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**MAARC Announces Inaugural Conference and Festival, November 9-11, 2018**

*A part of PAAFF 2018's opening weekend, "Music of Asian America: History, Activism, and Collaborations" is a three-day conference and festival that celebrates and critically explores Asian American music-making.*

Burlington, NJ – The Music of Asian America Research Center (MAARC) is proud to partner with the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival (PAAFF) to present its inaugural conference and festival from November 9-11, 2018. "Music of Asian America: History, Activism, and Collaborations" features two showcase concerts, three film screenings, four hands-on workshops with renowned musicians, and twelve research presentations given by prominent academics from across the country.

On Friday, November 9 at 9:30pm at the Lightbox Film Center, we will present our "Traditional and Hip Hop Showcase." This concert opens with classical and traditional music from China and Iran, performed by the **Swarthmore Chinese Music Ensemble** (directed by Lei Ouyang Bryant) and master santur (Persian hammered dulcimer) player **Dariush Saghafi**. Saghafi has a highly successful dual-career in music and medicine. A nephrologist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Dr. Saghafi has also taught at the Tabriz School of Music in Iran, and performed to rave reviews at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. The remainder of the concert will feature two rappers who have incorporated traditional instruments in their music. Both Sikh American **Seti X** and Cambodian American **praCh Ly** have used their powerful songs to empower their own communities, to work with youths, and to build bridges between communities.

On Saturday, November 10 at 9:30pm at Lightbox, we will present our "Folk and Indie Showcase." This program opens with **Sining Kapuluan**, a Brooklyn-based ensemble that performs Filipino folk dance and music. The remainder of the evening will feature alt-folk musicians. Korean American singer/songwriter **Bobby Choy**, aka Big Phony, is sometimes dubbed the Asian Elliott Smith; he will entertain the audience by singing a set of soulful songs. **No-No Boy** will close the evening with a multimedia concert of songs about Asian American experiences, both uplifting and traumatic. "Asian American film and literature is often about generation gaps—the insurmountable barrier between parents and children. In music, this is often manifested in differing musical tastes," says MAARC Executive Director Eric Hung. He continues, "By putting traditional and popular genres together, these two concerts will hopefully show that—despite these barriers—all Asian American generations have similarly explored issues of identity, justice and belonging."

[asianamericanmusic.org](http://asianamericanmusic.org)

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On Saturday and Sunday, “Music of Asian America: History, Activism, and Collaborations” will host four hands-on workshops. Three are led by musicians who performed at the showcase concerts: Seti X, No-No Boy, and Sining Kapuluan. The fourth is led by composer **Byron Au Yong** and writer **Aaron Jafferis**. This team is currently creating the *Activist Songbook*, a collection of 53 songs and raps to counteract hate. The materials for this project include interviews of Asian American, immigrant, and refugee organizers, many of whom are based in the Philadelphia area.

“Music of Asian America: History, Activism, and Collaborations” will also include twelve research presentations that explore how Asian American musicians have navigated the American racial landscape and conflicting discourses about music. For example, many people subscribe to the notion that music is a “universal language.” Yet, in North America, music genres are defined largely by race—classical music and country music are “white,” R&B and rap are “black,” and salsa and reggaeton are “Latino.” Musicians who write or perform in the “wrong” styles are almost automatically (and not always wrongly) labeled as “inauthentic” or, worse yet, as cultural appropriators. What’s more, Asian American musicians have to deal with the model minority stereotype, which tends to enhance the belief that they are technically proficient imitators with limited capacity for innovation and emotional expression.

The panels on Friday, November 9 explore: (1) what happens when Asian musical traditions are transplanted to the United States, and (2) the long-term effects of U.S. military policies in Asia on the music of Asian America. Saturday morning’s panel examines how Asian American musicians participating in different genres use style to contend with stereotypes and the North American racial landscape. Finally, Sunday morning’s panel discusses how Asian American musicians and the World War II Museum in New Orleans have dealt with issues of Asian masculinity. Researchers who will be speaking include **Christine Bacareza Balance** (Cornell University), **Dan Blim** (Denison University), **Elizabeth Clendinning** (Wake Forest University), **Donna Lee Kwan** (University of Kentucky), **Joseph Small** (Swarthmore College), and **Dan Wang** (University of Pittsburgh).

For full details, please visit: [asianamericanmusic.org/fest2018](http://asianamericanmusic.org/fest2018). Admission to research panels, workshops and some film screenings is free. Tickets to the two showcase concerts are available at: <https://paaff.gala-engine.com/2018/section/live-music/>

### **About the Music of Asian America Research Center**

Founded in 2017, the Music of Asian America Research Center (MAARC) strives to empower our communities through collecting, promoting, and teaching music created by Asian Americans, and seeks to advance knowledge about and social justice for Asian Americans through music. MAARC is working with you to:

- Create a comprehensive information center about music made by Asian Americans
- Build a digital archive (oral histories, artifacts, and sound/video clips)
- Develop education programs for teachers, professors, and lifelong learners
- Collaborate with artists and other organizations to put on community events

Please visit our website at [asianamericanmusic.org](http://asianamericanmusic.org), like us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on Twitter [@MusAsianAmerica](#).