

ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Latin America and the Caribbean

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The emergence of the Study Group on Music and Dance in Latin America and the Caribbean (ICTM LATCAR) is an example of ICTM's ability to establish intercontinental ties. At the 44th ICTM World Conference held in Limerick, Ireland (2017), a group of researchers working on Latin American and Caribbean cultures raised the need to establish a gathering mechanism for shared interests. The proposal had a direct antecedent: in 2015, led by Jakob Rekedal, a listserv was created and began to specifically link researchers in the regions concerned. The study group, therefore, was conceived under a regional perspective, not a thematic one.

The study group justifies its existence with a shared past and present, as noted in the official proposal:

The many diverse regions and peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean have commonalities in their historical, political, and migration backgrounds and identities. They share, among other aspects, a colonial past, the oppression of Indigenous knowledges and practices, as well as the preservation, maintenance, and development of unique modes of existence. These processes have informed Indigenous, African, and other experiences as well as forms of hybridization or *mestizaje*, which ultimately influence music, sound, movement and dances as culture and in cultures.¹

The organization of the initial symposium was entrusted to the Center for Research in Musical and Performing Arts (CIAMEN) of the University of the Republic, Uruguay. This meeting had a surprising response: 170 attendees; 100 researchers from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe; and 70 participants from Uruguay. Sixteen participants received grants from the ICTM Young Scholars Fund and the Maud Karpeles Fund.

The founding group invited keynote speakers with an extensive experience: Samuel Araújo, Enrique Cámara de Landa, Silvia Citro, and Miguel Ángel García. Following the theoretical propositions that served as the study group's founding ideas, the call for papers

sought to transcend traditional classifications of music and dance. The event was a novelty for the Uruguayan university, both in the subject matter and its location: rather than choosing Montevideo, the capital of the country, CIAMEN proposed meeting in the city of Salto, on the Uruguay River, a link with Argentina, and near the dry border with Brazil; that is, a symbolic place for the meeting. The city offered a warm welcome with a concert of accordions, bandoneons, and guitars, and the performance of a carnival *murga* in the historic Larrañaga Theater (figure 1).



Figure 1. Participants of the initial meeting of the ICTM Study-Group-in-the-Making on Music and Dance in Latin America and the Caribbean. Salto, May 2018 (photo by José Luis La Greca).

¹ The full mission statement of the study group is available at: <http://ictmusic.org/group/music-dance-in-latin-america-caribbean>.

The study group was born; its institutionalization came with the formal recognition of the ICTM Executive Board, followed by a business meeting at the 45th ICTM World Conference in Bangkok, Thailand (2019). And, in 2020, a few days before the worldwide paralysis of all in-person academic activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Sciences and Arts of Chiapas (Mexico) hosted the study group's first symposium on 9–13 March, again with a significant attendance of members from various countries. Natalia Bieletto, Julio Mendívil, and María Elena Vinueza were the invited keynote speakers, in a symposium developed with the sound of marimbas at the university and the City Plaza. The elections took place by electronic voting.

To end this short, but intense, story, I'd like to point out three characteristics of the study group that I consider essential to its profile. First, an interest in theoretical discussion, attention to epistemological and methodological novelties regarding new frontiers in manifestations, and in the research of the diverse world views present in Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, the openness towards communities historically discriminated against or underrepresented, with the frequent stereotypes elaborated for the region. And lastly, the meeting of generations: we argue a lot, but that leads us to share knowledges, experiences, and a passion—in the sense of commitment—for the study of cultures that make us diverse and, at the same time, bond us.