

## Musicologist receives second Fulbright-Nehru award

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Musicologist Guy Beck, recipient of a second Fulbright-Nehru research award, is in India for six months to research Hindustani classical vocal music. (Photo from Guy Beck)

Musicologist Guy Beck, an adjunct lecturer in the Tulane University School of Continuing Studies, has received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program grant to India in the field of music studies. His grant will involve research into Hindustani classical vocal music at Sangeet Ashram in Kolkata, in West Bengal.

[Beck](#) has taught courses in world music, world religions, and religion and music. He also teaches Buddhism for the Tulane Department of Philosophy and plans to return in the fall.

“This time around I will be pursuing advanced training in Hindustani vocal music, with an emphasis on performance of a specific vocal tradition known as the Agra Gharana, originally based in Agra (home of the Taj Mahal) but now dispersed throughout India,” Beck says.

“I will also be concentrating my research on the lyrical content of north Indian classical songs. Whether sung by Hindu, Muslim or non-religious artists, so far I have found that nearly 90 to 95 percent of the lyrical content comprises descriptions of Hindu religious and mythological themes and devotional situations. In several cases, however, there is veneration of a generic god through a variety of divine names that members of all religions can understand.”

He says Indian vocal music serves as a kind of aesthetic platform for inter-religious unity that has not been previously acknowledged.

“Though sometimes characterized as secularized or courtly, especially with the Western emphasis on instruments like sitar and tabla, Hindustani classical music is deeply rooted in the religious fabric of India,” says Beck, author of *Sonic Liturgy: Ritual and Music in Hindu Tradition*.

Beck also received a Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship for the 2009-2010 academic year to research the history and performance of Agra Gharana.

He is one of over 1,200 U.S. citizens who will travel abroad for the 2015-2016 academic year through the [Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program](#). Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement.