

The IHC South Asian Religions and Cultures Research Focus Group Presents

*Worship Space Acoustics:
Exploring Its Application in Hindu Temples*

Shashank Aswathanarayana

Media Arts and Technology, University of California, Santa Barbara



Wednesday, May 24 / 4:00 pm / 3041 Humanities and Social Sciences Building

Acoustically important aspects of Hindu worship include chants, bells, conch-shells, and gongs. Every Hindu temple is fitted with bells that worshipers ring. Conch-shells and gongs are used at various times during *pūjā* rituals, during which texts from the Vedas and other Sanskrit scriptures are chanted. These Vedic chants have phonetic characteristics such as pitch, duration, emphasis, uniformity, and juxtaposition. In this talk Shashank Aswathanarayana will discuss his postdoctoral research on the acoustics of Hindu temples in which he plans to build a complete acoustic image of five Hindu temples in South India and analyze the characteristics of the sounds within these temples as they relate to the effects on human consciousness. He also plans to develop and define new methods of acoustic characterization that are more appropriate for Hindu worship spaces than the traditional methods of acoustic characterization that have been developed for Christian worship spaces.

Shashank Aswathanarayana is a music technologist, percussionist, and research scholar from Bengaluru, India, who received his PhD in Media Arts and Technology from the University of California, Santa Barbara. In fall 2023 he will embark on his postdoctoral research at American University in Washington, DC as a Postdoctoral Fellow for Academic Diversity.



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