

**PRESS RELEASE: 10 December 2018**

## **Global Advisory Council Announced for €2million Global Hip Hop Study**

A 12-person global advisory council has been selected to steer the strategic vision of the world's first global study of hip hop music and culture.

At the heart of the €2million EU grant, CIPHER: Hip Hop Interpellation, is the council of scholars from around the world. "In fact, CIPHER is an acronym for *Le Conseil International pour Hip Hop et Recherche* – The International Council for Hip Hop Studies", says the study's principle investigator, University College Cork's J. Griffith Rollefson.

Over the next five years, the Council will help steer the strategic vision and promotion of the project as well as taking part in conferences, publications, and community-engaged work in Cork and internationally.

### **CIPHER Advisory Board**

The CIPHER Advisory Board is made up of academics from around the world with specialisations in hip hop ranging from the USA, UK, France, and Germany to Brazil, Jamaica, Senegal, South Africa, Japan, Aotearoa/New Zealand, the Philippines, and beyond.

Murray Forman, Northeastern University – USA, Canada  
Adam Haupt, University of Cape Town – Southern Africa  
Sina Nitzsche, Ruhr University Bochum – Germany, USA  
Hisham Aidi, Columbia University – France, North Africa  
Dawn-Elissa Fischer, San Francisco State University / Harvard Hip Hop Archive – USA, Brazil, Japan  
Justin Williams, University of Bristol – UK, USA  
Elliott Powell, University of Minnesota – South Asian Diaspora  
Wayne Marshall, Berklee College of Music – Circum-Caribbean  
Catherine Appert, Cornell University – West Africa, USA  
Nabeel Zuberi University of Auckland – Aotearoa/New Zealand, UK  
Mark Villegas, University of California, Irvine – USA, Philippines  
Noriko Manabe, Temple University – Japan, USA  
Tony Mitchell, University of Technology, Sydney – Australia, Pacific Islands (Honorary)

With the help of the Council, CIPHER will investigate how and why this highly localized African American music has resonated with communities around the globe.

Rollefson says, "The answer lies in the ways that the art form privileges local knowledge as a key to unlock global truths. Hip hop imagines the world from a bottom-up rather than top-down perspective. What's more, it's a form of progressive populism that has the capacity to correct our current path towards bigotry and intolerance, so I think it's time to listen to these voices that are on the front lines of history."

According to Rollefson, CIPHER "is a 5-yr hip hop knowledge mapping project that will crowdsource expressions of hip hop's local knowledge over the internet and then send researchers around the world to follow up on those expressions, working with local artists and fans."

“We hope to learn how these hip hop knowledges travel and localize”, explains Rollefson. “And, ultimately, we think CIPHER’s ‘digital-ethnographic’ method can help us understand how culture works more broadly”.

The €1,995,776.03 grant will allow Rollefson to hire four post-doctoral research positions in Ethnography and Digital Humanities and direct two fully-funded PhD students at University College Cork. Application deadlines will be announced early next year.

### **Flip the Script**

Rollefson is the author of the first monograph on European hip hop, titled *Flip the Script: European Hip Hop and the Politics of Postcoloniality* (<https://europeanhiphop.org/>). The seeds for the CIPHER initiative can be found in the conclusion to that 2017 book – as can Rollefson’s love of Irish hip hop. He tweets @cybergriff.

Follow the project at <https://europeanhiphop.org/> and @GlobalCipher

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More on this story at: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/news/ucc-music-lecturer-wins-2-million-global-hip-hop-study-grant.html>

*Professor Griff Rollefson, lecturer in the Department of Music at UCC, has announced the Global Advisory Board behind his €2m 5-year European Research Council grant to fund research into hip hop.*



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