



'TRANS-, CROSSINGS, AND INTERSECTIONALITY'

12th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group
on Music, Gender, and Sexuality

27 August - 1 September 2024

Sunway University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Hosted by:



School of
ARTS

Supported by:



Mariann Steegmann
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PROGRAMME & ABSTRACT BOOK

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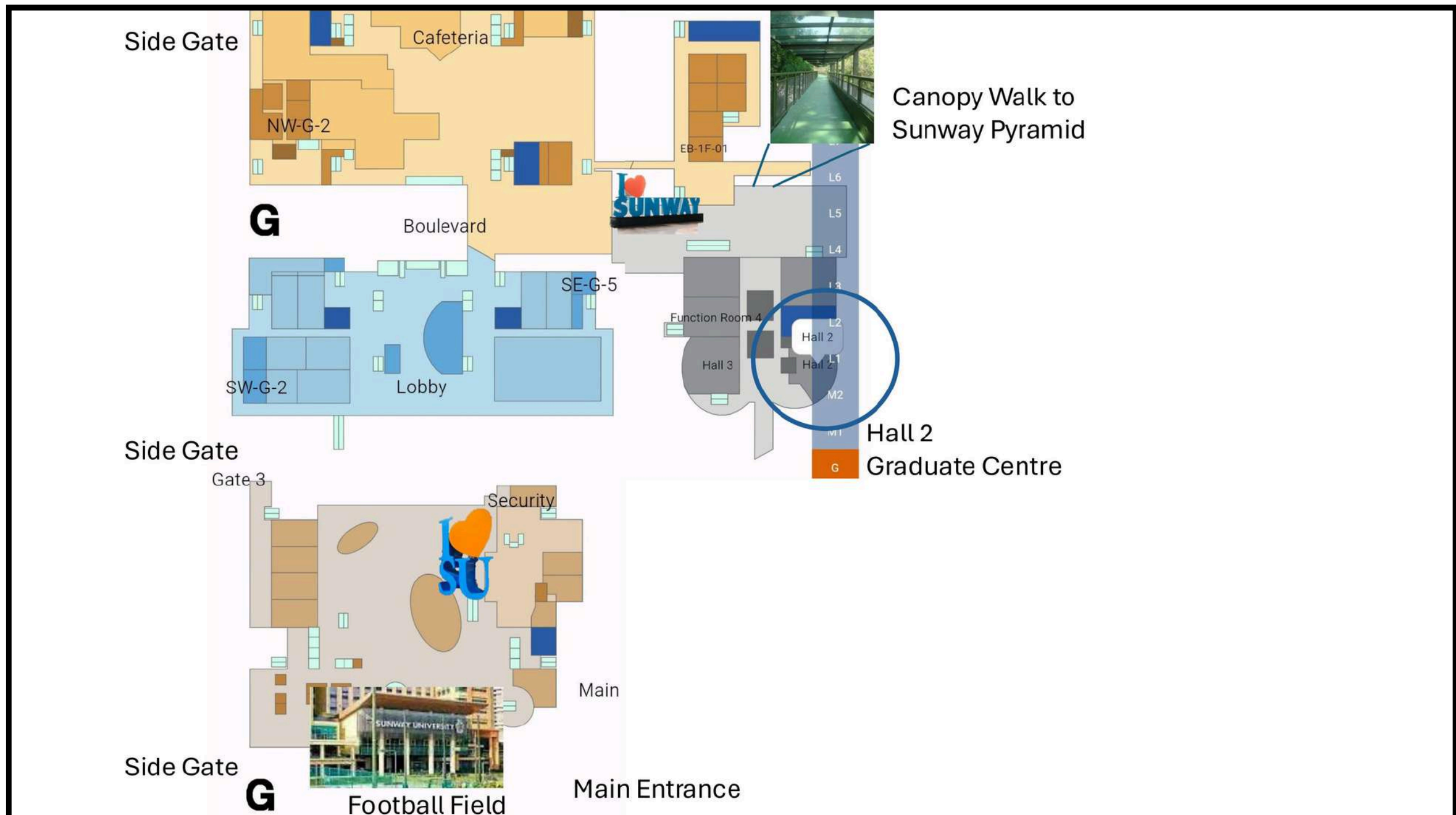
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The symposium is held at the Hall 2, Graduate Centre,
Sunway University



Top view map



Programme

DAY 1 - 27.08.2024 (Tuesday)

9.00 am	Registration
10.00 am	Opening Remarks and welcome address
Session 1: Indigeneity and Gendering in the Performing Arts in Southeast Asia (Chair: Tan Sooi Beng)	
10.30 am	<u><i>Conceptualizing Indigenous and Non-Binary Gendering in Central Sulawesi's Performing Arts: Heritage and Contemporary Performance among the Bayasa</i></u> <u>Mayco A. Santaella (Sunway University)</u>
11.00 am	<u><i>Indigenous and Non-Binary Gendering in the Performing Arts of Southeast Asia</i></u> <u>Rachel Ong, Patricia Hardwick, Clare Chan, Mayco A. Santaella</u>
11.30 am	<u><i>An Artistic Space for Balinese Banci: Comedic Cross-Dressing in Contemporary Balinese Dance Drama (online)</i></u> <u>Meghan Hynson (University of San Diego) & I Wayan Sudirana (Institut Seni Indonesia, Denpasar)</u>
12.00 pm	Lunch break
Session 2: Gendered Constructions in Folk Dancing (Chair: Patricia Hardwick)	
2.00 pm	<u><i>'Eh dass i mei Dirndal an andan Buam liaß' - Gender Constructs and Conceptualizations in Alpine Folk Music Practice</i></u> <u>Gertrud Maria Huber (University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna)</u>
2.30 pm	<u><i>Singapura Gelek: Gender Explorations by Malay-Identifying Choreographers</i></u> <u>Muhd Noramin Mohd Farid (University of Arts, Singapore / Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur)</u>
3.00 pm	<u><i>Gender Stereotypes in Folklore Dancing among the Serbian Diaspora in Vienna</i></u> <u>Katarina Petrović (University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna)</u>
3.30 pm	Coffee Break

Session 3: Celebration of Queerness and Excess (Chair: Rory Fewer)

4.00 pm	<u><i>Songs of Trans-gressors: Embodied Mimicry in Japan's Jōso Kōhaku</i></u> Christina Misaki Nikitin (Harvard University)
4.30 pm	<u><i>Play on Gender Conventions in the Binanog (Hawk-Eagle) Dance of the Panay Bukidnon Cultural Community in Central Panay, Philippines</i></u> Jose R. Taton (University of the Philippines Visayas)
5.00 pm	<u><i>"Uncle Johnny Made My Dress": Beyoncé, Renaissance, and Capitalization of Black Queer Cultures</i></u> Lauron J. Kehrer (Western Michigan University)
6.00 pm	Reception - Welcome Dinner (Rooftop Terrace - Graduate Center)

DAY 2 - 28.08.2024 (Wednesday)

Session 4: Music, Gender, and Agency (Chair: Svanibor Pettan)

9.00 am	<u><i>Let Me Tell You About My Life! Patriarchy and Agency Among the Chinese Women Puppeteers of Malaysia</i></u> Tan Sooi Beng (University Sains Malaysia)
9.30 am	<u><i>"We Can't Perform Without Spirits": Interrogating the Discursive Agency of Alcohol in Adzewa Performance</i></u> Adwoa Arhine (University of Ghana, Legon)
10.00 am	<u><i>The Women Masters: Exploring the Shift of Traditional Gender Roles in the Playing of the Maguindanao kulintang</i></u> Eva Cuenza (University of Philippines, alumna)
10.30 am	Coffee break

Session 5: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Music and its Industry (Chair: Mukesh Kulriya)

11.00 am	<u><i>Articulating Manhood: the Virtue of Bravery in Iban Popular Song in 1950s-1960s</i></u> Connie Lim Keh Nie (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak)
11.30 am	<u><i>Women and Popular Music in Ghana: Edith Norteye and the Performance Industry in Ghana</i></u> Grace Takyi Donkor (University of Ghana, Legon)
12.00 pm	<u><i>Arabesk Trouble</i></u> İlgaz Yalçinoğlu (Humboldt University, Berlin)
12.30 pm	Lunch break

Session 6: Queer Sensibilities, Legibility, and Validation (Chair: Noramin Farid)

2.30 pm	<u>Queer Illegibilities in Non Non Non's Electronic Dance Music Underground</u> Rory Fewer (University of California, Riverside)
3.00 pm	<u>Behati, Ethnic, and Queer Culture: Carving out the Borderland through Fashion and Music in Malaysia</u> Rachel Ong Shu Ying (University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz)
3.30 pm	<u>Fado Bicha and Its Quest to Validate the Invalid</u> Caio Felipe Gonçalves Mourão (Aveiro University)
4.00 pm	Coffee break

Lecture Performance and Hybrid Workshop: Ballroom and Waacking in Singapore (75 mins)

4.30 pm	<u>Walking the Runway; Visualising the Music: Contextualising the Queer Histories, Aesthetic Values, and Subcultural Formations of Ballroom and Waacking in Singapore</u> Shayus Sharif (Independent Scholar) Glenn Tan (Independent Performer) (online) Amin Alifin (Independent Artist) (online)
6.00 pm	ICTMD Malaysia National Committee Business Meeting (Welcome Meeting) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On site and via Zoom

DAY 3 - 29.08.2024 (Thursday)

Session 7: Public and Domestic Music Spaces (Chair: Connie Lim)

9.30 am	<u>Gendered Soundscape of Bhakti in India</u> Mukesh Kulriya (UCLA, Herb-Alpert School of Music)
10.00 am	<u>Stories of Resistance: Toward a Political and Cultural Ambiguity in the Social Production of Space Associated with Regressive and Conservative Values</u> Anna Rezaei (University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz)
10.30 am	Coffee break

Session 8: Organised panel: Oral Traditions, Gender and Folklore of Goa in India (Chair: Rasika Ajotikar)

11.00 am	<u>Ovio or Hovyo</u> Mamata Deepak Verlekar (Goa University)
11.30 am	<u>Dhalo and Fudgi</u> Sulochana Pednekar (Goa University)
12.00 pm	<u>Folk Musical Instrument Specific to Gender</u> Charudatta Mahadev Gawas (Goa University)
12.30 pm	Lunch break
2.30 pm	Film screening. (Chair: Heather MacLachlan) <u>"The Unmatched Ones": Women and Cultural Leadership in Serbian Independent Music Scenes - (26 minutes)</u> Iva Nenić (University of Arts, Belgrade)
3.15 pm	Coffee break

Session 9: Women and Femininity in Music (Chair: Anna Rezaei)

3.45 pm	<u>The Performing Woman in Nangiarkoothu</u> Rose Merin (M G University, Kerala)
4.15 pm	<u>"Portraying Femininity": Recreating Jiangnan sizhu in Hangzhou for Tourism, the Commercial Digital Landscape and the Chinese Cultural Policy (Lightning paper - 10 minutes)</u> Yun Ke Li (University Pendidikan Sultan Idris)
4.35 pm	<u>Creating the Ideal Woman Through Performance: Change and Continuity of Margamkali Tradition of the Syrian Christians of Malabar</u> George Pioustin (UCLA, Herb Alpert School of Music)
5.05 pm	<u>Carnival, Bodies and Women: An Analysis of Recent Female Protagonisms in the Uruguayan Murga</u> Marita Fornaro Bordolli (Universidad de la República de Uruguay)

DAY 4 - 30.08.2024 (Friday)

Session 10: The Performance and Labor of Sexuality (Chair: Marko Kölbl)

9.00 am	<u><i>Beyoncé / Black Culture “Go Harder: Beyoncé and Queer Sexual Renaissance”</i></u> Elliott Powell (University of Minnesota)
9.30 am	<u><i>No Strings Attached: Erotic Labor, Consumption, and Sexual Unfreedom among Trans Femme Entertainers</i></u> Eva Pensis (University of Pennsylvania)
10.00 am	<u><i>Caste and Sexuality in Saamna</i></u> Rasika Ajotikar (University of Hildesheim)
10.30 am	Coffee break

Session 11: Portrayal and Imagery of Women in Music Narratives (Iva Nenić)

11.00 am	<u><i>Portrayal of Women in Sinhala Folk Songs</i></u> (online) R M C S Ranasinghe (University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo)
11.30 am	<u><i>Female Aspects in Ashiqi Narratives</i></u> (online) Sara Shahlaei (Tehran Art University)
12.00 pm	<u><i>Analyzing Mulan's Multimodal Music Expressions Across</i></u> Yuhui Lu (University of Malaya) & Yue Chang (Independent Scholar)
12.30 pm	Lunch break

Session 12: Change, Sustainability, and Dominance in Gendered Hierarchies (Chair: Clare Chan)

2.30 pm	<u><i>Romani Music and Music Culture, Social Media, Gender, and Change</i></u> (online) Kai Viljami Åberg (University of Eastern Finland)
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Lecture-performance (Chair: Rachel Ong)

3.00 pm	<u><i>Pride as Protest: Queer Liberation through Celebration</i></u> Kai Mata (Guest Artist)
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4.15 pm	Coffee break
LAC Special programme (Organised by Patricia Hardwick) - Rooftop Terrace - Graduate Center	
5.00 pm	<u>Mek Mulung masterclass</u>
6.00 pm	Dinner reception
7.30 pm	Mek Mulung performance

Day 5 - 31.08.2024 (Saturday)

Session 13: Listening to the Dominant (Chair: Grace Takyi)	
10.00 am	<u><i>The Disguised Sexist Double Standard in American Church Music Ministries</i></u> Heather MacLachlan (University of Dayton)
10.30 am	<u><i>Perpetuating White Bourgeois Heteronormativity in Western Art Music Education</i></u> Marko Kölbl (University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna)
11.00 pm	<u><i>Listening to White Settler Femininity in the "Freedom Convoy" Occupation of Ottawa, Canada</i></u> (online) Gale Franklin (Carleton University)
11.30 pm	Lunch break
2.00 pm	ICTMD Study Group on Music, Gender, and Sexuality Business Meeting (Welcome Meeting) • On site and via Zoom
3.00 pm	Coffee break
4.00 pm	Closing ceremony - END
8.00 pm	Post-conference event until late - <u>Kangkang 3A</u>

Mek Mulung



Image by lead-performer Zamzuriah

Mek Mulung is a folk theatre performance that originates from the rural village of Wang Tepus, Jitra Kedah, in the northern region of the peninsular Malaysia. While the exact origins of Mek Mulung is unclear, the performers believe that Mek Mulung has existed for more than 400 years.

The performance of Mek Mulung involves musicians, dancers, and actors, and usually takes place in an open-air makeshift hut in a village setting. Stories are acted out and songs are sung in between acting parts. In the past, both male and female performers performed the Mek Mulung. However, due to the lack of female performers, Mek Mulung groups started training male performers to play female roles.

In the early 2000s, an urban version of Mek Mulung emerged as a result from a visit by the Petronas Performing Arts Group to Kampung Wang Tepus. This new version of Mek Mulung retained most aspects of the performance aesthetics, however, some elements such as the costumes, number of musicians, and the use of amplification such as cordless microphones are incorporated in the performance. Male performers performing female roles are employed as a form of comedy and to appeal to the urban audience. Presently, the urban style of Mek Mulung is widely accepted and performed in institutions and schools, and is used as a tourist attraction.

In 2023, Mek Mulung was recognized by UNESCO in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.



Workshop

In this workshop, participants will be exposed to the overview of the historical development of the Mek Mulung. Participants will also learn basic dance steps from the opening section of the performance called the Gerak Timpuh as well as some dances that are performed within the acting scenes and the closing song. Songs to accompany the dance will also be taught in this workshop. At the end of the workshop, a short demonstration of Mek Mulung will be presented by the dance company.

The workshop will be conducted by renowned Malay theatre practitioner **ZAMZURIAH BINTI ZAHARI** and her company.

KangKang 3A

Get ready to spread legs and celebrate at Kangkang3A!

Kangkang is an inclusive community event in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, that celebrates the talents of local and regional LGBTQ+ artists and allies. Launched in 2023, Kangkang (meaning "spread legs" in Malay) carries on the legacy of Everybody Nose, a pioneering platform for drag, comedy, music, and poetry.

Inspired by Everybody Nose's successful run from 2018 to 2022, Kangkang now thrives under the leadership of yon.taufu and Jessie, who are dedicated in fostering a vibrant community performance space. True to their spirit of giving back, Kangkang supports queer refugees in Malaysia by



sponsoring tickets and transportation to the event through the NGO Garabtaag. They've also increased crew pay and donated tickets to a local party organizer focused on women. Additionally, proceeds from the third Kangkang event in January 2024 supported the people of Gaza through @careforgaza.

Special Acts:

Steph Chan: A comedian known for their "anecdotal and raunchy" style (Bakchormee Boy), Steph has graced stages from Bangkok to New Orleans, including hosting Siao Char Bors Comedy.

Aloysius D @polloycious is known for his wild debut stripping to a patriotic song at Singapore's Esplanade theatre in 2017. He's always ready to bring the unexpected.

Kaimata: This award-winning singer-songwriter utilizes music to confront identity-based violence and mass atrocities. The Auschwitz Institute Artist Award recipient promises a powerful performance.

Local Musicians:

Shh...Diam! (queer punk band)

Clinton Jerome (R&B-soul singer)

Sewerslidal-sax-machine (genre-bending band)

VIONA (lyricist, composer, & producer)

The night will be hosted by the dynamic **Roa Neraka**.

The venue location will be disclosed to ticket holders a few days before the event.

More info on [Instagram](#)



Abstracts

Session 1: Indigeneity and Gendering in the Performing Arts in Southeast Asia

An Artistic Space for Balinese Banci: Comedic Cross-Dressing in Contemporary Balinese Dance Drama (online)

This project explores comedic cross-dressing in contemporary Balinese dance drama as a critical space for cultural production and gender discourse. In Indonesia, transvestism and androgyny are part of a centuries-old Hindu-Javanese and Hindu-Balinese imagery in which a third sex, or “in-between” gender represents cosmic power. This is articulated in the Hindu philosophy of arda nare swari, the idea that God is composed of male (nare), female (swari), and a half (arda) gender that is both male and female. This concept is embodied in ritual cross-dressed dance. Indonesian men who exhibit female traits or live as women but are not necessarily homosexual or transgender (although some may be) are commonly referred to by the culturally insensitive label banci. This word also forms the root of the word bebancihan, a term developed at the Balinese high school for the performing arts (KOKAR) in the 1960s to categorize dances in which males or females cross-dress to portray the opposite sex.

In their performances, bebancihan dancers uphold and transgress social norms and challenge local and national ideologies toward sexuality both in their onstage performances and in their offstage social media presences. Despite being stigmatized, many have become some of the most well-paid and influential performers in Bali. By documenting this phenomenon and conducting interviews with these performers, this research has three goals: 1) historicize cross-dressed dance and chart the development of Balinese dance drama from serious to comedic entertainment; 2) present the subjectivities of the performers, many of whom are labelled as “in-between” gender, or banci, and explore how they use cross-dressed performance to negotiate ideological tensions regarding gender and express their identities and sexualities; and 3) demonstrate how dancers are confronting state-sanctioned constructions of gender and shaping local and national attitudes toward sexuality through their performances.

Conceptualizing Indigenous and Non-Binary Gendering in Central Sulawesi’s Performing Arts: Heritage and Contemporary Performance among the Bayasa

The balia ritual among Kaili communities of Central Sulawesi in Indonesia is carried out to heal individuals, villages, ensure good crops, and to commemorate the ascension of a sando (shaman). The term itself is sometimes interpreted as bali or nabali (changed) ia (he/she/it) referencing spiritual changes that take place during this event. The present post-national condition (Santaella, 2016) in Central Sulawesi has paved the way for the use of rituals, customs, and local traditions within the performing arts for presentational purposes. This includes the recent participation of third gender performers such as the Kaili bayasa (transvestite priests) traditionally considered to have special inner powers and in charge of specific healing rituals pertaining to royal family members. This presentation discusses two specific performances. The first is an analysis of the piece “Poveba” composed by Hasan Bahasyuan in 1970 and performed by Ensemble Modero Palu featuring a male transvestite dancer. The second example discusses the reconstruction of traditional music and dance for provincial festivals with a focus on traditions once carried out during healing rituals led by the bayasa. The investigation unwraps possibilities for a broad discussion of how performing arts ensembles and festivals in post-colonial Indonesia have enabled for non-binary gender performers and spectators the development of communal experiences and alternative modernities (Gaonkar, 1999) to global gender constructs within Southeast Asian traditional performing arts domains.

Meghan Hynson (PhD, UCLA 2015) is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of San Diego, where she directs the Balinese gamelan ensemble and teaches courses in global music. Her primary research examines developments in Balinese shadow theater music (gender wayang) and gender issues in comedic cross-dressed characters of Balinese dance drama. She has also published on issues of music education and cultural diplomacy in west Javanese bamboo angklung with the Smithsonian Institute and most recently wrote an article for Religions journal, theorizing how broadcasts of the Balinese Hindu mantra (Puja Tri Sandhya) are used to assert local identity and participate in sounding religious nationalism. Dr. Hynson is on the board of the Center for World Music and also participates in their music in the schools program as a teaching artist.

I Wayan Sudirana (PhD, University of British Columbia) is a composer and ethnomusicologist and is an Associate Professor of Music at Institut Seni Indonesia, Denpasar. He has written two books about gamelan gong luang and edited a book about gabor, a genre in the gamelan gong kebyar tradition. Dr. Sudirana has written articles on traditional approaches to studying Balinese gamelan and his current research focuses on new music in Bali and the ancient Balinese gamelan philosophy and theory. He has collaborated with many composers and was commissioned to write a piece for the opening of the winter olympic games Vancouver Canada in 2010.

Mayco A. Santaella is Professor and Dean for the School of Arts at Sunway University, Malaysia. He studied at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa as an East-West Center Fellow, researching music and dance traditions of the extended Sulu Zone (East Malaysia, southern Philippines and eastern Indonesia) and their links to the Nusantara region. He conducted research for his doctoral studies in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, as a Fulbright research grant recipient. His recent publications include “Made in Nusantara: Studies in Popular Music” (co-editor, 2021) and “Popular Music in East and Southeast Asia: Sonic (under)Currents and Currencies” (editor, 2022).

Play on Gender Conventions in the Binanog (Hawk-Eagle) Dance of the Panay Bukidnon Cultural Community in Central Panay, Philippines

Binanog (hawk-eagle) dance is a social dance performed in wedding ceremonies and social occasions among the Panay Bukidnon indigenous cultural community in Central Panay, Philippines. The practice is typically gendered into two modal styles – the tinigbabayi (female) where a binukot (kept maiden) graces the solo performance, and the tiniglalaki (male) where either a couple composed of a male and a female or a group of two females and one male dance to hocketed instrumental rhythms and perform an energetic play of kerchiefs. In the performance, dancers typically exercise hampang or play and navigate musical, kinesthetic, and social conventions to elicit sibod, an ideological state of synchronicity and flow that the Panay Bukidnon community adheres to in performance. On some occasions, such gendered conventions, typically seen in formal and structured play, are subverted. While learning the nuanced complexities of the dance, some indigenous youth, who identify themselves as tibo (lesbian) or agi (gay) and some as “straight” males, subvert the strictly gendered contexts of the tradition by “playing” around norms, a kinamaret (whimsical play) expression. This presentation, thus, looks at the phenomenon of “play” in the context of gender. Specifically, I explore the significance of whimsical kinamaret performances and argue that non-formal play provides the Panay Bukidnon indigenous youth avenues for gender exploration.

Jose R. Taton Jr. is an Assistant Professor at the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) and an educator teaching music, arts, and humanities. He finished his Master of Arts in Ethnomusicology at The Philippine Women’s University. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Diploma in Music from West Visayas State University. His research interests include organology, festival studies, indigenous pedagogy, and sound studies. Currently, he is doing research on the Panay Bukidnon gong tradition.

Session 2: Gendered Constructions in Folk Dancing

‘Eh dass i mei Dirndal an andan Buam liaß’ - Gender Constructs and Conceptualizations in Alpine Folk Music Practice

The performance practice of Alpine folk music is traditionally characterized by historically determined gender roles in song and language, music and dance, even if the differentiations here may appear less clear at first glance than in other European folk music styles (see Haid 2006). In recent decades, the questioning of patriarchal social orders, power systems, and gender-specific norms has also led to a change and initial reinterpretation of gender identity in the performance practice of Alpine folk music. After years of dwindling acceptance of the traditional Alpine music genre, Generation Z in particular is showing a new interest in a new folk music style that has now crossed borders.

Almost 20 years after Gerlinde Haid’s reflections in the article “Musica Alpina – male and female horizons” (Haid 2006), I would like to question again to what extent localized concepts and metaphors of gender(s) and sexuality(ies) are being adopted or socially necessary reactions to these concepts and understandings are already taking place. Which changes are already deep-seated and accepted? Which changes can be seen as temporary side effects?

I will analyze the musical performance practice of the participants in the one-week workshops “Traditional Alpine music at Seggau Castle/Austria”. From the statistical data of the annual workshops, which have taken place every summer for 47 years, initial changes can be seen. Based on field research with musicians, singers and dancers in formal and informal gatherings during these workshops in southern Styria and my active musical participation in the workshops for 40 years, I will discuss keywords such as new forms of inequality and discrimination, shifting affects, and redefined artistic selves in an increasingly resigned and translocalized Alpine folk music.

Gertrud Maria Huber studied music education at the University of Music Nuremberg-Augsburg and the Richard Strauss Conservatory Munich. She holds a PhD degree in folk music research and is currently a Senior lecturer at the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, Austria. She is an active performer and directs several ensembles. Among others, she played the zither solo from “Tales of the Vienna Woods” with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Kurt Masur (www.gertrud-huber.com).

Singapura Gelek: Gender Explorations by Malay-Identifying Choreographers

In 2021-2023, a collective of choreographers and producers created a programme for Malay-identifying artists to create contemporary works that were responding to the theme of “gelek” which is a common Malay-Indonesian word for the movement of hips. This movement usually associated with the female body, focusing on the hips which symbolize fertility and the peak of female maturity, could also be a mocking term for male dancers who are not masculine enough or not portraying the usual warrior-like qualities that are necessary for the male role. The two-year programme supported 6 artists with various projects focused on aspects of gender and/or sexuality. It was specially tailored to provide artistic, dramaturgical and technical support for the creators. They were offered masterclasses by invited personalities, incubation periods for experimentation, work-in-progress presentation, a Malaysian residency at Rimbun-Dahan, and a final presentation platform. My paper will focus on three out of six works that were created as part of this programme: “Gelek Fiction” by Lyn Hanis Rezuhan, “Kontur” by Syarifuddin Sahari, and “Jantan Joget” by Shahrul Azhar Marekan. This case study analysis offers insights into how these creators have responded to the theme of gelek, especially as a fluid movement of transgression and transcendence on social and ethnic gendered dynamics. Through interviews with the choreographers and my own observation as organiser and, later cultural dramaturg, my argument about creative gendered subversions and activism will also contribute to the sociological commentary on the Malay minority experience in Singapore.

Dr. Noramin Farid is a choreographer, arts educator, and maritime Southeast Asian performing arts researcher. A recipient of the 2017 Singapore Youth Award and the 2018 India-ASEAN Youth Awards, Amin is the curator of an online portal, ARKITARI, which documents maritime Southeast Asian dances. He is also the current president of a dance organisation, DIAN Dancers, and the founding member of Arki-Gen, a group focused on promoting discourse and research about Southeast Asian performing arts. He holds a PhD in Theatre, Drama and Dance Studies from Royal Holloway, University of London, UK. Amin currently teaches Southeast Asian Performing Arts & Cultures at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), Lasalle College of the Arts and Singapore Raffles Music College (SRMC).

Gender Stereotypes in Folklore Dancing among the Serbian Diaspora in Vienna

Vienna is home to a large Serbian community whose history dates back to the Austro-Hungarian empire with significant growth in the 20th century, especially in the course of organized working migration from former Yugoslavia in the late 1960s. Within diasporic cultural life, Serbian folklore societies (KUD - kuturno umetničko društvo, cultural artistic society) play a central role, as becomes evident in the number of these societies: Austria alone is home for approximately 30 Serbian KUDs.

This paper examines the site-specific creation and consolidation of gender stereotypes in choreographed folk dancing. I address the cultural particularities of gender understandings. From “Balkan” notions of patriarchy to socialist Yugoslav gender equality policies up to culturalized perceptions of gender in diasporic settings. The paper’s main question is how these particularities are reflected in stage dance choreographies. I thus examine how folklore dance is a rehearsed set of rules in which ideals of masculinity and femininity as well as a heteronormative gender binary are emphasised. Further, I address how body movements are rehearsed following a strict gender binary and those movements are subsequently understood as natural signifiers of masculinity and femininity. Special attention is given to the individual conceptualizations of gender and sexuality by KUD members and their stances on patriarchy, their use of “tradition” in defending gender stereotypes in dance as well as the context of migration and gender.

The paper is based on documentary and explorative ethnographic fieldwork in Vienna, encompassing rehearsals, public and private performances as well as interviews with dancers and choreographers, mainly from the so-called “third generation” following the initial working migration of the 1960s.

Katarina Petrović is a master student of ethnomusicology at the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. After graduating from music high school in Serbia, she enrolled in the Bachelor studies of Musicology, an interuniversity programme shared by the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz and the University of Graz. Katarina has a rich artistic experience in traditional music performance, including both playing various musical instruments, such as gamelan and marimba, and learning traditional dances, especially those from Bali. In addition, she has many years of experience in playing and singing Serbian traditional dances and songs. Her research focuses on music of minorities, especially the Indonesian community in Serbia and the Serbian community in Austria.

Session 3: Celebration of Queerness and Excess (Chair: Rory Fewer)

Songs of Trans-gressers: Embodied Mimicry in Japan's Jōso Kōhaku

On New Year's Eve in Japan, the quintessential family tradition involves gathering around the TV to watch the annually broadcasted program of Kōhaku Uta Gassen (New Year's Song Contest). Meanwhile, a dynamic antifamilial kinship of queers, queens, and those in-between assemble to stage their own year-end spectacle called Jōso Kōhaku. Since 1951, Kōhaku has become deeply ingrained in Japanese culture, evolving into a national custom that prompts reflection upon the past year through the medium of popular songs. As its parodical twin, Josō Kōhaku features cross-dressers, drag queens, and queer and trans* artists who impersonate various popular musicians, ranging from emerging J-pop stars and boy groups to classic rock bands and enka singers. I frame these impersonations as monomane – the Japanese practice of embodied mimicry characterized by affective excess. Grounded in fieldwork conducted at Jōso Kōhaku shows in Tokyo and Kyoto, I explore how monomane performances showcase songs as collective memories that are queered through embodied excess. By adopting the culturally specific concept of monomane, I move beyond Butlerian discourse on drag and performativity when examining the interplay between parody, song, and the body. My analyses is deeply informed by the works of trans* historian Mitsuhashi Junko (2008; 2022), who proposes an alternative to EuroAmerican paradigms of LGBTQIA+ with the term “seibetsu ekkyōsha” [gender border-crosser], which I translate as Trans*gresser. Through an examination of Trans*gressers' monomane performances, I illustrate how gender, sex, and sexuality become redundant discourses in Japanese queer/trans* nightlives, transcending borders of identity, ideology, and idolatry.

Christina Misaki Nikitin (they/she) is a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology at Harvard University. Their research resides at the intersection between musical ethnography, performance studies, queer of color critique, decolonial thought, and TransPacific studies. Christina's research is dedicated to exploring the political, poetic, and aesthetic dimensions of queer and trans* musical performances based on fieldwork in Japan, South Africa, and the U.S. Their work delves into the nuanced ways colonial and ethnonationalist discourses are reproduced, negotiated, and subverted within postwar and contemporary Japanese popular music.

“Uncle Johnny Made My Dress”: Beyoncé, Renaissance, and Capitalization of Black Queer Cultures

When “Break My Soul,” the lead single from Beyoncé's seventh studio album, “Renaissance,” was released during Pride Month, June 2022, it was quickly apparent that the project would center on Black queer cultures. A dance track built primarily on an interpolation of Black queer, gender non-conforming New Orleans artist Big Freedia's bounce track, “Explode” (2014) and Robin S.'s house club hit, “Show Me Love” (1990), “Break My Soul” sonically invokes Black queer lineages and presents an anthem of resilience. Building on that track's success, the full “Renaissance” album, the Renaissance World Tour of 2023, and the December 2023 release of “Renaissance: A Film By Beyoncé”, all demonstrated the project's indebtedness to Black queer cultures and artists.

In this paper, I build on previous scholarship on ways that Beyoncé incorporates Black queer cultural practices in her albums and her stage performances to interrogate the relationship between the star and Black queer representation through “Renaissance”. These influences are manifested in musical choices, lyrics, featured and sampled artists who appear on the album, choreography in stage performance, and in the symbiotic relationship she has with fans, particularly through social media. Beyoncé both celebrates and capitalizes on Black queer cultural practices and labor in ways that do not always benefit Black queer communities and artists. For example, Beyoncé's inclusion of samples of queer artists, rather than in-studio or onstage collaborations, suggests a distancing from these very artists. Additionally, while the “Renaissance” film was released on World AIDS Day and features a segment on Beyoncé's late Uncle Johnny, a queer man who died from AIDS-related illness, it fails to name and address the epidemic that has impacted the Black queer communities that have so deeply influenced “Renaissance”. While “Renaissance” is celebrated for its Black queer inclusion, we should remain attentive to the power asymmetries it also enables.

Dr. Lauron J. Kehrer is an Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology and Musicology in the Irving S. Gilmore School of Music at Western Michigan University. Their research focuses on the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in American popular music, especially hip hop. Their first book, “Queer Voices in Hip Hop: Cultures, Communities, and Contemporary Performance” (University of Michigan Press, 2022) examines the work of Black queer and trans artists in hip hop. They are currently co-editing a volume with Stephanie Jensen-Moulton called “‘Better Be Good to Me’: American Popular Songs as Domestic Violence Narratives” (under contract, University of Michigan Press).

Session 4: Music, Gender, and Agency (Chair: Svanibor Pettan)

Let Me Tell You About My Life! Patriarchy and Agency Among the Chinese Women Puppeteers of Malaysia

Orientalist and nation-state historiographies about Asia often reinforce patriarchal ideology by dichotomizing male/female and juxtaposing this binary over public/private. As a consequence, Asian women are often stereotyped as docile victims of family and social circumstances who are incapable of entering the public space. This paper elucidates the dynamism and ambivalence of Chinese women performers' agency by recovering their voices and letting them speak. Focusing on the narratives of three Hokkien women glove puppeteers of the Beng Geok Hong and Sin Kim Hong Puppet Troupes of Penang, Malaysia, this paper illustrates that the Chinese women performers were able to exercise agency and move from the private into the public space in the twentieth century. They blurred the oppositional dichotomies in gendered historiography and shaped their own lives as wage earners, performers, and tradition bearers who contributed to religious and cultural life. At a young age, they underwent training as apprentices in the Hokkien opera and puppet theatre. They became the puppeteers and managers of their troupes, roles that were retained for men who inherited troupes from their fathers due to the practice of the patrilineal family system. To survive, the women had to be practical and innovative; they introduced changes in the stories, music, language, costumes, and staging of the puppet theatre to cater to the changing tastes of the audience through time. The women puppeteers were entrepreneurial, constantly networking with Chinese temples in the country for shows, and recruiting performers from the opera troupes to replace those who retired.

"We Can't Perform without 'Spirits'": Interrogating the Discursive Agency of Alcohol in Adzewa Performance.

Although it is common knowledge that most African societies have clearly defined aesthetic conventions, scholars have not fully explored the dimensions of musical and non-musical factors that people ascribe "good" music performance to, such as 'spirits'. In performing adzewa— a female musical tradition of the Fante people of Southern Ghana— the women claim a spiritual licence to negotiate the power to remember songs that would otherwise be considered impossible or difficult to recall. Referring to both alcohol and their ancestral overlords, they say: "We can't perform without the 'spirits'". This paper examines how spirits shape the identity and performance ethos of adzewa music against the performing women's claim that they can't perform without 'spirits'. Drawing on decade-long research on adzewa musical practices, the paper argues that the success of adze performance extends beyond singing, drumming, and dancing. In such performances, spirits have the agency to define and influence musical behaviours, norms, and identities. The paper concludes that the success of adzewa performance is rooted in a metaphysical negotiation between musicians and their ancestral instructors to be able to perform a full repertoire and have the resilience to finish performances that last several hours.

Tan Sooi Beng is an Honorary Professor of Ethnomusicology at the School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang. She is the author of "Bangsawan: A Social and Stylistic History of Popular Malay Opera" (Oxford University Press, 1993), and co-author of "Music of Malaysia: Classical, Folk and Syncretic Traditions" (Routledge, 2017) and "Longing for the Past, the 78 RPM Era in Southeast Asia" (Dust-to-Digital 2013), which won the joint SEM Bruno Nettl Prize in 2014. She is the editor of "Eclectic Cultures for All: The Development of the Peranakan Performing, Visual and Material Arts in Penang" (USM Press, 2019). Tan serves in the Advisory Editorial Board of Asian Music. She is the elected Vice-President of the Executive Board of the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM) and co-edited its digital publication "Dialogues: Towards Decolonizing Music and Dance Studies, 2021". Tan is actively engaged in community theatre for peacebuilding among young people and is involved in revitalizing the Potehi glove puppet theatre of Penang through documentation and localized performances.

Dr. Adwoa Arhine is an ethnomusicologist, a Fulbright Scholar (2014), and a Lecturer at the Department of Music, University of Ghana, Legon. She has published on women's performance practices and African identities, music and play, and taught courses in Music of West Africa, Music and Gender Studies, and Ghanaian Traditional Folk Songs.

The Women Masters: Exploring the Shift of Traditional Gender Roles in the Playing of the Maguindanao kulintang

The kulintang is a musical instrument of eight to nine laid-out rows of gongs. This can be heard across the greater Sulu area (southern Philippines, northern Indonesia and Malaysia) within Southeast Asia. This paper aims to explore a distinct traditional rendering in the Maguindanao (a Muslim ethno-linguistic in the southern Philippines) society which implicates the performance aspect of kulintang music-making. One of the major nuances found in the social structure is the rigid gender stratification which translates to the gendering of the kulintang instruments. This follows the theory of music onomatopoeia where the kulintang ensemble instruments are constructed to be associated with the speech sound and range levels based on a person's gender. These stiff gender assertions kept women in almost obscurity and limitations in their musical playing fields. The social transformations that happened among the Muslim ethnolinguistic groups of the Southern Philippines during the 1950s to the 1980s led to more liberal concepts of how gender is perceived among the people. This opened the rise of a new generation of women kulintang masters who were sought-after trailblazers in the performance stage, academe, and in their own communities.

Eva Cuenza is building her work as an early-career music anthropologist. She finished her Bachelor of Music (Musicology) degree, magna cum laude, at the University of the Philippines Diliman. She concentrated on Maguindanao kulintang performance under the tutelage of Prof. Aga Mayo Butocan. She allots her time attending conferences in presenting her studies likewise engaging with fellowships and performances. Her research interests include Waray (Eastern Visayas Region) music expressions, gender implications in music rendering, and gong music cultures like the Maguindanao kulintang and the Javanese gamelan. These critical researches are being utilized to prepare her endeavors for graduate school.

Session 5: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Music and its Industry (Chair: Mukesh Kulriya)

Articulating Manhood: The Virtue of Bravery in Iban Popular Song in 1950s-1960s.

In the 1950s, Sarawak utilized Iban soldiers who fought for the nation but also carried their pre-colonial cultural legacy of bravery (berani). Articulating manhood and bravery, this berani attribute associated with headhunting inspired Iban singers in Sarawak to write songs commemorating their achievements during the Malayan emergency (1948–1960). Iban are the largest indigenous ethnic group in Sarawak, Malaysia and make up approximately one third of the total Sarawak population. Since the establishment of Iban radio broadcasting in the 1950s under Radio Sarawak, Iban broadcasts not only served to disseminate information about the new nation but also to emphasize “the importance of Iban language” and to preserve the uniqueness of “reinvented cultural heritage” (Postill 2008: 214). In this paper, I argue that the music skills the Iban acquired were used as a medium to portray Iban's cultural identity and ethnicity within the larger nation-state where Malay and Western cultures dominated. Iban popular songs created in the 1950s and 1960s were associated with the virtue of bravery praising modern heroes. The pre-colonial Iban cultural qualities of manhood, bravery (berani), and boldness (kempang) differentiated these soldiers from others in the new nation. Berani as a song anthem resurfaced in the modern Sarawak armed forces and modern-day Sarawak military soldiers took pride in having pre-colonial roots in Iban warrior culture. Through the lens of “alternative conceptions of modernity” (Barendregt 2014), this paper analyzes song lyrics associated with the virtue of bravery and the dynamics and movements of the Iban people. Through semi-structured interviews with artists from the period, this paper interrogates the cultural factors that contributed to the creation of the songs. This analysis pays close attention to meanings embedded in the lyrics and how these songs portray the virtue of bravery.

Connie Lim Keh Nie is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. She completed her PhD in 2019 with a thesis entitled “Alternative modernities in the history of Iban popular music from 1950s to 1970s”. She is the main author of *Sape, alat muzik tradisional Sarawak (Sape, a traditional musical instrument of Sarawak, 2016)*. She is actively participating in various arts and culture activities with various NGO in Sarawak, helping to promote Sarawak's heritage through research.

Women and Popular Music in Ghana: Edith Norteye and the Performance Industry in Ghana

This paper explores the contributions of Edith Norteye, a prominent radio singer in Ghana in the 1950s, to recent Ghanaian popular music studies. Literature on female musicians/performers and their contributions to the space before the 1960s remains an under-studied area in popular music studies in Ghana, although there is enough evidence of their existence on records and in the archives. Edith Norteye is one such person. While many female performers of the time served as backup singers or instrumentalists in a male-dominated space, she stood out as a mainline singer, gaining popularity through live radio shows in the 1950s. This paper examines Edith Norteye's experiences and her significant role in paving the way for other female performers in Ghana during the period. Drawing on interviews and archival studies, the paper argues that female musicians played an influential role in the Ghanaian music industry before the 1950s, and unearthing their stories offers an appreciation and understanding of their contributions. Discussing the life and career of Edith Norteye, I shed light on the untold stories and challenges female performers faced in the music industry in Ghana before its independence.

Grace Takyi Donkor is an Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Music, School of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana, where she lectures on Ghanaian and African popular musical arts and indigenous music traditions in Ghana. Her research interests include gender issues in Ghanaian popular music, indigenous performance practices, and gospel music. She is particularly interested in the performance practices of female popular musicians and their various modes of representation. Grace holds a Master of Philosophy in Music from the University of Ghana and is completing her doctoral studies at the same institution. Her PhD dissertation examines how women were represented in highlife music in Ghana between the 1940s and 1960s and how these forms of representation have contributed to developing the music tradition and popular music in Ghana. Grace is the director of the African Ensemble at the Department of Music and leads the Atenteben Ensemble and the Adenkum Ensemble of the Department.

Arabesk Trouble

Arabesk, a music genre that gained high popularity in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s due to a significant influx of migration from rural areas to cities, was often associated with uneducated taste, regressive politics, and Eastern influences by Western-oriented cultural critics of its time. According to this view, Arabesk diverted the Turkish public from the Republican values based on a secular modernist Turkish identity that was constructed in opposition to a orientalist notion of the Ottoman legacy.

However, despite being associated with regressive and conservative values, Arabesk played a significant role in being one of the first public platforms where transgender identity was discussed. After the famous singer Bülent Ersoy's gender-affirming process in the late 1970s became of public interest, the military regime that came to power after the 1980 coup imposed a stage ban on her and other transgender performers. The lifting of this ban and the legal recognition of her gender identity were made possible in 1988 by the introduction of the gender change law that was popularly called the "Bülent Ersoy law". Her return to stages was warmly welcomed by the public and became a symbol of a liberal era.

Ilgaz Yalçinoğlu completed his undergraduate education in musicology, media studies, and art history in Marburg and received his MA in musicology from Humboldt University Berlin with his thesis on the potentials of transgender theory for popular music studies on the example of popular music in Turkey. As a guest lecturer, he gave courses on trans theory and ethnographic research methodologies in popular music studies at Humboldt University. In addition to his academic research, he has been involved with trans*/queer activism in Turkey and Germany. He organized various music events and continues his music journalism.

Session 6: Queer Sensibilities, Legibility, and Validation (Chair: Noramin Farid)

Queer Illegibilities in Non Non Non's Electronic Dance Music Underground

Over the past decade, a handful of party collectives operating under the label of “queer” have emerged in Bangkok’s nightlife scene in response to what they identify as the stratification of queer identities and lack of spaces for alternative musical tastes, including the “underground” sounds of certain electronic dance music subgenres. In this paper, I offer an analysis of one electronic dance music collective, Non Non Non, which was founded by DJ Mae Happyair and organizes self-described “underground queer raves” throughout Bangkok. While the English word “queer” might appear to denote an imported, neoliberal identity that stands in opposition to the self-determination of Thai queer communities, I follow the work of Peter Jackson in analyzing Bangkok’s queer rave scene as providing spaces of autonomy even as they necessarily operate as commercial endeavors. Furthermore, I ask what this scene’s applications of the word “queer” might gesture toward if we are to hear them outside of the representational economy of identity. In my analysis, I argue that “queerness” takes the form of a musical aesthetics, which can be sensed in how the “rawness” of Non Non Non’s queer raves constitutes several forms of strategic illegibility. I propose three forms of sonic “rawness” that are enacted in how the queer rave resists comprehensibility, offers new affective orderings of value, and forces a friction between normative and non-normative sound territories. The queer rave, I argue, employs an established model of queer consumerism to sound out forms of queer autonomy on the level of aesthetic imagining.

Rory Fewer is a PhD student in the ethnomusicology program at University of California, Riverside. His current project examines electronic dance music as a form of futurity praxis within Bangkok’s queer rave scene. Rory has presented research at Pop Conference and the Council on Thai Studies and his work has been published in *Investigaciones en Danza y Movimiento*. He is currently co-editing a special issue of *Documenta* on dance and new technologies.

Behati, Ethnic, and Queer Culture: Carving out the Borderland through Fashion and Music in Malaysia.

This paper explores the intersections of popular music, fashion, and social media as a spatio-temporal space that affords legitimacy for the expressions of queer identities and politics through the Malaysian fashion brand, BEHATI. Founded by Kel Wen in 2018, BEHATI has been pushing the boundaries of traditional cultural wear in Malaysia by deconstructing gender codes associated with ethnic attire. As a queer-positive brand, BEHATI includes drag queens as models, queer DJs, voguing, and queer symbolism such as the colours of the rainbow in their fashion campaigns and fashion shows. The brand is deemed controversial for transgressing socio-cultural norms in Malaysia - where the fundamental organization of society is based on ‘race’, which has its roots in British colonialism; and the organization of gender and sexuality informed by ethnoreligious principles and politics. By employing the concept of Borderlands (Clisby 2020) as my analytical framework, I argue that through the performative act of music and fashion, BEHATI carves out a ‘borderland’ that affords legitimacy for the expressions of marginalized identities, such as the LGBTQ+ communities, who have been discriminated and criminalized in the country. In line with hooks (2015: 150), Borderlands “offers the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds”. Through the analysis of the creative outputs of BEHATI, I show how music becomes a tool for BEHATI to contest normative socio-cultural norms and claim a space in Malaysia by celebrating diversity as its brand value. Subsequently, I highlight how these acts are achieved through the symbols of cultural identities, patriotism, and queer culture.

Rachel Ong Shu Ying is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Ethnomusicology, University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (Austria). Her PhD project explores the queer performing scene in Kuala Lumpur by looking at the intersections of race, class, religion, and politics. She is also employed as a University Assistant at the Institute, where gives lectures and assist in administrative works. She holds a Masters in ethnomusicology from the University of Malaya (Malaysia) and has previously worked at Leuphana Universität Lüneburg (Germany) as a part-time lecturer and Sunway University (Malaysia) as both a project manager and a lecturer.

Fado Bicha and Its Quest to Validate the Invalid

This paper will present a brief biography of the Portuguese musical group Fado Bicha (FB), as well as some of its artistic references. As it calls itself a work of “LGBT Fado”, we will provide a small contextualization of the fado musical genre, with all its normativity, comparing it to the group’s proposal. Also, we will talk about queer artists that preceded them on this path.

With the song Lila Fadista, FB wanted to create a queer “myth” for fado, to provide LGBT people with a “memory” that still does not exist within it, which we will show to be false. Proof of this is the mention, by themselves, of some of the names, as indirect references to the project, emphasizing, however, that they are not queer artists. They said this because of the lack of queer self-nomination of these artists, distancing themselves from them. Likewise, the FB presented themselves as fado practitioners, but increasingly distanced themselves from other fado practitioners and places where they practiced fado.

Thus, the big question of this paper is: why do FB want to be validated as queer fado practitioners, when they denied previous practitioners of fado and queer Portuguese music, distancing themselves from them? To answer this question, we will use the concept of “validation”, proposed by Marsha Linehan (1993), which consists of the recognition and acceptance of our actions by others. Two situations raised by her will be particularly useful: 1) People generally remain in social contexts of understanding, but on the other hand, they tend to move away from excessively judgmental and/or punitive contexts; 2) Validation is particularly effective for people who have been exposed to experiences of invalidation in the family and/or community and/or who have developed vulnerabilities associated with normativity.

Caio Felipe Gonçalves Mourão

completed his University Master's degree through the Postgraduate Program in Music in 2015 at the Universidade de Brasília and a Degree in Artistic Education with a specialization in Music in 2012 at the Universidade de Brasília. He has been pursuing a PhD in Musical Sciences at Universidade Nova de Lisboa since 2019. He is a teacher at the CEP Escola de Música de Brasília and an INET-md scholarship holder. He works in the area(s) of Humanities with an emphasis on ethnomusicology, anthropology of music, music teaching as well as being a multi-instrumentalist, arranger and music producer.

Lecture Performance and Hybrid Workshop: Ballroom and Waacking in Singapore

Walking the Runway; Visualising the Music: Contextualising the Queer Histories, Aesthetic Values, and Subcultural Formations of Ballroom and Waacking in Singapore (hybrid)

In the world of globalised street dance, voguing and waacking are two styles that are generally understood as having queer roots. However, much of the queer history and stylistic nuances are often overlooked in mainstream street dance education, competitions, and media representations. For instance, while voguing has been an accepted genre in the street dance competition world, the historical context of it emanating from a now globalised but still underground LGBTQ ballroom culture is less known. Further, it can be argued among practitioners that waacking's current existence as a street dance style has shifted further from its original performance context in gay-oriented nightclubs and discotheques.

This presentation comprises spoken, showcase, and workshop components, with the broad aims of (1) meaningfully and critically examining gender and gendered performance in voguing and waacking, and their relations with "aestheticising" and affirming sexuality; (2) locating and contextualising ballroom and waacking on the global, regional and local levels; (3) mapping out and tracing the convergences, divergences and intersections in forming and establishing waacking and ballroom in Singapore; (4) examining the role of agents in shaping the Singaporean waacking and ballroom scene, and its relationship with the wider arts and performance ecosystem; (5) imparting to audience members two focal points of embodiment and the fundamental difference in bodily and attitudinal dispositions of waacking and voguing.

Presented by performers who are active in either/both subcultures, this sharing-showcase-workshop hopes to open the discursive space for further critical examination of street dance in Singapore, with more street dancers engaging with their respective art forms as reflexive practitioners. It also offers an example of how cross-examination and analyses of localised street dance styles could be approached through the lens of gender and sexuality, and along the axes of global-local, dance-performance, and commercial-community.

Shayus Sharif @ Sha Obsidian 007 is an independent para-academic organiser and researcher, vested in institutional critique, ludic and parodic interventions, vernacular and youth music cultures, and movement studies. She has curated art showcases, movement workshops, and performances in both institutional and artist-run spaces. She is active in the Singaporean and Japanese Ballroom scenes, and has fostered relations with the London scene, as a member of the Kiki House of Obsidian. Her current projects include a Creative Residency with Singapore's National Library Board, where she is researching and exploring interpellations within the sonic and sartorial histories of Pop Yeh Yeh.

Amin Alifin is an established professional performer, active in performing, competing, and choreographing on local and international stages, projects and productions. His continuous effort is present in the commercial scene, independent arts scene, theatre productions, street dance and the underground ballroom scene, and he "bridges the gap" as a key figure for many Singaporean dancers and performance practitioners across multiple dance styles, expanding their niches and altering perspectives of what dance is. He is a mentor and educator in the Singaporean waacking scene, and is also a trailblazer of the Singaporean ballroom scene through his work with the Vogue in Progress collective, nurturing the inception and growth of the scene and community members.

Glenn Obsidian Mizrahi is a trained ballet, jazz, contemporary and street jazz dancer, actor, and singer. He has performed in local productions and is also an active fashion and costume designer and beauty-maker for productions. Glenn is the first Singaporean to be in a Major Ballroom House. He is also the founding and current father of the Kiki House of Obsidian, and is an organising member of KikiHQ, Singapore's platform encouraging and mentoring people who are newer to the ballroom scene.

Session 7: Public and Domestic Music Spaces (Chair: Connie Lim)

Gendered Soundscape of Bhakti in India

The Bhakti (devotion) movement in South Asia, beginning in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is the first phase of India's broad anti-caste movement of 'modern' times. Bhakti has been an important religious and spiritual tool for the marginalized caste and gender identities to reject and resist the Brahminical ideas of religion and God. Bhakti proliferated through swathes of performative traditions such as Ratijoga, Satsang, Mela, Kirtan, and various dance forms in North India. In this paper, I propose to compare two popular religious practices of devotional singing, Ratijoga and Satsang, through gender asymmetric power relationship. Ratijoga is a popular tradition in North India. It is organized in a domestic space with two or three lead singers, with the rest following them in a chorus. It starts at night, so until recently, only the women from the family or the immediate neighborhoods participated, with no paraphernalia of sound system, pandals, or feasts, which are hallmarks of male-dominated Satsang. The term Satsang means good company or congregation. From the perspective of scale, resource consumption, and visibility Ratijoga and Satsang are in a diametrically opposite position. What defines the difference is the gender compositions of the participants. Satsang is organized primarily in public places and sometimes in domestic spaces. Satsang has very little presence of women. In public places, men and women have separate sitting areas; in domestic spaces, women sit behind the doors. Depending on the location and popularity of the singers, satsang draws from a few people to thousands. By contrasting these two practices, in my research, I would like to understand how Ratijoga differs from Satsang thematically. How are these aesthetic and functional differences dictated by gender, caste, class, and technology? How does the gendered (im)permissibility of sounds create an exclusionary public and sonic sphere?

Stories of Resistance: Toward a Political and Cultural Ambiguity in the Social Production of Space Associated with Regressive and Conservative Values

Ambiguity is one of the most important characteristics of revolutionary regimes. In the construction of the revolutionary state, one of the primary battles would be to specify the meaning of ambiguous concepts in a way that they can be the subject of interpretation according to the revolutionary ideology. In the Iranian revolution, one of these important concepts is the definition and relation between public and private places that have characterized much of the recent history of music in Iran. The tension between the boundary of these two concepts becomes clearer in the case of solo female singing and its prohibition in public since the 1979 revolution. "Female presence" on the predominantly all-male public stage of Naqqali—traditionally a one-man show, using heightened speech, gestures, and body movements to portray stories of Shahnameh, Iran's iconic Book of Kings—can be seen as one of the examples of "agency which disturbing and confusing these boundaries" (Born 2013: 59). In order to interrogate representations of "female presence" in these solo productions on the public stage in Iran in this paper, I try to understand the ways in which female Naqqals deployed to transcend boundaries without disguising their female body and voice. Also, I will explore the best way of approaching this cultural and political ambiguity of theorization of the spatial, particularly following the work of Asef Bayat (2013) on the social production of space.

Mukesh Kulriya is a PhD student in Ethnomusicology, at University of California, Los Angeles, USA. He received an MPhil in Theater and Performance Studies and a MA in Arts and Aesthetics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research focuses on the intersection of music and religion in South Asia in the context of gender and caste. His PhD research will examine bhakti, or devotion practices within the ambit of popular religion in Rajasthan, India. Since 2010, he has collaborated on India-based projects around the craft, culture, folk music, and oral traditions as an organizer, archivist, translator, curator and researcher.

Anna Rezaei is a PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (Austria). Her main areas of research concern ethnomusicology, maqam music with a focus on Iranian and Turkish music, sound studies, historical ethnomusicology, and religious dimensions of music and performance. She has a BA in philosophy (2009) and an MA in ethnomusicology from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts (2019) and was a research assistant at Mimar Sinan and Istanbul Technical University (2019-2021). While in her MA her focus was on the theoretical aspect of Dastgâh music, in her PhD project she will focus on a traditional performance known as Naqqali in Iran which is dedicated to Shahnameh's stories. This performance and its nationalist dimension will be explored in her PhD thesis.

Session 8: Organised Panel: Oral Traditions, Gender and Folklore of Goa in India (Chair: Rasika Ajotikar)

Ovio or Hovyo

Folk songs serve as mirrors reflecting the multifaceted socio-cultural and economic dimensions of a society, encapsulating its traditions and narratives across generations. In Goa, the smallest yet culturally rich state in India, a plethora of folk songs are embraced by diverse communities, one of which is the lyrical form known as ovio, typically structured with three to four rhyming stanzas. These compositions are ingrained in the fabric of Goan folk culture, serving as a form of artistic expression and a repository of communal heritage. Ovio or hovyo verses are sung predominantly by women during laborious tasks and ceremonial occasions such as weddings. An old Goan saying suggests that “these songs emanate spontaneously as one sits upon the grinding stone”, symbolizing their intimate connection with daily life and celebratory rites through narrative storytelling or anecdotes. Ovio articulates a spectrum of female experiences encompassing desires, joys, sorrows, familial bonds, societal dynamics, and reminiscences of maiden homes. Remarkably, ovio transcends religious boundaries, resonating within both Hindu and Christian communities in Goa. Noteworthy is the paradoxical inclusion of menstruating women, traditionally marginalized during various societal events, yet permitted to partake in grinding and singing ovio but with prescribed limitations. This paradox underscores the complex interplay between cultural norms and gender dynamics, offering a nuanced glimpse into historical gender roles and societal structures. During weddings, ovio assumes a ritualistic significance of diverging from conventional Vedic ceremonies, thereby assuming the mantle of “mantras” within the ceremonial framework. As “living fossils” of a bygone era, ovio verses serve as invaluable artefacts, providing insights into women’s lived experiences in primitive societies, thereby enriching our understanding of Goan social history. Thus, a scholarly inquiry into these folk songs is imperative for unravelling the intricacies of Goan society, particularly in elucidating the status and agency of women across epochs.

Dhalo and Fudgi

Dhalo and Fudgi are two primary folk dance forms of the Hindu community of Goa. Dhalo is performed in a common and sacred community space called Maand. In contrast, Fudgi is performed in local households and at Maand during festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Nag Panchami, Shravani Aiytar (Sunday in the month of Shraavan as per Hindu calendar), and many more such festivals. Musical instruments are not used in either dance form, but through the different types, claps create a rhythm to the unique tunes of the lyrics. These lyrics are both traditional pieces and impromptu. The dance involves dialogues, body movements, and expressions. Both forms of dance depict the traces of primitive culture, social structure, gender roles, sexual desires, and aspirations of freedom, memories of childhood and maiden homes, and resilience towards gender discrimination in sarcasm, humour, and boldness.

Dhalo are performed in the ‘Paush’ month of Hindu calendar usually falling in the months of January and February according to the English calendar. Women gather in the night at a sacred place in the village to perform and take part in this ritual. The ritual is performed on five consecutive nights from 10.00 p.m. to 12.00 p.m. and 5th day it goes on overnight till next day afternoon. All women gather and pray and then start exchanging haldi, kumkum, and flowers which are referring to marriage and long years of married life. Women are usually not allowed to go out in the night. This is the only ritual where married women are expected to go out in the night and play Fudgi and Dhalo, where men are not present.

Mamata Deepak Verlekar is an Assistant Professor at Shenoai Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University, India. She is presently engaged in doctoral research on “Women's Voices in Hindi Poetry of the Twenty-first Century”. Her academic endeavours extend across diverse disciplines, including folklore, Hindi poetry, and literary theory. A proficient poet in Konkani, she introduced her debut collection, “Dhag”, in 2021, with “Fondkulan” poised for release. Beyond academia, Mamata's editorial contributions are evident in “Mahamari mein Manushya”. Additionally, she holds a founding role in Dhaee Akhar Goa and pursues proficiency in Kathak at Sudha kala Prangan, Goa.

Sulochana Pednekar is an Assistant Professor at Goa University's Women's Studies Programme, draws on 15 years of grassroots experience, delving into gender issues in health, education, and environment while documenting local practices. She crafted globally screened educational films on menstruation as a fellow of Women Aloud and Video blogging for an Empowerment fellowship. Dedicated as an Ecofemme Brand Ambassador, champions eco-friendly sanitary products and conducts menstrual awareness sessions. Notably recognized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, she received the Zilla Mahila Samman in 2014. She contributed to documenting environmental struggles in Goa as a part of Living Histories of Land in Goa –a mobile museum; she presented her research internationally, in Mexico, Philippines, Myanmar, and Australia and on national platforms.

Folk Musical Instrument Specific to Gender

Instruments used in folk music play a crucial role in expressing communities' cultural heritage and societal narratives, carrying significant anthropological implications. In contrast to the instruments favoured by classical musicians, folk instruments are deeply rooted in nature, reflecting a harmonious relationship with the environment. In Goa's folk music tradition, these instruments, often crafted from natural materials, serve as essential tools in narrating the historical and geographical fabric of the region. The interplay between folk music, dance, and instruments highlights the interconnectedness of cultural expression. Goan folk instruments exhibit a diverse range, mirroring the region's cultural diversity. For instance, songs sung by fishermen resonate with the rhythmic cadence of the sea. At the same time, those of the farming community evoke the gentle sway of paddy fields in the breeze, capturing the influence of geography on musical themes. Classification of Goan folk instruments reveals four primary categories, including membranophones like ghumat, mhadale, and shamel; idiophones like kansale and jhanj; aerophones like konno and banko; and chordophones like iktari and sarangi, with percussion instruments being particularly prevalent. Unique instruments specific to certain communities, such as the pava of the Dhangar group and the murli of the Kunbi community, contribute distinct tonal qualities to the musical landscape. The gendered dimension of folk music is evident in the divergence of instruments used by men and women. Women, typically assigned domestic responsibilities, often use household items like utensils and grinding stones to create rhythmic accompaniment, highlighting gender dynamics within musical expression. While folk songs hold ritualistic significance, women's music resonates deeply with their daily lives and struggles, offering insight into societal dynamics. Therefore, academic exploration of Goan folk music is essential for understanding the complex interplay of culture, gender, and social structures, enriching our understanding of Goa's diverse society through its musical heritage.

Charudatta Mahadev Gawas is a dedicated musician and hones his Harmonium expertise under the mentorship of Shri Subhash Fatarpekar and Dr. Shudhanshu Kulkarni. Currently, he holds the position of Harmonium accompanist at Kala Academy, Panaji, Goa, India. His academic journey includes a degree in Civil Engineering from Goa College of Engineering, Farmagudi, and a Masters in Performing Arts with Distinction in Harmonium from Shivaji University, Kolhapur. Pursuing a PhD in music (Harmonium) at Goa University, he is exploring the harmonium repertoire in Indian classical music. Notable accolades adorn his career, including international representation at the esteemed International Youth Festival in Baku, Azerbaijan, alongside numerous national awards and scholarships.

Film screening (Session chair: Heather MacLachlan)

“The Unmatched Ones”: Women and Cultural Leadership in Serbian Independent Music Scenes

This film, a product of the research project “Female leadership in music: a cross-genre research of women’s roles, agency and collaborative music-making practices in Serbia” (2019-2023), explores the experiences of women musicians in traditional folk, world music, and independent popular music scenes in Serbia. Focusing on the relation between musical labor, creativity, and social expectations and constraints put before women, the film strives to capture the nuanced link between personal experiences and societal norms within an intergenerational scope, inviting the participants to represent their perspective outside the celebratory and schematic narratives traditionally tied to the concept of the leadership. Five musicians spanning different genres (neotraditional folk music, jazz, world music, pop, heavy metal/rock) and generations share stories that illuminate the intricate interplay of gendered expectations, evolving political contexts, and ideologies of their respective music scenes. Questions posed to them, grouped into metaphorical clusters of “realities”, “confrontations”, and “possibilities”, explore aspects such as the daily routines of female musicians; the positioning, problems, and possibilities for women within respective music scenes; the matters of activism, networking, and support. The film showcases the diverse approaches of these musicians to navigating gendered asymmetries and stereotypes, as well as to fighting the inequalities and forging practical ways of dealing with the challenges, ranging from supposedly ‘minor ones’ to the visible structural obstacles tied to gender. Their narratives, doubts, and successes shed light on the evolving constructs of womanhood and the changing landscape of gender dynamics in Serbian (and to an extent, post-Yugoslav) independent music scenes, with some of the approaches being aligned with the feminist legacies, and the others ‘softly’ contesting the gendered inequalities in the sociomusical spaces traditionally associated with patriarchy.

Iva Nenić is an ethnomusicologist who works as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Music, Belgrade. Her work is focused on gender regimes and the politics of intersectionality, but also on the topics of ideological interpellation, (dis)identification, and affective sonic practices, in reference to the traditional folk music of Serbia to post-Yugoslav world music, female musicianship in Serbian independent and neotraditional music scenes, Balkan-based hip hop and post-Yugoslav pop folk. Iva’s monograph “Gusle players and other female traditional instrumentalists in Serbia: identification by sound” (CLIO 2019, Serbian language) received the Anđelka Milić award granted by SEFEM in the category of scholarly work critically contributing to the study of gender relations. More recent publications include the book “Women’s leadership in music: modes, legacies, alliances”, co-edited with Linda Cimardi.

Session 9: Women and Femininity in Music (Chair: Anna Rezaei)

The Performing Woman in Nangiarkoothu

Nangiarkoothu is widely considered as the only existent model of the earliest “classical” dance-drama tradition performed by women not just in India but elsewhere in the world. This solo woman performance tradition with rich acting technique has a history that dates back to the 9th-10th century C.E. The pioneering effort of the revival of Nangiarkoothu began only after 1965 when, under the aegis of the veteran artist Painkulam Rama Chakiar, the art form was taken outside the temple-centered koothambalam to Kalamandalam, a state-run institution. While cultural nationalism, shifts in patronage, and crossing the seas paved the way for the art form breaking away the caste laws and boundaries, the State interest and the bestowal of “classical” status by the Ministry of Culture, and the heritage economy created by UNESCO, which has defined the art form as “masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity”, stimulated more Western and Indian scholarly interest. Yet, most literature on Nangiarkoothu situates the art form in its traditional and ritual context with less attention given to its cultural, political, and social context animated by actual performative circumstances. This paper looks at both the state-sponsored monolithic history that often gets visibility in the “scholarly” writings and publicity materials, and the numerous subjective positions and individual histories brought in by the performers, which are collected through personal interviews. I try to understand how modern performances of this traditional form conceive and project the idea of gender, and “woman” in particular. By also focusing on the changes brought in by the postcolonial movements such as feminism, Marxism, subaltern/Dalit /Dravidian/identity politics and discourses, the paper contextualises the idea of “woman” in Nangiarkoothu. Revisiting the essentialised assumptions of the so-called “facts” in the historiography of any performance tradition with an “ancient” lineage is a necessary task. For this, understanding history from the point of view of the performers is important to analyse how the constructed history of the so-called “classical” and “ancient” art form such as Nangiarkoothu is more fabricated than real.

Dr. Rose Merin is an Assistant Professor at M.G. University, Kerala. She completed her PhD at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Her thesis is titled “Contextualising Gender in Nangiarkoothu: A Critical Perspective on its History through Cultural and Performance Analysis”. She earned her MA and MPhil degrees from the University of Hyderabad. Her MPhil thesis is titled “Politics of Performance: Contemporary Issues of Gender and Community in Mohiniyattam”. She is a trained classical singer (Carnatic), classical dancer (Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam and Kuchippudi), and theatre performer. She has won many research fellowships, travel grants, and bursaries, has presented papers nationally and internationally, and has published with reputed publishing houses such as Harper Collins and Tulika. She has a wide range of work experience in the media, publishing industry as well as in the academia. Her research interests include the performance of religion, gender, class, caste, and body in the literary, cultural, and performative fields; the intersection of cultural artifacts such as music, dance, and literature; cultural politics and policies; critical theory, cultural studies, gender studies, historiography, and minority studies.

“Portraying Femininity”: Recreating Jiangnan sizhu in Hangzhou for Tourism, the Commercial Digital Landscape and the Chinese Cultural Policy (Lightning paper)

Jiangnan sizhu (si: silk; zhu: bamboo) is a genre of Chinese instrumental ensemble music that is performed for personal enjoyment and to accompany rites of passage and ceremonial events. In the past, female musicians were noticeably absent from rituals and public spaces within the predominantly male-dominated Jiangnan sizhu community. Historically, societal gender norms limited women sizhu musicians to performing a repertoire of seductive sounds and adopting a physical demeanour tailored exclusively for elites, nobles, merchants, and bureaucrats within their private spaces. In 2008, Hangzhou’s bid for Jiangnan sizhu to be included in China’s national Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) list created a demand in the heritage tourism industry for the transition of Jiangnan sizhu performances from male to female musicians. Three factors are driving the increasing preference for female Jiangnan sizhu performances: tourism, the commercial digital landscape, and Chinese national cultural policy. In Hangzhou, Jiangnan sizhu is perceived as a “creative” musical form that can be reconstructed to satisfy the global tourist gaze, a patriarchal male gaze, and a commercial media gaze. However, as female musicians are often hired to play Jiangnan sizhu for global tourists, an issue arises concerning the agency of women performers – whether they are subjects or objects in the power dynamic. Through ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and participant observations this research examines (1) the reconstruction of Jiangnan sizhu’s national imaginary in response to Chinese national cultural policy; (2) how tourism informs the portrayal of femininity within particular Jiangnan sizhu performance elements; and (3) the selling of “feminine style” in Jiangnan sizhu music.

Yun Ke Li is currently a PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology at the Faculty of Music and Performing Arts, University Pendidikan Sultan Idris. She obtained a Master of Arts (Chinese Instrumental Performance) in 2021 from Xi’an Conservatory of Music, China. She has gained the second prize both for the 3rd Anhui Province “Yellow Mountain Cup” Erhu & Pipa Competition (2017) and Singapore Raffles International Music Festival national instrument competition group (Young artistic category, 2020). She has given three individual concerts in Xi’an (2021, 2019, and 2018). She served as one of the moderators at the 2nd IPAG2023 and the 5th IMPAC2023 international conferences in Malaysia.

Creating the Ideal Woman Through Performance: Change and Continuity of Margamkali Tradition of the Syrian Christians of Malabar

Margamkali, a round dance for social gatherings with accompanying sung poetry that narrates the advent of Thomas the Apostle in Malabar Coast is considered as the main performance tradition of the Syrian Christians in Kerala where it has survived for many centuries. This paper is a study on the change and continuity of the performance tradition of margamkali, with the objective of reviewing this musical performance at the intersection of religion, gender, and politics in Kerala. Arnold Bake’s survey of music throughout the Indian subcontinent in the 1930s and its ‘Restudy’ by Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy and Amy Catlin in the 1980s provide a significant audio-visual source of information about the tradition of margamkali, its survival, and transformation. The four decades between these two collections saw some of the turning points in the sociopolitical life of the Syrian Christian community. By comparing the two collections of 1938 and 1984 and by investigating major events like Indian Independence (1947), Kerala state formation (1956), Vimochana samaram translated as liberation struggle (1959), and the Vatican Council (1960-64), I study the festivalization, Sanskritization, modernization, and institutionalization of margamkali. This paper seeks to study the changing roles of women in Kerala society in general and the Syrian Christian community in particular within the span of half a century, by looking at the remodeling of margamkali as a cultural re-enactment that showcases the antiquity and heritage of the community performed by ‘respectable’ women. By exploring the past and engaging with the present, my research focuses on the central question: how has the eventful mid-twentieth century shaped the present form of this age-old tradition as a women’s performance form?

George Pioustin is a PhD student in the department of ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles. He holds an MA and MPhil in Performance Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD). He has extensively presented research papers at various international music conferences and his research interests include performance traditions within Indian Christianity, Indian classical music, music and migration, as well as minority studies. George is a recipient of a fellowship in Indology instituted by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, for the ‘Outstanding Persons in the Fields of Culture’, UNESCO- Sahapedia Fellowship 2017, Serendipity Arts Grant 2018 among other accolades. A trained Carnatic vocalist, George also writes for the arts supplement of the leading national newspaper in India, The Hindu. He is currently serving as the Managing Editor of Ethnomusicology Review.

Carnival, Bodies and Women: An Analysis of Recent Female Protagonisms in the Uruguayan Murga

Murga emerged in the Uruguayan carnival scene at the end of the 19th century as a genre of popular musical theatre, with Spanish (predominantly), Afro-Uruguayan, and Italian contributions (Fornaro 2020). Murga is defined by polyphony, the use of counterfactum, a strong theatricality, and especially by the function of criticism of customs, authorities, and events. These ensembles have been characterised by exclusively male integration and strong misogyny. But during the 20th century, female murgas emerged, and many have integrated women. On the other hand, because of internal discussions and social sanction, sexist and misogynist texts have been diminishing; in some murgas today they are inconceivable. In 2021, there was a novelty that affected murga dramaturgy: two ensembles chose women, actresses previously linked to the carnival, to play the central solo female characters: a senator and a minister from the coalition of right-wing parties that have governed the country since 2020. As a result, it was no longer necessary to resort to transvestism, a mechanism adopted for the representation of female characters, often accompanied by the procedure of body enlargement, centred on the hypertrophy of secondary sexual characteristics. Male cross-dressing has been interpreted as a form of misogynist violence in representational environments (Hooks, 1993). In this paper, I will analyse the differences between the two cases, one with a predominance of literary and musical resources and the other based on theatrical aspects, both with intense use of the grotesque. On the other hand, I will deal with what happens in Carnival in 2024, where the role of the Governor of Montevideo and the Director of Culture, figures of the Uruguayan left, have been assumed by women. I will deal with the mechanisms of criticism based on a feeling of otherness or identification with women in political power.

Marita Fornaro Bordolli has obtained the Doctorate in Musicology from the University of Valladolid, Spain; she has a DEA in Music (2000) and Anthropology (1999) at the University of Salamanca, Spain, and a BA in Musicology (1986), in Anthropological Sciences (1978), and in Historical Sciences (1978) from the University of the Republic of Uruguay. Her research covers music and popular culture, music iconography, musical criticism, and theaters; she has worked in Uruguay, Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, and Marruecos. Currently she is the coordinator of the Research Center on Musical and Scenic Arts, University of the Republic Uruguay. She is a member of National System of Researchers, Uruguay.

Session 10: The Performance and Labor of Sexuality (Chair: Marko Kölbl)

Beyoncé / Black Culture “Go Harder: Beyoncé and Queer Sexual Renaissance”

Beyoncé’s “Renaissance” album is often, and rightly, lauded for its centering of Black queer music, musicians, dancers, and performers. From sampling artists like Kevin Aviance and Big Freedia, to collaborating with producers like Miss Honey and Syd, to creating music inspired by disco and house, “Renaissance” proffers a genealogy of Black queer music’s past and present as well as illustrates the contributions of Black queer and trans musicians and dancers to Black music culture. But what of Black queer sex? The clubs and nightlife which housed (no pun intended) and cultivated Black queer music and dance were also sites of queer sex. To riff off L. H. Stallings (2015), Black dance parties were often spaces of and for Black orgies, spaces that crossed the social and the sexual. To that end, this paper considers the work and workings of sex, and in particular queer sexual intimacies, in “Renaissance”. It uses Beyoncé’s “Cuff It” remix and “Thique” as case studies through which to explore her engagements with BDSM and multi-gender group sex, respectively. In the end, this paper aims to think through the ways in which the sexual politics of “Renaissance” complement, complicate, and cross the Black queer sonic and dance cultures of the album.

Elliott H. Powell is Beverly and Richard Fink Professor in Liberal Arts and Associate Professor of American Studies and Asian American Studies at the University of Minnesota. His work sits at the intersections of race, sexuality, and popular music. He is the author of “Sounds from the Other Side: Afro-South Asian Collaborations in Black Popular Music” (University of Minnesota Press, 2020). His work can also be found in many journals and edited volumes like GLQ, the Journal of Popular Music Studies, the Jazz Research Journal, Amerasia Journal, the Oxford Handbook of Hip Hop Studies, and The Black Scholar.

No Strings Attached: Erotic Labor, Consumption, and Sexual Unfreedom among Trans Femme Entertainers

As Esther Newton noted in some of the earliest nightlife ethnographies of trans feminine performance, “violence is as American as apple pie”. Newton isn’t only speaking of antiques violence faced by sexually and racially marginalized people within broader society; she instead gestures towards the ways that the trans feminine performers chronicled within her study were disparaged within queer nightlife scenes as well. This paper revisits Newton’s premise within the context of an emerging scene of trans cultural production, specifically as it concerns trans feminine (including transsexual women) strippers and erotic dancers. This paper draws both from my personal experience performing in queer nightlife as well as from conversations with trans femme pole dancers/strippers to explore the social and psychic conditions faced by sexually and racially marginalized trans femme performers. Ultimately, “Consumption with No Attachment” names the dynamic by which a society steeped in trans fetishism and hypervisibility conceals and denies its desire for trans feminine people, a parasocial fantasy of scopic consumption without social attachment. Linking together testimony, film, and social media, this paper offers a method to account for the material conditions of and stigmas faced by trans femme performance within the erotic industries.

Eva Pensis is a multidisciplinary artist and scholar whose work explores the contours and legacies of trans femme life and art within popular culture, nightlife economies, entertainment, and performance industries. Her current book project approaches a performance history of lipsyncing (the record act) within queer nightlife by way of unearthing and attending to a counterhistory of transmisogyny and erotophobia within gay drag scenes and queer studies as a disciplinary formation. Her writing has been featured in e-Flux, Los Angeles Review of Books, Ruckus, SAGE Encyclopedia of Trans Studies, and the Journal of Popular Music Studies. Eva is a pole instructor, artist, pianist, and community archivist. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow with the Trans Oral History Project at the University of Pennsylvania.

Caste and Sexuality in Saamna

In this paper, I locate ‘Saamna’, (roughly translated as ‘confrontation’ in Marathi), within the contemporary milieu of regional folk music industry in western India primarily performed by Dalit or low-caste musicians. Saama represents a live performance space wherein musical improvisation involves impromptu lyrical composition marked by overtly expressed sexual desire with typical sexual metaphors. Despite operating in an overtly heterosexual framework, Saamna is significant given the complex history and pedigree of genres such as lavani and tamasha wherein Dalit female sexuality (and thereby, upper caste sexuality) is (re)constructed. Moreover, Saamna musicians as well as this genre have close links to anti-caste and Ambedkarite social movements wherein similar musical forms have been used towards political ends. This paper will, thus, examine the different registers in which Saamna becomes a popular performance space for the musicians as well as the audience.

Rasika Ajotikar is Junior Professor of Ethnomusicology at the Institute for Music and Musicology and the Center for World Music at the University of Hildesheim.

Session 11: Portrayal and Imagery of Women in Music Narratives (Chair: Iva Nenić)

Portrayal of Women in Sinhala Folk Songs (online)

This research delves into the portrayal of women in Sinhala folk songs, examining the nuanced representations within the cultural and societal context of Sri Lanka. Life revolves around the family for most Sri Lankans while the mother holds a significant amount of household responsibilities and is respected, the father, husband, or son is usually the patriarch. Sinhala folk songs showcase women in diverse roles, emphasizing their significance in maintaining familial harmony as dutiful daughters, loving wives, and caring mothers. However, the narrative extends beyond conventional gender roles, exploring themes of unrequited love and the resilience of the female experience, presenting a comprehensive view of women's roles. The research also highlights the songs' role as vehicles for cultural transmission, depicting women as the bearers of heritage. Through lyrical narratives, they are portrayed as crucial contributors to the preservation of cultural identity, acting as guardians of stories, rituals, and wisdom. In essence, research underscores the rich tapestry of Sinhala folk songs, reflecting the evolving roles of women in Sri Lankan society. The celebration of women's contributions coexists with an acknowledgment of the challenges they face, offering a nuanced perspective on the complexities and diversity of their experiences within this cultural musical tradition.

R M C S Ranasinghe is a dedicated educator and visiting lecturer of Visual and Performing Arts in Sri Lanka, currently a PhD candidate. Passionate about fostering creativity, my research aims to contribute to the academic discourse in the arts. Committed to inspiring the next generation and promoting the cultural richness of Sri Lanka through education.

Female Aspects in Ashiqi Narratives (online)

Ashiqi is one of the Azəri musical genres that is more common in Azərbayjan and Iran. Ashiqi music is intertwined with narratives including epics and romances and women have significant roles both in musical and narrative sides of this genre. Feminine approaches have not been under enough attention in previous research about Ashiqi music and there are only a few works that have addressed them. Our aim in this paper is to investigate and classify the feminine roles and also examine the verbal behavior of Ashiqs (performers) in female episodes of the stories from an ethnomusicological perspective. The research method is qualitative and based on analysis on the Azəri stories and also data gathered from fieldwork and interviews with Ashiqs. The main question of this paper is to determine the nature of the female aspects in Ashiqi narratives exclusively in Asli and Kərəm and Shah Ismail and Arab Zangi as our case studies. After analyzing the data, it emerged that women in Ashiqi narratives appear in various figures, some of these roles are main and the others are peripheral. Occasionally, a character may have a main role and a secondary in the story at the same time. These roles have also been changed over time due to social and religious conditions.

Sara Shahlai is a graduate student in Ethnomusicology from Tehran Art University and received her bachelor's degree in Iranian Music from Tehran Art University. In her research, she is investigating Ashiqi music genre with female perspectives.

Analyzing Mulan's Multimodal Music Expressions Across

The legend of Hua Mulan has been transmitted in China for thousands of years, encompassing profound themes such as gender politics, identity transformation, and societal expectations regarding gender behavior. Studying the evolution and reconstruction of the female image in Mulan's works across different periods is of significant importance for understanding the changing status of Chinese women. As a symbolic system conveying meaning through the “performance” of body language, music related to Mulan has been continuously created from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the present day. With the rapid development of the multimedia era, employing multimodal discourse analysis allows for a deeper depiction of music performances, thereby elucidating the musical significance within them. The innovation of this study lies in selecting Wei and Jin folk song “The Ballad of Mulan”, Henan opera film “Mulan Joins the Army”, and the opera “Mulan Poems” as research subjects from a multimodal perspective. Using Roland Barthes' semiotics as a theoretical framework, a comprehensive gender bias hierarchy is constructed to provide profound theoretical support for multimodal music performances. By encoding and analyzing the universality of gender bias manifested in the dimensions of subordination, marginalization, stereotype, and violence, the study decodes the characteristics of Mulan's female image across various modalities. This not only reveals the societal expectations placed on Mulan's female image but also analyzes the stereotypes associated with gender roles. The research contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the historical evolution of the Chinese female image. Furthermore, it offers new perspectives and methods for future gender music studies.

Yuhui Lu is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Malaya, boasting a diverse educational background that spans ethnomusicology and traditional Chinese music performance. My academic journey includes pursuing studies in Ethnomusicology at La Sapienza Università di Roma, complemented by an MFA and BA in Music Performance from Henan University. My research interests center around Asian music and diaspora music, as reflected in my published papers exploring topics such as Western operatic aria aesthetics and the influence of canto on Chinese opera singing art. I have actively contributed to research projects investigating Henan Folk Songs and analyzing regional disparities in Henan Folk Songs from a cultural perspective. Furthermore, I am currently engaged in an ongoing project focused on uncovering the creative transformation and innovative evolution of Sui and Tang Dynasty court music, collaborating closely with specialized educators.

Yue Chang is an independent researcher based in Paris, specializing in the integration of performing arts and digital humanities. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from the Shanghai Theater Academy, where she developed a strong foundation in performing arts. Her career includes significant roles at the Shanghai International Arts Festival and a leading Asian performing arts agency, contributing to her deep understanding of the industry. Pursuing further understanding in the digital domain, Yue pursued a Master of Digital Humanities in the Netherlands. This experience enhanced her skills in multimodal research and annotation design. Yue's academic pursuits have led to the publication of her notable paper, “The Content Management of World-Class Art Festivals: Case Study of Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Avignon Festival, and Shanghai International Arts Festival”.

Session 12: Change, Sustainability, and Dominance in Gendered Hierarchies (Chair: Clare Chan)

Romani Music and Music Culture, Social Media, Gender, and Change (online)

Social media shapes music and music cultures both locally and globally; this is also the case among the Roma. Structures in Romani music and musical culture, such as communal value and norm systems, remain, collapse, or are renegotiated. Regarding Finnish Roma music - including all genres - the recent changes in gender-related perceptions have been particularly interesting. Through social media, musical actors have challenged and continue to challenge the traditionally patriarchal and strongly masculine music community bringing female singers to the center of Romani music for the first time. However, the field of movement of female artists is limited. In this presentation, I highlight the changing and unchanging structures in music culture that have occurred through social media in relation to gender, and above all, I present the reasons for the possibility and impossibility of changes. I ask: which cultural structures in social media enable and allow Finnish Romani artists to escape outside the traditional world of gender values and norms and why? At the same time, I wonder why certain cultural areas of activity, despite musical changes, maintain the primordial structure of the sexes and why? My presentation is based on extensive empirical research with Roma musicians in Finland and other countries over a period of more than 30 years.

Docent Kai Åberg is Adjunct Professor of the Study of Traditional Music at the Department of Finnish Language and Cultural Research, University of Eastern Finland. His special research interests are Finnish Romani music and music culture. Mr. Åberg has written more than sixty international and national articles on Romani music, made numerous monographs as well as TV documentaries and recordings. His current research topic is the Romani music and culture of Russia and Finland's Karelia. He has done fieldwork among the Roma for more than 30 years in Finland and all over the world.

Lecture-Performance : Pride as Protest: Queer Liberation through Celebration (Chair: Rachel Ong)

Pride as Protest: Queer Liberation through Celebration

Through a compelling forty-five-minute lecture-performance, Kai Mata takes the audience on an interpersonal journey that transcends conventional LGBTQ+ narratives, focusing on themes of acceptance, unity, and hope for equality. The performance weaves narrative lyricism into a tapestry of ballads and upbeat anthems, aiming to elevate queer identity as a cultural heritage deserving of celebration.

While LGBTQ+ discourse in Southeast Asia validly centers around the suffering imposed on queer minorities, Kai Mata's music vividly communicates queer joy, offering a cathartic outlet for the community to experience pride. The celebration itself becomes an act of inherent rebellion, turning pride into the essence of protest. With songs that have reached over five million people, Kai Mata's performance serves as a powerful tool in solidifying the message that LGBTQ+ identities extend beyond imposed suffering.

This performance underscores the intersection of art and activism, showcasing music as the heartbeat of a movement. Kai Mata's work not only establishes LGBTQ+ identities in the public consciousness but also fosters a profound sense of queer euphoria within the community. The performance becomes a living testament to the entanglements of trans- and crossings, as it traverses gender constructs and conceptualizations, offering a nuanced perspective on intersectionality. By exploring the joyous dimensions of queer existence, Kai Mata's concert becomes a transformative experience, challenging and expanding our understanding of the diverse narratives within the LGBTQ+ spectrum.

Kai Mata is an Indonesian LGBTQ+ activist that utilizes music to spotlight minority experiences. She rose as a prominent queer figure in 2020 through her public declaration and song "Her", she gained global attention, accumulating 500,000 views and 12,000 signatures against a bill mandating conversion therapy. This thrust her onto global stages, converting hateful comments into pride anthems. Kai's performances intricately weave narratives of Indonesia's pre-colonial queer acceptance, present discrimination, and a hopeful, inclusive future, employing queer celebration as inherent rebellion. With 17 pride anthems boasting 4 million online streams, she secured a 2024 Saari Artist Residency in Finland, producing Indonesia's inaugural Dangdut album celebrating queer identities.

Session 13: Listening to the Dominant (Chair: Grace Takyi)

The Disguised Sexist Double Standard in American Church Music Ministries

American Protestant churches are home to so-called music ministries, which consist of one or more music ensembles that provide accompaniment for congregational singing. These music ministries explicitly welcome both men and women, and indeed, both men and women volunteer in great numbers to sing and play in ensembles such as church choirs, orchestras, and praise bands. There is an evident gender disparity in the leadership of these ensembles: men overwhelmingly predominate as leaders of church music ministries. In addition, as I will argue in this presentation, church music ministries enforce a sexist double standard that applies to the volunteer musicians. Leaders never say that women are held to a different and higher standard than men, and may not even be consciously aware that they are maintaining a double standard; in this sense, the double standard is disguised. Rather, church music leaders argue that singers must be confessing Christians, but instrumentalists need not be. However, because of the deeply gendered context of American Protestant churches - where women are much more likely to sing, and men are more likely to play instruments - women musicians are generally required to meet a spiritual standard that male musicians are not. This presentation is based on interviews of twenty-five American church music leaders, and contributes to the burgeoning scholarly investigations of Christian church musicking by ethnomusicologists (Ingalls, Reigersberg and Sherinian 2018; Mall, Engelhardt and Ingalls 2021; Myrick and Porter 2021; Stueuernagel 2021).

Dr. Heather MacLachlan is a Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio. She is the winner of the 2023 ICTMD Article Prize and the 2023 Helen Roberts Prize awarded by the Society for Ethnomusicology. Dr. MacLachlan is the author of two monographs and numerous scholarly articles.

Perpetuating White Bourgeois Heteronormativity in Western Art Music Education

Situated within the discourses of an ethnomusicology of Western art music, this paper examines the production of gendered, classed, and racialized bodies in higher music education institutions (HMEI) of so-called “classical music,” in more precise words: European classical art music, short WAM (Western Art Music). Based on ethnographic interviews with students and staff in one of Europe’s leading HMEI and drawing from experiential knowledge of a decade of anti-discriminatory campus work, I address how WAM, despite its self-proclaimed “universality”, actually inhabits deeply racist, anti-queer, sexist, and classist logics. In one-to-one instrumental or singing lessons, students’ bodies are disciplined based on structures of intersecting normative evocations, like heteronormativity, masculinity, Whiteness, Christianity, a bourgeois class position, and similar markers. With the global movement of WAM as a major cultural side-project of European colonialism, WAM today is a signifier of political, social, and cultural capital globally, and thus a central pillar of HMEIs worldwide. While WAM plays a pivotal role in various parts of the world (often generating regional traditions of composing and performing), Whiteness linked to normative European gender and class expectations still determines an ideal WAM performance. The inherent racialization of WAM performers also pertains to the corresponding education in and outside Europe. What can an ethnomusicological perspective add to the discussion of this racialized music practice? What are the specific features of anti-Asian racism? How do they intersect with sexualized and gendered forms of othering? I tackle these questions in analysing how WAM performances are linked to a bodily adaptation to a racialized heteronormative gender regime that is obligatory, naturalized, and often internalized. The paper aims to further the discourse on WAM in the field of ethnomusicological gender studies and is based on ethnographic fieldwork at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna.

Marko Kölbl is Assistant Professor and head of the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. He holds a PhD in Ethnomusicology and is specialized in music and dance of minorities and migrant communities with a focus on intersectional, queer-feminist, and postcolonial perspectives. His areas of interest are death and mourning, voice, dance, as well as gender and sexuality, and music’s relation to racialization and racism; ongoing field research with the Croatian minority in Burgenland, migrant communities in Vienna, specifically Afghans, as well as Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iran, and Turkey. His teaching covers academic and artistic courses. Marko Kölbl serves as chair of the ICTMD Study Group on Music, Gender and Sexuality.

Listening to White Settler Femininity in the “Freedom Convoy” Occupation of Ottawa, Canada (online)

From January 22nd to February 23rd, 2022, the “Freedom Convoy” occupied Ottawa, Canada’s capital city, in protest, overwhelming the soundscape with ceaseless honking and displays of racism and far-right extremism. In addition to thousands of vehicles gathering in downtown Ottawa, the Convoy was also supported by various virtual campaigns that included cover songs, music videos, and songs written in support. In this paper, I explore the sonic performances of white settler masculinities and femininities (Gentile 2021) employed throughout the “Freedom Convoy” occupation. In dialogue with the growing anti-2SLGBTQIA+ mobilization in Canada, I consider how white femininity has been operationalized in various far-right spaces. Because white womanhood remains “centred as a site of dominance” (Moreton-Robinson 2000) in the Canadian colonial context, white women’s bodies function as sites of purity (Strings 2019) and symbols of the nation (Gentile 2021) used in the policing of space (Walcott 2021). Drawing on Daniels (2021), who argues that white settler femininity is a “key technology for keeping public spaces white” (38), I ask: how was white settler femininity performed sonically during the “Freedom Convoy” occupation? What is the relationship between white supremacy and cisheteropatriarchy and how is this relationship fuelled by contemporary political movements in Canada? Through this paper, considering my own white feminist positionality, I explore how attention to sound can contribute understandings of the various dimensions of white supremacy, as a system of power, in studies of sound and music in Canada.

Gale Franklin (she/her) is a PhD Candidate in Canadian Studies at Carleton University. Her research addresses the multiple violences Canada as a nation has rendered invisible by discussing the resonances of white supremacy through sound and music. Her dissertation, “Listening to White Supremacy: Race, Space and Belonging in Ottawa”, argues for the centering of sound and listening in approaches to race and difference in Canadian studies, and for the reorientation of Sound studies outside of whiteness. It seeks to encourage scholars across multiple fields to listen to the sensory, spatial, sounded, and embodied dimensions of white supremacy and develop strategies for listening towards more anti-racist futures. This work actively engages policy, national programming, and lived experiences to explore questions of belonging, nationalism, whiteness, and intersectionality in Canada.