Call for papers
International music studies conference

We Want More: Music / Sociology!

8-9-10 April, 2026
Erasmus University Rotterdam
Organized by the research centre Rotterdam Popular Music Studies

This conference focuses on the **study of (popular) music from a sociological perspective**. To that end, we invite a broad range of papers which explore music from different methodological and theoretical approaches and through diverse empirical data. We also welcome abstracts from our disciplinary friends, such as geography, cultural studies, and beyond. **We want more!**

WE [pronoun]

We are both members of society at large as well as actors in music ecosystems - as music makers, audience members, and academics. This conference therefore includes themes around both the production and the reception of music. We seek to examine the **challenges of today's music ecosystems** (AI, inequality, precarity, sustainability, well-being) as well as **societal challenges music can help solve** through audience engagement (care, inclusion, societal change). Our aim is twofold: highlighting the rich variety of music sociology today and strengthening the relationships between researchers and music industry professionals to facilitate relevant and impact-driven music research.

WANT [verb]

We want a lot. We ask a lot - from ourselves, our favorite artists, and society. This raises urgent (sociological) questions about music: **What do we want** (taste, consumption)? **How do we want it** (live, through platforms or AR/VR)? **What do we want to pay for it** (fair pay, precarity)? **How do we want to pay for it** (crowdfunding, industry, patronage, subsidies)? **And how do we want music to matter** (activism, climate, commercialism, community, well-being)?

MORE [adverb]

More suggests abundance. More streams, more gigs, more genres, more money. But popular music is also characterized by more precarity, more inequality, more overburdened artists, more oversaturated audiences. This conference aims at **bringing together researchers and industry**

professionals to reflect on these dynamics, paradoxes and challenges, sharing empirical work, and exploring exciting future avenues for the sociological study of music.

! [punctuation mark]

An exclamation mark screams **urgency**. We are all searching for collective effervescence, meaningful experiences, affective atmospheres. But how is this pursuit disrupted by forces such as technology (AI), commodification and platformization? And what are the possible consequences of these shifts? Among them are trends such as festivalization, a growing sense of diminished authenticity, and the prevalence of hope labour, where artists invest time and effort in uncertain opportunities, driven more by aspiration rather than guaranteed reward. In this continuously evolving field, popular music studies must **confront the tensions between hope and disillusionment, performance and precariousness, creativity and capital, by critically engaging with the systems that shape who gets heard, how, and at what price.**

To reflect this wide scope of concerns, we invite papers along the following **themes**:

- **AI, streaming, algorithms, and the platformization of music** [curated by Dylan Thompson and Yosha Wijngaarden]
- **Music, care, health and well-being** [curated by Julian Schaap and Janine Stubbe]
- **Production, labour, and careers in the music industry** [curated by Pauwke Berkers and Erik Hitters]
- **Audience (live) experiences, taste and consumption in music** [curated by Femke Vandenberg and Thomas Calkins]
- **Social inequalities, cultural representation, and coloniality in music** [curated by Kim Dankoor and Robbert Goverts]
- **Sustainable and resilient music ecosystems and its policy implications** [curated by Frank Kimenai and Didier Goossens]
- **Music education, learning and professionalization** [curated by Wessel Coppes and Jenn Clempner]
- **The political economy of music industries and music business** [curated by Virgo Sillamaa and Martijn Mulder]
- **Music, urban space, nightlife** [curated by Timo Koren and Miguel Neiva]
- **Music, activism, and social change** [curated by Kristina Kolbe and Jelena Beocanin]
- **Music from the 'margins', de-westernizing music sociology** (curated by Petrica Mogos)

ABSTRACTS

Please email abstracts of max. 300 words in English (including a research question, theoretical approach, methodology, [preliminary] findings together with a short bio (50 words), including name, institutional affiliation and position, and email addresses, to: rpms@eur.nl. Please also include the theme(s) to which your abstract speaks most. Abstract deadline: October 1, 2025. Participants will receive notifications of acceptance by November 1, 2025.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us: Pauwke Berkers at rpms@eur.nl
Please also check: We Want More: Music / Sociology! | Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication | Erasmus University Rotterdam