

## Call for Proposals

### Music, Diplomacy, Propaganda: Towards New Definitions *Two-Part Participatory Workshop*

Online, June 20, 2025

and

Université de Montréal, October 16-18, 2025

What is music diplomacy, what is music propaganda, and what makes it possible to distinguish one from the other – not only from the internal perspective of players involved, but also and primarily from research’s external perspective? As simple as these questions may seem, it is in fact very difficult to provide an unequivocal answer. Scholarly literature on these topics – which has developed considerably in recent years – bears witness to this challenge: use of these two terms varies greatly, underpinned by equally varied definitions (explicit, but more often implicit). The expression “music diplomacy” can thus designate, among other things, musical practices accompanying the work of professional diplomats, a specific type of cultural and/or public diplomacy, or a form of intercultural exchange through music; as for music propaganda, it is generally defined as a kind of subordination of music to political interests, but the ways in which this definition is applied are extremely varied, and in many cases, the boundaries between music diplomacy and music propaganda also remain somewhat blurred.

Organized as part of an [interdisciplinary research project aimed at \(re\)thinking the distinction between music diplomacy and music propaganda](#) (whose bibliography is available [here](#)), the purpose of this participatory workshop is to offer a space for group reflection on these fundamental questions. It takes place in two complementary and inextricably linked parts:

- 1) A half-day online **seminar** for theoretical and conceptual reflection (June 20, 2025);
- 2) A three-day in-person **gathering** to discuss case studies (October 16-18, 2025).

During the **seminar that makes up the first part of the workshop**, participants will meet to outline the main lines of discussion around a few key theoretical texts, chosen among the participants’ suggestions. In this first stage of the workshop (for which Marie-Hélène Benoit-Otis and her team will give an introductory general presentation of the theme), we’ll be working together to try to better understand the concepts of music diplomacy and music propaganda, without yet applying these reflections to specific case studies.

This conceptual and theoretical discussion will feed into the **second part of the workshop**, during which participants will be able to propose a reflection rooted, where appropriate, in one or more case studies (from the Renaissance to the present day), to test the limits of the conceptual framework they have developed. These presentations will be prepared **collaboratively**. The accepted proposals will be grouped according to the kind of dynamic studied (not simply based on the chosen case studies’ geographical or chronological proximity), and brought together in round tables to help establish dialogue between the three or four participants. Groupings will be determined during the June 20, 2025 online seminar, which will provide an opportunity for initial contact between people in the same round table group. To facilitate discussion, all participants will

also be invited to share a brief written abstract of their presentation, prior to the October 2025 gathering.

Proposals for the second part of the workshop may address any of the following questions, or any other question related to the definitions of music diplomacy and/or music propaganda:

- What is music diplomacy and what forms can it take?
- What is music propaganda and what forms can it take?
- What are the boundaries between diplomacy and propaganda in music? (This line of questioning can take the form of a theoretical reflection, a literature review, a study of the factors that can influence the choice of one term or the other in a certain context, an analysis of the consequences and implications of this choice, etc.)
- How do the concepts of music diplomacy and music propaganda interact with related concepts, such as education or imperialism?
- How have music diplomacy and/or music propaganda evolved through time?
- What are the specificities of *music* diplomacy or propaganda compared to diplomacy or propaganda borne by other forms of cultural expression?
- How does interdisciplinary work influence the study of music diplomacy and/or music propaganda? How do we approach these notions in musicology, history, sociology, political science, communications, philosophy, etc., and how can we combine different approaches to achieve a more complete analysis?

In addition to the round tables, the October 2025 gathering will include a keynote presented by **Danielle Fosler-Lussier**, author of numerous essential works on music diplomacy (see below for a few examples).

A collective publication bringing together articles derived from a selection of the contributions to the workshop is planned.

*Proposals (max. 300 words) for the second part of the workshop, along with a brief abstract (max. 150 words), a short biography (max. 150 words), and, if you wish, a list of up to three (3) reading suggestions for the June 20, 2025 seminar must be submitted electronically before October 1, 2024, using the online form available at the following URL:*

<https://forms.gle/WpbB3p5hxx1zDQr5>

The workshop's languages are **French** and **English**.

### Coordinator

Simone Calvé (Université de Montréal, CRCMP, OICRM)

\*For any questions, use the following address: [musiquediplomatiepropagande@gmail.com](mailto:musiquediplomatiepropagande@gmail.com)

### Organizing Committee

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### Advisory Committee

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### Indicative Bibliography

See [here](#) for the complete bibliography of the project “*Musique, diplomatie et propagande*” directed by Marie-Hélène Benoit-Otis.

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