

ICTM Study Group on Music and Allied Arts of Greater South Asia

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The mission of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Allied Arts of Greater South Asia is to foster the study of sound, music, and allied arts in South Asia, broadly conceived.¹ The group determined “allied arts” as dance, movement, iconography, and visual components of musical performance, while “Greater South Asia” refers to South Asia’s neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, and Uzbekistan. This study group hopes to meet approximately every two years, generally in conjunction with another regionally defined group and in a variety of international locations.

The group encourages collaborative and comparative work with colleagues across the region and areas connected through geographical contiguity, diaspora, trade, and the Internet. It also promotes acts of doing and making—performing, dancing, composing, drawing, and other forms of participation—as integral parts of scholarly study. The group strives towards inclusiveness with regard to scholarly approaches and participation.

The study group was approved by the Executive Board in March 2016. This followed the first meeting of the group held on 4–6 March 2016, at Harvard University on the music of South, Central, and West Asia. The programme committee consisted of Richard Wolf (chair), Anna Schultz, Natalie Sarrazin, Peter Kvetko, and Robbie Behrs. Presentations filled three simultaneous panels over three days. Presenters and attendees consisted of approximately a hundred people.

The conference featured a performance on *dutar*, *tanbur*, and *sato* by Sirojiddin Juraev, one of the finest instrumentalists in Central Asia today. Warren Senders (*khyal*, vocal), George Ruckert (harmonium), and Christopher Pereji (tabla) also performed Hindustani music for the conference.

Stephen Blum provided the keynote address, “Working with musics of three adjacent regions,” with Richard Wolf acting as a respondent.

The panel chairs were volunteers including Harvard professors in anthropology, South Asian studies, and from the Divinity School, as well as scholars and performers of the area. International participants and attendees included those from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Russia, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, and the UK, and participants from the USA included those traveling from the east coast, midwest, southwest, and west coast.

The following individuals were voted in to act as officers for the newly formed study group: Richard Wolf, chair; Brita Heimark, vice chair; Natalie Sarrazin, secretary.

Following the approval by the Board, the first symposium of the Study Group on Music and Allied Arts of Greater South Asia was held in conjunction with the annual research symposium of the University of Visual and Performing Arts (UVPA) in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 12–14 December 2019. The UVPA conference theme was “Urbanism, landscape, and public space: Rethinking creative arts and humanities,” and a fascinating keynote lecture on this theme was given by Sasanka Perera (South Asian University, New Delhi, India). The overarching theme of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Allied Arts of Greater South Asia symposium was “South Asian music in the world”; Frank Korom (Boston University) gave the insightful keynote lecture entitled, “Bhujangbhushan’s oscillation between song and speech in performance.” The joint conference was a resounding success, with great comradery and scholarly dialogue between the participants.

There was a total of fifty presenters for the ICTM portion alone, which included scholars from Australia, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Germany, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, the UK, and the USA (figure 1). Panels topics ranged from Revisiting the historiography of Hindustani music’s hereditary practitioners; to Colonization, reformation, and transformation; Indian folk music; Folk arts, dance, and theatre; Sex, gender, and cinema; South Asian music and arts in diaspora; Sri Lankan and Tamil culture; Folk and gender; Devotional music, exchange, identity, and global dimensions; and Local music and its spread.

1 The completion of this chapter owes much to the contributions of Brita Heimark and Natalie Sarrazin. *Eds.*



Figure 1. Participants of the first symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Allied Arts of Greater South Asia. Colombo, Sri Lanka, December 2019 (photo by Kosala Anuradha, UVPA).

Meals were generously provided by the local hosts, the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, and the University of Visual and Performing Arts, under the expert guidance of Saumya Liyanage. In addition, thanks to a generous grant from Harvard University and the efforts of the executive committee (Richard Wolf, Brita Heimark, and Natalie Sarrazin), the study group was able to pay travel expenses for many of the university students from the USA and the South Asian participants. We were also grateful to the American Institute of Pakistan Studies for their valuable support. UVPA organized an impressive dance performance for all of the local and visiting scholars, and there was an elaborate dinner with live music on our final evening together. This study group's joint conference with UVPA in Colombo offered an exceptional opportunity for global scholarly dialogue that will no doubt further significant research in the years to come.