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7th Conference on English Language and Literary Studies (CELLS 7)

25–26 September 2026

University of Banja Luka

Faculty of Philology, English Department
in association with
Academy of Arts, Music Department

The Music of Language and the Language of Music:

Static and Dynamic Perspectives on Expression, Form and Meaning

In these turbulent and unpredictable times, the arts, music in particular, have never been more important for the preservation of positive human values. Language and music, two powerful instruments in this endeavor, possess their own structural hierarchies and systems of meaning, yet they are so closely intertwined that cognitive science still cannot clearly determine where one ends and the other begins. Across history, they have continuously nourished one another: operas such as *Romeo et Juliette*, *War and Peace* and *La Traviata* were inspired by the works of William Shakespeare, Leo Tolstoy and Alexandre Dumas; the music of Ludwig van Beethoven or The Beatles has inspired writers such as Thomas Mann and Haruki Murakami. George Bernard Shaw was a passionate music critic; James Joyce conceived of his prose in musical terms; and figures such as Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan and Laurie Anderson embody the creative fusion of poetic and musical expression.

Today, both research and artistic practice increasingly move away from viewing works as static, isolated products and instead understand them as dynamic processes shaped by interaction, transformation and continuity across time. Texts, languages and musical compositions are no longer treated as fixed artifacts but as living forms that evolve through reinterpretation, translation, performance and reception.

Music is often called a universal language, but what makes lyrics, songs and melodies in a given language distinctive within the constellation of cultures? The universality of music is not merely a phrase referring to emotions and motifs; it also raises the question of how melodies and translation merge, crossing the barriers of different languages and cultures. At the same time, awareness of linguistic structure sharpens rhythmic and formal sensitivity, deepens interpretation, and strengthens creative and pedagogical practice. Music also plays an indispensable role in language acquisition, whether as a source of lyrics, a form of motivational support or simply a pleasurable experience, reminding us that language learning should be engaging and enjoyable, just as art—especially music—thrives in dynamic, engaging experience.

Keynote speakers

We are pleased to announce the following keynote speakers:

- **John Frederick Bailyn**, Stony Brook University, USA
- **Franc Marušič**, University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia
- **Ira Prodanov Krajišnik**, University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Suggested topics (including, but not limited to)

- Rhythm and pattern across music, language and literature
- Language, literature and music as interwoven systems of meaning
- Translation as a bridge between music, language and literature
- Music inspiring language and literature
- From literature to song, opera and musical form
- Digital and experimental explorations of music–language intersections
- Music in language acquisition and pedagogy

Conference format

Hybrid (in-person and online participation)

Important dates

- Abstract submission deadline: **14 June 2026**
- Notification of acceptance: **28 June 2026**
- Early-bird registration deadline: **30 August 2026**
- Final registration deadline: **6 September 2026**
- Conference dates: **25–26 September 2026**
- Full paper submission deadline: **31 January 2027**
- Expected publication: **June 2027**

Conference fee

- Standard fee: **100 EUR**
- Early-bird fee: **80 EUR**
- Fee for participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina: **100 BAM**

The fee includes the conference materials, coffee breaks and conference dinner.

Submission and registration

Abstracts (max. 300 words) should be submitted via the **CELLS 7 Abstract Submission Form**:
<https://forms.gle/RtBcd5Go1G9EFdHT7>

Registration is to be completed via the **CELLS 7 Registration Form**:
<https://forms.gle/kjNYTHaVpbqHFGHNA>

Publication

A selection of papers will be published in the journal *Filolog*. Journal website: <https://filolog.rs.ba/index.php/filolog>

Conference Websites

<https://cells7.netlify.app/>

<https://www.flf.unibl.org/index.php/sr/cells>

Venue

University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Philology
Bulevar vojvode Petra Bojovića 1A
78000 Banja Luka
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Faculty of Philology website: <https://www.flf.unibl.org/index.php/sr/>

Contact

Email: cells@flf.unibl.org

We look forward to your proposals.

On behalf of the Organising Committee,

Jasna Jurišić Roljić and Svetlana Mitić (UNIBL, Faculty of Philology, English Department)

Gordana Grujić and Sofija Vučićević (UNIBL, Academy of Arts, Music Department)