

ICTM Study Group on African Musics

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Mission statement and organization of the study group

According to its mission statement,

The key function of the African Musics Study Group (AMSG) is to research, promote, preserve, disseminate, and protect African musics and dance in all their aspects, functions and geographical locations, in Africa and in the diaspora. (<http://ictmusic.org/group/african-musics>)

Historical developments of the study group and its leadership

In July 2009, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa hosted the 40th ICTM World Conference. The ICTM Executive Board encouraged Patricia Opondo who was then serving her final term on the Board, to use the occasion to hold a meeting with researchers of African musics, in view of establishing a Study Group on African Musics. She asked an elder and the longest serving ICTM African member present, Mwesa Mapoma, ICTM Liaison Officer for Zambia, to chair the meeting. The interim leadership nominated were Patricia Opondo (chair), Robert Chanunkah (vice chair), Mandy Carver (treasurer), Alvin Petersen (secretary), Rose Omollo-Ongati, and Marie Agatha Ozah, in an attempt to have a continent-wide representation.

At the 41st World Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, in 2011, the Executive Committee had several meetings to prepare all the documents required including a draft constitution compiled under the leadership of Vice Chair Robert Chanunkah. The members present at the business meeting endorsed the documents tabled by the committee, and we formally requested the ICTM Executive Board to recognize the ICTM Study Group on African Musics. The Board approved the study group at its meeting on 20 July 2011.¹

1 It was recognized as the African Musics Study Group, and hence its acronym, AMSG, which one can still encounter.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2011–2015

The founding members of the executive committee in 2011–2015 were: Patricia Opondo (chair), Robert Chanunkah (vice chair), Alvin Petersen (secretary), Rose Omollo Ongati, and Marie Agatha Ozah.

The initial four years presented a steep learning curve for the study group; there was so much to do and not enough resources, sub-committee structures, and poor communication especially with executive-committee members being in countries with erratic internet connections, and some even with frequent power interruptions, thus even email communication proved to be unsatisfactory. This meant that any meaningful meetings could only take place every two years at world conferences and, even then, it wasn't guaranteed, as some members couldn't afford international travel. Another problem that stood in our way was that no institution came forward with an offer to host our first symposium. Once again, we faced challenges in fundraising or lack of institutional support in various home institutions or even having no strong local committee structure with committed individuals who could come together to volunteer to serve on a local arrangements committee. Therefore, in 2015 Patricia Opondo, who was serving the final year of her term as chair, thought that an innovative way around this was to link a study-group symposium with an annual festival already in place at her home institution (University of KwaZulu-Natal) and under her direction.

From 29 September to 4 October 2015, the University of KwaZulu-Natal African Music Project hosted the study group's inaugural symposium, which dovetailed with the tenth anniversary celebrations of the African Cultural Calabash, a folklife event held on the campus.

The year 2015 saw remarkable growth for the ICTM Study Group on African Musics. The ICTM Secretariat conducted successful online elections for the new Executive Committee (EXCO); at the Business Meeting

However, in conformity with the naming of all other study groups, its name was changed to the Study Group on African Musics (SGAM).

in Astana we were able to finalize changes to the draft constitution, and we proudly have a constitution in place. The Treasurer vacancy was finally filled and a Publications Coordinator post established. (Opondo 2016:30)

NEW OFFICIALS

Following the online elections in June 2015, the following were elected into office: Patricia Opondo (chair), Amanda Villepastour (vice chair), and George Worlasi Kwasi Dor (secretary).

Then, during the study-group's business meeting in Astana in July 2015, the following were elected to the following positions, thereby completing the executive committee that served the Study Group on African Musics from July 2015 to June 2019: Elina Seye (publications coordinator), Sylvia Bruinders (treasurer), and Alvin Petersen (website administrator).

The executive committee for the period 2019–2023 consists of Sylvie Le Bomin (chair), Patricia Opondo (vice chair), Ana Flávia Miguel (secretary), Cara Stacey (webmaster), and Susanne Fürniss (publications).

Study-group activities

SYMPOSIA

The inaugural symposium in Durban, South Africa, in 2015, which brought together close to a hundred academics, artists, and documentary filmmakers with an interest in Africa and the diaspora, had three themes: African bows, fiddles, harps, guitars; Packaging heritage; African diasporic cultures. The keynote speaker was J. H. Kwabena Nketia, and the special guest speaker was Dave Dargie. J. H. Kwabena Nketia, Ghanaian ethnomusicologist and composer, is considered Africa's premier musicologist. He left an amazing legacy, spanning decades, and was one of the most published and best-known authorities in the world on African music and aesthetics. Dave Dargie, a prolific senior researcher of African bows, mainly of the Xhosa in South Africa, presented a paper that opened the symposium and addressed one of the key themes.

The symposium was held over three days. The programme committee included Patricia Opondo (chair), Eduardo Lichuge, Ana Flávia Miguel, Rose Ongati, Marie Agatha Ozah, and Jorge Ribeiro. The local arrangements committee included Patricia Opondo (chair), Thabile Buthelezi, Jose Alberto Chemane, Innocent Mutero, Nhlakanipho Ngcobo, Nozuko Nguqu, Lindani Phumlomo, Lebogang Sejamoholo, and Thulile Zama.

There were delegates from music departments of all the major South Africa universities—University of Cape Town, University of Witswatersrand, University of Pretoria, Northwest University, University of KwaZulu-Natal—all of which include teaching and research in African music and ethnomusicology. The symposium also attracted artists and researchers from Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and from outside of Africa: Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Turkey, and the USA.

The celebrations of the African Cultural Calabash Festival marked the tenth anniversary of this annual folklife event, curated and produced by the Applied Ethnomusicology section in the School of Arts – African Music and Dance (AMD) division:

This pan-African show came at the backdrop of xenophobic disturbances, and provided a renewed appreciation of pan-African unity in diversity by featuring artists such as Tomelets Sereetsi (Botswana), ZviriMudeze (Zimbabwe), Jembeken (Mozambique/South Africa/USA), Zippy Okoth (Kenya), Ngalanga Ensemble (Mozambique/South Africa), and Praise Zinhuku (Zimbabwe).

South Africa was represented by Madosini, the grande dame of Xhosa Umrube and Uhadi bows, and by other South African bow researcher-performers such as Dave Dargie, and Cara Stacey. UKZN's [University of KwaZulu-Natal's] own Bro. Clement Sithole performed on an old Zulu indigenous instrument, the *umakhweyana* gourd-resonated bow, and UKZN postgraduate student Nozuko Nguqu proved to be a Maskandi star in her own right. We bestowed a Lifetime Achievement Award to UKZN's *umakhweyana* bow teacher, Bro. Clement Sithole in recognition of his contributions in preserving this instrument which he learnt at the feet of [the late] Princess Constance Magogo, the mother of Honorable Mangosuthu Buthelezi. (Opondo 2016:31)²

The second symposium (figure 1) featured the theme “African music scholarship in the twenty-first century: Challenges and directions” and was hosted by the Department of Music, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, 9–12 August 2018. The programme committee included Daniel Avorgbedor (chair), George Dor, Sylvie LeBomin, Birgitta Johnson, and Patricia Opondo.

The Local Arrangements Committee, formed by Adwoa Arhine, Hilarius Wuaku, Eric Sunu Doe, and Michael Ohene-Okantah Jr, and chaired by the head of the Department of Music, Joshua Amuah, did an outstanding job in hosting the symposium, especially in providing a fine selection of local musics and dance, and hosting two workshops. The Abibigromma Theatre Company, directed by Hilarius Wuaku, gave a rousing welcome as delegates entered the Institute of African

2 For further information, visit <http://culturalcalabash.ukzn.ac.za/>.



Figure 1. 2nd ICTM SGAM Symposium hosted by the University of Ghana. Legon, 9-12 August 2018 (photo courtesy of the University of Ghana).

Studies. Osei Kwame Korankye then gave a memorable performance on the *seperewa* harp. The first evening concert featured the Ghana Dance Ensemble, directed by Moses Nii Dorte, and the closing was a wonderful performance by the Legon Palm Wine Band, directed by Eric Sunu Doe. There was the generous sharing of palm wine and all present had a taste of the local brew as the band got the audience to their feet until late into the night. The Lapaz Community Youth Choir, directed by Ben Amakye-Boateng, and the Department of Music's Pop Ensemble, directed by Kofi Kodonu Labayile, performed at the closing concert on the last night. (Opondo 2018:26)

The symposium attracted broad interest and the four days included presentations by 70–80 speakers, 22 panels, two key concert nights, two workshops, a roundtable discussion on copyright and publishing, as well as a special presentation by RILM. Speakers presented research from nineteen African countries: Benin, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, and Zimbabwe. It was exciting to witness the growth and ICTM presence in more African countries, as well as engage with speakers who focus on African diasporic collaborations and exchanges in Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Finland, Guyana, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, and the USA.

The symposium was organized around the following sub-themes:

- African and Afro-diasporic collaborations and exchanges
- Representations on the Francophone presence in African music scholarship
- Music education: Philosophies, pedagogies of African music
- Interdisciplinarity and African music historiographies in critical perspective
- New analytical approaches to contemporary African art music traditions.

The proceedings were officially opened by Kofi Agyekum, acting dean of the School of Performing Arts. V. Kofi Agawu (Hughes-Rogers Professor of Music at Princeton University) delivered the keynote address, "Appropriate theory." Agawu encouraged us to reflect upon what kind of theory is applicable for Africa, and outlined "the importance of three related scholarly/creative practices: contrapuntal reading, transcription, and the composition of art music." He concluded that "an appropriate theory is not a single theory, nor does it follow conventional standards of coherence, rather, it seeks advantage for Africa and African people" (Opondo 2018:25).

The symposium attracted four generations of Africanist scholars from the world over. Highlights included a memorial session for Bernard Woma, which paid special tribute to his worldwide contribution and included a performance by students whom Woma taught in China. Significant in this session was the paper by Zhang Boyu "Musicking the Soul," titled after a book Zhang had recently published and dedicated to the memory of Kimasi Browne, who died in January 2017 and was the inspiration for the book. Another important highlight was the session "Meeting the Elders," led by Lester Monts and including the emeritus and senior professors JH Kwabena Nketia, Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, Eddie Meadows, John Collins, Kofi Agawu, Egberto Bermudez, and Leslie Gay. The elders were mentors to many, and their writings form the cornerstone of most postgraduate seminars on African musics. The session provided a unique opportunity for delegates to meet and engage with the elders.

On the evening following the SGAM Business Meeting, Zdravko Blažeković's presentation "RILM and African Music" discussed the scope, depth, and interdisciplinary coverage and representation of African music and dance traditions with an emphasis on current challenges, uneven coverage of geo-cultural areas and genres, and called for volunteer submissions and national representatives. He also spoke on the place of RILM in enhancing the scholarly study of and publications on African musics. He presented a special award to Daniel Avorgbedor for initiating bibliographic coverage of African publications in RILM. (Opondo 2018:25)³

The third symposium with the central theme "Dialogue of African musics and cultures through space and time" was planned for 23–26 September 2020 at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, Mozambique. Specific sub-themes, listed in the call for papers, included the Lusophone presence in African musics; Inventories, descriptions, uses and cross-cultural studies on traditional musical instruments; Music from the Swahili world: At the crossroads of Arab and sub-Saharan musics; Influence of traditional musics in modern genres; and Discussion on the construction of scientific projects and/or teaching programmes. Unfortunately, due to the COVID pandemic, the symposium was postponed to 2022.

PUBLICATIONS

Our inaugural publication, *Studies in African Musical Heritage*, will be published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2022. The collection includes seventeen chapters and is co-edited by Elina Seye and Patricia Opondo.

Articles related to the Ghana symposium will appear in a special issue of *African Music: Journal of the International Library of African Music*, as well as in two other journals currently under negotiation. One journal is expected to publish a cluster of papers dealing with African music theory, composition, and aesthetics, while the focus of the other one will be education and pedagogy.

LISTSERV, WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

One of the biggest challenges that plagued our study group in its initial four years, was poor communication as a consequence the great distance between members spread throughout the African continent and diaspora. In 2015, with the assistance of Carlos Yoder, executive assistant of ICTM in the Secretariat's office, we finally had two breakthroughs from our previous communication challenges, making it easier for dialogue amongst our members. We moved the study-group's pages out of

the restrictive Google Groups, and aligned them with other study-group pages hosted on the ICTM website. This new set-up makes it easier for us to share information. In 2015, the ICTM Secretariat also set up a listserv for us, which was the best news, and ultimately a breakthrough for SGAM membership. The address is stg-african-musics@ictm.org.

To remain in contact with colleagues after symposia and world conferences, we encourage those interested to be part of SGAM's listserv, to follow news on our website and also to contribute towards our social media pages.

SGAM BRANCH ACTIVITIES

We currently have two branches of the study group, one in the US and another in the UK, and encourage other regions interested in forming branches to discuss this with the study-group vice-chair.

The US branch was established in 2013, instigated by Marie Agatha Ozah, who convened a meeting at the 42nd ICTM World Conference in Shanghai, China. Nine scholars met and established the North American Subsection of the African Musics Study Group (NASAMSG-ICTM), aiming to "share strategies and develop positive frameworks toward African and African diaspora music education in North American contexts." The branch also seeks to increase research activities and collaboration (Ozah, Kafumbe, and Tang 2014).

The inaugural symposium, "Pedagogy and performance of African and African American musics in higher education: Experiences and challenges," was organized by Marie Agatha Ozah together with Jean Kidula and Damascus Kafumbe, and hosted by Marie Agatha Ozah at the Mary Pappert School of Music and co-sponsored by the Mary Pappert School of Music, the Center for African Studies, and the Honors College Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on 17 July 2014. Twelve papers were presented, followed by an evening concert by Umoja African Dance Company, directed by Anicet M. Mundundu (figure 2). The keynote address was delivered by David Locke, professor of music and ethnomusicology at Tufts University. At the business meeting, Marie Agatha Ozah (chair), Damascus Kafumbe (chair), and Patricia Tang (secretary) assumed branch leadership.

The UK branch was instigated by Amanda Villepastour (Cardiff University) and ratified in Astana in 2015.⁴ Although ethnomusicology's beginnings in the UK were established by a strong contingent of Africanists including A. M. Jones, Anthony King, and later John Blacking and Peter Cooke, an African study group had never emerged alongside other regionally focussed

³ The full symposium programme can be found at: <https://www.ictmusic.org/group/african-musics> and <http://afmusgroup.beaconpros.com/>.

⁴ Amanda Villepastour contributed to this chapter by writing the section on the UK branch of the SGAM.



Figure 2. Participants of the inaugural symposium of NASAMSG: (front row) Elie Kihonia, Patricia Opondo, Jean Kidula, Kenan Foley, Damascus Kafumbe, David Locke, Marie Agatha Ozah, Kimasi Browne, Anicet Mundundu; (back row) Eric Charry, Patty Tang, Roberta King, George Dor. Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, 17 July 2014 (photo courtesy of Patricia Opondo).

organizations in Britain. Since it was the UK chapter of IFMC (formed in 1973) that provided the first and only platform for African music scholars to converge alongside other ethnomusicologists, the ICTM's SGAM seemed an appropriate platform for Britain's first African music study group.

The inaugural SGAM-UK meeting (December 2016, SOAS, London) was planned by an interim committee formed by Peter Cooke, Trevor Wiggins (both SOAS research associates), Sara McGuinness (University of West London), Zé Kouyaté (performer and PhD candidate), and Amanda Villepastour (both at Cardiff University). On the day, the discussion was led by a panel, which included four internationally distinguished African performers, who have all taught and studied in academic settings (figure 3).

Zimbabwean *mbira* master Chartwell Dutiro led a ceremonial opening through song, after which the conversation between the panel and around forty attendees (comprising students, academics, musicians, DJs, and teachers) revolved around the UK's distinctive environment, how the group could best serve the diverse interests of its potential members, and how African performers can share leadership roles with academics in

determining the mission of SGAM-UK and the form of its meetings. Dutiro, who had decades of international experience as a performer, teacher, and PhD candidate, provoked an animated discussion by declaring, "African academics can be the *most* colonial!" He explained that his experiences in academic settings outside of Africa have been the most rewarding as "the voice of performers is missing in African academia."

The discussion turned to how the UK group could facilitate equal participation of academic, performance, and creative work in its activities and visible outcomes, and how British ethnomusicologists can continue to navigate the colonial inheritance of the nation's institutions in their struggle to hire African scholars and musicians, and create equitable conditions, obtain visas for visiting performers, raise funding for African students to study in the UK, and mobilize UK-based students to Africa for immersive learning that benefits those who teach them.

A year later in November 2017, Amanda Bayley furthered SGAM-UK's mission to facilitate conversations between artists and academics through convening the second SGAM symposium, "Filming African music: An interdisciplinary study day." The programme included



Figure 3. Panel at the first SGAM-UK meeting: Sara McGuinness (West London University), Bernard Woma (Ghana/US), Amanda Villepastour (Cardiff University), Landing Mané (Senegal/UK), Charwell Dutiro (Zimbabwe/UK), Dele Sosimi (Nigeria/UK). Bath Spa University, 18 November 2017 (photo by Trevor Wiggins).

academic papers, films, performances, and an evening of African-British collaborations, featuring among others, Dutiro.⁵ The following SGAM-UK symposium in March 2020 was convened by Villepastour at Cardiff University with the theme: “Issues of pedagogy and transmission in African music in the UK.” An afternoon workshop and discussion was led by Senegalese drummer/dancer Landing Mané and his musicians, and Finnish ethnomusicologist Elina Seye, followed by an evening concert.

SGAM-UK has established a core membership, ideology, and set of aims. Having started as a cooperative comprising people from contrasting work cultures (i.e., academics alongside freelance musicians), at the time of writing, the group is still led by the original interim committee, which is in the process of developing a suitable mission statement and constitution.

PARTICIPATION AT ICTM WORLD CONFERENCES AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

Following the approval of the study group in 2011, in 2013 at the 42nd world conference in Shanghai, China, we were very fortunate that the host institution offered extensive support to ten African scholars. The 43rd world conference hosted in 2015 by the Kazakh National University of Arts, Astana, Kazakhstan, had just under thirty presentations on Africa, the largest to date. A vibrant business meeting saw us through a tedi-

ous but fruitful discussion, and the study-group’s constitution was further refined.

The Astana world conference presentations can be summarized as follows:

1. Two Africa specific panels: “Performance, power and identity: Case studies from Ghana” and “Tradition and modernity in African music”
2. A roundtable discussion on the topic “African musics in higher education: Experiences and challenges”
3. A film session with two ethnographic filmmakers, one from Ivory Coast and the other from South Africa
4. An exciting workshop session
5. Papers integrated with other panels, providing comparative, global perspectives.

This broad participation certainly marks growth in our participation at world conferences, with a similar significant number of attendees at the 44th world conference in Limerick in July 2017. We thank ICTM and host institutions for all the sponsored delegates and contributions made towards travel and subsidised membership fees. This support is extremely valuable, especially for members from soft-currency African countries, who previously may never have been able to attend a world conference.

During the 2017 business meeting in Limerick, the constitution went through further ratification and finally in 2018 through the leadership and direction of SGAM Vice Chair Amanda Villepastour, we now have a solid document in place that went to final vote in 2018.

⁵ One week before his death in September 2019, Dutiro was awarded an honorary PhD by Bath Spa University.

We have managed to streamline many things and refer to the constitution for guidance on matters such as elections and voting, as well as duties of officers and responsibilities of subcommittees.

Conclusion: Reflections on challenges and growth over the past ten years

From what started off as a relatively small number of interested individuals, and a structure without a constitution and common framework for operational matters, the Study Group on African Musics has found creative solutions around funding and communication challenges which today enable the members to communicate easily through the listserv. There is a website hosted by ICTM for the study group; all are able to submit materials on the social media pages. We held our inaugural symposium in South Africa (2015), the second in Ghana (2018), and planned the third one in Mozambique (2020), rotating the hosts through regions around Africa. This has provided a forum for local scholars to converge and be acquainted with the work of ICTM, and later events can be further strengthened by the work of strong and active liaison officers in the countries in those regions. So together, these breakthroughs have pushed us forward to be an active and vibrant study group that currently has hosted two international symposia and has moved forward with the publication projects. The two branches in the US and the UK provide the opportunity to bring together colleagues in the diaspora for the exchange of ideas. In 2019, we got the third generation of executives with a solid constitution and management structure, so those continuing with the baton have a sure footing going forward. We also look forward to another ICTM world conference being hosted by an institution in Africa, as well as the proliferation of SGAM branches throughout the world.

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