

# ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia

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## The beginning years and beyond

The ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia is familiarly known among its members as “PASEA.” PASEA is now twelve years of age, and we have a history to share at this point in time. In 2008, ICTM scholars of Southeast Asian performing arts began speaking with each other about the possible formation of a study group that would encompass all the performing arts found throughout the ASEAN region (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Over the years, scholars have studied and documented characteristics of the music, dance, and theatre of Southeast Asia that have been found to be unique, exhibit substantial differences from the music of East Asia, and are performed by both Austroasiatic- and Austronesian-speaking peoples throughout both the mainland and the vast archipelago of this region. With the purpose of forming a study group focussed on the performing arts of this ASEAN region, an organizing meeting of ICTM scholars took place on 18 August 2008, immediately following the 25th symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology at the Royal Bintang Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Several dance specialists from that study group, including Adrienne Kaeppler, the president of the ICTM at that time, stayed in Kuala Lumpur to work on the possibility of a new study group focusing on the performing arts of Southeast Asia.

## Development of the Mission Statement and the Executive Committee

During the 2008 meeting, reports were given by performing arts scholars from a number of Southeast Asian and other countries. A Mission Statement was established, and a liaison person (Patricia Matusky) was selected to file the application with the ICTM for a study group focusing on the performing arts of Southeast Asia. The application was approved in 2008 by the ICTM Board, and the PASEA Mission Statement became the guiding document and stimulation for the creation of a *commu-*

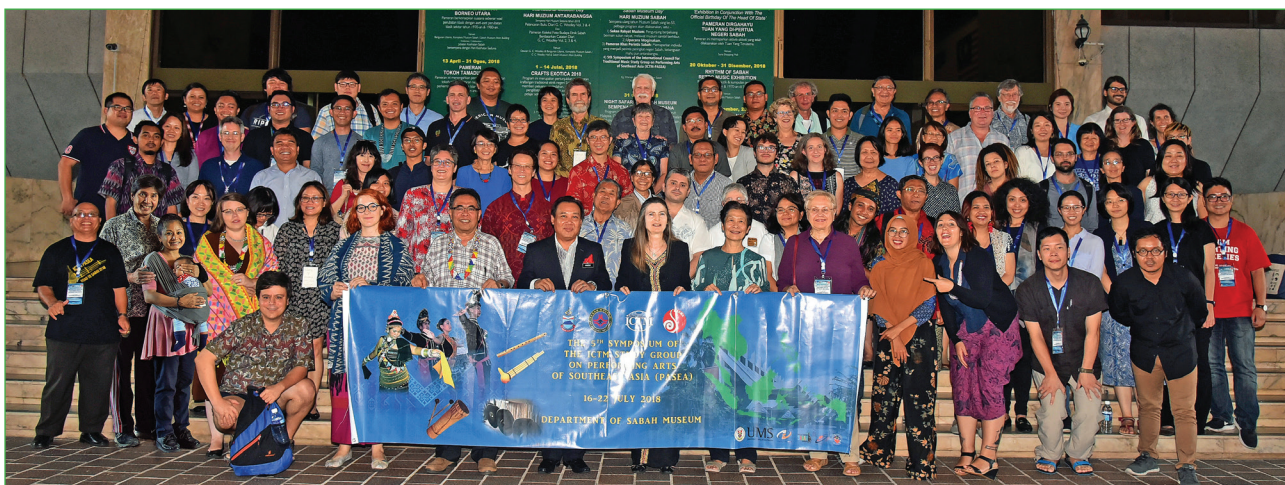
*nitas* of scholars who are active in the SG today. The text of the Mission Statement emphasizes a dedication to:

the study and research of music, dance and theatre as found throughout Southeast Asia, and includes Southeast Asian performing arts that are found elsewhere in the world. The Study Group intends to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, new approaches and current research among established as well as young ICTM scholars around the world. The Study Group will also strive to increase communication and interaction among scholars working in Southeast Asian performing arts, and to promote future research initiatives in areas of Southeast Asia where there has been little or no research. (approved on 18 August 2008)

The first PASEA meeting took place on 7 July 2009 during the 40th ICTM World Conference at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. During that meeting, a chair and a secretary were elected—Patricia Matusky and Made Mantle Hood, respectively, each to serve an initial four-year term, and both of whom would serve on the newly formed Executive Committee for the study group. The additional PASEA members who served by appointment on this Executive Committee in 2009 and beyond included Mohd Anis Md Nor (publications chairperson), Joyce Teo (local arrangements chair for 2010), David Harnish (member-at-large), and Felicidad Prudente (local arrangements chair for the 2012 symposium).

During the meeting in 2009, the name of the study group was formally approved to be the “ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia (PASEA).” It was also agreed upon to run symposia on a biennial basis with the understanding by its members that the first symposium, 10–13 June 2010, would be hosted by the Republic Polytechnic in Singapore. For that first symposium, Joyce Teo was the local arrangements chair, and Patricia Matusky chaired the programme committee. This first symposium featured presentations by the more than eighty ICTM Southeast Asian performing arts scholars who convened at the Republic Polytechnic Arts Management facilities in Singapore.

Over the course of the following two years, the Study Group By-laws and Guidelines for Symposia were



**Figure 1.** 5th ICTM PASEA Symposium group in front of Muzium Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, July 2018 (photo courtesy of Department of Sabah Museum, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia).

formulated, proposed, and officially adopted at the study-group meeting that took place at the PASEA symposium, 14–19 June 2012, hosted by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (Republic of the Philippines, Office of the President) and the Philippine Women’s University in Manila. Subsequent to these early meetings, the study-group meetings (general business meetings) take place once a year at an ICTM world conference or during a PASEA symposium.

PASEA is now run by the chair, Made Mantle Hood, elected in 2016 (formerly by Mohd Anis Md Nor, 2016–2020, and Patricia Matusky, 2009–2016); vice chair, Pornprapit Ros Phoasavadi (formerly Patricia Matusky, 2016–2020); secretary, Christine May Yong (elected in 2018); and an Executive Committee comprising appointed PASEA members: Felicidad A. Prudente and Patricia Matusky, and formerly Wayland Quintero (co-chairs of publications); Made Hood and Marie-Pierre Lissior (co-chairs of the 2021 programme committee); Ted Tsai Tsung-Te and Catherine Ching-Yi Chen (co-chairs of the 2021 local arrangements committee); Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan (chair of the student-awards committee); David Harnish (member-at-large); and Ricardo Trimillos (member-at-large). This PASEA executive committee formerly included Mayco Santaella and Ne Myo Aung (of the Gitameit Music Institute, Myanmar), co-chairs of the local arrangements committee for the symposium in 2020 in Myanmar, which was forced to cancel.

In this narrative on developments in PASEA, changes took place through two procedures in 2017 which had been discussed from time to time in past study-group meetings. First, it was finally decided to officially allow the use of the local host country’s languages in addition to English as the main language(s) of a symposium. Second, each of the then four existing *Proceedings* was formatted in an electronic version and uploaded to the

ICTM website on the web pages dedicated to the Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia. Hence, the PASEA proceedings are now easily accessible to all members of the ICTM, its study groups, and other interested readers.

## Volunteers

Numerous volunteers who are active PASEA members have helped this study group maintain the management of its email list and the operations of the various committees, including the programme, local arrangements, and publications committees. Volunteers on these committees in past years include: Joyce Teo, Gisa Jähnichen, Hanafi bin Hussin, Mohd Anis Md Nor, Hafzan Zannie Hamza, Felicidad Prudente, Patricia Matusky, Bussakorn Binson, Made Mantle Hood, David Harnish, Jose Buenconsejo, Wim van Zanten, Paul Mason, Christine de Vera, Kristina Benitez, Lilymae Montano, Mi Hyun Oh, Teresa Montes, Leo Rempola, Richelle Rivere, Theresa Ascencio, Jon Garcia, Felistina Pangsiw, Paz Reconquista, Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, Christine May Yong, Larry Witzleben, Patrick Alcedo, Aline Scott-Maxwell, Lawrence Ross, Patricia Hardwick, Matthew C. M. Santamaria, Sumarsam, R. Anderson Sutton, Ricardo Trimillos, Clare Chan Suet Ching, Mayco Santaella, Tan Shyr Ee, I Wayan Dibia, I Komang Sudirga, Ako Mashino, Sarah Anais Andrieu, A.S. Hardy Shafi, Mumtaz Backer, Jasni Dolah, Carren Hong Kim Lan, Nur Azreen Chee Pi, Pravina Manoharan, and Tan Sooi Beng.

The current list of PASEA volunteers for various tasks for the period of 2018–2020 include: Tan Sooi Beng, Sarah Anais Andrieu, Randal Baier, Margaret Sarkissian, Made Mantle Hood, Felicidad Prudente, Desiree A. Quintero, Lawrence Ross, Marie-Pierre Lissior,

Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, Christine May Yong, and Hafzan Zannie Hamza. The PASEA is truly thankful and appreciative for all of our volunteers' contributions and for the help given by all PASEA members over the years (figure 1).

## The PASEA mailing list

The PASEA currently maintains an email list of over 300 people with an ongoing active membership of over 120 ICTM members who regularly attend the biennial symposia. The membership comes from around the world and includes scholars studying, documenting, publishing, and actively performing in all of the performing arts (music, dance, theatre) of Southeast Asia. The mailing list was maintained in past years (2008–2016) by the chair of the study group, then this task was transferred in late 2016 to a volunteer (Desiree A. Quintero) who functions as the personal assistant to the study-group chair, and now the PASEA secretary manages the mailing list.

## Student awards

The possibility of offering an outstanding student-paper award was discussed at the study-group meeting during the PASEA symposium in Bali in 2014, and the criteria for determining the award and the administrative body to process the award was discussed by the Executive Committee in the following months. Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan serves as chair of this committee and engages PASEA members to help evaluate student papers at PASEA symposia, based on the selected criteria approved by the Executive Committee in 2014. The award is then given to the selected student (or students) at the closing ceremony of each PASEA symposium. In 2016 at the fourth symposium in Penang, student awards were given to Christine Yun-May Yong (graduate student at Wesleyan University, USA) for her lightning paper, and to I Putu Hiramayena (graduate student at the University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana, USA) for his full-paper presentation. At the fifth symposium (2018), the award was given to Gene Lai, a graduate student at Wesleyan University for his full-paper presentation.

## PASEA website and Facebook page

A website was created in 2009 to function as an all-encompassing news and documents venue where PASEA members would have transparent and easy access to important PASEA documents including the

minutes of study-group meetings. This site was set up through Google Sites. However, this website is no longer in existence, and the historical and current PASEA files are being prepared for storage on external hard drives that will be maintained by the study-group secretary.

At the 2012 PASEA meeting, member Paul Mason suggested setting up a Facebook page. The suggestion was accepted and Mason volunteered to maintain this electronic site that would function as an informal method of communication for members and other interested individuals. Today, Made Mantle Hood manages this site. Immediate news to PASEA members, as well as related performing-arts citations, publications, and other related information are frequently noted on this social media site (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/171878712943748/?ref=share>).

## PASEA symposia: Past and proposed

Following the first symposium in Singapore, 10–13 June 2010, each of the subsequent biennial PASEA symposia was hosted by the following institutions:

14–19 June 2012: National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Philippine Women's University in Manila, Philippines (Felicidad Prudente, LAC chair);

14–20 June 2014: Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia (Mohd Anis Md Nor and Made Hood, LAC co-chairs);

31 July – 6 August 2016: Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia (Tan Sooi Beng, LAC chair);

16–22 July 2018: Department of Sabah Museum, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia (Sintiong Gelet, Mansur Haji Asun, Head of the Sabah Museum, and Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, LAC co-chairs);

July–August 2021 (instead of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic): the projected 6th symposium was to take place at the Gitameit Music Institute in Myanmar (Ne Myo Aung, Institute member, and Mayco Santaella, LAC co-chairs), however this hosting was cancelled, and a 2021 online symposium is planned at the Tainan National University of the Arts in Taiwan (Ted Tsai and Catherine Chen, LAC co-chairs).

At least two different themes are proposed for every symposium that serve to guide the papers, lecture-demonstrations, and workshops presented by the PASEA members, along with new research papers, video and film presentations, and live demonstrations that are accepted as major contributions. Some of the themes, reflecting PASEA members' research foci and papers, included:

- Hybridity in the performing arts
- *Silat* (martial arts) of Southeast Asia
- Archiving and documentation



**Figure 2.** 2nd ICTM PASEA Symposium, Saman dance workshop (Indonesia) at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Manila, June 2012 (photo courtesy of Hafzan Zannie Hamza).

- (Re)producing Southeast Asian performing arts (in the context of tourism, commodification, local identity, and modern multi-cultural music education)
- Southeast Asian bodies, music, dance, and other movement arts (incorporating movement arts in ritual, theatre, and other contexts)
- Interculturalism and the mobility of performing arts in Southeast Asia
- Sound, movement, place: Choreomusicology of humanly organized expression in Southeast Asia
- Performing arts and the religious impulse
- Endangered performing arts—maintenance and sustainability efforts
- Crossing borders through popular performance genres
- Tourism and the performing arts in Southeast Asia
- Expressing heritage—inviting encounter: Intersections between scholars and performing artists in Southeast Asia (theme for 2021)
- Movementscapes and soundscapes (theme for 2021).

For each symposium, the host institution develops one featured theme while the PASEA members suggest and the PASEA Executive Committee confirms a second theme. The sample list above reflects a wide variety of topics and subjects, some of which have been the starting point and perhaps even the “incubation point,” for at least two publications emerging from the research of PASEA members: Paetzold and Mason (2016), and Nor and Stepputat (2017). The PASEA Executive Committee anticipates other works published by its members in the years to come.

All symposia feature various kinds of presentations including regular papers of twenty minutes or “lightning papers” of ten minutes that usually feature reports on current research. In contrast, roundtable discussions may be presented or workshops undertaken featuring live demonstrations for teaching and illustration purposes. In recent years, wherever applicable and appropriate, the study group has encouraged live demonstrations of performing arts as part of a presentation during the symposia (figure 2).

### Sub-study groups in PASEA

There are currently three sub-study groups that engage in specialized research in highly contrasting subject areas of the performing arts of Southeast Asia.

The first of these specialized research groups to emerge within PASEA is the Sub-study Group (SSG) on Performing Arts of Muslim Communities in Southeast Asia, which was approved at the study group meeting on 12 June 2010 in Singapore. This SSG is currently co-chaired by Mohd Anis Md Nor and Raja Iskandar Raja Halid. The SSG aims to promote research on the performing arts of Southeast Asian Muslims and initiates cross-cultural dialogues and collaborative research projects amongst performers, artists, cultural workers, and researchers. Members are encouraged to use their findings to present papers at PASEA symposia and at ICTM world conferences. A good number of papers based on the above-mentioned activities were presented by the members at the ICTM world conferences in Astana (2015) and Limerick (2017). To sustain discourse and related communications, this SSG main-

tains a newsletter. For the period 2016–2017, this SSG compiled a list of recent publications from its members that will eventually be updated and made available in the newsletter.

The second SSG to emerge within PASEA focuses on the Performing Arts in Royal Contexts in Southeast Asia (SOPIRC-SEA). This SSG was proposed in 2011 by member Lawrence Ross, who is now the chair. One of its major goals is to amass scholarship on the myriad connections between the region's performing arts and its royal courts. The scope encompasses the historical roles performing arts have played in linking Southeast Asian polities, exchanges between court and village, and the legacies of court traditions in contemporary society. Royal courts in Southeast Asia have been relevant for several reasons:

- They have been sites for the creation, maintenance, and development of numerous music, theatre, and dance forms
- Several extant forms are products of court-to-court migrations
- Appropriations have occurred by royal courts from folk culture and vice versa
- Performance has often been a medium for royal displays of dominion
- Many so-called “classical” court forms are seen as national and popular icons.

Although royal courts are often in symbiosis with modern states, their distinctive institutions, concerns, ideologies, and constitutions of power distinguish them from a broader examination of performing arts under state sponsorship. Performance in royal contexts touches on issues and topics germane to PASEA as a whole, including origin and myth, genealogy, repertoire, instruments, ensemble types, ritual practices, proscriptions, cultural preservation, and so on. By sharing PASEA members' research through this SSG, it is hoped that this kind of scholarship will foster collaborations with and contributions to other disciplines, with the potential to offer new theories and explanations of how royal systems have affected social change and shaped modern identities in Southeast Asia. The members of this SSG also explore ways to make findings useful to the ICTM membership at large, other disciplines, and the general public.

To these ends, a two-day symposium took place in July 2018 called “Performing arts and the royal courts of Southeast Asia” at Sunway University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Twenty-one paper presentations by scholars from six ASEAN countries, the USA, Australia, and Japan were delivered, along with a roundtable discussion on the royal courts and present-day cultural institutions in Southeast Asia, including live demonstrations of music and dance stemming from the royal courts of the region. During the past months, this SSG

has focussed on the production of an anthology of the works presented at this symposium. In pursuit of this goal, SOPIRC-SEA intends to establish an online forum through which members can share their reflections on the recent symposium, as well as perspectives, theories, bibliographies, and methods that might be useful to this volume (see <http://www.facebook.com/group/SOPIRC-SEA>).

The proposal to start a third sub-study group was presented and discussed in August 2016 during the 4th symposium in Penang, Malaysia. This SSG encompasses various studies of the popular performing-arts industries of Southeast Asia, as proposed by Isabella Pek, who now co-chairs this sub-study group with Sangwoo Ha. The Institute of Ethnic Studies at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) hosted the first meeting in 2016, which was attended by twenty-three participants and comprised mostly Malaysian-based music academics along with scholars from the Philippines and Indonesia. The meeting featured talks from invited speakers: Paul Augustin from Penang House of Music, Ahmad Izham Omar from Media Prima, and Shamsul Amri Baharuddin of UKM. Each of the speakers shared their experiences and insights on popular music and performing arts industries in Malaysia. At the 2016 meeting it was agreed to work on four research themes:

- Localized popular music, such as Iban pop, Kelantanese pop, Baguio pop, *dangdut karwang*, Pattani Muslim pop, *lukthung*, among others
- Southeast Asian club culture, including electronic dance music, music and youth culture, indie/underground/DIY, producers, and technologies
- Performing arts and media, encompassing performing arts in screened media, digital media, Internet media, intimacies of performing arts media, performing arts and social media, media and globalization/localization/glocalization, neo-liberal economies of production and consumption, indie/underground/DIY/corporate production, and technology
- Mainstream and industry, including audience perception and reception, radio/TV/online, Internet of music, events/festivals, fusion/hybridity, economy, politics, gender, composers, performers.

The participants agreed to meet once a year to share research projects and provide mutual support in carrying out research and producing outputs, and to present themed research panels, including but not limited to the above topics.

This SSG organized the “Studies of popular music workshop” on 12–14 January 2018 at the National Museum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The topics of discussions included research methods specific to popular music studies, its fundamental literature, publishing journal articles on popular music, and contemporary trends in the study of popular music worldwide. Sarah Hill of

Cardiff University was the resource expert in the workshop, and eleven research projects were discussed. On 11–14 January 2019, this SSG organized the “PASEA Pop 2019” conference at a meeting location known as RUANG (“space”) in Kuala Lumpur; it drew participants from the UK, Norway, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia. This conference coincided with the launch of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music – Southeast Asia branch (IASPM-SEA), which continues to work closely with the PASEA Sub-study Group on Popular Performing Arts Industries of Southeast Asia.

## Proceedings

Thus far, five completed *Proceedings* have emerged from past PASEA symposia. The chief editor for the first through third *Proceedings* was PASEA member Mohd Anis Md Nor, along with production editors Hanafi bin Hussin and Hafzan Zannie Hamza. The names of PASEA members who served as volunteers on the editorial teams for these and subsequent *Proceedings* have been noted above. The chief co-editors of the fourth *Proceedings* (2017) and the fifth *Proceedings* (2019) are Patricia Matusky and Wayland Quintero, with production editors Hafzan Zannie Hamza and Christine May Yong. The sixth *Proceedings* will be co-edited by Patricia Matusky and Felicidad A. Prudente, with production editors Catherine Ching-Yi Chen and designer Ting-Ying Hsiao of the TNNUA in Taiwan. All *Proceedings* are typically published by the host institution of each symposium, and the editing is carried out by a group of PASEA volunteers on an editorial team that varies from symposium to symposium.

The *Proceedings* include both full and lightning papers presented at each symposium. However, a presenter can request that only his/her abstract be included in the given *Proceedings*. The full content of the symposium is documented in the *Proceedings* in the form of written articles, reports, abstracts, photos, and the actual programme schedule. All *Proceedings* are typically published in hard copy (see Nor et al. 2011, 2013, 2015; Matusky et al. 2017, 2019). Since 2017, all PASEA *Proceedings* have also been available as downloadable PDF files at <https://ictmusic.org/group/performing-arts-southeast-asia>.

## Looking ahead

Due to the spread of COVID-19, the members of the Executive Committee of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia decided to postpone the sixth symposium that was originally scheduled for late July and early August 2020 to 29 July – 5 August

2021. This online symposium will be hosted by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, and the Tainan National University of the Arts in Taiwan.

There are two book projects by PASEA members currently in the works toward publication:

- “The Animal Within: Exploring Ecologies of Human and Animal Relations in the Performing Arts of Southeast Asia” (working title), edited by Patricia Hardwick and Made Mantle Hood.
- “Performing Arts and the Royal Courts of Southeast Asia: Inter-Court Relations, Intra-Kingdom Circulations, and Contemporary Legacies” (working title), edited by Lawrence Ross and Mayco Santaella.

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