



## GREEN COLLEGE CROSS-SECTORAL CONSULTATION **MEHFIL: MUSIC, TEXT AND PERFORMANCE OF SOUTH ASIA**

In Urdu and Hindi, *Mehfil* is a term used for an intimate gathering that features an art performance, such as music, poetry or dance. This series brings performers and scholars to campus to allow faculty, students and staff to explore a few South Asian musical and performance traditions, and the texts they draw on. We engage with scholars and local performers, and bring in two sets of performers from South Asia, to explore the popular and the classical, the religious and the secular. Join us as we bring the arts of South Asia to life at Green College!

ALL TALKS ARE AT GREEN COLLEGE IN THE COACH HOUSE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC WITHOUT CHARGE

### TERM 2

#### **WORLDLY DIVINE LOVE: WOMEN AND PUBLIC PERFORMANCES OF SUNG POETRY IN SOUTH ASIA**

**Francesca Cassio**, Music and Sardarni Harbans Kaur  
Chair in Sikh Musicology, Hofstra University  
Thursday, January 30, 2020, 5:00 pm

Through postcolonial and contemporary gender studies theories, the presenter will discuss and showcase secular and religious repertoires, ranging from the songs performed by the *tawaif*-s (courtesans) to the sung poetry associated with spiritual contexts and practices. Delving into the social norms that in Pre-Partition India prevented women from becoming professional singers, the speaker will debate the public sphere of music performances dominated by male-restricted *mehfils*. Based on several years of fieldwork in South Asia, and rigorous musical training under the guidance of renowned singers of Indian music, Dr. Cassio's talk will explore two opposite expressions of 'love' - as portrait in the *tawaifs'* songs and in the Sikh *kirtan* repertoire - whose nuances though allow to go beyond the (colonial) binary categories of secular and 'religious', dissolving into the spiritual dimension of the sung poetry, in which the 'beloved' is disembodied.

#### **Cecil H. and Ida Green Visiting Professor FROM MIRA TO BULLHE SHAH: SONGS OF REASON AND PASSION - MUKHTIYAR ALI IN CONCERT**

**Mukhtiyar Ali**, folk singer  
Thursday, February 27, 2020, 5:00 pm

Mukhtiyar Ali is an Indian folk singer who blends a Rajasthani folk idiom with refined classicism, singing the poetry of Kabir, Mira and Bulleh Shah. Mukhtiyar Ali was born in a small village called Pugal on the North West frontier of India in the state of Rajasthan. He is from the semi-nomadic Mirasi Community, which hails from the Thar Desert. Mukhtiyar represents the 26th generation of practitioners of this traditional form, keeping alive the oral tradition of *Sufiana Qalam*.

Those attending talks at Green College are warmly invited to come to dinner.

For information on making dinner reservations, see [www.greencollege.ubc.ca/how-attend-dinner](http://www.greencollege.ubc.ca/how-attend-dinner)

#### **DALIT PERFORMATIVITY AND MASCULINE NORMATIVITY? CONSIDERING THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SANT RAM UDASI AND AMAR SINGH CHAMKILA**

**Virinder Kalra**, Sociology, Warwick University  
Thursday, March 26, 2020, 5:00 pm

In exploring the lives and works of two Punjabi singers who came from Dalit backgrounds, the accuracy and relevance of this caste positioning is put into question. Udasi as a Naxalite revolutionary with some sympathy to Sikh separatist forces in the early 1980s and Chamkila, was known for his lascivious lyrics and died in a violent encounter, blamed on Khalistanis. Perhaps in relation to Paash, the renowned leftist poet of the 1980s these two characters are neglected repeating caste privilege and thus justifying the appellation Dalit in relation to caste. In exploring these poet-performers the question of gender is prominent, as Iqbal Kaur (Udasi's daughter) continues his legacy in propagating his ideology and the emergence of Ginni Mahi asserting a positive 'Chamar' identity through Ravidas and Ambedkar disrupting the hypermasculine overtones of Punjabi pop aesthetics.

#### **THE ART OF THE TILLANA**

**Kavita Ramanan**, Applied Mathematics, Brown University  
Thursday, April 23, 2020, 5:00 pm

The Tillana is a specific musical form of South Indian classical music that incorporates an attractive melodic structure into a strong rhythmic framework, and is also commonly featured in classical Indian (Bharatanatyam or Kuchipudi) dance performances. After providing a brief introduction to basic elements of South Indian classical music such as raga and tala, Kavita Ramanan will give a brief history of the evolution of the tillana and present different types of tillana compositions, while highlighting their stylistic differences.



CENTRE FOR INDIA  
AND SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH



Indian Classical Music  
Society of Vancouver

