

# Dissertation Completion Fellowship Nomination Form

## Application deadlines:

For Spring 2019 and Summer 2019 Only: October 24, 2018  
For Summer 2019 and Fall 2019 Only: March 20, 2019

Date: October 23, 2018 **IMPORTANT: Follow the Guidelines listed on Page 2.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

PID# \_\_\_\_\_

Degree sought (circle one): DMA PHD

Major Percussion Performance

Address to receive correspondence regarding competition:

Grand River Ave

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Lansing, MI 48912

MSU E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the semester in which you wish to receive the fellowship:

X Spring Semester 2019 \_\_\_\_\_ Summer Semester 2019 \_\_\_\_\_ Fall Semester 2019

### Summary of Nominee's Record:

1) Semester of first MSU enrollment in this program Fall 2016

2) Current GPA 4.0

3) Number of outstanding DF credits in academic coursework 0 (do **not** include 996, 997, 998, 999 credits)

4) Course work or recitals remaining (include the current semester):

Current Semester: MUS 990 Doctoral Independent Study, MUS 996 Doctoral Recital Performance

Spring 2019: MUS 996 Doctoral Recital Performance

5) Comprehensive examinations passed to date (please list specific exam): April 14, 2018: History and Theory

6) List *major* fellowships/scholarships/assistantships awarded to date (College of Music, Graduate School, competitive, internal, external):

Full MSU College of Music Scholarship Fall 2016 and Spring 2017; MSU College of Music Percussion Graduate Teaching

Assistantship Fall 2017-Present; Belmont University School of Music Percussion Graduate Teaching Assistantship 2013-2015

**Student must submit ONE (1) pdf of ALL materials to [musgrad@msu.edu](mailto:musgrad@msu.edu).**

**Please see the directions about Letters of Recommendation. Application materials must reach the College of Music Graduate Studies Office, 207 Music Practice, before:**

**5:00 pm, October 24, 2018 or March 20, 2019.**

Signature of Primary Advisor or Guidance Committee Chair

10-24-18  
Date



# Official Transcript

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Course	Title	Credits	Grade	Repeat	Honors
Fall 2016					
Graduate Credit					
MUS 201	Aural Skills Review	1	4.0		
MUS 869	Tonal Counterpoint	2	4.0		
MUS 880	Composition	2	4.0	RN	
MUS 996	Doctoral Recital Performance	1	4.0	RN	
Term Credits: 6.0		Cumulative Credits: 6.0			
Term GPA: 4.0000		Cumulative GPA: 4.0000			
Spring 2017					
Graduate Credit					
MUS 872	Tonal Forms	2	4.0		
MUS 880	Composition	2	4.0	RN	
MUS 996	Doctoral Recital Performance	2	4.0	RN	
Term Credits: 6.0		Cumulative Credits: 12.0			
Term GPA: 4.0000		Cumulative GPA: 4.0000			
Fall 2017					
Graduate Credit					
MUS 830	Res Methods & Materials Music	3	4.0		
MUS 992	Seminar in Musicology	3	4.0	RN	
MUS 996	Doctoral Recital Performance	3	4.0	RN	
Term Credits: 9.0		Cumulative Credits: 21.0			
Term GPA: 4.0000		Cumulative GPA: 4.0000			
Spring 2018					
Graduate Credit					
MUS 868	Topics in Music Analysis	3	4.0		
MUS 992	Seminar in Musicology	3	4.0	RN	
MUS 996	Doctoral Recital Performance	3	4.0	RN	
Term Credits: 9.0		Cumulative Credits: 30.0			
Term GPA: 4.0000		Cumulative GPA: 4.0000			
Fall 2018					
Graduate Credit					
MUS 990	Doctoral Independent Study	2			
MUS 996	Doctoral Recital Performance	7		RN	
Term Credits:		Cumulative Credits:			
Term GPA:		Cumulative GPA:			
Spring 2019					
Graduate Credit					
MUS 996	Doctoral Recital Performance	9		RN	

## EDUCATION

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**Michigan State University** — East Lansing, MI

Doctor of Musical Arts — Percussion Performance

Major Professor —

Projected **August 2019**

(ABD May 2018)

**Belmont University** — Nashville, TN

Master of Music — Percussion Performance

**May 2015**

Major Professor —

Bachelor of Music — Percussion Performance

**December 2011**

Bachelor of Arts — German

**Hochschule für Musik Dresden** (exchange student) —Dresden, Germany

**2009-2010**

Major Professor: (Principal Timpanist, Dresden Staatskapelle)

## TABLA STUDY

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**Tabla Lessons in Benares Oral Tradition** — via Skype

**July 2016-present**

Teacher: (Tabla Instructor, McGill University)

**Summer Tabla Workshop with**— Montréal, QC

**July 2017 & 2018**

Intensive workshop with focus on technique and repertoire in the Benares oral tradition

**Tabla Lessons with Kyle Jones** — Nashville, TN

**January-June 2016**

Teacher:

## PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

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**MSU Rudimental Day of Percussion** — Okemos High School

**October 2018**

Performed tabla solo, featured marimba soloist with percussion ensemble

**MSU College of Music Garden Series Concert** — East Lansing, MI

**September 2018**

Performed a tabla solo; performed marimba and snare

**Cortona New Music Sessions** — Cortona, Italy

**May 2018**

Percussion Fellow, premiered three chamber compositions

**Guest Artist Recital** — Albion College, Albion, MI **April 2018**  
Performed solo tabla and marimba

**Forks and Corks Concert** — Cooley Law School Stadium, Lansing, MI **March 2018**  
Performed solo tabla

**4 DMA Degree Recitals** — Michigan State University **April 2017-September 2018**  
Performed solo tabla, marimba, and percussion on each

**Tuba Bach Chamber Music Festival Concert** — Big Rapids, MI **October 2017**  
Featured World Percussionist: performed tabla, kanjira, pandeiro, tambourine, and cajon

**Substitute Percussionist with Regional Symphony Orchestras** **2017-present**  
Lansing Symphony, Midland Symphony, and Jackson Symphony

**Percussive Arts Society International Convention** — Indianapolis, IN **November 2017**  
Performed a showcase concert with the Michigan State University Percussion Ensemble

**The Aspen Music Festival and School** — Aspen, CO **Summer 2014**  
Orchestral Performer

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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**Percussion Graduate Teaching Assistant** — Michigan State University **2017-present**

**Tabla Clinician** — Olivet College **October 2017**

**Percussion Instructor** — Michigan State University Community Music School **2018-present**

**Adjunct Percussion Instructor** — Belmont University **2015-2016**

## RECORDINGS & ACADEMIC WRITING

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**Video Recordings of Tabla and Percussion** **2015-present**  
<https://sebastianbuhts.com/video/>

**Antique Violences: Music of John Mackey** **May 2017**  
CD recording with the MSU Wind Symphony, Label: Blue Griffin

**Master's Thesis** **May 2015**  
Buhts Sebastian. "Exploring the Palette of Percussion." Master's thesis, Belmont University, 2015.

Dissertation Completion Fellowship

Project Statement

A New Pedagogy For Tabla:

Bridging The Gap Between Oral And Written Traditions

by ME

I am applying for the Dissertation Completion Fellowship to complete work for the Lecture Recital and Document. My project focuses on creating a pedagogical approach for teaching tabla to western percussionists by combining western notation with Indian oral tradition. The tabla consists of two Indian hand drums with origins dating back to the 17th century and a strong musical lineage rooted in Varanasi, India. I will use the funding from this grant to support a semester's worth of study in Varanasi, where I have been accepted to study with tabla guru Pandit Kishor Kumar Mishra, Tabla Faculty Member at the Performing Arts of Banaras Hindu University. For my lecture recital, I will perform a 30-minute traditional tabla solo that I learn while abroad and transcribe its contents using the MacDonald/Mativetsky western notation system.

The MacDonald/Mativetsky notation system utilizes a western music staff in order to incorporate tabla into western solo and chamber contexts. By adhering to the universal principles of western notation, the tabla pitches descend from high to low on a music staff as shown in figure 1. The words written above the note-heads indicate verbal syllables used to teach thirteen stroke types via oral tradition. The note-heads provide useful information to western musicians by indicating not only stroke type, but also contour of pitch and rhythm. My project will build upon this scholarship. Specifically, my lecture recital and document will be the first to present a traditional tabla solo using the MacDonald/Mativetsky notation system and the first to utilize this notation for pedagogical purposes.

Figure 1. MacDonald/Mativetsky Tabla Notation System Key.<sup>1</sup>



The success of this project hinges on my ability to study tabla, repertoire, and pedagogy with a primary source in India. Full immersion abroad will advance my level of expertise on tabla and ensure that I preserve cultural authenticity in my pedagogical approach. For the past two years, I have studied tabla through oral tradition via Skype lessons with Shawn Mativetsky, Instructor of Tabla at McGill University, and have attended two of his summer-intensive tabla workshops at McGill. In addition, I have studied the compositional forms of traditional tabla repertoire, performed tabla for numerous solo and chamber recitals, and have presented clinics on tabla performance practices. I believe my background has prepared me to take my tabla research to the next level. By studying with Pandit Mishra, I will gain direct knowledge of tabla repertoire and performance practices through oral tradition from a primary source. This research will tremendously help guide the relevance and accuracy of my lecture recital and document.

My lecture recital will showcase a 30-minute tabla solo that I learn via oral tradition in Varanasi, India from Pandit Mishra. I will transcribe it using the MacDonald/Mativetsky notation system and project excerpts from the transcription onto a screen to illustrate a visual analysis of compositional form and technical approach. Additionally, I will project video footage that corresponds to the transcribed excerpts. In the videos, I will demonstrate proper technique

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<sup>1</sup> Shawn Mativetsky, "Tabla Notation in New Music Contexts." Shawn Mativetsky. Accessed October 20, 2017, <https://www.shawnmativetsky.com/notation>.

through oral tradition. Lastly, I will discuss the benefits of written notation working in tandem with oral instruction in order to solidify my case for establishing a new tabla pedagogy that bridges the gap between written and oral traditions.

My document will be outlined as follows: chapter one will introduce Indian oral tradition and its benefits for teaching tabla. Chapter two will introduce the MacDonald/Mativetsky notation system and its benefits as a pedagogical tool. Chapter three will introduce tabla technique and illustrate how each stroke type corresponds to the MacDonald/Mativetsky notations system. Chapter four will feature my transcription of a traditional tabla solo using the MacDonald/Mativetsky notation system and provide an analysis of its pitch and rhythmic contour. Chapter five will serve as the conclusion and discuss the significance and broader ramifications of introducing tabla to western musicians through oral and written traditions. I have already completed background research for chapters 1-3. The purpose of this fellowship is to carry out research for writing chapters 4-5.

My ultimate goal is to develop the research from this project into a published method book. Obtaining this award and carrying out this research will position me as a competitive candidate to receive future grants from organizations such as Fulbright and the American Institute of Indian Studies in order to pursue further research in India for a method book publication. This Dissertation Fellowship will provide me with the opportunity to study from a primary source in India in order to preserve authenticity and expertise in my book. As a result, my method book and video companion will serve as an introductory gateway to the tabla's oral tradition and performance practices and directly impact western percussionists interested in learning tabla that may not have the resources to learn via oral tradition alone.



## Time-table for completing the project

Project Task	Due Date	Status
Establish contact with Pandit Kishor Mishra, Tabla teacher at Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India	June 20, 2018	Complete
Complete background research for document chapters 1-3	October 1, 2018	Complete
Apply for MSU Dissertation Completion Award	October 24, 2018	Complete
Apply for research visa to study in India through the American Institute of Indian Studies	November 1, 2018	Complete
Study privately in Varanasi, India beginning February 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6-hours daily practice</li> <li>• Observation and experience: total immersion in oral tradition pedagogy</li> <li>• Build technique and learn repertoire from Benares gharana (tabla lineage in Varanasi)</li> <li>• Research effective layouts for introductory method books</li> <li>• Sketch outline for method book</li> </ul>	February 1 — June 1, 2019	
Transcribe tabla solo from oral tradition using MacDonald/Mativenessky notation system	April 15, 2019	
Record video footage of oral tradition for lecture recital	May 1, 2019	
Finish lecture recital document	June 15, 2019	
Submit document to full guidance committee	June 30, 2019	
Defend lecture recital	July 31, 2019	
Perform lecture recital	August 1, 2019	
Graduate with DMA degree	August 2019 (Summer)	