



8th International Conference of the Word and Music Association Forum

“Sacrum et Profanum in Words and Music”

University American College Skopje, North Macedonia

May 21 - 23, 2026

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 8th Biennial Conference of the Word and Music Association Forum (WMAF) will be hosted by the School of Foreign Languages, University American College Skopje (Skopje, North Macedonia).

The mission of the WMA Forum is to provide a friendly and open environment where both emerging and experienced scholars from diverse fields interested in interdisciplinary research in the word and music studies can meet, cooperate, and learn together.

We warmly invite papers on the topic of:

“Sacrum et Profanum in Words and Music”

This conference seeks to explore “the sacred and the profane”, with all their multifaceted meanings, as they manifest themselves in the interplay between words and music.

We would like to look into the array of ideas about the sacred and/or/versus the profane in word and music studies, from liturgical hymns and *missae parodiae* to subversions and pastiches, from divine inspiration to human desire, from ritualistic or religious compositions to secular performance spaces. The coalescence of both elements in practices of parody and contrafactum invite reflection on textual, contextual and functional factors co-determining their opposition. Where does it actually reside, what makes the difference? How can forces from one realm serve the purposes of the other? What are the areas of possible compromise and where a line needs to be drawn? Can music alone stand for the difference between the ardors of the earthly Aphrodite and the celestial love, or, flames of carnal desire and the flames of the Holy Spirit? Or must it recur to word, which provides the necessary degree of specificity? The theme "sacrum et profanum" opens a wide field of inquiry into how words and music reflect, challenge, and negotiate spiritual and worldly realms.

We seek contributions that address both the coexistence and the conflict between sacred and profane traditions. Furthermore, we invite papers that investigate the transformations of the sacred and the profane through time and today, particularly in relation to crisis, hope, and visions of the future. How do words and music respond to spiritual, existential, cultural, and political crises? How do they serve as vehicles of transcendence or critique? How are notions of the sacred reimagined in contemporary secular societies, or conversely, how is the profane ritualized or aestheticized in ways that invoke the sacred? In particular, we are interested in



the notion of absence or lack of the sacred and longing for this abandoned dimension as expressed in words and music.

The conference theme invites a broad range of interpretations and methodologies. We encourage submissions that examine, but are not limited to:

- Sacred and profane motifs in music and literature
- The sacred and the profane in times of conflict, crisis or social upheaval
- The sacred and the profane of genre, style, and form
- Sacralisation and profanation gestures
- Myth, mysticism, and the sacred in word and music studies
- Profanity and blasphemy across music, literature, and other forms of mixed and verbal communication
- Ritual, liturgy, and performance in literature and music
- Sacred music in secular contexts; secular music in sacred spaces
- Apocalyptic and utopian visions
- The divine in artistic expression
- Future spiritualities
- Pedagogical approaches to teaching the sacred and the profane through words and music

Our aim is to spark an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary conversation and we welcome papers that contribute to a richer understanding of the political dimensions of word and music studies.

Papers on surveying the field of word and music studies, not directly connected to the conference theme, are also welcome.

We invite contributions coming from across the humanities (and beyond), including, but not limited to:

- Literary Studies
- Music, Musicology, Ethnomusicology
- Theology and Religious Studies
- Philosophy (including Aesthetics and Ethics)
- History of Ideas
- Art History
- Political Science
- Cultural and Media Studies
- Gender Studies
- Postcolonial Studies
- Education

We hope for an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary conversation on words and music through this prism, potentially invigorating for our own discipline(s) of study and promoting intellectual freedom in our communities.



Please fill out the application form (including an abstract of max. 350 words and a short biobibliographical note) at the link below **by October 1, 2025**.

Application form link: <https://forms.gle/ZbwnX3FX53QxYWZeA>

Notification of acceptance will be sent by **February 1, 2026**.

Accepted papers will have a presentation length of 15-20 minutes (followed by a 15-minute discussion).

The working language of the Conference is English.

For any queries you can write to the conference hosts Assoc. Prof. Dr Ivana Trajanoska and Dr Jan Czarnecki at wmaforum@gmail.com

There is no conference fee. Travel and accommodation costs should be covered by the individual participants.

Conference Program Committee:

Ivana Trajanoska and Jan Czarnecki