on demand through

Logitech Z906 5.1 Surround Sound Speaker System

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Group HU song at Ohio Regional Eckankar Seminar

HU song by members of the Eckankar Ohio Satsang Society

Hymn during worship service at Beulah Baptist Church

Mantra recitation at Buddhist home

Hymn during worship service at Transport for Christ trucker chapel

Congregation Agudas Achim Kever Avot prayers for the deceased at Greenlawn Cemetery

Chant for Goddess Hecate during Winding Road Coven gathering

Cone of Power chants by Winding Road Coven members



PERCUSSION

Drums, bells, cymbals, and gongs are frequently heard in religious contexts. These instruments provide a rhythmic pulse to coordinate movement and practice, and fill the air with a shimmering vibration that is felt in the bodies of participants.

LISTEN: Notice the relationships between each part and the overall whole effect of the performance in these recordings. How might the interaction between participants in these events relate to their religious objectives? Does it facilitate participation or model relationships between participants?



COLLAGE: PERCUSSION

Run time: 09:01

Produced by Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand through two Genelec 8010A Bi-Amplified Active Monitor speakers

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Energy-raising ritual at Columbus Witches Ball

Dashain puja festival at Vedic Sewa Samaj Temple

Timiket celebration near St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Kirtan at ISKCON Columbus

Outdoor drum circle and healing gathering at Ash Cave

Drum circle at ComFest

Music during All Saints Day service at United Methodist Church For All People

Rhythm in unison

(stomp)

STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP
STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP
STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP

A shaker.
Gradually faster. Faster gradually faster.

Shake shake shake

shakeshakeshakeshake

STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP
STOMP	STOMP						
(voice chants)	(voice chants)						
STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP	STOMP
STOMP	STOMP						

Shake shake shake

shakeshakeshakeshake

Bells ring,
signify a change in the air,

Air horn billows blowing sound (hand drums)
Voices whoop and holler ecstatically (ululation)

Krishna hand bells ring
"Hare Krishna Hare Krishna"
Drums beating, keeping pulse

Bum-tabumbum BUM-ta-bumbum Bum-tabumbum BUM-ta-bumbum

(tambourine)
dakadakadakadakaDAkadaKAdakadaka dakadakadakadakaDAkadaKAdakadaka
(tambourine)

"Oh when the saints go marching in"
Methodist church clapping,
"Oh Lord I want to be in that number!"
Resounding, joyous.



HOME

For many people in America, religion is an essential part of home life. Jews might recite special blessings when waking up, going to sleep, or before and after meals. Buddhists and Hindus often pray at home shrines. Asatru followers ritually recite runes – ancient symbols that they believe hold special meaning and power.

LISTEN: Notice how the home can be an essential part of religious life. How does religion resonate through people's daily lives?



COLLAGE: RELIGION AT HOME

Run time: 04:29

Produced by Alison Furlong

Technology used: Played on demand through singular Panphonics Sound

Shower mono loudspeaker

Interpretive Text by Veronica Anne Salinas

What's Playing:

Tibetan Buddhist Geuthuk home observance

Bedtime sh'ma prayer in Jewish home

Mead bottling by members of the Nine Worlds Kindred

Ambient sounds in a Muslim home during Ramadan

Home communion during COVID-19 pandemic

Runic Galdr during Columbus Mead Hall Yule gathering

(beep of smoke detector)

R e c i t a t i o n

(beep)

o f

(beep)

t h e

Q u r a n

(beep)

“We offer ourselves and this congregation to you” WOOF

V o i c e

(beep)

c h a n t i n g

(beep)

“That might be something to think about - mead pickles” “Pickle mead?” “How would that work? I don’t know about that...”

“Two nights before Tibetan New Year and that night we Tibetan tend to make noodle soup”

“Nine different kinds of grains

or beans

to symbolize

a fertile harvest

But Karma doesn’t like so many things in his

So we do more of a broth, with tomatoes, shallots, garlic, onions, celery, ginger...”

C H A N T

O O O O M M M

(ding di-ding ding ding)

C H A N T

C H A N T

C H A N T

(ding di-ding ding ding)

“The body of Christ broken for you.”

“The blood of Christ shed for you.”

“Because He loves you.”

HAIL THE HALL!

“We are going to make a dough out of this and squeeze it so all your fingerprints are in it. And while you doing that[...] you pray that all my sickness, bend and cut there, all my sickness, pray and throw them away.”

Children’s voices sing calmly

Shema yisroel, Adonai eloheinu, Adonai echad Baruch sheim kevod malchuto le’olam vaed

(ding di-ding ding ding)

(These are prayer flags which are old and they’ve fallen on the ground, and you can’t just throw them away)

“We’re burning these in order to destroy them?”

“And it’s the same with teachings or scriptures...they can’t be thrown away so they should be burned.”

(ding di-ding ding ding)

R e c i t a t i o n

(beep)

o f

(beep)

t h e

Q u r a n

(beep)



PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 Pandemic forced many of us to alter our lives in profound ways, and religious sounds were no exception. The need for social distancing prompted many religious congregations to shut down during the pandemic and the airborne nature of the virus made the practice of singing together in shared space potentially dangerous. As a result, religious sounds were adapted through the shift to zoom and other digital mediums.

LISTEN: How were religious sounds transformed by the COVID-19 Pandemic? What were the limits of those transformations?

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LISTEN: How were religious sounds transformed by the COVID-19 Pandemic? What were the limits of those transformations?



PLAYLIST: MESSAGES

Total run time: 18:06

Produced by D'Arcee Charington Neal & Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand on iPad

What's Playing:

Christian prayer on cable news

Islamic discussion of sickness

Muslim women's study session

Evangelical altar call

Global Unity Transmission Meditation

Jewish Shabbat morning service

Buddhist speaker during Memorial for the Homeless

Street evangelist

Easter worship service

Catholic invocation of St. Corona

Easter sermon about fear



PLAYLIST: NEW RELIGIOUS SPACES

Total run time: 16:24

Produced by D'Arcee Charington Neal & Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand on iPad

What's Playing:

Sikh memorial service

Outdoor Eid prayers

Baha'i prayers

Breonna Taylor vigil

Jewish outdoor shofar service

Zoom Catholic vespers

Taizé ecumenical Christian service

Hindu worship service

Qur'anic recitation

Buddhist chanting

Easter worship service



PLAYLIST: DISRUPTED PEACE

Total run time: 17:57

Produced by D'Arcee Charington Neal & Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand on iPad

What's Playing:

Wiccan Cone of Power interrupted

Hindu service bells

Online Bible study

Sound bath meditation

Protestant home communion

Gospel song

Buddhist meditation

Islamic Ramadan lesson

Qur'anic recitation

Muslim Imam interrupted by child

Online Wiccan Lughnasadh



PLAYLIST: RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

Total run time: 15:37

Produced by D'Arcee Charington Neal & Lauren Pond

Technology used: Played on demand on iPad

What's Playing:

Online Wiccan Lughnasadh

Online Jewish Shabbat service

Church blood drive

Easter clanging of pots and pans

Jewish Goodnight Moon leyning

Christian blessing of the hands

Drive-in Easter worship service

Buddhist chant and celebration of first responders

Promotion for healing drum circle

Lent video journal

SILENCES

The perceived absence of sound can take on religious significance for some communities. To do so participants often learn to ignore the ambient sounds in a space, such as the hum of ventilation equipment or the electric buzz of lights in order to participate in a shared experience of silence.

An emphasis on silence also points to the absences in this exhibition. Take a moment to consider what religious sounds you might be familiar with that were not made audible here.

LISTEN: What different kinds of silences do you note? What does it feel like to be silent or silenced? What sounds are absent or present in your own communities or neighborhoods? What are the ethical or practical reasons why certain sounds might not be present in this exhibit?

TEACHING RELIGIOUS SOUNDSCAPES

In this section we offer some suggestions for how Religious Soundscapes might be incorporated into course plans. Students can use this catalog to listen to the exhibition, read the accompanying materials, and reflect on their experiences. Potential areas that may benefit from this research and exhibition include comparative religions courses; American studies courses; ethnography and ethnomusicology courses; as well as sound studies and media arts-based studio courses. Possible assignments might ask students to write their own interpretive texts for the collages, to identify other themes or concepts that emerge through listening to the exhibition, or even to construct their own collages based on sounds they collect themselves.

Learning outcomes include:

- Discussion about definitions of religion and the scholar's role in creating definitional boundaries.
- Broaden understanding of religious traditions and consider the ways in which religions are practiced in everyday life.
- Think analytically about what can and cannot be learned about religion by listening.
- To initiate thinking and conversation about where we expect to hear religious sound and where we find it.
- To reflect on the value and limits of classifying religious sounds in particular and the challenges of classifying religious practices in general.



WORKSHOP: LISTENING FOR RELIGION

This is a workshop for a group of 5-15 people (in larger groups participants can work with partners). People should have notebooks/writing instruments so they can reflect on and discuss their experiences with each other.

Conversation about listening (15 minutes)

Begin the workshop by asking participants to reflect on their own ways of listening. Do people listen differently? How is listening based on their experiences, familiarity with what they are hearing, etc? Ask them to identify sounds beyond music that hold significance for them.

Focused Listening & Reflection (30 minutes)

Each participant (or pair of participants) should select (or be assigned) a particular loop in the exhibit. Ask them to go and spend 30 minutes listening carefully to their selected loop; ideally they should listen to the loop two or more times if possible. As they listen they should take notes on their experience of listening, using the following questions as guidelines.

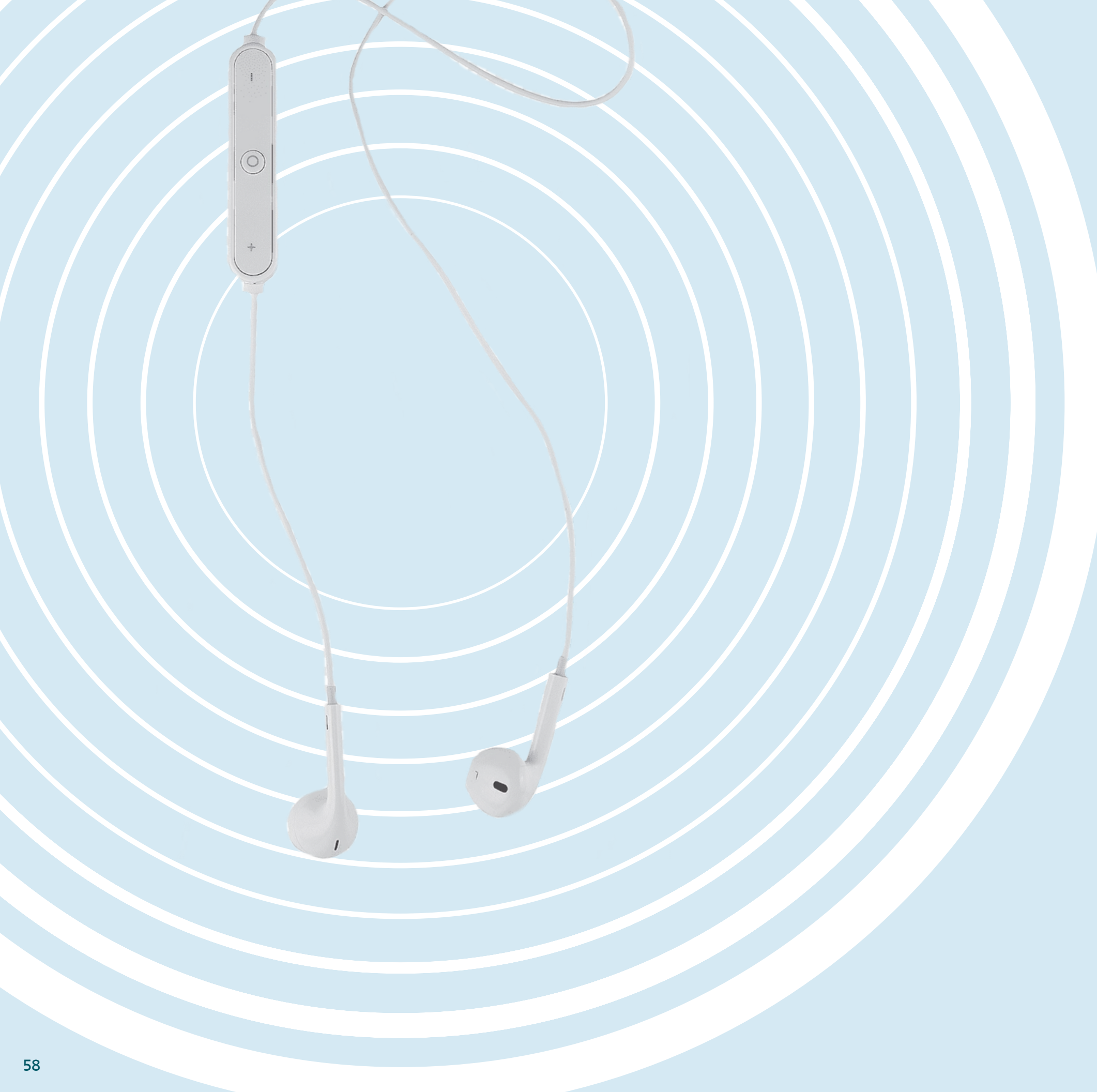
Have each participant identify the following:

- The **intention** behind the composed sound collage
 - Why was it recorded?
 - Why was it edited this way?
- The **affect** of the sound collage
 - How did it make you feel?
 - Calm? Frustrated?
 - Do you relate to these sounds?
- The **impact** of listening
 - What changed for you from the beginning of the workshop?
 - Why is listening to this important?

Discussion (45 minutes)

Discussion of participant's listening experiences can be guided by the above questions but can also expand to other considerations that came up as people listened to the loops.

Use small groups as necessary for the discussion to encourage in-depth conversation about listening experiences.



PLAYLISTS

Here are some suggestions of paths to take through the exhibit that highlight different themes:

Personal Experiences

Formal Ritual (WORSHIP)
Religion Outdoors (OUTDOORS)
Voices (VOICES)
Percussion (PERCUSSION)
Religion at Home (HOME)
COVID: Disrupted Peace (PANDEMIC)

Religious Encounters

Encounter & Outreach (STREETSCAPE)
Festivals (WORSHIP)
Campus Outreach (CAMPUS)
Ohio Expo Center (COMMERCE)
COVID: Messages (PANDEMIC)

Celebrations

Parades & Processions (STREETSCAPE)
Festivals (WORSHIP)
Student Groups (CAMPUS)
Voices (VOICES)
COVID: Religious Transformations (PANDEMIC)

Religion Out Loud

Religion Out Loud (STREETSCAPE)
Encounter & Outreach (STREETSCAPE)
Political Protests (STREETSCAPE)
Mobile Ministry (WORSHIP)
Campus Outreach (CAMPUS)
Religion for Sale (COMMERCE)
COVID: Messages (PANDEMIC)

Sounds of 'Silence'

Religion Outdoors (OUTDOORS)
Meals (WORSHIP)
Ohio Expo Center (COMMERCE)
COVID: Disrupted Peace (PANDEMIC)

REACTIONS AND REVIEWS

Religious Soundscapes : A Reflection

Sasha Borshev, an Urban Arts Space Intern

The Religious Soundscapes exhibition depicts religion as a phenomenon, surrounding the viewer as they walk through an audio landscape. Religious Soundscapes explores religion's many pathways. Humans constantly search for fuel, and for some it lies in the beauty and paradigm of worship. Researched and produced by the Religious Sounds Project (ASRP) team of faculty and researchers, the exhibition invites audiences to immerse themselves in what religion might sound like.

Throughout the galleries, visitors experience sounds of religion in communities, on the street, and in the home. Religious Soundscapes strongly brings about religion as a force in the home. Common household objects like pillows and magazines are scattered through the exhibit. Haunting displays of masks on casual tabletops echo the hardship of the COVID-19 pandemic, which changed the face of worship altogether. Services became zooms, and indoor venues were forgone completely.

The ASRP invites viewers to wonder: does religion change based on space and environment? How does the home connect us to something bigger? Religious rituals like meals are considered. Inside the home, meals are a common thread between all people. A sense of community is illustrated as a key part for so many who fill their lives with worship. In addition to sounds from the home, Religious Soundscapes encompasses a broad range of sounds from religious chants to recordings of outdoor rituals to street preachers with sounds of heavy protest in the background. These sensitive audios remind the audience that religion can take extreme sides and cause considerable strife and harm. Listener discretion is advised. There is even silence.

The viewer must consider what comes of a pause. They must also determine whether silence has the potential to fill a space, just as religious chanting or voices may. The final stop of the exhibition provides a space for viewers to comment on the exhibition via post-it notes on a communal board.

[R]eligion has many sounds, reflecting its multitude of forms and the circumstances of its practice. That's the point of Religious Soundscapes, an audio exhibition installed through mid-July at Ohio State's Urban Arts Space, located Downtown in the former Lazarus building.

Richard Ades, Columbus Monthly, July 11, 2022

"Religious Soundscapes" emphasizes the ubiquitous nature and complexity of American religion. It questions where and how religious practices take place. It considers who among us are religious and in what ways. And perhaps most significantly, the exhibit challenges visitors to put to use their powers of listening.

Nancy Gilson, The Columbus Dispatch, June 18, 2022

Whether we're cognizant of it or not, [Isaac] Weiner explained, sound is often how we encounter religious expression and experience, either our own or someone else's. "Sound creates moments of contact," he said. Bringing those moments of contact to ears beyond the people who initially experienced them is the idea behind "Religious Soundscapes," an immersive, sonic exhibition at OSU's Urban Arts Space.

Jim Fischer, Columbus Alive, June 1, 2022

I'd like to compare what I heard to what you may see surveying an Amish quilt. While your ocular focus embraces its colors, geometry and condition, my fingers take in the stitching, filling, and types of material used. What you see is more expected than the in-between that my fingertips explore, but arguably, my intake is more complete. For this reason, the intentional design of overlays and background sounds rising to foregrounds at Religious soundscapes may lead to initial confusion, capturing what sighted visitors generally ignore, but what we as nonvisual listeners use to gain perspective in our environments. While overall audio background has little to do with the faith-based sounds to which our attention inverts nearly by instinct, such uninvited audio, like stitches in a quilt, nevertheless runs through the fabric of any faith in the steady weaving together of humanity. Whether echoing around the cold stone walls in a cathedral, or shielded in the warm field grass at a powwow, A cricket's voice sings with our own. Those gathered choose to discount, or in the case of this exhibit, to recount, possibly even to rejoice in its existence amidst our human hunt for holiness.

Elizabeth Sammons, "Stitches in Faith"

SUGGESTED READINGS

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CREDITS

Religious Soundscapes is co-curated by Vicki Brennan (University of Vermont), Alison Furlong (Ohio State), Ely Lyonblum (University of Toronto), and Lauren Pond (Ohio State). It draws on eight years of research and production by the American Religious Sounds Project (ARSP), a collaborative, inter-institutional initiative co-directed by Amy DeRogatis (Michigan State University) and Isaac Weiner (The Ohio State University).

The ARSP is supported by a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation.

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We are grateful to the following communities in Ohio & Michigan who shared their sounds with us for the ARSP archive and this exhibit:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Apostolic Church International Columbus Assembly | Okemos Presbyterian Church |
| Athletes in Action | OSU Indian Student Association |
| Beulah Baptist Church | OSU Muslim Student Association |
| Bharatiya Hindu Temple | Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church |
| Christ the King Catholic Church | Pentecostals of East Lansing |
| Clowns Serving Christ Ministry | Raceway Ministries |
| Columbus Karma Thegsum Chöling | Rushing Wind Biker Church |
| Columbus Mead Hall | Solid Rock Church |
| Congregation Agudas Achim | St. Ephram Malankara Orthodox Church |
| Council on American-Islamic Relations, Ohio | St. Gregory's Abbey |
| Douglas Blue Feather | St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church |
| ECKANKAR Ohio | St. Stevan of Dechani Serbian Orthodox Church |
| Guru Nanak Religious Society | The Anointed Touch Ministries |
| ISKCON Columbus | The Magical Druid |
| Jyoti Church Columbus | The People's Church |
| MeshugaNotes | Three Cranes Grove Druid |
| MSU Hillel | Transport for Christ |
| MSU Powwow for Life | United Methodist Church For All People |
| Nine Worlds Kindred | Vedic Sewa Samaj Temple |
| Noor Islamic Cultural Center | Wat Buddha Samakidham Temple |
| Odissi Dance Club | Winding Road Coven |

CONTRIBUTORS

Vicki Brennan is an anthropologist who studies religion, sound, music, and urban space in Africa and the African Diaspora. She is currently an Associate Professor of Religion at the University of Vermont. Her book, *Singing Yoruba Christianity* (Indiana UP, 2018), examines how members of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church Movement in Lagos, Nigeria use music, dance, and other media as a means of producing moral community and reinforcing ethical values and modes of self-making. Her research has also been published in *American Ethnologist*, the *Journal of Religion in Africa*, and the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*. She is currently writing a book about media and celebrity in Nigerian gospel music.

Amy DeRogatis is Chair and Professor of religion and American culture in the Department of Religious Studies at Michigan State University. She is the recipient of the William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award. Dr. DeRogatis' research focuses on the multiple ways that religious groups, people, and communities in the US express religious ideas, commitments, beliefs, and knowledge through embodied practices. Her most recent book *Saving Sex: Sexuality and Salvation in American Evangelicalism* (Oxford, 2015) delved into the history of popular evangelical sex manuals and the efforts that authors made to convince readers that embodied sexual practices and restraints constitute a form of witnessing to their faith. Dr. DeRogatis was also the co-director of the American Religious Sounds Project, a collaborative digital initiative, supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, to document and interpret the diversity of American religious life by attending to its varied sonic cultures.

Alison Furlong earned her Ph.D. in 2015 from the ethnomusicology program of the Ohio State University School of Music. Her dissertation dealt with churches as alternative spaces of music-making in the former East Germany. Alongside her work as the project coordinator for the American Religious Sounds Project, Alison is also a web application developer for Ohio State's College of Arts and Sciences, where she has designed and built websites for scholarly projects for the departments of Dance, History, and Psychology, and the Center for Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

Ely Lyonblum is the Strategic Research Development Officer at the Faculty of Music, University Toronto. His projects, largely focusing on cultural equity, range from the history of sound recording, American Sign Language performance art, and storytelling through music. Ely trained as a documentary filmmaker at Goldsmiths, University of London, and completed a PhD in Music at the University of Cambridge. Ely's work has been presented by the MIT Media Lab, CBC Radio 1, the Smithsonian Institution, the British Library, and has been shown at music and arts festivals across six continents.

Lauren Pond is an award-winning documentary artist who uses audio, photography, and other digital storytelling methods to explore and evoke the complexities of religious life. She currently works as the Digital Media Manager of the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago Divinity School and previously served as the Multimedia Producer of the American Religious Sounds Project. She also has an extensive background in arts administration. In 2017, Lauren published her first monograph, *Test of Faith: Signs, Serpents, Salvation*, with the support of the Duke Center for Documentary Studies/Honickman First Book Prize in Photography. She received dual Bachelor's degrees in journalism and art from Northwestern University in 2009 and a Master's degree in photography from Ohio University in 2014.

Veronica Anne Salinas (she/hers) is a Tejana artist, writer, researcher, and Deep Listener. Her work explores creative research in sound, environment, geomancy, writing, text scores, listening practices, anthropology, performance, improvisation, acoustic ecology, the archive, and video work. *Yturri-Edmunds* is her solo project. She holds an MFA in Sound from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Isaac Weiner is a scholar of American religious studies, with research interests in pluralism, law, and sensory culture. His first book, *Religion Out Loud: Religious Sound, Public Space, and American Pluralism* (NYU Press, 2014), analyzed the politics of religious pluralism in the United States by attending to disputes about religious sound in the public realm. He is co-director of the American Religious Sounds Project. He was also co-editor of *Religion, Law, USA* (NYU Press, 2019).

