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**“The Guru is Pop!” Young Sikh Generation in Italy and
Their Efforts to Create New Sounds for a Transnational Kirtan**

Kirtan performances in the Gurdwaras (the Sikh temples) consist in the musical realization of the shabad (hymns) contained in the Sacred Book. This is the most relevant moment of the religious rite, because the words of the Sacred Book come to life in music. Nowadays, musics employed to perform the hymns, both in motherland and in migration, encompass various genres.

My talk starts from the study of the Sikh musical reality in some Italian diaspora communities, especially those in northern Italy, with a focus on the new generation of musicians and music users. Specifically, it investigates the recent phenomenon of the production of religious music videoclips by young people based in Italy. The production of religious videoclips is already widely established in India and other places in the diaspora, but it is a new phenomenon in the recent migrations to Italy. My study reveals the first results of the search for a new form of prayer by young people far from the motherland, who pass through the technological medium and need to communicate through new forms of expression to reconcile an important cultural background with the new context - local but also global - in which they are set. The musical performance of the Gurus' prayers is renewed musically, sounding like a pop song and leading to a personal affirmation of the musicians, while at the same time remaining in the 'safe and socially accepted zone' of religious music.

Bio

Thea Tiramani is a research fellow of the Department of Musicology at the University of Pavia in Cremona, Italy.