



# ASIAN-EUROPEAN

## MUSIC RESEARCH

## E-JOURNAL

**ASIAN-  
EUROPEAN  
MUSIC  
RESEARCH  
JOURNAL**



No. 3 (Summer 2019)  
ISSN 2625-378X

COTTBUS/BERLIN: WENDISCHER VERLAG

**ASIAN-EUROPEAN  
MUSIC RESEARCH  
E-JOURNAL**

**SPECIAL PRINT**

**No. 3 (Summer 2019)  
ISSN 2625-378X**

**COTTBUS/BERLIN: WENDISCHER VERLAG**

# AEMR-EJ

## Editor

Xiao Mei, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, [e\\_xiaomei@126.com](mailto:e_xiaomei@126.com)

## Reviews Editors

Tan Hwee San, SOAS, [ht5@soas.ac.uk](mailto:ht5@soas.ac.uk)

Chuen-Fung Wong, Macalester College, [wong@macalester.com](mailto:wong@macalester.com)

Send books, films, links and other materials for review to:

Tan Hwee San, Chuen-Fung Wong, Gisa Jähnichen, Xiao Mei

**Co-Editor** Gisa Jähnichen, Shanghai Conservatory of Music [gisajaehnichen@web.de](mailto:gisajaehnichen@web.de)

## Editorial Board

- *Ako Mashino (Dr., Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan)* [akomas@sky.email.ne.jp](mailto:akomas@sky.email.ne.jp)
- *Alexander Djumaev (Dr., Union of Composers of Uzbekistan)* [adjumaev@yahoo.com](mailto:adjumaev@yahoo.com)
- *Chinthaka P. Meddegoda (Dr., UVPA, Colombo, Sri Lanka)* [chinthaka.pm@vpa.ac.lk](mailto:chinthaka.pm@vpa.ac.lk)
- *Chow Ow Wei (Dr., Putra University, Malaysia)* [choweichowei@yahoo.com](mailto:choweichowei@yahoo.com)
- *Earl Jimenez (MA, Philippine Women's University, Philippines)* [ecljimenez@pwu.edu.ph](mailto:ecljimenez@pwu.edu.ph)
- *Esbjörn Wettermark (Dr., Office for Cultural Development Gävleborg, Sweden)*  
[esbjorn.wettermark@regiongavleborg.se](mailto:esbjorn.wettermark@regiongavleborg.se)
- *Helen Rees (Prof. Dr., UCLA, USA)* [hrees@ucla.edu](mailto:hrees@ucla.edu)
- *Liu Hong (Dr., Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China)* [liuhongusa@163.com](mailto:liuhongusa@163.com)
- *Xu Xin (Dr., China Conservatory of Music, Beijing, China)* [iamxuxin@yeah.net](mailto:iamxuxin@yeah.net)
- *Razia Sultanova (Dr., Cambridge University, UK)* [rs588@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rs588@cam.ac.uk)
- *Tan Shzr Ee (Dr., Royal Holloway, University of London, UK)* [shzree.tan@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:shzree.tan@rhul.ac.uk)

*Asian-European Music Research Journal* is a peer-reviewed academic journal that publishes scholarship on traditional and popular musics and field work research, and on recent issues and debates in Asian and European communities. The journal places a specific emphasis on interconnectivity in time and space between Asian and European cultures, as well as within Asia and Europe.

The *Asia-Europe Music Research Center at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music (AEMRC)*, which is the physical *site of the journal*, is a new academic platform established by the conservatory on the basis of synergetic cooperation between academic institutes at home and internationally. The platform focuses on the study of musical cultures in the geographical arenas connecting Asia with Europe, specifically looking at the flows of musical ecologies and civilizations. It examines and compares the histories and current developments of multicultural practices between Asia and Europe, and explores the reinterpretation of traditional music resources in applied and sustainable contexts. The Centre seeks to promote in-depth academic exchange at home and abroad, with emphasis on interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaborations, including the promotion of cultural diversity in the digital humanities and musical knowledge building. It aims at providing a supportive research and teaching environment with a commitment to the larger interests of equality, tolerance, capacity building and the stimulation of artistic creativity, and the exploration of innovative approaches towards redefining fields of cultural study.

The journal is also associated with longstanding 'key tertiary research bases' focusing on humanities and the social sciences in Shanghai, including the Chinese Ritual Music Research Center and the Oriental Musical Instruments Museum, both at Shanghai Conservatory, as well as with the work of other departments at the Conservatory. The Center also cooperates with various Chinese and international universities and research institutions.

## Call for Submissions

The journal provides a forum to explore the impacts of post-colonial and globalizing movements and processes on these musics, the musicians involved, sound-producing industries, and resulting developments in today's music practices. It adopts an open-minded perspective on diverse musics and musical knowledge cultures.

Despite focusing on traditional and popular musics, relevant themes and issues can include explorations of recent ideas and perspectives from ethnomusicology, social and cultural anthropology, musicology, communication studies, media and cultural studies, geography, art and museum studies, and other fields with a scholarly focus on Asian and European interconnectivity. The journal also features special, guest-edited issues that bring together contributions under a unifying theme or specific geographical area.

In addition, the journal includes reviews of relevant books, special issues, magazines, CDs, websites, DVDs, online music releases, exhibitions, artwork, radio programs and music festivals.

The official email address of the Center is [AEMRC@shcmusic.edu.cn](mailto:AEMRC@shcmusic.edu.cn).

Please, send your full submissions (non-formatted with all your figures and items placed within the text of a word-document and a cover sheet with your personal data) to this email address. The editors will then get in touch with you on an individual basis.

## Abstracting & Indexing

*In progress*

## Frequency and Publication

*Two issues per volume year, June (summer) and December (winter) commencing 2018*

# CONTENTS AEMR-EJ 3

## Articles, Essays, and Reports

UNDERSTANDING THE PAST FROM THE PRESENT: EXPLORING SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE SARDINIAN LAUNEDDAS AND THE ANCIENT GREEK AULOS

Juan Sebastián Correa Cáceres

[01\\_Abstr + Info Correa Cáceres 190301 / 01\\_ Juan Sebastián Correa Cáceres 190301](#)

1-10

EMACIATED FEMALE PLAYING THE CYMBALS: A STUDY OF THE ANCIENT HINDU BRONZE FIGURINE IN POLONNARUWA, SRI LANKA

Sarath Chandrajeewa

[02\\_Abstr + Info Chandrajeewa 190302 / 02\\_ Sarath Chandrajeewa 190302](#)

11-16

REPORT ON DOUBLE REED INSTRUMENTS OF NEPAL

Ram Prasad Kadel

[03\\_Abstr + Info Kadel 190303 / 03\\_ Ram Prasad Kadel 190303](#)

17-19

BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS REGARDING THE OPERETTA *THE LAND OF SMILES* BY FRANZ LEHÁR

Katja Claudia Nadler

[04\\_Abstr + Info Nadler 190304 / 04\\_ Katja Claudia Nadler 190304](#)

20-26

AN OVERVIEW ABOUT DIFFERENT SOURCES OF POPULAR SINHALA SONGS

Nishadi Meddegoda

[05\\_Abstr + Info NMeddegoda 190305 / 05\\_ Nishadi Meddegoda 190305](#)

27-35

THE INDIE ROCK MUSIC SCENE IN KUALA LUMPUR BEFORE 2015

Frank Ong

[06\\_Abstr + Info Ong 190306 / 06\\_Frank Ong 190306](#)

36-41

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ON CHINESE TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Xiao Mei [萧梅]

[07\\_Abstr + Info Xiao Mei 190307 / 07\\_Xiao Mei 190307](#)

42-51

## Reviews

THE JOYFUL TRADITION OF JIANGNAN SILK AND BAMBOO: AN EVENING OF BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

Li Ya [李亚] and Yin Xiang [尹翔]

[08\\_Abstr + Info Li Ya & Yin Xiang 190308 / 08\\_ Li Ya & Yin Xiang 190308](#)

52-56

SOME THOUGHTS ON EXPECTATIONS: THE SECOND MUSIC EDUCATION ALLIANCE ACROSS THE BELT AND ROAD CONFERENCE, CCOM BEIJING, 2019

Gisa Jähnichen and Sarath Chandrajeewa

[09\\_Abstr + Info Jaehnichen & Chandrajeewa 190309 / 09\\_ Gisa Jähnichen and Sarath Chandrajeewa 190309](#)

57-59

REVISITING SOME THOUGHTS ON THE KALMYK DOMBRA: TWO INSTRUMENTS IN ONE BODY?

Ghilyana Dordzhieva

[10\\_Abstr + Info Dordzhieva 190310 / 10\\_ Ghilyana Dordzhieva 190310](#)

60-63

THE 22ND SYMPOSIUM OF THE ICTM STUDY GROUP ON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

LISBON, PORTUGAL, APRIL 10-13, 2019

Rastko Jakovljevic

[11\\_Abstr + Info Jakovljevic 190311 / 11\\_Rastko Jakovljevic 190311](#)

64-66

# CODE of ETHICS of AEMR-EJ

Asian-European Music Research E-Journal (AEMR-EJ)

The editorial board of AEMR-EJ consisting of the

Editor: Xiao Mei, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, e\_xiaomei@126.com

Reviews Editors: Tan Hwee San, SOAS, ht5@soas.ac.uk and

Chuen-Fung Wong, Macalester College, wong@macalester.com

Send books, films, links and other materials for review to:

Tan Hwee San, Chuen-Fung Wong, Gisa Jähnichen, Xiao Mei

Co-Editor: Gisa Jähnichen, Shanghai Conservatory of Music gisajaehnicen@web.de

Editorial Board:

Ako Mashino (Dr., Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan) akomas@sky.email.ne.jp

Alexander Djumaev (Dr., Union of Composers of Uzbekistan) adjumaev@yahoo.com

Chinthaka P. Meddegoda (Dr., UVPA, Colombo, Sri Lanka) chinthaka.pm@vpa.ac.lk

Chow Ow Wei (Dr., Putra University, Malaysia) chowwei@upm.edu.my

Earl Jimenez (MA, Philippine Women's University, Philippines) ecljimenez@pwu.edu.ph

Esbjörn Wettermark (Dr., Office for Cultural Development Gävleborg, Sweden)

esbjorn.wettermark@regiongavleborg.se

Helen Rees (Prof. Dr., UCLA, USA) hrees@ucla.edu

Liu Hong (Dr., Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China) liuhongusa@163.com

Xu Xin (Dr., Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Shanghai, China) iamxuxin@yeah.net

Razia Sultanova (Dr., Cambridge University, UK) rs588@cam.ac.uk

Tan Shzr Ee (Dr., Royal Holloway, University of London, UK) shzree.tan@rhul.ac.uk

agrees to the following:

## CODE OF ETHICS

### Publication ethics and malpractice statement for AEMR-EJ

#### 1. Publication, authorship and author's responsibilities

AEMR-EJ is a double-blind, peer-reviewed journal. Papers in whatever research tradition must report new scientific findings. They should knowledgeably present the findings, give correct and complete references to previous related work by the authors and by others (citations), repeat previously published findings only inasmuch as it is necessary for understanding the context, and in a clearly identified form.

Authors of scientific publications are always jointly responsible for their content. A so-called "honorary authorship" is inadmissible.

With this definition of authorship, other contributions, even though seemingly significant are not by themselves regarded sufficient to justify authorship. For example, the following are not grounds to claim authorship:

- the responsibility for obtaining the funds for the research,
- the contribution of important materials,
- the training of co-authors in certain methods,
- involvement in the collection and assembly of data,
- directing an institution or working unit in which the publication originates.

However, institutions, organisations, or private persons funding or otherwise assisting the author's research have to be acknowledged in the text of the contribution.

Authors are obliged to participate in the peer-review process, to provide retractions or corrections of mistakes and to state that all data in article are real and authentic. In papers with multiple authors, all authors have to state that they have significantly contributed to the research.

Authors have to list all references used in the paper. This includes written and audiovisual sources. Plagiarism or any use of fraudulent data will lead to rejection from publication. In the process of editing, detection software is used to help identify such issues. With respect to the originality of papers published, it is strictly forbidden to publish the same paper in more than one journal or book series at a time.

By making a submission for consideration, the author(s) agree on all the statements above.

#### 2. Responsibility for the reviewers and editors

Reviewers and editors of submitted manuscripts are bound to respect confidentiality and to disclose conflicts of interest with respect to the research, the authors, and/or the research funders.

Judgments should be objective, constructive and based on best scientific practice. Reviewers should recommend relevant published work, including audiovisual materials, which are not cited.

Reviewers must agree to respond to a submitted manuscript within 6-8 weeks.

Editors have complete responsibility and authority to accept or reject an article, based on the recommendations of the reviewers. Editors should recommend a submission for publication, suggest that further revisions be made, or reject it outright. Editors must preserve the anonymity of reviewers.

When a paper is accepted for publication, editors and reviewers must agree on the statements above.

### 3. Publishing ethics issues

The editorial board will monitor ethics of publication, following the rules and practices mentioned by COPE.<sup>1</sup> Papers submitted that cause ethical conflicts through plagiarism, fraudulent data, or issues that endanger the integrity of any academic record, will be rejected and the authors excluded from further publication in the series. Rejection of a paper follows the reviewers' recommendations and a majority decision by the editorial board. In the same way, the editorial board precludes business needs from compromising intellectual and ethical standards.

The editorial board will publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies, if necessary. Authors and readers are invited to raise any ethical concerns with the board.

The official email address of AEMR-EJ is [AEMRC@shcmusic.edu.cn](mailto:AEMRC@shcmusic.edu.cn).

The official address of the journal is:

Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 20 Fenyang Lu, Library Building, Room 624B. 200031 Shanghai, CHINA.

1 June 2019.

---

<sup>1</sup> Details and regular updates: <https://publicationethics.org/>. last retrieved 17 June, 2019.

Cite as:

**Correa Cáceres, Juan Sebastián. 2019. Understanding the Past from the Present: Exploring Similarities between the Sardinian Launeddas and the Ancient Greek Aulos, *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 1-10.**

## **UNDERSTANDING THE PAST FROM THE PRESENT: EXPLORING SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE SARDINIAN LAUNEDDAS AND THE ANCIENT GREEK AULOS**

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the similarities between the extant Sardinian launeddas and the extinct Greek aulos. Therefore, it presents parallels between contemporary and past music related practices. It also examines the origins of the launeddas by focusing on a Nuragic statuette, as well as its possible associations with a figurine from the Aegean.

### **Keywords**

Sardinia, Greece, launeddas, aulos, comparative

### **Juan Sebastián Correa Cáceres**

Juan Sebastián Correa Cáceres is an archaeologist and musicologist. Following his first degree from the University of Malta, he furthered his musical studies at the same University where he graduated with an M.Mus in musicology. His research centred on the possible existence of music activity in prehistoric Malta. He is currently a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology with a thesis focused on music in antiquity, specifically on how social processes such as acculturation, diffusion, and syncretism affected the musical practices of that period. In addition, he is a music theory teacher at the Malta School of Music and private tutor of guitar and flute.

### **Contact**

juan.s.correa[[@](mailto:juan.s.correa@hotmail.com)]hotmail.com

# UNDERSTANDING THE PAST FROM THE PRESENT: EXPLORING SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE SARDINIAN LAUNEDDAS AND THE ANCIENT GREEK AULOS

**Juan Sebastián Correa Cáceres**

## **Abstract**

This paper explores the similarities between the extant Sardinian *launeddas* and the extinct Greek *aulos*. Therefore, it presents parallels between contemporary and past music related practices. It also examines the origins of the *launeddas* by focusing on a Nuragic statuette, as well as its possible associations with a figurine from the Aegean.

**Keywords:** Sardinia, Greece, launeddas, aulos, comparative

## **INTRODUCTION**

My fieldwork trip to the Mediterranean island of Sardinia took place during January 2017. Sardinia is situated to the West coast of Italy and measures 270 km on the north-south axis and 145 km east to west. The island is abundant in natural resources which favoured the development of complex societies such as the Nuragic. This particular culture emerged in the mid second millennium BC (Early Bronze Age) (Dyson and Rowland, 2007: 54). The name Nuragic comes from a particular type of architecture, namely to large circular towers known as Nuraghi (Melis, 2003: 7). It is believed that Nuragic people originated from indigenous Sardinians who shaped pre-Nuragic cultures during the Neolithic and the Chalcolithic periods (ibid: 7). The Nuragic, apart from being builders, were skilled in the use of metals, one of their main activities being bronze working (Dyson and Rowland, 2007: 73). Owing to its central position in the Mediterranean, Sardinia has never been isolated, as a matter of fact, the island has historically been the recipient of external influences which have contributed to its identity (ibid: 54).

During this fieldwork trip, I visited Pitano Perra, a *launeddas* maker, in his workshop in Maracalagonis. Prior to my trip, I became acquainted with my informant through Facebook. This social networking site has study groups in which members interact through discussion threads. I joined the music archaeology study group where my Sardinian informant is a member. I contacted him through private messaging where I introduced myself and explained my project. I found our correspondence very interesting and asked if I could interview him further. He gladly accepted and we decided to meet in Sardinia on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2017. My approach to these interviews was mainly based on informal conversations during which I let my informant speak freely. Nevertheless, my informant was very disposed to answer my questions some of which I had prepared in advance.

## **TALKING WITH PITANO PERRA**

I met Perra in Maracalagonis, a commune in the city of Cagliari situated twelve kilometres northeast of Cagliari. We agreed to meet by the church of Maracalagonis and while waiting for Perra to arrive, I bought a coffee from a nearby café. The waitress at the bar realised that I was a foreigner and asked what I was doing in Maracalagonis. I told her that I was there to meet Pitano Perra, a local *launeddas* maker and player. She kindly informed me that he works in his family's tobacco shop, just a few doors down from the café. On entering the tobacco shop, he immediately recognised me and was very happy to see me. We left the shop together and walked through the streets until we reached a traditional Sardinian house where Perra had his workshop. At the entrance of the house, there were a few citrus trees



and surprisingly different types of cane reeds of which he explained the differences between them (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: The entrance of Perra's house (photograph reproduced by courtesy of Pitano Perra).**

In the workshop (Pitano's pride), there were several tools on the left-hand side corner. The adjacent wall had two shelves, in which Perra keeps pre-cut cane in plastic containers. He also has a collection of figurines representing musicians and other motifs. One of the most fascinating objects was a hanging cabinet on the right-hand side. This cabinet contained various types of reeds of different sizes, some outstandingly big. On his desk, he had two lamps: one of them with a magnifying lens, some pieces of cane for future projects, a tuner, as well as a cardboard knife and a few papers with designs for *launeddas* (Figures 2 and 3).



**Figure 2: The present writer and Pitano Perra at his workshop, Maracalagonis; Figure 3: Perra in his workshop (photograph by the author).**

Perra has mastered the *launeddas* very well thus, apart from being a performer, he is also a *launeddas* maker. During our conversation, he gave credit to his master, Attilio Scroccu, with whom he studied for ten years (Figure 4). Attilio left everything in Pitano’s hands due to his old age. My meetings with Perra consisted of compiling data which may serve to establish parallels, or connections between the contemporary *launeddas*, the Nuragic traditions, and the extinct *aulos*. Perra clearly understood the purpose of my studies and was of invaluable help.



**Figure 4. R-L: Attilio Scroccu and Pitano Perra (photograph reproduced by kind permission of Pitano Perra).**

Perra explained that the *launeddas* consists of three canes,<sup>1</sup> a drone (*su tumbu*) and two melodic canes (chanters). Thus, the instrument consists basically of two parts. The left-hand part (*makossa manna*)

---

<sup>1</sup> The word *launeddas* is plural so it encompasses the three pipes, the drone and both chanters (Weis Bentzon 1969).

consists of the drone (*su tumbu*) which is tied to a chanter with a string.<sup>2</sup> The right-hand part (*mankosedda*) is made up of another chanter (*sa mankosedda*) (Figure 5). Each part of the *launeddas* is made out of a different type of cane. For example, the drone is made from female cane (*kanna femina*). This type of cane is thick (about 50 mm in diameter), light and has great resonance. When harvesting cane, *launeddas* makers search for these features. The drone is often made out of two or three parts mounted together by means of tenons and sockets. For the chanters, male cane (*kanna masku*) is used. This type of cane is thin; therefore, it has a narrow inner diameter of about 18 to 20 mm. Male cane is ideal for fingering, that is to say, the narrower the diameter, the shorter the distance between the fingers. This also allows the manufacturer to produce more notes, that is, finger-holes in short lengths of cane. Another characteristic of this cane is that it maintains the air pressure.



**Figure 5: Launeddas player (photograph by the author).**

Perra insisted that the cane which serves for *launeddas* making must be cut between December and March (Autumn-Winter season), if possible, during the full moon. *Launeddas* makers believe that the intense moonlight provided during that lunar phase, has an effect on the cane which makes it last for a long time.<sup>3</sup> This corresponds to what the ancient Greek author Theophrastus had observed<sup>4</sup> (IV. XI. 3-5)<sup>5</sup> who asserted that the cane used for making *auloi*<sup>6</sup> should be harvested between the months of Boedromion (September-October) and the months of Skirrophorion (June-July) or, Hekatombaion (July-August). That is to say, the cane must be cut between the last month of Spring (Skirrophorion) and the end of Summer (Boedromion). The difference between the Sardinian tradition and that of ancient Greece is that *launeddas* makers harvest the cane when it is green. However, they do not make use of it

<sup>2</sup> This section is known as *sa loba* in Campidano (south-western of Sardinia), and as *sa kroba* in Sarrabus (south-eastern of Sardinia) (Weis Bentzon 1969).

<sup>3</sup> For more information on this, compare Weis Bentzon 1969: 16.

<sup>4</sup> Theophrastus (c.371-c.287 BC) was born in Eresus, Lesbos. He was an associate and successor of Aristotle. He became the head of the Lyceum of Athens after Aristotle's departure from that city on the death of Alexander the Great. Theophrastus is renowned by his work *Enquiry into Plants* which survives intact (Roberts 2005: 702).

<sup>5</sup> Hort, Arthur. 1916. *Theophrastus Enquiry into Plants Volume I*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 371.

<sup>6</sup> The word '*auloi*' is the plural of *aulos*.

until it is dry (the drier the better). According to Perra (2017), this process takes about six months. This may suggest that the ancient Greeks used to cut the cane when it was neither too green nor too dry. This practice may have shortened the process of drying. Theophrastus also notes that in Orchomenos (modern Boetia, Greece) cane grows by the lakes. Such cane was evidently waterlogged, especially in seasons when the lakes were full. Thus, it is very likely that the drying process took longer but nevertheless depended very much on the time of year.

Perra (2017) distinguished between different types of *launeddas*. The most common types are known as *puntu di organo*, *fiorassio*, and *mediana*. These aerophones have their own tuning (*puntus*) and can only reproduce a part of a major scale. Therefore, a *launeddas* player is able to perform a restricted number of melodies on each model. The specific range of each *launeddas* makes them suitable for certain contexts. According to Perra (2017), in the past, the *launeddas* were made to measure. The first thing that a *launeddas* maker did was to make a drone which sounded good. This was followed by the notes (finger-holes). Nowadays, *launeddas* makers are able to make small instruments which, according to Perra, these are used to attract tourist attention. In the past, there were standard instruments tuned in SOL or FA (*puntu di organo*). Such *launeddas* had a low register and served to be played in the Catholic Church. In contrast, small instruments such as the *mediana* and the *fiorassio* reproduce a high-pitched sound which encourages people to dance. As a result, such instruments were forbidden in church. The priest would stop anyone from entering the temple with such instruments because this incited pleasure rather than composure.

Perra's distinction brought to my mind the fact that like the *launeddas*, different types of *aulos* existed. The most common types of *aulos* were the *parthenius* (lit. young woman or, of young girls), the *paedicus* (lit. belonging to children), the *perfect*, and the *superperfect* (these may stand for male voices) (Athenaeus B. XIV. c.36).<sup>7</sup> The above-mentioned terms suggest a possible classification by range where the *parthenius* is the highest voice, the *paedicus* is the middle range, and both *perfect* and *superperfect* are the lowest voices. The terminology also alludes to a variety of *aulos* of different sizes which may have been intended for people of diverse ages and levels of competence and, perhaps, different contexts. In contrast to the Sardinian tradition, the dramatists of the fifth century made use of a small *aulos* (*gingras*) to accompany their theatrical set-ups and religious ceremonies (Ath. B. IV. c.76).<sup>8</sup>

Perra seemed very enthusiastic and passionate as well to provide me with information about the reconstruction of ancient *auloi*. He made his first replica of the *aulos* fifteen years ago. The project was for a university student who had a photocopy with the measurements of the *aulos* of the Louvre. It took him one month to complete the reconstruction. Pitano's talent as an artist, maker, and researcher makes him the best person to interview in Sardinia (Figure 6).

While referring to the *aulos*, Perra, remarked that the cane which serves to make *auloi* has to be at least 1 cm in diameter. This type of cane is rare and difficult to find. This could be the reason why people in Antiquity turned to other types of materials such as wood, and bone, materials which were able to be carved into hollow tubes with a number of finger-holes.<sup>9</sup> Before Diodorus of Thebes (Pollux *Onomasticon* IV.80)<sup>10</sup> increased the number of holes of the *aulos*, this instrument had four finger-holes (*trupemata*) on each pipe (*bombyx*). Therefore, one could reproduce a limited number of notes, that is, between four or five notes. Perra (2017) suggests that the distance between finger-holes may have been significant because of the wide diameter of the tube. Therefore, one can say that on this type of *aulos*, a performer was able to play only melodies composed of five tones (pentatonic). It is very likely that two melodies, one on each pipe, were performed simultaneously. The practice of employing two tubes was

---

<sup>7</sup> Athenaeus of Naucratis, *Deipnosophistae*, English *The Deipnosophists or, Banquet of the Learned, of Athenaeus* trans. by Charles Duke Yonge, 3 vols (London: H.G. Bohn, 1853-54), III, 1013. (Hereafter, Ath.).

<sup>8</sup> Ath., I, 279.

<sup>9</sup> It is worth-noting here that Euripides suggests that in North Africa, particularly in Libya, people used the stems of the nettle-tree, the Libyan lotus (*Celtis Australis*) to make *auloi* (Eur. Hel. 167). In view of this, one may put forward the possibility that the task of acquiring reed was difficult in the Libyan region. As a matter of fact, in modern Libya, cane only grows in the Saharan dessert around salt-water lakes, specifically in a volcanic area known as Wau Namus.

<sup>10</sup> Pollux Julius, *Onomasticon cum Annotationibus Interpretum: Curavit Guilielmus Dindorfius*, ed. by Guilielmus Dindorfius (Karl Wilhelm Dindorf), 5 vols (Lipsiae (Leipzig): In Libraria Kuehniana, 1824), I, 203. (Hereafter, Pollux).

mainly intended to achieve intensity of sound. This is very possible because cylindrical bored instruments do not have much sound projection.



**Figure 6: Pitano Perra playing one of his *aulos*' reconstructions (photograph by the author).**

It is very likely that the practice of manufacturing and playing double-pipes instruments developed in the Aegean as early as the second millennium BC.<sup>11</sup> At least this is what is indicated by a marble figurine discovered in the island of Keros which depicts a man playing the *aulos* (Figure 7). In Sardinia, this practice may have started during the Nuragic period (*c.*1700 BC-*c.*AD 476). This is suggested by the discovery of a bronze statuette at Ittiri (province of Sassari) in 1900. The figurine represents a human figure playing an archaic aerophone which resembles an *aulos*.<sup>12</sup>

## OTHER ENCOUNTERS AND OBSERVATIONS

During my fieldwork, I also visited The National Archaeological Museum of Cagliari, where this cast bronze statuette is exhibited (Figure 8). I have to highlight the assistance which I received from the museum staff. The moment I told the guard I was researching the 'Suonatore di launeddas itifallico' (ithyphallic launeddas (flute) player) he allowed me to take detailed photographs of this figurine. Then, he advised me that a local craftsman makes replicas of all the figurines on display and that they are available at the museum shop. Unfortunately, this particular replica was out of stock because it is somewhat demanded as a souvenir. However, the salesgirl offered to call the craftsman to bring one for me. After a few hours, I returned to the museum shop to collect the replica.

---

<sup>11</sup> Although the silver pipes from the royal cemetery of Ur date from *c.*2500 BC, we cannot be ascertained that these were played simultaneously, moreover, few are the depictions of pipes from early Mesopotamia that predate the Iron Age. The stela of Ur-Nammu (*c.*2334-2000 BC) is one example, however, it shows a figure playing some sort of pipe. For more information on this, see Canby 2001: 22-3; on the silver pipes from Ur, see Wolley 1934 and Rimmer 1969.

<sup>12</sup> Some scholars date this artefact to the seventh or eighth century BC (Lortat-Jacob 2001: 284). However, this may not be accurate because of a lack of archaeological context (Dyson and Rowland 2007: 76). According to Melis (2003: 52) small cast-bronze figurines were already circulating in Sardinia as early as the ninth century BC. It is very likely that these objects were brought to the island from the Middle East and used as models for local production. This latter interpretation stems from the *Lux et Oriente* paradigm of Diffusionism. This theory claims that new ideas developed first in the eastern Mediterranean and were carried westward by merchants (Trigger 1989: 150-55).



**Figure 7: Marble figurine of a double-pipe player from the Cycladic island of Keros; 2800-2300 BC (photograph by the author); Figure 8: The author at the National Archaeology Museum of Cagliari.**

The original cast bronze statuette is 120 mm tall, and depicts a hermaphrodite human being who is holding two pipes in his left hand and one in his right. The individual has breasts and prominent male genitals. The body is completely naked, except for the head which is covered by some sort of helmet (Taramelli, 1982: 287). The presence of overemphasized sexual attributes, namely prominent breasts and genitalia, suggests that this figure may be connected to some sort of fertility ritual which, undoubtedly, included musical manifestations. Many interpretations attempt to clarify why this figurine is depicted with an erect phallus. When discussing this with Perra during another meeting that I had with him he brought forth the idea that the sexual attributes on this figurine were done on purpose by the artist to represent moments of ecstasy that this musician was experiencing when playing this instrument. In this regard, Rouget (1985: 7) notes that ecstasy is only attained in silence, immobility, and solitude while trance, that is to say, an altered state of consciousness is obtained by means of sounds, agitation, and in the presence of people. Consequently, it is very likely that the erect phallus was mainly intended to symbolise trance which, according to Plato, is directly associated with melody, and, by implication, with melodic instruments. Plato (B.III. 398c-399e)<sup>13</sup> claimed that the whole *harmoniai* in songs and melodies were not suitable for the education of man. In fact, like Socrates, Plato maintained that the Phrygian and the Dorian were the most appropriate modes to instruct people. The *aulos* from the Hellenistic period was an instrument in which the performer could play the whole *harmoniai*. Therefore, it was the most melodic [melodious] of ancient Greek instruments. In light of this information, the *aulos* definitely incited trance, and this may be one of the reasons why it was sporadically banned in ancient Greece. The Nuragic statuette recalls the figure of the satyr and the silen which are often portrayed in classical art with an erect oversized phallus. Like the Sardinian bronze, these mythological beings are depicted naked while playing the pipes; same case with the Cycladic figurine. All this suggests a diffusion of music related practices from the Aegean (Cyclades) to Sardinia.

<sup>13</sup> Plato, *Plato The Republic*, trans. by Paul Shorey, 2 vols (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, William Heinemann Ltd, 1937), I, 245-51. (Hereafter, Pl. Rep.).



**Figure 9: Frontal and profile view of the ‘Ithyphallic launeddas (flute) player’, Nuragic bronze statuette, National Archaeology Museum of Cagliari; c.700-800 BC (photographs by the author).**

The statuette has distinctive features. For example, the partial squatting position of the body may be interpreted as a dance step (Taramelli, 1982: 7), possibly part of some sort of choreography. In view of this, the figurine may be considered as an idol who is taking part in a procession, which would certainly have included dancing and marching. Such processions may have had military or religious purposes, as well as to celebrate special events. This could be related to a number of bronze figurines discovered across the island which portray Nuragic people during different activities. The most frequent subjects are warriors, archers, and boats. Accordingly, it is very likely that Nuragic people played the pipes in military contexts, such as the one described by Plutarch (26 F) <sup>14</sup> where Spartan soldiers (Lacedaemonians) march to the sound of the double-pipe (*aulos*) to engage the enemy. However, whether Nuragic people were war-oriented is not clear. Whatever the case may be, similar artefacts representing religious individuals, musicians, dancers, as well as women holding children and mythological beings suggest other contexts (Lilliu, 1956). According to Melis (2003: 54), the statuettes were used as votive offerings and deposited at sanctuaries in wells as requests or thanks for divine assistance in battles, abundant harvest, illness, and so on.<sup>15</sup> Some cast figurines were also retrieved from graves and domestic contexts (Ferrarese Ceruti, 1985).

## SUMMARY

In summary, one may say that parallels do exist between contemporary *launeddas* and the ancient *aulos*. Indeed, it is possible that we are speaking of the same instrument. The fact that the Nuragic statuette has strong similarities to the one from the Aegean lead us to think on to the possibility that a cultural flow originating in the Aegean relocated the *aulos* in other parts of the Mediterranean, such as in Sardinia. Historically, Sardinia has been part of trading networks since the Stone Age, and this indicates that there are still many points to be addressed. For example, the exchange of goods and influences between Sardinia and the Minoan-Mycenaean cultures, as well as with Cyprus. Clearly, the possible contacts that

<sup>14</sup> Plutarch. 1822. *The Peri Mousikes of Plutarch*, trans. by John Healy Bromby. Chiswick: Press of C. Whittingham: 65. (Hereafter, Plut. On Mus.).

<sup>15</sup> For more information on this compare Pinza 1901: 150-156.

existed between the above-mentioned cultures may bring new insights to this matter. These may also lead us to rethink all of the above and to search for other different possibilities and connections.

## REFERENCES

- Barker, Andrew. 1984. *Greek Musical Writings Volume I The Musician and his Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bélis, Annie. 1986. La Phorbeia. *Bulletin the Correspondance Hellenique*, 110: 205-218.
- Bélis, Annie. 2001. 'Aulos'. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition. Edited by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell. London: Macmillan, 2: 178-184.
- Bithell, Caroline. 2006. The Past in Music: Introduction. *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 15 (1): 3-16.
- Bohlman, Philip V. 1997. Fieldwork in the Ethnomusicological Past. *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. Edited by Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley. New York: Oxford University Press: 139-162.
- Canby, Jeanny Vorys. 2001. *The "Ur-nammu" Stela*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- Comotti, Giovanni. 1989. *Music in Greek and Roman Culture*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Dyson, Stephen L. and Robert J. Rowland. 2007. *Shepherds, Sailors, and Conquerors: Archaeology and History in Sardinia from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- Ferrarese Ceruti, Maria Luisa. 1985. Un Bronzetto Nuragico da Ossi (Sassari). *Studi in onore di Giovanni Lilliu per il suo settantesimo compleanno*. Edited by Giovanna Sotgiu. Cagliari: Istituto di Antichità e Archeologia e Arte.
- Howard, Albert A. 1893. The Aulos or Tibia, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 4: 1-60.
- Lilliu, Giovanni. 1956. *Sculture della Sardegna Nuragica*. Cagliari: Edizione della Zattera.
- Lortat-Jacob, Bernard. 2001. 'Sardinia'. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition. Edited by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell. London: Macmillan, 22: 284-287.
- Melis, Paolo. 2003. *The Nuragic Civilization*. Sassari: Carlo Delfino editore.
- Perra, Pitano. 2017. interviewed by Juan Sebastian Correa Caceres, 2<sup>nd</sup> January.
- Pinza, Giovanni. 1901. Monumenti Primitivi della Sardegna. *Monumenti Antichi*, 11: 5-280.
- Rimmer, Joan. 1969. *Ancient Musical Instruments of Western Asia in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, The British Museum*. London: Published by the Trustees of The British Museum.
- Roberts, John (ed.). 2005. *The Oxford Dictionary of The Classical World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rouget, Gilbert. 1985. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Taramelli, Antonio. 1982. *Scavi e Scoperte 1903-1910*. Sassari: Carlo Delfino, 1: 283-290.
- Trigger, Bruce G. 1989. *A History of Archaeological Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weis Bentzon, Andreas Fridolin. 1969. *The Launeddas: A Sardinian Folk-Instrument*. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1: 11-158.
- West, Martin Litchfield. 1992. *Ancient Greek Music*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press.



- Widdess, Richard. 1992. Historical Ethnomusicology. *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*. Edited by Helen Myers. London: Macmillan Press: 219-237.
- Woolley, Leonard. 1934. *Ur Excavations, Volume 2: The Royal Cemetery. A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonid Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931*. London and Philadelphia: British Museum and Museum of the University of Pennsylvania/ New York: Carnegie Corporation.

Cite as:

**Sarath Chandrajeewa. 2019. Emaciated Female Playing the Cymbals: A Study of the Ancient Hindu Bronze Figurine in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka. *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 11-16.**

## **EMACIATED FEMALE PLAYING THE CYMBALS: A STUDY OF THE ANCIENT HINDU BRONZE FIGURINE IN POLONNARUWA, SRI LANKA**

### **Abstract**

The ancient bronze figurine which is the subject of this text, is exhibited at the archaeological museum in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka. It is associated with two activities, religious chanting and playing cymbals. The figurine, illustrates how a work of art denotes its creator the freedom to visualize and recreate a religious story through the use of a three-dimensional form. Taken as a whole, its iconography represents the 'Shiva -bhakti' tradition' prevalent in Sri Lanka in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The figurine, which shows a devotee of Lord Shiva, has been identified as a depiction of poet-saint *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār*. This and similar sculptures, were originally designed for temple worship and festivals in South India and Sri Lanka. Even to date, *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* is celebrated annually in several temple festivals in Tamil Nadu and other locations where there is a significant population of Hindu worshippers of Lord Shiva. In the text, the figurine and the legend surrounding *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* are examined and reflected on as important aspects of Sri Lanka's history. This paper considers the story of the poet-saint *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* through a fascinating artistic remnant of the ancient Shiva-bhakti movement on the island of Sri Lanka, an evocative bronze temple figurine. The Hindu figurine is first examined through visual examination and consideration of its archaeological contexts and finally interpreted through the legends surrounding *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* and her historical legacy as part of a once powerful spiritual movement in South India and Sri Lanka.

### **Keywords**

*Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār*, Shaivism, Shiva-bhakti Saints, Tamil devotional poetic anthology, Hindu bronze

### **Sarath Chandrajeewa**

Sarath Chandrajeewa [full name: Rathnayake Mudiyansele Sarath Chandrajeewa], Senior Prof. Dr., is currently the Vice Chancellor of the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka. He is a reputed expert in sculptures, which is his main teaching and research subject. His studies started at Kelaniya University in Sri Lanka, then he specialized in bronze casting at the Royal College of Art in London, doing later his Master of Fine Arts and his Doctor of Philosophy in Moscow at different high-ranking institutions. He won a number of important international awards and published widely on colours and shapes.

### **Contact**

vc[@]vpa.ac.lk

# EMACIATED FEMALE PLAYING THE CYMBALS: A STUDY OF THE ANCIENT HINDU BRONZE FIGURINE IN POLONNARUWA, SRI LANKA

Sarath Chandrajeewa

## Abstract

The ancient bronze figurine which is the subject of this text, is exhibited at the archaeological museum in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka. It is associated with two activities, religious chanting and playing cymbals. The figurine, illustrates how a work of art denotes its creator the freedom to visualize and recreate a religious story through the use of a three-dimensional form. Taken as a whole, its iconography represents the 'Shiva -bhakti' tradition' prevalent in Sri Lanka in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The figurine, which shows a devotee of Lord Shiva, has been identified as a depiction of poet-saint *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃār*. This and similar sculptures, were originally designed for temple worship and festivals in South India and Sri Lanka. Even to date, *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃār* is celebrated annually in several temple festivals in Tamil Nadu and other locations where there is a significant population of Hindu worshipers of Lord Shiva. In the text, the figurine and the legend surrounding *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃār* are examined and reflected on as important aspects of Sri Lanka's history. This paper considers the story of the poet-saint *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃār* through a fascinating artistic remnant of the ancient Shiva-bhakti movement on the island of Sri Lanka, an evocative bronze temple figurine. The Hindu figurine is first examined through visual examination and consideration of its archaeological contexts and finally interpreted through the legends surrounding *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃār* and her historical legacy as part of a once powerful spiritual movement in South India and Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃār*, Shaivism, Shiva-bhakti Saints, Tamil devotional poetic anthology, Hindu bronzes

## VISUAL READING

The bronze figurine is a visualization of an emaciated female playing the cymbals, *thālam*, while seemingly chanting devotional songs (Figures 1 and 2). She is in a seated position. The upper part of her torso has been left bare and a cloth covers the lower part of the body. Her right knee is bent straight and the foot is placed on the ground. Her left leg is also bent with her foot closer to the body and the leg positioned in parallel to the ground. She is wearing a close-fitting necklet and a necklace or rosary that appears to be made out of beads. Moreover, the figure displays a beaded armlet on her right arm with a circular loop for tightening. Unadorned, simple bracelets can be seen on her wrists. She is wearing heavy earrings and there are upward-facing flowers in her hair. Her headdress is made up of twelve angular shapes, giving the impression of the hair being on end. The facial expression suggests excitement and awe with her eyes and mouth open as if to indicate her fascination with Lord Shiva's godly dance. She is holding a pair of small cymbals connected with a short rope. Her posture indicates that she is playing the role of an accompanist through vocal contribution as well as in the act of playing the cymbals. Her emaciated and pointed breasts are hanging down and taken as a whole, the female figure appears to be purposefully deformed and presented in abstract format.



**Figures 1 and 2: Shiva Saint Kāraikkāl Ammaiār, Polonnaruwa Period, 11<sup>th</sup> Century (Photographs of the author).**



**Figure 3: Granite sculpture of Hindu deities at the Siva Temple No.01, Polonnaruwa. Photo: J. Lawton, 1870 (public domain).**

According to Hindu mythology, a sculptor gives free expression to his imagination and this may have contributed to the portrayal of a gaunt woman with an eerie and esoteric appearance. This particular work has been compared by historians and archaeologists with somewhat similar images found in

several museums and in South Indian temple imagery.<sup>1</sup> The figurine has been identified as a female devotee of Lord Shiva known as *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār*. The meaning of *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār* is ‘The revered mother of Kāraikkāl’ - “Kāraikkāl” being her birthplace and “Ammaiṃyār”, meaning “mother”, which is said to be the term that Lord Shiva used when referring to her.<sup>2</sup> *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār* was one of several Tamil poet-saints and she is recognised as the author of four poetic works dedicated to Shiva in the Tamil language.

## DISCOVERY OF THE BRONZE FIGURINE

The figurine was originally enshrined in the Shiva Temple number 05, an archaeological site in Polonnaruwa, together with several other bronze statues depicting various aspects of the Hindu God Shiva. The bronze sculpture, which was excavated in 1960, is a solid cast, 28 cm in height and covered in dark green patina. At present, it is listed as exhibit number 7.1 in the Hindu Bronze Gallery at the archaeological museum of Polonnaruwa.<sup>3</sup>

The artifact is dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the early Polonnaruwa period. Polonnaruwa was then the location of Sri Lanka’s capital kingdom of Sri Lanka during the mediaeval period. In ancient times, it was known as *Pulatti Nagara*<sup>4</sup> (city of Pulasti), named after the famous Hindu sage *Pulasti*. The early Polonnaruwa period is identified as the Hindu period (993-1055 AD) as King *Rājarāja* (983-1014 AD) and the South Indian *Chola* Dynasty invaded the Kingdom of Anuradhapura and established Polonnaruwa as the provincial centre of their royal administration. The *Cholas* built temples in Polonnaruwa for the worship of Hindu gods such as Lord Shiva, Vishnu, and Ganesh. Following a period of 62 years, the Sinhala king *Vijayabāhu* I (1055-1110 AD) and his army marched to Polonnaruwa and defeated the *Cholas* thereby liberating the city of Polonnaruwa. This was the beginning of what is known as the late Polonnaruwa period (1055 - 1235 AD)<sup>5</sup>. After the first discovery of Hindu bronzes at excavation sites in the Polonnaruwa Hindu temples in 1908, H. C. P. Bell, the first Commissioner of the Archaeological Department under the British Government of Ceylon, described the Hindu Bronzes as follows:

“It is clear that the majority of the Hindu shrines and the sculptures connected with them belong to the period of the *Chola* occupation of ancient Lanka. There is every likelihood that when the *Cholas* who brought the *Sinhala* people under subjection, began building shrines to worship their Gods and started making images of their deities and saints, they employed Sinhala artisans. The building of Buddhist shrines, the making of Buddha images and the executing of mural paintings at Buddhist temples had made the Sinhala people experts in architecture, sculpture and painting. These native craftsmen were employed by the *Chola* conquerors for their works.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Similar figures are held in the collections of the Nelson Atkins Museum of Arts in Kansas City, and the Metropolitan Museum of Arts in New York. Historical images of Saint *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār* can be found in Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Shiva in Tamil Nadu, South India. For example, in the Vadaranyeswarar temple in Tiruvalankatu, the Kapaleeshvara temple in Mylapore, and during the mango festival to celebrate her life story at the temple town of Karaikkāl.

<sup>2</sup> Battacharya, N.N. ed. 1989. *Medieval Bhakti Movements in India*. New Delhi: Munishvaram Manoharlal.

<sup>3</sup> Godakumbura, C.E. 1961. Archeological Surver of Ceylon: *Annual reports*, 1908: 73-75; Godakumbura, C.E. 1961. ‘Bronze from Polonnaruwa’ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) New Series*, 7 (2): 239-253; Godakumbura, C.E. 1964. *Polonnaruwa Bronzes, Art Series*, 5. Colombo: Archeological Department: 13, 20; van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, Johanna Engelberta. 1981. *Sri Lanka: Ancient Arts*. London: Commonwealth Institute: 34; von Schroeder, Ulrich. 1992. *The Golden Age of Sculpture in Sri Lanka*. Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publication.

<sup>4</sup> Geiger, Wilhelm, translator (assisted by Christian Mabel Duff Rickmers) and ed. 1953. *Cūlavamsa*. Colombo: Ceylon Government Press: 73.156

<sup>5</sup> Geiger, Wilhelm, translator (assisted by Christian Mabel Duff Rickmers) and ed. 1953. *Cūlavamsa*. Colombo: Ceylon Government Press: 58.1.

<sup>6</sup> Bell, H.C.P. 1913. Archeological survey of Ceylon: *Annual Reports*, 1908: 74.

Bell thus suggests that the figurine of *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* represents a unity of the Chola's religious beliefs and the craftsmanship of the native Singhalese population. The origin of the female subject, however, is undeniably South Indian.

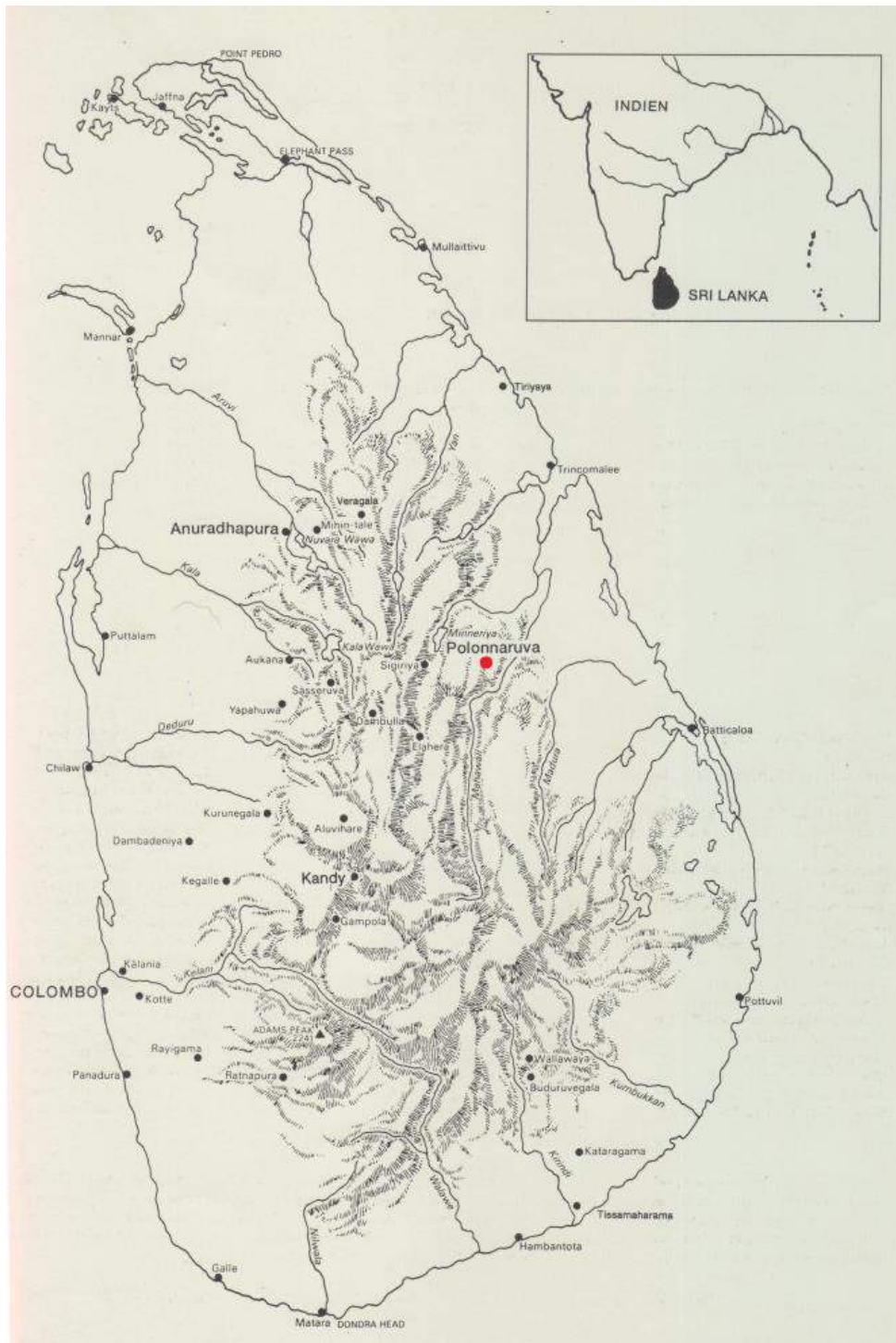


Figure 4: Map of Sri Lanka (Open source). A red dot marks Polonnaruwa.

### RELATED HISTORY AND LEGENDS

*Kāraikkāl* is a maritime trading city in Tamil Nadu, South India, where, according to a legend, *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* lived around 550 AD. *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār's* original name was *Punithāvathiyar*.

*Punithāvathiyar* was married to *Paramādattan*, a wealthy merchant from a coastal city of *Nāgapattinam*. One day her husband sent home two mangoes. On the same day, a Shiva Yogi appeared in front of her house begging for alms; hence, she offered one mango to him.

At midday, her husband came home for his noon meal. After the meal, she served him the remaining mango. He finished it and asked for the other mango as he had sent her two. She went inside and prayed to Lord Shiva for divine intervention as she was frightened of telling her husband that she had given it as alms to a Shiva Yogi. Mysteriously, a mango appeared on her palm, so she served it to her husband. He tasted it and understood it to be of divine taste so he became quite sure it was not one of the mangoes he had sent his wife. When questioned, *Punithāvathiyar* told him the truth. However, *Paramādattan* refused to believe her explanation and challenged her to produce another mango the same way she had done the first one. Therefore, the distressed woman appealed to the Lord Shiva once again. Consequently, another mango appeared on her palm and this too she gave to her husband. As soon as he took the fruit into his own hands, it disappeared. It was at this point that he truly realized the potential and significance of *Punithāvathiyar's* devotion to Lord Shiva. Therefore, he felt that it was a great sin to continue living with this woman as husband and wife and he decided to flee from his hometown. He loaded a ship with goods and sailed to the city of *Pāndyan* where he settled down and married a merchant girl. His second wife had a daughter and they named her *Punithāvathi* after *Paramādattan's* first wife.

As a result of her husband's disappearance, *Punithāvathiyar* became dejected and went in search of her husband. Finally, she reached the *Pāndyan* kingdom. *Paramādattan* heard of her arrival and went with his second wife and child to meet her. He fell at *Punithāvathiyar's* feet and revealed that he regarded her not as a wife but as a goddess instead. At this point, *Punithāvathiyar* prayed to Lord Shiva beseeching him to deprive her of her physical beauty and to grant her a demonical form. Her prayer was answered and her body was transformed into that of an emaciated female. According to the legend, she then went on a pilgrim to mount *Kailāsh*, the abode of Lord Shiva. During the last lap of the pilgrimage, she gave up walking by foot and finished her journey on her head.<sup>7</sup> Her devotion to her god remained throughout her life and Vidya Dehejia states that, '[s]he spent the rest of her life singing praise of Shiva, whom she visualized as dancing in a dense forest where emaciated female ogres fed up on half burn carcasses between cremation fires'.<sup>8</sup> Thus, *Punithāvathiyar*, now known as *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār*, has become celebrated as one of Lord Shiva's most devoted servants.

## POETESS AND CYMBAL-PLAYER

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a minister at the Chola court named *Cekkilār* wrote 63 biographical stories of the devotees of Shaivism, including that of *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār*. This volume is named *Periya Puranam* or 'The great tradition'.<sup>9</sup> *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār* is one of the key figures among the sixty-three saints listed in the Tamil Shiva-bhakti tradition and one of only three females. She was a poetess, vocalist and a cymbal-player for Lord Shiva, and the only female saint known to have composed literary works, of which there are 143 verses in four separate works remaining, all expressing her religious devotion.<sup>10</sup> She is commemorated as a great poet-saint in South Indian Tamil devotional literature.

## CONCLUSION

From historical sources, legends and the works ascribed to her, it could be assumed that *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār* was a historical personality and a committed devotee of Lord Shiva. Having arguably been a

<sup>7</sup> Craddock, Elaine. 2010. *Siva's Demon Devotee: Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

<sup>8</sup> Dehejia, Vidya. 1988. *Slaves of the Lord- The Path of the Tamil Saints*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal: 129-138.

<sup>9</sup> McGlashan, Alastair, translator. 2006. *The History of the Holy Servants of the Lord Shiva: A Translation of the Periya Puranam of Cekkilar*. Oxford: Trafford Publishing.

<sup>10</sup> Pechilis, Karen. 2012. *Interpreting Devotion: The Poetry and Legacy of a Female Bhakti Saints of India*. London: Routledge.

follower of the deity for most of her life the legend tells us how she embraced a life as a religious servant and took the form of an ascetic female yogi.

Thus, the small bronze figurine from Polonnaruwa opens up a window to history and a story that explores the conflict between domestic family life and spiritual life of ancient Hindu society in South India. It could be that *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* herself transformed into a skeletal form due to the emotional suffering she experiences as a result of the loss of her spouse and to compensate for the loss, she decided to devote her life to a deity whose perceived omnipresence, would have reassured her. Thus, her transformation from a wife to a Shiva devotee, and her resort to writing and chanting religious verses, may well have generated the legends and rituals developed around her character.

The worship of *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* has faded now and it is no longer practiced among Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. The Polonnaruwa bronze figurine, however, remains as a museum piece and is considered as a treasure of Sri Lankan art. Ultimately, this icon is testimony to the veneration of Lord Shiva in the Shiva-bhakti tradition that emerged in Sri Lanka under *Chola* rule in the 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> centuries and, as such, it represents the religious vision of Chola royalty at the time.

Finally, it can be stated that the creation of this sculpture undoubtedly exemplifies the impact of mythology, music, dance, and religious devotion on an ancient community. Even today, the solid bronze figure of *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār* remains an enduring symbol of piousness while her emaciated body continues to remind us of the impermanent and decaying nature of all material entities..

## REFERENCES

- Battacharya, N.N. ed. 1989. *Medieval Bhakti Movements in India*. New Delhi: Munishvaram Manoharlal.
- Bell, H.C.P. 1913. *Archeological Survey of Ceylon: Annual Reports, 1908*.
- Craddock, Elaine. 2010. *Siva's Demon Devotee: Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār*. Albany: State University of New York Press (SUNY Press).
- Dehejia, Vidya. 1988. *Slaves of the Lord- The Path of the Tamil Saints*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal: 129-138.
- Geiger, Wilhelm, translator (assisted by Christian Mabel Duff Rickmers) and ed. 1953. *Cūlavamsa*. Colombo: Ceylon Government Press.
- Godakumbura, C.E. 1961. Bronze from Polonnaruwa. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) New Series*, 7 (2): 239-253.
- Godakumbura, C.E. 1964. *Polonnaruwa Bronzes, Art Series*, 5. Colombo: Archeological Department.
- Godakumbura, C.E. 1961. *Archeological Surver of Ceylon: Annual reports, 1908*.
- McGlashan, Alastair, translator. 2006. *The History of the Holy Servants of the Lord Shiva: A Translation of the Periya Puranam of Cekkilar*. Oxford: Trafford Publishing.
- Pechilis, Karen. 2012. *Interpreting Devotion: The Poetry and Legacy of a Female Bhakti Saints of India*. London: Routledge.
- van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, Johanna Engelberta. 1981. *Sri Lanka: Ancient Arts*. London: Commonwealth Institute.
- von Schroeder, Ulrich. 1992. *The Golden Age of Sculpture in Sri Lanka*. Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publication.



Cite as:

**Kadel, Ram Prasad. 2019. Report on Double Reed Instruments of Nepal. AEMR-EJ, 3: 17-19.**

## **REPORT ON DOUBLE REED INSTRUMENTS OF NEPAL**

### **Abstract**

Nepal, with its extreme topography, is home to a great variety of castes and ethnicities each with their own language and distinct music culture. Insect sounds, and bird songs have influenced folk music composers, musicians and musical instrument makers throughout time and double reed instruments, in particular, tend to mimic natural sounds. More than a score of distinct double reed instruments has been described by Music Museum of Nepal some with straight bodies and others curved like the crescent moon.

### **Keywords**

Nepal, musical instruments, double reeds, castes, descriptive methods

### **Ram Prasad Kadel**

Ram Prasad Kadel, PhD, has spent more than a decade in researching and preserving the musical instruments of Nepal. He has also established the Nepali Folk Musical Instrument Museum (NFMIM) in 1997 after starting collecting orally transmitted musical pieces since 1995. His research shows that there are 59 different ethnic groups and more than 100 castes which have separately developed their own instruments and evolved their own music styles.

### **Contact**

lok baja[ @ ] gmail.com

# REPORT ON DOUBLE REED INSTRUMENTS OF NEPAL<sup>1</sup>

**Ram Prasad Kadel**

## **Abstract**

Nepal, with its extreme topography, is home to a great variety of castes and ethnicities each with their own language and distinct music culture. Insect sounds, and bird songs have influenced folk music composers, musicians and musical instrument makers throughout time and double reed instruments, in particular, tend to mimic natural sounds. More than a score of distinct double reed instruments has been described by Music Museum of Nepal some with straight bodies and others curved like the crescent moon.

**Keywords:** Nepal, musical instruments, double reeds, castes, descriptive methods

## **OVERVIEW**

Nepali double reed instruments fall into two categories, those played with circular breathing, including five with twin pipes and twin double reeds, and those played with pauses for breath. The reeds can also be described in two main groups. The first type is now usually fashioned from folded layers of smoked palm leaf but, before palm leaves became available in Nepal, the triangular tip of the papery stem-sheath of various bamboo species was used. Smaller reeds, typically made by the *Damai* musician caste, produce a high-pitched sound and larger ones, made by the *Kapali* (temple musicians), are used for lower pitched music. The second type of reed is made from a short length of young, thin bamboo either with a node at each end or at the top end only, and a thinly shaved sliver is cut on the side; this sliver is held open with a female human hair.

The body of highly crafted double reed instruments such as the *sahane* and *muhali* are made of the hard woods, Catechu or Indian rosewood but double reed instruments can also be constructed of bamboo and may incorporate hollow gourds (e.g. *bin*), coconut shells (e.g. *pungi*), animal skins (e.g. *musak bin*) or dry *abel* fruit shell (e.g. *mohola*). The sophisticated wooden instruments may be curved or straight and are always fitted with a metal bell which is shaped like the *Datura* flower. This bell can be removed when playing on sombre occasions such as funeral rituals. Nepal is the only South Asian country to have curved woodwind instruments and these have a conical bore. During construction the curved body is sliced in half lengthways so that the bore can be accurately gauged out and then the halves are carefully put back together and the close-fitting joint is held in place with fish glue and bands of *nigalochoya* (bamboo bark).

A Nepali traditional belief is that any musical instrument might be a gift from God. Trees selected for making woodwind instruments should only be cut on the *saaita*, the astrologically most auspicious date and time, which is chosen with the help of a priest. Rituals are performed, and *mantras* chanted, to obtain permission from the deities to cut the wood, and subsequently to discern the correct time to begin making the musical instrument.

Before playing the new instrument for the first time another special *Tantric* ritual, *Pranaschetana*, is performed, to add *prana* (life force) to the new musical instrument and to invite the Goddess *Saraswati* to reside inside it. This ritual is most commonly performed on *Mahanawami* (ninth day

---

<sup>1</sup> This report was given during the 25<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of the International Council for Traditional Music on Double Reed Instruments along the Great Silk Road, held in November 2018 at Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Since it is a short report rather than a paper that problematizes research issues, it was chosen to be presented in AEMR-EJ instead of being integrated in the anthology of reviewed research papers that will be published later about this event.

of *Dashain* festival). The musical instrument may be treated from time to time by dipping them in oil, curd, sour milk, or butter to keep the wood in best condition and extend its life.

Double reed instruments are distributed throughout Nepal from the Himalayas, e.g. *Sherpa ghyaaling*, and through the mid hill region, e.g. *sahane* played by *Damai* caste musicians, the *Mauri Baja* of the Western hills and the *Brirangi* played in the Eastern hills then down to the plains of the *Terrai* where the *sahanna* is played by the *Musahar* caste. In the Kathmandu Valley the two main types of double reed woodwind instruments are the *sahane*, and the *muhali*, which each have several varieties. The *muhali* appears in eight distinct types.

According to some of Nepal's traditional beliefs, the universe is composed of five elements, earth, fire, water, air, and sky. All wind instruments are thought to belong to the sky element and playing these instruments is believed to purify the sky element. Hence this has to have a healing effect on the whole universe because all beings and environment is surrounded by the sky.

Historically, there were two routes by which Nepalis could join the main Silk Route, which was of great importance to any kind of migration, so does it for the exchange of double reed instruments: the northern route to Tibet or the longer but less arduous route to the south of India and of course travellers and traders took their instruments with them to play on route and to relieve their longing for home.

Double reed instruments are played alone, in sets of several together, or accompanying other instruments particularly other wind instruments and drums. Animal herders play to express emotion, dispel loneliness, to calm down and to round up animals or to communicate with other herders in the forest. These musical instruments are played at all get-togethers and festivals. The sound produced is loud and attracts people from far and wide to join a gathering and they also promote a harmonious atmosphere on any occasion. The double reed instruments are regarded as the queens above all other musical instruments and have the most important role in worship. In the Kathmandu Valley the musicians start playing before sunrise to greet the God on each new day. We can also find inscriptions on the metal bell of some temple instruments which tell us that a king or army commander has donated the instrument to express their gratitude to the Goddesses of a temple after winning a battle.

The melodies of double reed instruments are popular in Nepal and their players, especially those who practice circular breathing, are respected above other musicians because of the difficulty of mastering the technique. A musician who plays with circular breathing is honoured by being given a white turban to wear when playing at special ceremonies. Sadly, fewer people are becoming proficient these days, because there is no longer enough support from the government or from temple *Guthis* (management committees). Musicians are forced by lack of support and lack of money to seek other ways of making a living.

### LIST OF DOUBLE REED INSTRUMENT FOUND IN NEPAL







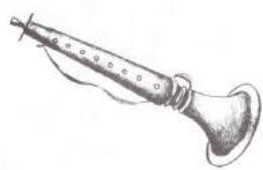

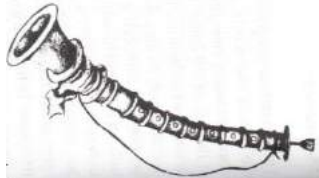
A) Double reed instrument that are played with pauses for breath

1. Bimbili 2. Gujrati Muhali 3. Kohali 4. Piura 5. Puli 6. Ros Mahali 7. Brirangi 8. Jor Sahane 9. Masak Bin 10. Baans Sahane 11. Yab Nali

B) Double reed instrument played with circular breathing

1. Bhamara Muhali 2. Bin 3. Dhode Sahane 4. Mahuri Baja 5. Mohola 6. Moholi 7. Puja Muhali 8. Pugi 9. Rasa 10. Sahane 11. Sherpa Ghyaling 12. Tamang Ghyaling 13. Tip Sahane 14. Sor Sahane

## PICTURES OF DOUBLE REED INSTRUMENTS

	Piuraa <sup>2</sup>		Parts of Sahane Baja <sup>3</sup>
	Sahanaa		Part of Sahane Baja
	Gujraati Muhaali		Reed of Maahuri Baja
	Sahane		Maahuri Baj
	Nal		

An intense study of these reed instruments and their current musicians is under way. It is interesting, how and for what purpose these instruments are locally classified.

## REFERENCES

- Kadel, Ram Prasad. B.S.2061. *Nepali Lok baja*. Kathmandu: Music Museum of Nepal.  
 Kadel, Ram Prasad. 2007. *Musical Instrument of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Music Museum of Nepal.

<sup>2</sup> All depictions are by courtesy of the Music Museum of Nepal.

<sup>3</sup> All colour pictures are taken by the author.

Cite as:

**Nadler, Katja Claudia. 2019. Biographic Details Regarding the Operetta 'The Land of Smiles' by Franz Lehár. *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 20-26.**

## **BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS REGARDING THE OPERETTA *THE LAND OF SMILES* BY FRANZ LEHÁR**

### **Abstract**

This essay on biographic details regarding the operetta *The Land of Smiles* by Franz Lehár is entirely dedicated to facts found in literature and repositories of performance organisers. It does not aim at discussing importance or consequences this operetta might have on current musical life neither in central Europe nor in Asia. Being aware of this, here are only details mentioned that are helpful for further studies and do not mislead into speculation. Also, this essay is just a first access to the materials from the viewpoint of recent experiences with operettas.

### **Keywords**

operetta, exoticism, Franz Lehár, Vienna

### **Katja Claudia Nadler**

Katja Claudia Nadler (full current name Katja Claudia Seipelt) studied musicology, vocal practice, and music education at Goethe University in Frankfurt and Frankfurt Music Academy. She completed her PhD at Putra University, Malaysia. Her main research interest is stage music involving vocal skills. In this regard, she investigated less emphasized parts of music history such as role groupings in operas, operettas and musicals of Europe and of East Asian provenience.

### **Contact**

katjanadler[ @ ]web.de

# BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS REGARDING THE OPERETTA *THE LAND OF SMILES* BY FRANZ LEHÁR

**Katja Claudia Nadler**

## **Abstract**

This essay on biographic details regarding the operetta *The Land of Smiles* by Franz Lehár is entirely dedicated to facts found in literature and repositories of performance organisers. It does not aim at discussing importance or consequences this operetta might have on current musical life neither in central Europe nor in Asia. Being aware of this, here are only details mentioned that are helpful for further studies and do not mislead into speculation. Also, this essay is just a first access to the materials from the viewpoint of recent experiences with operettas.

**Keywords:** operetta, exoticism, Franz Lehár, Vienna

Franz Lehár was born on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1870 in Komárno, a town then belonging to Hungary. His father was Franz Lehár (senior) the military capellmeister from Habsburg; province of Moravian Silesia. His mother was Christine Lehár of Hungarian origin (Linke, 2001: 7). Due to the father's profession, Lehár frequently moved from place to place in his early childhood. Hence, in 1871 the Lehárs were ordered to Bratislava, 1875 to Sopron, 1877 to Cluj and in 1879 to Carlsberg. The family became larger from one station to the next. Three of Lehár's siblings died shortly after birth, whereas Maria Anna was only 11 years old when she passed away. A long life was only granted to Lehár and his 1876 born brother Anton and to his 1890 born sister Emilie Christine (ibid: 13).

In Lehár's parents' house music played a crucial role. For the parents, it was obvious that one day their eldest son would overtake the father's profession (ibid: 14). Music was frequently performed at home and Lehár's first attempts to play piano critically supervised by his father. Already at the age of six, Lehár composed melodies from poems and was able to practice his compositional skills (ibid: 15).

In Sopron, Lehár went to elementary school. After another transfer to Budapest in 1880, he visited the Piarist Gymnasium. Because he was familiar to the Hungarian language since early childhood, a short time later the parents decided to send their son to gymnasium in Moravian Sternberg so that he can acquire a much better knowledge of the German language (Schneidereit, 1983: 18). Here, he received from his uncle, the town's capellmeister, music lessons in violin and orchestral playing. His musical skills were developed so well that his parents took a college education into consideration. In 1882, the twelve-year old Lehár accessed the Prague Conservatory and accomplished his studies in violin major and minor in music theory and composition (Linke, 2001: 16). After Lehár presented some of his compositions to Anton Dvořák and Johannes Brahms, they encouraged him to continue building up his compositional talent and to devote himself to composition (Glocken Verlag, 1985: 212). On 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1888 Lehár successfully completed his legal state exam as orchestra and solo player and immediately got a job as the first violinist at the Vereinigte Stadttheater in Elberfeld-Barmen, today's Wuppertal (ibid). Even though he accepted the position mainly for practical reasons – the salary was 150 Mark per month – Lehár was quickly promoted to a concertmaster and had a very clear vision about theatre and opera life (ibid).

In 1889 Lehár followed the request of his father to become a violin soloist in his band in Vienna and he left for military service at k.u.k. Army, Infantry Regiment No. 50<sup>1</sup>. In 1890, Lehár was given the post of capellmeister at the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the north Hungarian Losoncz. Hence, he became the youngest music director (Linke, 2001: 21). Besides rehearsals and performances with the band, Lehár remained in the seclusion, much leisure and opportunity, to acquire additional talent as an orchestra musician and composer (Glocken Verlag, 1985: 213). He mostly used the night hours for his compositions. More than 30 works were created during this period (Linke, 2001: 22). He wrote his first opera project *Rodrigo* in 1893 on the occasion of an announcement for a one act opera of the Duke of Cobourg-Gotha. But he did not win the competitive tendering.

In 1894, Lehár was awarded a position as the Navy capellmeister in Pola, today's Croatia. On 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1894 Lehár had the task to welcome the German emperor Wilhelm II with music, for which he received the highest award (Decsey, 1924: 50). Besides directing the band, he increasingly dedicated his time and energy to composition: so, he created marches, polkas and waltzes and he focused on another opera project: *Kukuška* (Linke, 2001: 25). After his opera was accepted at the Stadttheater Leipzig, he dropped his job as Navy capellmeister to focus only on composition. The premiere on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1896 was a great success (ibid. 27). Since Lehár was financially weak due to lack of a position, he travelled in 1897 to Trieste as a military capellmeister of the Infantry Regiment No. 87 and overtook the band of his seriously ill father in Budapest in 1898 who passed away on the 7<sup>th</sup> February of the same year.

Lehár received financial support from his mother. This enabled him to take over the opera material of his work *Kukuška* from the publisher Hofbauer. As a self-publisher, he was successful to perform the opera in Königsberg and Budapest. Once again, he became very successful and again he gave up his position (Glocken Verlag, 1985: 214). In Budapest he started looking for a new libretto, but this project was a failure, because operettas were not popular at this time (Linke, 2001: 28). In 1899, Lehár once again became a military capellmeister of the Infantry Regiment No. 26 in Vienna. Since the Viennese audience was always enthusiastic for something new, Lehár set newspaper reports to music, such as the *War Songs March to China* dedicated to the defeat of the Boxer revolt (Decsey, 1924: 66). In the years to come, quite a lot of works were created through which Lehár became more popular, e.g. the Cycles of Waltzes, 1900-1902. Especially here, the waltz *Gold und Silber* may be mentioned, which Princess Pauline Metternich-Sándor ordered Lehár to compose as the opening waltz for a ball under the motto gold and silver. With this work, Lehár maintained a lasting success to this day (Linke, 2001: 30). After Lehár's regiment was to be transferred to Győr, he decided to remain without a position in Vienna. After a short time, his mother also moved to Vienna.

The operetta in Vienna was outdated at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Keller, 1926: 420). Thanks to the Hungarian writer and director William Karczag at the Theater an der Wien, who was able to promote renaissance values and hence, he appointed completely new employees and singers for the theatre (Holzer, 1951: 222). In the course of this restructuring, in 1902 Lehár became a contract as a conductor and composer of operettas for the newly engaged staff.<sup>2</sup> On the 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1902 his first operetta entitled *Wiener Frauen* at the Theater an der Wien had premiere. Shortly after his operetta *Rastelbinders* followed which was premiered on the 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1902 at the Carl Theatre in Vienna. This work was Lehár's first major success and was played throughout Austria-Hungary and Germany (Linke, 2001: 34). Then he composed the less successful operettas *Göttergatte* (Vienna, 1904) and *Juxheirat* (Vienna, 1904). Lehár himself said: "In diesen Werken habe ich meinen eigentlichen Stil noch gesucht, den ich dann in der *Lustigen Witwe* gefunden habe"<sup>3</sup> (Glocken Verlag, 1985: 215).

With his next project, *Die Lustige Witwe*, Lehár responded to societal change. The masses of the petty Viennese bourgeoisie dominated the theatre. The people of Vienna demanded openness and modern forms of living together, since divorce was allowed in Hungary since 1895. Thus, Hungarian subjects

---

<sup>1</sup> It was a common army of Austro-Hungarian ground forces. Until 1889 it was called k.u.k. Army (meaning kaiserlich-königliche Armee = Imperial-Royal Army, which was misleading for a joint institution of the two halves of the Empire since 1867). Therefore, upon Hungary's request in 1889, the name k.u.k. was introduced.

<sup>2</sup> Hence, Lehár was contractually bound to the Theater an der Wien. He had to compose operettas exclusively for this theatre, where his compositions had their world premieres.

<sup>3</sup> Translation: In these works, I still searched for my own style, which I was then able to find in *Die Lustige Witwe*.

and music urged to the forefront in order to ignore moral barriers for one evening (Csáky, 1996: 147). The operetta *Die Lustige Witwe* celebrated on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1905 at the Theater an der Wien premiere. A new type of genre was born: the fairy tale scenes were removed. The sentimental songs to Vienna and wine were no longer timely. The figure of the merry widow (*Die Lustige Witwe*) was realistic and the dramatic structure was arranged logically (Czech, 1960: 108). The triumph of this operetta spread over to Hamburg, Berlin, Prague, Zurich, London and Paris. Performances in English language took place in New York, Chicago, India, South Africa, China and Japan (Linke, 2001: 47). The success of *Die Lustige Witwe* triggered a demand, which influenced the whole operetta industry. New theatres were opened and the premiere service increased (Hadamowsky, 1947: 399).

In 1906, Lehár's mother passed away. Between 1906 and 1914 he worked on the rearrangement of his already existing works including ten new operettas. Lehár was a rich man. In the summer of 1912, he bought a villa in Bad Ischl (today's Franz Lehár's Museum), while his girlfriend Sophie Meth moved in the yard building. Here he spent the summer with great pleasure and used his time for composition (Linke, 2001: 64).

After the outbreak of World War II, about 75 per cent of the male population, including Lehár's brother and his sister's husband were convened. As the third member of the family, Lehár was now freed and able to continue to dedicate his time for his compositions (ibid: 66). He documented the last cavalry battle of world history at Jaroslavice/Galicia with the composition of the *Reiterlied* in 1914. Herewith he started his song cycle *Aus eiserner Zeit*. There were two other operettas: *Der Sterngucker* (Vienna, 1916) and *Pacsirta* (Budapest, 1918), Lehár's first operetta in Hungarian language achieved great success even after the end of the war.

After the closure of the regiment in November 1918, Lehár opted for a Hungarian citizenship as a result of the war, because his birthplace *Komárno* now belonged to Czechoslovakia. He kept his residences in Vienna and Bad Ischl (ibid: 71). Here was much misery: there was almost no food, the heating did not work and there was no electricity at night. Lehár had to earn money. He composed and conducted every day. On 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1920 *Die blaue Mazur* celebrated, on the belated festivity of his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, premiere at the Theater an der Wien. Lehár was once again able to record another big success.

In January 1922, the one-act musical comedy, *Frühling*, was performed at the Theater an der Wien. This was a special circumstance far from the everyday operetta: Lehár focused here the housing problem and the economic crisis (Lichtfuss, 1989: 153). This was followed by the premiere of the operetta *Frasquita* at the Theater an der Wien on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1922. The famous tenor, Richard Tauber, whom Lehár had learned to know in 1921 in Bad Ischl, overtook the main male role two months after the premiere. The performances were sold out shortly after Tauber started singing at the theatre (Linke, 2001: 76). This was the beginning of a strong cooperation and friendship between Tauber and Lehár. Lehár composed the main role of his upcoming work entitled *Die Gelbe Jacke*, exactly suitable for Tauber's voice register. Although Tauber did not sing the role – Lehár did not meet Tauber's demands to share the total income<sup>4</sup> – the premiere on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1923 at the Theater an der Wien was given due attention (ibid: 77).

Karczag died on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1923. This prompted Lehár to free himself from the Theater an der Wien, and to withdraw the legal rights for his further world premieres (ibid: 79). But this was not the true reason: Lehár composed the main parts of his operettas for selected singers of the theatre. Since however, his favourite stars were no longer there after 1923 and also Tauber – for the time being – saw off from the operetta in order to switch to serious opera at the Vienna State Opera. So, Lehár saw no reason to continue working for the theatre (ibid. 81).

On 20 February, 1924 Lehár married his long-time girlfriend Sophie in Vienna. After a while, on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1924, the Bürgertheater Vienna presented his new operetta *Cloco*, in which Lehár for the first time added to modern drums and saxophone in the orchestra (Schneidereit, 1983: 119). A year later a revival sparked at the Johann Strauss Theater in Vienna, a renewed enthusiasm for Lehár, upon which the opera director agreed with Lehár to premiere his next operetta entitled *Paganini* in the Johann Strauss Theatre (ibid. 215). In several aspects, this work represented a turning point in Lehár's creative period:

---

<sup>4</sup> total investment income consisted of one-night fee plus a share in the future income generated by the operetta, while lowering the author's licenses.



- Tauber visited Lehár in the summer of 1924 in Bad Ischl, while he was working on *Paganini*. After Lehár had played some passages from his new play, Tauber decided to return to operetta music and to collaborate with Lehár in the future (Linke, 2001: 81). Tauber described his decision as follows: “Warum sollte ich, der Mozart singt, eine schöne Melodie bloß deshalb nicht singen dürfen, weil sie von einem so eminenten und in seiner Art sicher genialen Musiker wie Lehár geschrieben wurde”<sup>5</sup> (Marilaun, 10/10/1922). Henceforth, Lehár made it to his assignment to fit the melodies to Tauber’s voice, to enhance the opera-like and thus, to create a new form of operetta singing (Linke, 2001: 82).
- In Lehár’s previous works the unity of the good old Austria was realized on the stage long after the collapse of the monarchy (ibid: 90). Now, Lehár was convinced that “... ein großer Umschwung in der mitteleuropäischen Seele vollzogen hat. Man könnte sehr wohl von einer Stabilisierung der Gemüter sprechen. Die Menschen begannen wieder aneinander zu glauben (...) Die Verfassung des Publikums in unserer Zeit ermöglicht auch der Operette, sich von der Lüge des Happy-Ends abzuwenden”<sup>6</sup> (Lehár, 19.10.1929). Starting from *Paganini*, Lehár waived the classic good end of the operetta and put on opera-like sentiment and pathos.

The premiere of *Paganini* on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1925 in the Johann Strauss Theater was a success.

Already in 1925, Lehár’s operettas were not only enjoyed in theatres and on opera stages. More media was developed: So, for example, Lehár travelled to Paris for the premiere of the silent film *Die Lustige Witwe* that was filmed in Hollywood (Linke, 2001: 83), and the Berlin performance of *Frasquita* was broadcasted as first operetta transmission of the world via radio on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1924 (Schneidereit, 1976: 210).

Lehár’s and Tauber’s following operetta project was *Der Zarewitsch*. For months, the two had gone through every scene prior to the premiere that took place in the German Artists’ Theatre in Berlin on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1927, after their successful rehearsals. This success gave Lehár the opportunity to go on tour with Tauber who was going to play *Zarewitsch*. In so doing, the operettas were performed in Frankfurt, Munich, Dresden, Chemnitz, Hanover, Hamburg and Cologne (Linke, 2001: 88). Once Lehár returned to Bad Ischl, he used the time to meet with friends, colleagues and managers, among them, Paul Whiteman and George Gershwin (ibid: 85). In this way, he also received the libretto for his next musical comedy *Friederike* that celebrated its premiere at the Metropol Theatre in Berlin on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1928.

This was followed by recordings in Vienna. From mid-June 1929 *Friederike* was performed on the Dutch Lehár Festival, The Hague, Amsterdam, and Munich. Lehár travelled a lot to focus on his operettas and to take care of the conducting on respected performances (ibid: 96).

Back in Bad Ischl he and Tauber began rearranging *Die gelbe Jacke*: The new title was *The Land of Smiles*. Prior to the premiere, on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1929 in the Metropol Theatre in Berlin, a gramophone recording of the song *Dein ist mein ganzes Herz*, was made (sung by Tauber). The audience streamed in masses into the theatre, mainly to enjoy the live performance of the already published song *Dein ist mein ganzes Herz* (ibid: 96). This was followed by performances in Hamburg, Cologne, Stuttgart and Munich. Schneidereit (1983: 169) explains in one of his works the success of the *Land of Smiles*: “In der Geschichte der Operette gibt es kein weiteres Werk, in dem jede Musiknummer so zum Erfolgsschlagwer wurde. *Land des Lächelns* ist die Vollendung der spätbürgerlichen Operette und zugleich ihr Abschluss”<sup>7</sup>. Worldwide it took the second position among Lehár’s operettas, right after *Die Lustige Witwe*. The enthusiasm of Lehár’s operettas led to numerous simultaneous offers of various

---

<sup>5</sup> Translation: Why shouldn’t I, who sings Mozart, be able to sing a beautiful melody, because it was written by such an eminent and – in his own way – ingenious musician like Lehár?

<sup>6</sup> Translation: ...the Central European soul underwent a great change. One could quite talk about the stabilization of the minds/feelings. People began to believe each other again (...) The state of mind of the audience in our time also enables the operetta to turn away from the untruth of happy endings.

<sup>7</sup> Translation: There is no other work in the history of operetta, in which every musical part became such a successful hit. *The Land of Smiles* is the completion of the late bourgeois operetta and simultaneously the end.

works within one and the same city. On 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1929 nine of his performances were carried out only in Berlin (Czech, 1960: 245).

Lehár turned 60 in 1930. In his honour, his works were performed on all the major stages, such as Amsterdam, Budapest and London. Lehár Festivals took place in Berlin and in Vienna. He conducted his own works with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. On 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1930 made the RAVAG a live radio broadcast from the Theater an der Wien possible when *The Land of Smiles* was performed (Linke, 2001: 99). On 8<sup>th</sup> November the world premiere of a sound movie, *The Land of Smiles*, produced by Richard Tauber-Tonfilm GmbH, was premiered in the Apollo Cinema. This was Lehár's first German sound movie production, which was soon to be succeeded by *Friederike*, *Der Zarewitsch*, *Frasquita*, *Paganini*, *Eva* and *Cloclo*. Lehár composed individual soundtracks for the movies *Es war einmal ein Walzer* (1932) and *Großfürstin Alexandra* (1933).

Over the years, Lehár got considerable prosperity, thus he was able to purchase the Schikaneder Villa in Vienna-Nussdorf in 1932, which lies along the Danube. In 1933 he received his first award in Paris, from the President of the Republic, who distinguished him with the Commander's Cross of the Legion of Honour (ibid: 101). Despite Lehár's successes, the financial situation in Germany became increasingly hazardous. The world economic crisis of 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1929 left its mark: high unemployment rate, bankruptcies and bank closures steadily increased. Thus, living conditions worsened, the demand of the audience decreased and many theatres were forced to close (ibid: 99). On 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1933 Lehár signed a contract with the Vienna State Opera, where his next stage work, *Giuditta* was premiered. The entry to the State Opera was a success for Lehár under the given circumstances, because the opera director took the budget issue into considerations with the intention to support the audience magnet, Lehár, to get rid of his financial problems (ibid: 107). In this regard, Lehár points out: "Glücklich, dass sich der Traum meines Lebens erfüllte, dass es mir nach dreißigjähriger Tätigkeit als Komponist vergönnt war, auf der klassischen Bühne der Wiener Staatsoper aufgeführt zu werden, mein Werk von den prominentesten Künstlern gesungen und dem berühmtesten Orchester der Welt gespielt zu hören"<sup>8</sup> (Lehár, 01.19.1934). The premiere of *Giuditta* on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1934 was broadcasted live by 120 radio stations from the Vienna Opera House.

Both at home and abroad, the new operetta became very popular. It was only in Nazi Germany, where it could not be performed. Lehár was disgraced because he was confounding with his brother, who critically commented on the German neutral policy (Linke, 2001: 111). In November of 1934, it became public that Mussolini had rejected the dedication of *Giuditta* on the grounds that the representation of a deserter on stage would, in every form, make the principles of a leader and the authority obviously ridiculous (Grun, 1961: 270). This denunciation came just right for Lehár's opponents. Starting from Berlin anti Lehár demonstrations had an effect, since he was accused of having worked with Jewish librettists. Already in 1932, *The Land of Smiles* was in the German stage correspondence, attributed to the Jewish operettas (Kieser, 1991: 29). Nazi cultural communities received end of 1934 the information that Lehár's operettas were to be considered as inappropriate to be performed in Germany (Linke, 2001: 111). Nevertheless, in a circular of 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1936, the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, declared that the operettas should be performed (Kieser, 1991: 30). Simultaneously, Hitler as well personally allowed the performance of Lehár's operettas, although Lehár was married to a Jewish woman. Hitler appreciated Lehár whose works he very much enjoyed during his time in Vienna. So, he welcomed Lehár in November 1936 in Berlin as a guest of honour at the annual meeting of the Reich Chamber of Culture and the NS Community *Kraft durch Freude*<sup>9</sup> (Linke, 2001: 112). With the German stages, the largest market was once again opened for Lehár.

Shortly before the collapse of the Publishing Company W. Karczag, Lehár succeeded to take away his publishing properties. Henceforth, he decided to publish his works on his own and received the

---

<sup>8</sup> Translation; That the dream of my life could come true, that even after thirty years as a composer my work still had the chance to be performed on the classic stage of the Vienna State Opera, to listen to my work to be sung by the most prominent artists accompanied by the most famous orchestra of the world.

<sup>9</sup> A recreational organization of the Nazi regime to enforce the necessary upgrades to increase production without wage increases. Recreational events should serve to relax and regenerate in order to encourage the output (performance on the job) and simultaneously convey the idea of a classless society in the sense of the Nazi ethnic community.

appropriate license from the Viennese magistrate on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1935. This was the birth of the Glocken Verlag (ibid: 115). On 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1938 the Vienna State Opera included Lehár's second operetta, *The Land of Smiles*, in its repertoire.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1938, Hitler marched into Austria. With this the connection to the German Empire was sealed. In 1939 Lehár moved his residence and artistic offices from Vienna to Bad Ischl, since his wife was safer here from the persecution of Jews (ibid: 117). On 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1939, World War II broke out. Still, Lehár travelled to Berlin, Hamburg and Budapest in order to conduct the performances of his works. But because an increasing number of male actors had to go to the front, most theatres and opera houses were shut down one after the other.

In 1940, Lehár received some honours: he was appointed an honorary citizen of Sopron (Hungary). He was awarded the Honorary Ring of the city of Vienna and the Goethe Medal for Art and Science from Hitler (Schneidereit, 1976: 327). In the same year Lehár was committed to conducting at the front as part of the cultural special services and the health care at the Western Front. Thus, he was able to retreat from composing war marches and songs (Linke, 2001: 120).

On 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1943 Lehár ended his musical career with a world premiere of the *Zigeunerliebe*, which he rearranged as a musical comedy under the new title *Garbonciás*, at the Royal Opera in Budapest (ibid: 121). After the second play, which he conducted, he collapsed and was taken to Bad Ischl, where he had to stay in bed. His health showed gradual improvement only in 1945. With the end of the war, the time without theatre came to an end as well. The Berlin Metropol Theater announced for the end of September Lehár as the conductor to his work *Paganini*, but a stroke and complaints with his eye prevented him from the trip (ibid. 124). Since there was lack of medical care in Austria, the couple went to Zurich for treatment at the end of January, 1946, where it stayed at the Hotel Baur. After arriving in Zurich, the couple withdrew from public life for about a year. It only received friends and relatives. On 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1947 they attended a performance of *Paganini* in the Stadttheater Zurich. A few days later Sophie passed away.

In Lehár's last year a joint concert still took place, in which Tauber sang and Lehár conducted. In February 1948, Lehár conducted another concert in the Congress House of Zurich. End of July of the year 1948, Lehár returned to Bad Ischl accompanied by his sister, where he was awarded an honorary citizenship on 14<sup>th</sup> October. On 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1948 Lehár passed away. He was buried in the family vault in Bad Ischl on 30<sup>th</sup> October after a requiem (ibid: 127).

## REFERENCES

- Csáky, Moritz. 1996. *Ideologie der Operette und die Wiener Moderne. Ein kulturhistorischer Essay zur österreichischen Identität*, Wien: Böhlau.
- Czech, Stan. 1960. *Das Operettenbuch. Ein Führer durch die Operetten und Singspiele der deutschen Bühnen*. Stuttgart: Muth.
- Decsey, Ernst. 1924. *Franz Lehár*. Wien: Drei Masken-Verlag.
- Glocken Verlag. 1985. *Franz Lehár. Thematischer Index*. London: Glocken Verlag.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. 2011. *Faust I und II*. Hamburg: Nikol-Verlag.
- Grun, Bernard. 1961. *Kulturgeschichte der Operette*. München: Langen/Müller.
- Hadamowsky, Franz; Heinz Otte. 1947. *Die Wiener Operette*. Wien: Bellaria-Verlag.
- Holzer, Rudolf. 1951. *Die Wiener Vorstadtbühnen. Alexander Girardi und das Theater an der Wien*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei.
- Keller, Otto. 1926. *Die Operette in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*. Wien: Stein-Verlag.

- Kieser, Klaus. 1991. *Das Gärtnerplatztheater in München 1932-1944. Zur Operette im Nationalsozialismus*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang Verlag.
- Lehár, Franz. 1929. *Der neue Weg der Operette*. Neues Wiener Journal, 19 October 1929. Wien.
- Lehár, Franz. 1957 [1929]. *Das Land des Lächelns. Franz Lehár. Klavierauszug mit Text*. Wien: Glocken Verlag.
- Lehár, Franz. 1957 [1929]. *Das Land des Lächelns. Franz Lehár. Textbuch der Gesänge*. Wien: Glocken Verlag.
- Lehár, Franz. 1982 [1929]. *Franz Lehár. The Land of Smiles. Operetta in Three Acts*. London: Glocken Verlag.
- Lehár, Franz. 1934. *Lehár über sein reifstes Werk: Giuditta*. Neues Wiener Extrablatt, 19 January 1934. Wien.
- Lehár, Franz. 1932. *Wie entsteht ein Schlager?* Neue Freie Presse, 24 April 1932. Wien.
- Lichtfuss, Martin. 1989. *Operette im Ausverkauf*. Wien: Böhlau.
- Linke, Norbert. 2001. *Franz Lehár*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- Marilaun, Karl. 1922. *Gespräche mit Kammersängern*. Neues Wiener Journal, 10 October 1922. Wien.
- Posner, Roland, Klaus Roberino, Thomas Albert Sebeok. 2003. *Semiotik 13.3*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Reuth, Ralf Georg. 1992. *Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1924-1945*. München: R. Piper GmbH & Co KG.
- Schneiderei, Otto. 1976. *Berlin wie es weint und lacht. Spaziergänge durch Berlins Operettengeschichte*. Berlin: VEB Musik.
- Schneiderei, Otto. 1983. *Operette A-Z*. Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft.

Cite as:

**Xiao Mei [萧梅]. 2019. Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music. *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 42-51.**

## **EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ON CHINESE TRADITIONAL MUSIC**

### **Abstract**

‘Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music’ has a history of thousands of years, making it difficult to present this topic comprehensively. Therefore, the larger theme “Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music within a Dialogue of Civilizations and Cultures” that is partly discussed here will be limited to the contemporary history and the appearance of Chinese traditional music after the first encounters with ‘so-called’ Western music. This paper is mainly a reflection on the author’s personal experiences, views on certain aspects of the topic, and a wider consideration of historical events that are connected to it.

### **Keywords**

education, tradition, Chinese music, dialogue, cultural views

### **Xiao Mei [萧梅]**

Xiao Mei [萧梅] is a professor at the musicology department of Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She is the ‘Director of the Research Institute of Ritual Music in China’, an appointed ‘Researcher of the Museum for Oriental Instruments’. Beyond this, she is the President of ‘the Association for Traditional Music in China’ and a ‘Member of the Executive Board of ICTM’ since 2011, founding member of the ‘ICTM Study Group on East Asian Music’, and ‘Chair of the National Committee of the ICTM in China’. She has been collecting and studying traditional, folk and ritual music of the Han people and other groups in China such as Mongolian, Oroqen, Naxi, Miao (Hmong) and Zhuang over a long period of time.

### **Contact**

e\_xiaomei@126.com

# AN OVERVIEW ABOUT DIFFERENT SOURCES OF POPULAR SINHALA SONGS

**Nishadi Meddegoda**

## *Abstract*

Music is considered to be one of the most complex among the fine arts. Although various scholars have given different opinions about the origin of music, the historical perspectives reveal that this art, made by mankind on account of various social needs and occasions, has gradually developed along with every community. It is a well-known fact that any fine art, whether it is painting, sculpture, dance or music, is interrelated with communal life and its history starts with society. Art is forever changing and that change comes along with the change in those societies. This paper looks into the different sources of contemporary popular Sinhala songs without implying a strict border between Sinhala and non-Sinhala beyond the language used. Sources, created throughout history, deliver not only a steady stream of ideas. They are also often converted into labels and icons for specific features within a given society.

The consideration of popularity as an economic reasoning and popularity as an aesthetic pattern makes it possible to look at the different important sources using multiple perspectives and initiating a wider discussion that overcomes narrow national definitions. It delivers an overview which should not be taken as an absolute repertoire of sources but as an open pathway for further explorations.

**Keywords** Popular song, Sinhala culture, Nurthi, Nadagam, Sarala Gee

## INTRODUCTION

Previous studies of music have revealed that first serious discussions and analyses of music emerged in Sri Lanka with the focus on so-called tribal tunes. The tunes of tribes who lived in stone caves of Sri Lanka have got special attention of scholars worldwide since they were believed of being some of the few “unchanged original” tunes. Sachs wrote that Sri Lankan tribal songs belong to the post stone age (Sachs, 1949: 6). According to him, the oldest tribal tunes in the world are found in Sri Lanka and Patagonia. Amongst all the tunes in the world, Sri Lankan tunes have clear melodic structures that accommodate Western familiarity. Scholars, who researched melodies in the world, have even nominated Sri Lankan tunes to be more musical than others as stated by Kulathilake (1974: 6). This irrational judgement found in the quoted literature shows the progress in research methods and views on music that was accessed mainly through oral means. The striving for superlatives in music research seems not a primary goal anymore, especially if those superlatives represent wrongly interpreted preconditions such as the degree of musicality attributed to melodies and their appearance. Also, the originality is questionable in any case found in recent times since mobility and communication do not avoid communities that lived slightly longer than others in geographical or social isolation.

In consultation with historical researches, other previous studies have demonstrated that the inauguration of Sri Lankan music formation is influenced by teachings of Buddhism, some Indian music and the cultural life of European colonizers. This paper is concerned with music influenced by colonial life styles that was instigated in Sri Lanka in 1505, when the Portuguese established their control over the maritime areas of the island and after that the Dutch and the British (Ariyaratne, 2002: 9-12). However, the colonial power lasted about four centuries in Sri Lanka and unavoidably, many elements of Western culture were spread throughout the Sri Lankan communities during this period.

Sri Lanka seems not having had a kind of entertaining court music similar to that of India or some European regions. However, there may have exist a specific music during the occasions of people’s ceremonial gatherings and during magic rituals. It is possible that court culture with dancing and music did exist in Sri Lanka as well, but since the Buddhist monks were the scribes and exclusive guardians of the literary tradition, they chose to ignore and not record texts of such rather profane performances. Sarachchandra mentioned the nonexistence of an advanced or professional theatre tradition due to the

influence of Theravada Buddhism which “tended more towards solitary contemplation and the attainment of insight (vidassana) than towards congregational practices or participation in community life” (Sarachchandra, 1953: 7-8).

The most probably influential fact could be some Indian practices from the root, which were integrated into Sri Lankan music (Kulathilake, 1974: 24) due to the geographical factors, commerce, religious tasks, trade (Swami, 2002) and any kind of cultural contacts. Sri Lankan musical life thus did never exist isolated from others and took up many inspirations from abroad.

The following section scrutinizes comprehensively the production of popular Sinhala songs in Sri Lanka focusing on the different sources of Sinhala music practice up to the present time. Accordingly, the first three forms in this chapter, which is titled as ‘the ritual theatre’, nadagam song and nurthi song include a brief introduction to understand the evaluation of ‘Sinhala song’.

## THE RITUAL THEATRE

One of the most important contexts for music is its use in rituals. The term ritual also encompasses religious services. This specific context is more broadly applicable to all situations in which formal patterns of behavior are repeated without question because they are seen to have meaning (Miller & Shahriari, 2013: 42).

The Sinhala theatre rigorously incorporated religious beliefs and practices of the people, bringing them a feeling of prosperity and entertainment. Music enriched their rituals, and marked their social and cultural belongings. Only very few elements of the ritual performance and folk drama survived, and there were where only limited parts that could be considered being songs in which prose was chanted or verses (kavi) were rather spoken in impromptu dialogues, however, dance was an accepted element.

Sokari, Kolam (masked drama), and Kavi Nadagam can be seen as important sources. The Sokari “song” was a type of chanted prose or sung verse of four stanzas in consistent metrical outlines called ‘gee meter’ which usually shaped the melodic capacity. The melodic range is narrow, about two or three narrow intervals. Initially the blowing instrument ‘Horanawa’ was used (CP Meddegoda, 2019) and subsequently some percussion instruments such as local drums; yak beraya, geta beraya, udekkiya, daula with ‘reverberating gongs’ (thaalampota) and horanawa were played. There are quite a few research studies on ritual theatre music in Sri Lanka. However, studies on songs rarely found.

There are three other varieties of recitative forms used in the Sri Lankan music vocabulary; such as Kavi, Sindu, and Viridu. Sarachchandra defined the term Sindu as ‘songs that are sung in measured time and are given the general name ‘Sindu’ (Sarachchandra, 1967: 106). At the same time Kavi and Viridu are also sung in a specific meter and typically the word “rhyme” is very similar to Sindu (Gunathilake, 1984: 20). Kavi also was a very popular style of Sinhala compositions in Sri Lanka which was meant essentially for singing. In the Sanskrit language ‘kavi’ denotes a poet and poems (kavya means also poems).

As cited by Kulathilake (1974), the song no. 601 in ‘Kavsilumina’ (the crest gem of poetry) by Parakramabahu, a king of Ceylon, mentions the word ‘ollie’ a singing style of Carnatic music in which the singing range always is in a high pitch register. This is similar to one aspect of Sinhala gami gee (folk songs) with a singing style known as “andahara”. Kulathilake (1974: 111) assumes that andahara is similar to falsetto in what he has known as Western music.

## NADAGAM SONG

One of these traditional forms of art ‘nadagam’ has no past history of indigenous Sinhala music since the origin is seen in the South-Indian Carnatic tradition. Even so, the most interesting approach to this issue has been proposed by Gunathilake who states that the Sinhala Nadagama is not a mere ‘dance drama’ of the type found in the South Indian folk theatre and this rural theatrical performance is termed as the nadagam in Sinhala and natakam in Tamil (1984: 1). The nadagam song repertoire extends a

greater melodic range. Singing is usually reflecting upon dramatic conversation. The style of singing in the nadagam had a definite meter and rhythmic structures and they were not theatrically stylized. The narrator sings one line of the verse and the chorus repeats this, creating further dramatic intensity. The singers in the nadagam recapitulate different situations represented by the kavi, innise or the sindu as experienced in the songs of Ehelepola, Sulambawathi, Kusa and Wesathuru nadagam (Gunathilake, 1984: 21, 22).

Important nadagam composers were Pilippu Sinnho, John Murthi, Hendrik Re Abreu, and Rajapaksa Waidyanatha (Gnanissara, 2009: ix-x). The used instruments are harmonium, maddalaya, horanawa with distinctive beats such as tirlana, chapu, pasan, wadimudi tal. Traditionally, nadagam used two drums for vedi tal (increase meter) and adu tal (reduced meter). The music of nadagam brought once a fresh dimension into Sinhala musical life and this might be the aspect of providing a source of inspiration until present times.

## NURTHI SONG

In the last decades of the 19th century, the Parsi theatrical company traveling from Bombay caught the local audiences rapidly with their fascinating performances (Silva, 1981: 485). This Parsi theatre came to be known as nurthi in Sinhala. Its melodramatic art form attracted the society for its plots based on myth and imaginary, new dramatic techniques and mainly Hindustani music.

During the period of the declining nadagam, C. Don Bastian was the first person who staged *Rorina*, the first nurthi play in 1877 (Ruvini, 29th April 2009). He made plays borrowing several Indian melodies for their songs (Ariyaratne, 1998: 218). Later trailing him beside John de Silva and Charles Dias, entering this stream and a number of Sinhala nurthis arose soon to the local spectator's taste, among them 22 songs of Daskon, 44 songs of Siri Sanga Bo, 58 songs of Shri Wikrama, 39 songs of Ratnawalee, 34 songs of Dutugemunu, 42 songs of Wessanthara nadagama (Gnanissara, 2009: x).

John De Silva (1854-1932) directed a number of much-admired nurthi plays accompanied with melodies composed by musicians and dramatists such as Vishvanath Louji, Ameer Khan, Baliwala, Magan Lal, Mohan Lal, Nawab Khan and Abdul Khan (Sujeewa, 2003). Those melodies were based on Hindustani ragas such as khamaj, asawari, jaunpuri, peelu, and kafi with the Hindustani cyclic rhythm patterns such as dadara tal 3/3, tree tal 4/4, kjhap tal 2/3, and kaherwa tal 2/2. This could be the first impressive start that led to the taste for Ragadhari Music launched for Sri Lankan listeners as a result of a visit to Sri Lanka by several Parsi theatre companies from India since 1887.

The nurthi theatre carried out the first public introduction of entertaining songs into the Sinhala speaking music scene, that appeared basically in the structure of sthaya and antara, verse shapes and musical treatments taken over from Hindustani music. The taste of nurthi melodies was soon adapted to the hitherto national music tradition using Hindustani music principles for the compositions (Silva, 1981: 485). The young national music tradition acquired a distinct Indian music system. But the roots of this melodious nurthi tradition prospered for two decades in the first quarter of the 20th century. With the decline of nurthi, another style of drama tradition arose, which was called teeter (theater) (Sujeewa, 2003: p. 30). However, it is clear that no considerable attention has been paid to songs or even dialogues. These teeter plays and their titles were used for Sinhala films produced in Sri Lanka, for example the title of teeter Pitisara Kella was appropriated as the title for a film produced in 1941 in Sri Lanka.

The following section is to help understand the origination of the term 'popular' in the production of Sinhala songs. "Popular" Sinhala songs came into being with the arrival of gramophone music and the growth of popular culture of Sri Lanka.

## GRAMOPHONE SONG

Gramophone appliances arrived in Sri Lanka in 1901 and by 1903 records were available to be listened to in Sinhala (Broughton; Ellingham, 2000: 231). The Gramophone record disc is an analogue sound storage medium, a flat record, that could be stored in different ways. The first examples of these talking



machines were manually operated models. Electrically operated gramophones arrived in Sri Lanka in about 1937 along with repertoire in other languages such as Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Malay, Portuguese, and English. It should be noted that the music played back from these machines was already heavily transformed and fragmented regarding their musical sources. Anything that was recorded on records could be seen as a gramophone song and many conflicting views on music resulted later from this fact. However, the gramophone use was the most significant event for the development of entertaining Sinhala songs during the past history in Sri Lanka since it initiated the use of key components in structuring songs by using technology. Concentrating on some essentials of music compositions in an imagined Western way, such as pitch, beat, rhythm, melody, texture as well, arranged in a recognizable pattern by way of introduction, chorus, interludes, two or three verses and, time duration settled up to 3 or 4 minutes as well, there was a substantial progress in producing Sinhala gramophone songs. In the early age of the gramophone industry, the first criteria for any preference given was the fitting melody of the song, the second regarded the lyrics and the third the style of singing.

At the beginning of gramophone music, the popular nurthi songs were recorded and the first ever Sinhala record was released in 1906 under the Odeon label (Ariyaratne, 1998: 55, 216). C Don Bastian and John De Silva contributed as well. They produced the dramas ‘Siri Sangabo’, ‘Ramayanaya’, ‘Shri Wickrama’, ‘Sakunthala’, ‘Uttara Rama Charithaya’ and others, which took into account many well-loved songs such as ‘Shreya Mana Math Wee’, ‘Harimi Raja Sepa, or Pipila De Saman’. These songs have been recorded in the early years (Sujeewa, 2003: 37-38). Apart from these songs, some Hindi melodies, Carnatic, and English songs were considerably popular and became more popular among the Sinhalese population.

The recording companies have been releasing parallel Sinhala songs using different titles for the melody of a Hindi song at the same time. These different companies were competing for popular Hindi melodies as they couldn’t find enough Hindi melodies to produce enough records of Sinhala songs. For instance, when releasing the song ‘kale pura pen’ (Wasantha Sandanayake) by Odeon, the Columbia Label released a song ‘pipunu male ron’ (Mohiddin Beg & Vinodini) to the same melody at the same time.

There were two main Gramophone music companies. HMV or His Master's Voice (operating in 1917) and Columbia (operating in 1930) (Ariyaratne, 1998: 32, 39). It can be seen that this was a crucial situation for those who were engaged in producing entertainment music and doing their business with this at that period. The gramophone songs released by these companies became more wide spread. H.W. Roopasinghe (HMV label) and Mohamad Gaus (Columbia label) have been the music directors of these musical companies. It is obvious that these gramophone music companies contributed to the competition within the early Sinhalese music businesses. During this era, a number of Sinhala singers became well-known stars, recording songs largely for the Tower Hall productions (Gnanissara, 2009: x).

The first repertoire of gramophone songs has been created based on Hindustani ragas and also the musicians such as Naushad composed music based on some Indian Folk music.

Ariyaratne (1998: 114) noted that the period of the gramophone songs was the first to be introducing Western music melodies which had not been known much earlier. The following songs fall into this category: songs by Sarachchandra, ‘Siri paade samanala kanda pene’ (the melody of the parallel English song is ‘Galway Boy’) by Vincent De Paul and Erica (H.M.V. Disc No. WN114) and ‘Selalihini kowul handa rewu denna’ (HMV Disc No. WN124) (using the melody of the song ‘There’s a Tavern in the Town’) by C.T. Fernando and Lata (Makuloluwa, 1970: preface). According to public opinions, there exists a similarity between the above noted English melodies and the named Sinhala songs.

Another relevant point is that of the lyrics, which played an important role. Proper words have been set to a melody, unlike in many Hindustani songs which use singing syllables. As Ariyaratne indicates, the lyrics of the gramophone songs indicate significant events in the life of Buddha, including incidents of the Jataka stories and evocative descriptions of sacred religious sites and religious festivals (1998: 216). Hence the lyrics are full of a deep Sinhala poeticism and a simple sense of meaning. For example, love, aesthetical pleasure, devotion, patriotic and sacred or religious feelings are found therein. It is noticeable

that the lyricists or writers have used their skills and paid much attention on the lyrics systematically used to construct these songs.

Mohamed Gaus, B.S. Perera, Vincent Perera, R.A. Chandrasena and P.L.A. Somapala have introduced some aspects of Western orchestration to the Gramophone music.

However, by the 1940s the gramophone has taken a novel way of being independent from the pervasive influence of Indian musical tradition and it became a great commercial enterprise. Ananda Samarakoon, a pioneer of this new trend in the field of gramophone music composed several catchy songs inspired by Rabindranath Tagore. The National Anthem of Sri Lanka is also one of his compositions falling into the gramophone song period which was recorded under the Label of HMV. The singers Ananda Samarakoon, Sunil Santha, Sooriya Shankar Molligoda, W.D. Amaradeva, Susil Pematne, and C.T. Fernando found creative and unique music styles in this field. Simple narrative songs of everyday life were brought in. This stage of development in Sri Lanka was known as “the era of the independent Sinhala song”.

In this era some Western music instruments were also utilized to produce euphonious songs which were not used earlier in the Sinhala song system, such as the piano, the mandolin, and the guitar.

Around 1953 Radio Ceylon permitted the producers of gramophone records to use its recording facilities and with this chance for the first time, Sri Lankan sound engineers have put on tape the discs of HMV and Columbia. Therefore, two microphones could be used for the first time now to record gramophone music in Sri Lanka.

## FILM SONG

‘Film songs’ played a vital role in the Sri Lankan music scene. The first film produced in Sri Lanka was shown on 21st January 1947 at Kingsly Cinema in Colombo called “Kadawunu Poronduwa” translated as “The Broken Promise” produced by S.M. Nayagam of Chitrakala Movie Tone Ltd. The early phase of Sri Lankan film music seemed to have been depended on Indian guidance. In the first nine years various Sri Lankan films were made in south Indian studios with stories, sets, technicians and even directors, and musicians who were Indian. The songs were sung by Indian artists with Sinhala words to the tune of the original Hindi or Tamil song. To illustrate Indian musician ‘Ramaya Muttusamy’ (1926-1988) who composed music scores for over 200 films can be considered as the pioneer of the Sri Lankan film music in the early decade (Thilakerathne, 16 August 2009).

The first serious occurrence of Sinhala music has emerged during the late decade of the 1950s, when the Sri Lankan film industry started producing its own movies and film music about different topics. In this era, the composer Mohammed Gaus started generating music compositions for Sri Lankan films and a number of composers began creating a unique of music native to contemporary Sri Lanka (Broughton & Ellingham, 2000: 231). However, for the first time, Amaradeva created remarkably non-Indian music for Sri Lankan films with the most important being ‘Ran Muthu Doowa’ in 1962. The efficiency of film songs has been improved and captured the Sri Lankan audience easily. So far it has been avoided of copying Indian films and enabled an opportunity for Sinhala musicians and singers to showcase their artistic skills. Likewise, these melodious film songs have assisted the Sinhala sarala gee, a specific kind of songs (see below) to arise. Most notably, Shelton Premaratne, Premasiri Kemadasa, Austin Munasinghe, Sarath Dasanayake, Stanley Pieris, Rohana Weerasinghe and numerous other musicians made a lasting effort to create intrinsic styles of music compositions. Also, Sri Lankan musicians such as Victor Ratnayake, Gunadasa Kapuge, Nanda Malini, Malini Bulatsinhala, Amara Ranathunga, and T.M. Jayaratne began to appear on the scene.

Structurally, it is noticeable that these film songs were considerably more complicated than Sinhala light songs, a category that applied on earlier types of entertainment songs, since many different musical features and skills have been used. Assuming that as a replacement for the ‘adlib-style’ (dohorawa) of Sinhala light song, film songs have appealed to Sinhala traditional four stanza’s verses (kavi). For example, a song by Indrani Wijayabandara, ‘kulunu gune sudana sene’, from the Sinhala film ‘Deiyange

rate' (1958) was shaped with this verse (kavi) which then was applied at the beginning and the end of the song as 'pera pera kandulu binda dena dena sudana sene'.

During this era of songs, there could be seen another special feature that some consists slow vocal passage which was not sung correspondingly to any cyclic rhythmic pattern but in a free-metric way (dohorawa). This type of free-metric renderings can be found in the beginning and sometimes in the middle section of a song, for instance Mohiddin Beg's song, 'Suwade mata seethala suwanda pawa (adlib), Himi budu una Buddha gayaawe' (chorus).

## GROUP SONG

There had been a considerable development in the Sinhala song in the mid-1960s after group music was instigated into Sri Lankan music practice. It is said that the first Sinhala group song was sung by Nevil Fernando's 'Los Caballeros' music group. They sung C.T. Fernando's song. They were using Western techniques of harmonic progressions and instruments such as Spanish guitar, güiro, maracas, and conga drums (Ariyaratne, 2002: 62, 63). They tried to follow Spanish and Latin American music styles for their music compositions. For example, they used a limited number of tones in a narrow scale, the dancing type of rhythms, syncopized styles and Latin American instruments such as timbales or tress were often utilized (Alison, 2000: 428).

They created some of the existing songs of the other musicians, with their new music mixture and those songs became more popularized rapidly, for example 'Mage sudu mame', (C.T. Fernando's), 'Udarata Manike manahara kandurata thilake', (C.D. Fonseka and Razeena Yakeem), and 'Wella simbina rella apata mehema kiyana' (from the film 'Dheewarayo' in 1964, music by M.K. Roksam).

Inspired by them, a number of musical groups soon followed and formed themselves into larger groups in Sri Lanka. These music groups blossomed around the island for two decades, in the 1960s and 1970s. Singers such as Clarence Wijewardane, Annesly Malawana, Indrani Perera, Anil Bharati, Shiromi Fernando, and Maxwell Mendis became more well-known in the course of group music. The Sinhala music groups have introduced themselves either as 'Harmony Groups' or as 'Pop Groups' (Ariyaratne, 2002: 65,80,84,100). It has to be noted that "popular" in this context is rather a quantitative term and does not reflect on any kind of musical quality. It is meant as a denomination for wide-spread or well-known. Insofar, this term is taken as an economic term rather than an art term (Jähnichen, 2012).

The singer, music composer and lyricist, Clarence Wijewardane (the king of pop music in Sri Lanka) shaped the first generation of pop music. His songs such as Kanda suriduni, Maniyane, Hiruge lowedi, Gamen liyumak ewilla became very popular (Broughton & Ellingham, 2000: 231-232).

Group songs were released effectively with the assistance of extended play (EP) discs<sup>1</sup> on the record labels of Philips and Sooriya. Sri Lanka Radio Ceylon has banned broadcasting group songs as well as baila<sup>2</sup> or songs based on non-Sri Lankan tempo that affect the Sinhala music scene. The genre baila was a condemned type of music (Ariyaratne, 2001: 154). Likewise, the commercial service, too, took action so as to preserve Sinhala music programs for the public (Ariyaratne, 2002: 88).

## SARALA GEE

After the establishment of Radio Ceylon in 1925, the term sarala gee (light songs) was introduced to the Sinhala music industry in the first half of the 1950s as a new trend with simple story lines of everyday life. The same song structure has been preserved over the times and exists even until today.

The roots of Sarala gee can be traced back to musicians such as Ananda Samarakone and Sunil Shantha, who went to India to learn Indian music and after India's independence, brought back North Indian and

---

<sup>1</sup> EP is an extension of the single record. It contains more tracks but is not as long as a full album of songs. It was a cheap alternative for both the producer and the artist.

<sup>2</sup> Baila, an entertaining song, mainly urban and instrumentally accompanied, is not further explained here, but can be considered as another important source reaching back to Portuguese colonial times (Dias, 2019).

Bengali classical music to Sri Lanka. They introduced something original and creative musical and lyrical forms in their field which consisted of great complexity. They took up the sarala gee tradition along with the experiments of Hindustani classical and semi classical music genres such as khyal, ghazal, bhajan, and quawali. The major change in the lyrics was formed with the method of fixing a four-line stanza. The themes were seemingly religious songs, love songs, patriotic songs, and didactic songs. The accompanying instruments were the violin, guitar, flute, traditional Sri Lankan drums, sitar and tabla. Hence the roots of these melodious tunes are deeply rooted in entertainment music in Sri Lanka, where a preference for Hindustani music existed due to various reasons (CP Meddegoda, 2018).

Ariyaratne stated that after 1950 the actual gramophone song and later radio song was found to be distinguished only with difficulty (1998: 93).

Sunil Santha (1915-1981) used many musical techniques learned through observing Western music of singing and playing in his compositions such as harmonic progressions and instrumentation (double bass, Spanish guitar). For example, the songs 'kurulu adare', 'nelawee senasenne', 'rella negenne', and 'suwanda Rosa mal nela' (Ariyaratne, 2002: 17).

Another special circumstance of Sunil Santha's musical life is that he printed and published 'Song Folio (1948)' transcribing his Sinhala songs into the Western staff notation system, for those Sri Lankans who admired Western music. Inspired by Sunil Santha, his student P.L.A. Somapala used many Western techniques and music instruments to produce Sinhala songs. Western dancing beats 'Rumba Samba' and Western instruments such as the piano, clarinet, saxophone, and guitar as well as Eastern music instruments were also used for both singing and playing. Following his teacher, he also published three of his song books with their music notations, such as Yamuna (1950), Sigiri (1951), and Dunhida (1952). In the formation of sarala gee during the early decades, singers and composers such as B.S Perera, G.R Edward, Leelawathi, Suriya Shankar Molligoda, R.A. Chandrasena, P.L.A Somapala and W.D. Amaradeva also played decisive roles.

During the period of 1925-1950, Radio Ceylon (SLBC) refused to use Western music for Sinhala songs, not even a Western music instrument could be played, the Director General's special permission had to be sought for such cases. When a permanent orchestra was established at the SLBC, not even a Spanish guitar was allowed to be included therein.

With the establishment of the commercial service at Radio Ceylon in 1950, there had been an easy way to record and broadcast imitative songs with lyrics in Hindi, Tamil and English. For instance: Sinhala songs by Susil Premaratne "ranwan karalin pesila" (English song was 'whish me luck as your way), "ma aa mawatha sandalu thale hinda" (from the English song 'you are my sunshine') and others were composed.

As noted, it was circumscribed to broadcast those Sinhala songs via Radio Ceylon, which have been composed with the grace of Western music. Although, there were no such restrictions caused in the field of film music. B.S. Perera's film 'Perakadoru Bena' (1955), Edwin Samaradiwakara's 'Daskama' (1958), Sheltan Premaratne's 'Gehenu Geta' (1959), Premasiri Kemadasa's 'Senasuma Kothenada' (1966) were outstanding examples of such works (Ariyaratne, 2002: 21-37).

However, the situation generated a significant atmosphere in the Sri Lankan music field by the 1960s. The trade of Gramophone discs ended in 1970. At that juncture these emanated the era of EP (Extended Play) disc. EP discs could give extensive reproduction due to closer grooves and the big area of its surface. An alternative name for an EP disc is 'Microgroove'. There were two types of Microgroove discs available (Ariyaratne, 2002: 47-52).

### **33 1/3 RPM (REVOLUTIONS PER MINUTE) VERSUS 45 RPM**

The 33 1/3 rpm LP disc (long playing) and 45 rpm EP disc were displayed. The LP and EP discs were easily sold out after launching the disc playing machines such as the 'Record Player', and the 'Turn Table'. However, at the beginning it was difficult to find either EP discs or LP discs of Sinhala songs to run with those technologies. Thus, only English, Hindi, and Tamil LP and EP discs were played. Rock and Roll music and pop groups like The Beatles, The Shadows, The Bee Gees and Rolling Stones

became enormously popular among Sri Lankans. Particularly among the younger generation. However, the first Sinhala EP disc was released in 1959 by Louis Brown Company by 'Philips'. The very first LP disc released in 1971 with the label of 'Sooriya' was by Jerold Wickramasooriya. The recording studio Nelu in Nugegoda had accepted to record the stereo (multitrack) version and there were approximately 11 recording studios in Sri Lanka in 1986 (Ariyaratne, 1998: 50). The songs which were popularized by way of Radio Ceylon started to convert those into EP discs around 1974 for example 'Maliniye', 'Upuli', 'Daskon' and others. Later gramophone and radio songs of professional singers such as H.R. Jothipala, J.A. Milton Perera, M.S. Fernando, and Victor Rathnayake were transformed into EP discs (Ariyaratne, 2002: 56,57).

## FINAL REMARKS

This rough overview is only the beginning of a wider research into the field of Sinhala oriented entertainment music in Sri Lanka. Many episodes such as earlier practices in folk songs during ceremonies or on entertainment spots during celebrations, as well as urban entertainment initiated by colonial structures, could not be mentioned here. They will be examined in detail since further studies are highly recommended.

## REFERENCES

- Abhayasundara, Vimal. 2011. *Sangeetha Sanhitha*. Colombo: S. Godage and Brothers.
- Ariyaratne, Sunil. 1998. *The Gramophone Era in Sinhala Music*. Colombo: S. Godage and Brothers.
- Ariyaratne, Sunil. 2001. *Baila Kaffirinha; an Investigation*. Colombo: S Godage and Brothers.
- Ariyaratne, Sunil. 2002. *Pop Music Groups of Sri Lanka*. Colombo: S Godage and Brothers.
- Broughton Simon, Ellingham Mark and Richard Trillo. 1999. *World music / 1 Africa, Europe and the Middle East* London: Rough Guides.
- Broughton, Simon and Ellingham Mark. 2000. *World Music: Latin and North America, Caribbean, India, Asia and Pacific, 2*. London: Rough Guides.
- De Silva, K.M.. 1981. *A History of Sri Lanka*. London: University of California Press.
- Gnanissara, Pathegama. 2009. *Gi Rasa Vinisa*. Colombo: S. Godage and Brothers.
- Gunathilake, M.H.. 1984. *Nadagama: The First Sri Lankan Theatre*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.
- Hennayake, Nalani. 2006. *Culture, politics, and development in postcolonial Sri Lanka*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Jähnichen, Gisa. 2012. How Much "World is World Music? *Essays on World Music and its Preservation*. Edited by Loo Fung Chiat, Loo Fung Ying, and Mohd Nasir Hashim. Saarbrücken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing: 71- 83.
- Kulathillake, Cecil de Silva. 1974. *Lankawe Sangeetha Sambhawaya*. Colombo: Lake House.
- Makuloluwa, W. B. 1970. *Abhinava Mulika Geetha, 3rd Edition*. Colombo: Gunasena Publishing.
- Meddegoda, Chinthaka Prageeth. 2018. Oral Teaching Systems Versus Ongoing Canonization in Hindustani Vocal Practice. *AEMR-EJ*, 2: 53–64.
- Meddegoda, Chinthaka Prageeth. 2019. The Role of Double Reed Instruments in the Process of Cultural Exchange along Past and Present Trading Routes. Lecturer given at the Second Music Education Alliance Across the Belt and Road Conference, CCOM Beijing, 2019. Ms. unpublished.

- Ruvini, J.. 2009, April 29. Nurthi the Living Art. *Daily News*.
- Sachs, Curt. 1943. *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Sachs, Curt. 1949. *A Short History of World Music*. London: Denis Dobson Ltd.
- Sarachchandra, Ediriweera. 1967. *The Folk Drama of Ceylon*. Colombo: Department of Cultural Affairs.
- Sarachchandra, Ediriweera.. 1953. *The Sinhalese Folk Play and the Modern Stage*. Colombo: Ceylon University Press Board.
- Silva, K.. 1981. *A History of Sri Lanka*. London: University of California Press.
- Sirimewan, Sujeewa. 2003. *Sindu Sevanaya*. Mudungoda: Tharanga.
- Swami, P.. 2002. *Music of the Nations*. New Delhi: Munishiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Thilakerathne, I. 2009, August 16. "Importance of Music to Cinema". *Sunday Observer*.
- Weerasinghe, Chamikara. 2008, 12 January. "Iraj to release album in Dhevehi". Archives, *Daily News*.

Cite as:

**Ong, Frank. 2019. The Indie Rock Music Scene in Kuala Lumpur Before 2015. *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 36-41.**

## **THE INDIE ROCK MUSIC SCENE IN KUALA LUMPUR BEFORE 2015**

### **Abstract**

This paper is to give an overview about a specific way doing and consuming music in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. The time frame of observation is short and defined from 2009 to 2014. In this period, many changes in public life occurred, which were connected to an increasing pressure on artists who were not complying to mainstream media demands. This overview is based on a long-lasting cooperation and a steady flow of information between musicians, organizers, and the researcher. The consequences of giving this short are a list of questions and insights into the dynamics of musical expression among specific audiences and their musical idols.

### **Keywords**

Indie Rock, Malaysia, subculture, urban music

### **Frank Ong**

A musician with vast experience in contemporary popular music, Frank Ong (full name Frank Ong Thwee Cheen) has performed internationally including in Hong Kong, Singapore, Los Angeles, Taiwan and Malaysia. He is actively involved in the Malaysian music industry as a session musician, arranger, production and executive producer. After many years of industry experience, Frank joined the contemporary popular music education fraternity in Malaysia during the industry's early days in 2000. His research interests are contemporary popular music and culture, fusion music, Indie and mainstream music industries, and popular music semantics.

### **Contact**

franko[[@](mailto:franko@sunway.edu.my)]sunway.edu.my

# THE INDIE ROCK MUSIC SCENE IN KUALA LUMPUR BEFORE 2015

**Frank Ong**

## **Abstract**

This paper is to give an overview about a specific way doing and consuming music in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. The time frame of observation is short and defined from 2009 to 2014. In this period, many changes in public life occurred, which were connected to an increasing pressure on artists who were not complying to mainstream media demands. This overview is based on a long-lasting cooperation and a steady flow of information between musicians, organizers, and the researcher. The consequences of giving this short are a list of questions and insights into the dynamics of musical expression among specific audiences and their musical idols.

**Keywords:** Indie Rock, Malaysia, subculture, urban music

## **INTRODUCTION INTO THE LOCAL INDIE ROCK SCENE**

Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia is a city where music of many cultures can be found. In the early 20th century, Bangsawan musicians adopted Western musical instruments playing Anglo American Music (Matusky & Tan, 2004) and other musical genres migrated to Malaya from Arabian and Indian cultures. Western popular music is practiced by many self-learning pop musicians and caters to wide audiences and listeners. Music of the British Invasion, Classic Rock, R&B, Disco, Pop, and Hip Hop have established their presence with globally mainstreamed music listeners in the city of Kuala Lumpur.

Since the late 1990s, Indie Rock music business with an Alternative Rock music concept is gaining awareness in the popular music industry of Malaysia. At present, local Indie Rock music and its culture has exposed in local Indie Rock concerts such as Rockaway' (Livescape, 2012), an independent rock music festival staging local and foreign bands since 2009, and 'Rock the World' (Rock The World, 2008), another local Indie Rock music festival stage yearly since 2000. There are other smaller concerts that are not held yearly such as: KL Independent Band Fest (LifeinKL.com, 2009), DIGIMusicLive Concert (DIGI, 2009), Indie youth fest' (fest, 2011). Exposing themselves and performing at music clubs, event gigs, and being winners of local and regional award shows such as Voice Independent Music Awards 'VIMA' (Themes, 2011), Anugerah Industri Musik (AIM, 2011), Shout Awards (8TV, 2010) and MTV World Stage Awards (MTV World Stage, 2012) many local Indie Rock musicians now display images and identities differ to their previous underground era.

Local Indie Rock music is now supported musically by labels independent from media record companies with interest in creating a regional Indie music community distributing resources and supporting an open platform for options of writing and producing music in directions apart from global mainstream. This has resulted in the situation that local Indie Rock solo artists and bands are writing more songs texts in English language and producing music for the local and foreign market that was once dominated by globally mainstreamed local rock and pop music styles.

## **MUSICAL IDEOLOGY**

According to Eagleton (1991), the term ideology is a vast concept ,with a whole range of useful meanings', and is impossible to compress the ,wealth of its meanings into a single comprehensive definition', but for the purpose of this study its definition will be limited to: 'forms of thought motivated



by social interests' and 'a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class' (Ibid: 1). The alternative ideology of Indie Rock music partially overlaps into the mainstream popular music ideology in terms of verbal texts, group identities, social ideologies and products (Brown & Volgsten, 2006). Where mainstream popular music is mostly created as entertainment products suited for the general masses, alternative Indie Rock music reserves itself to be a product raising personal and social issues.

From interviews with Rithan, Meng, Anthony Yap, and Azway, it can be concluded that presently in Kuala Lumpur, Indie Rock artists have elements of an urban middle class working mentality and attitude, possessing awareness of their immediate living conditions which are triggered by societal, economic, cultural, political and global changes which can be found in lyrical contents of many songs. It can be further understood that the songs, especially the text messages, act as social vehicles assisting the individual to bond physically, mentally or both, with other individuals that realized the same social and cultural meanings expressed musically, thus forming groups with identities related to a similar ideology. These groups gather during the artistes' appearances; listen to their favorite songs, socialize or have a sense of belonging to the group or/and identity to share with others.

Social and individual conflicts, poverty, love, alienation, marginalization, and environmental problems are generally ideological issues experienced by the listeners which are highlighted in Indie Rock song texts. The musical value of the song can be seen in:

- the manner of delivery,
- musical accompaniment,
- what the artiste believes in,
- and the content of the lyrics.

As stated in an interview with Rithan (2011, accessible: ARCPA 01322)<sup>1</sup> Indie Rock music works similarly to a trusted voice of the community which has its own identity and personality, unlike artists who compose or perform commercially to suit the trend of the market regardless of the community to which they socially belong.

## GIGGING SCENE

It is understood economically by club owners that the justified standard of a good performance by the musicians is having the capacity to lure in a good spending crowd, and have the ability to make the customers happy with their performances.

There are many such commercial clubs and pubs in Kuala Lumpur as shown in figure 1, e.g. 'The Library' (1), 'Beach Club' (2), 'Zouk Club' (3) and 'Changkat Clubs' There, performances are mostly consumed as an entertainment product rather than a platform for the musicians to voice out their ideologies. The named venues serve a mentality of hyper reality and create simulations of developed countries' entertainment environment and are designed to attract the local and foreign youths residing in the city of Kuala Lumpur that mainly want to be entertained without any further commitment.

Underground gig venues, which are different from purely commercial clubs and pubs, are places where local Indie bands perform, sell their CDs, and expose themselves to a dedicated audience. These venues are equipped with simple set ups; a stage, basic music equipment such as sound system, drums, amplifiers for the guitar and bass, and microphones for vocals. Or it can just be an empty stage with or without any music equipment. These venues attract the alternative crowd with interest in varieties of Indie genres. According to Azway (2011, accessible: ARCPA 01305, 0:08:20-0:08:55), gigs are usually divided into two types of performances:

1. an acoustic performance involving one or two performers and

---

<sup>1</sup> ARCPA stands for Audiovisual Resource Centre for the Performing Arts and is the unique ID of this small scale AV-Archive at the Music Department of Putra University, Malaysia. The files are publicly accessible under these Code Numbers.

2. involving a band of more than three members which is sometimes called a full force set up.

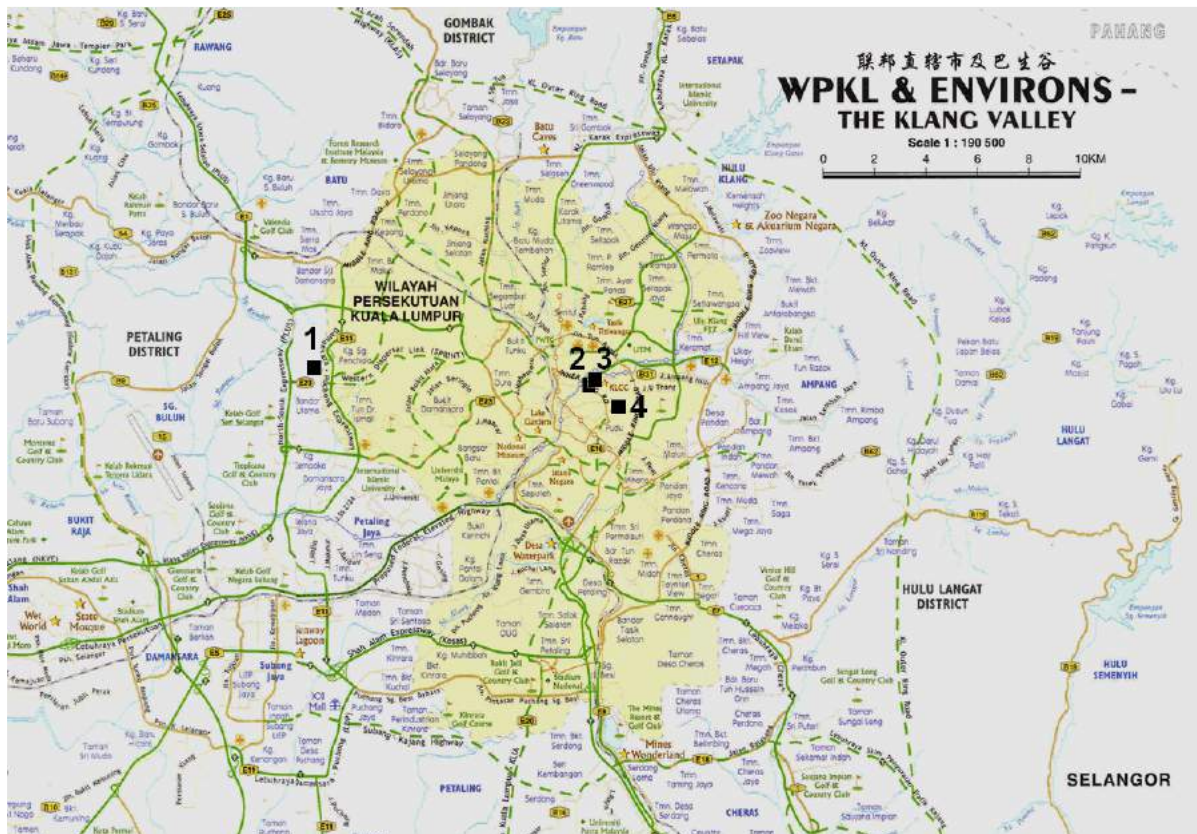
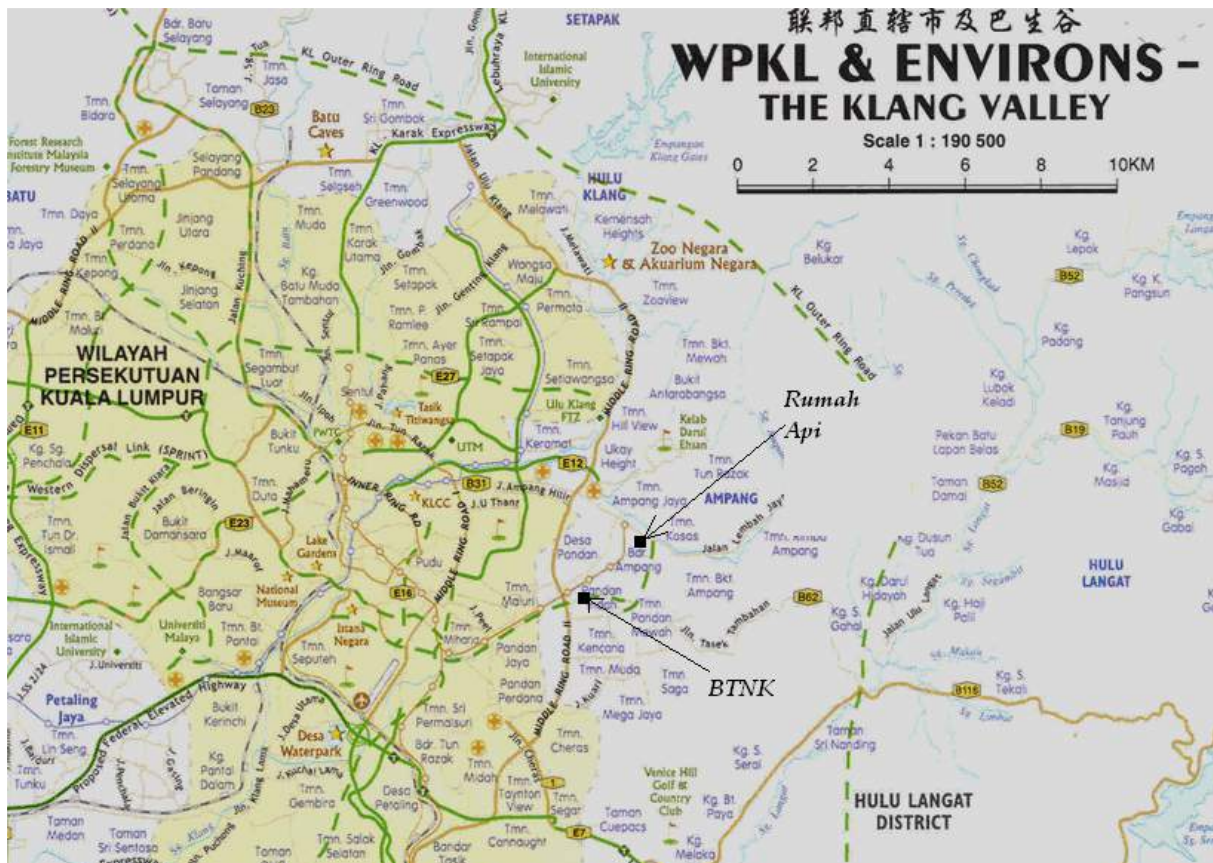


Figure 1: Locations of entertainment clubs in Kuala Lumpur. (Open source, modified by Frank Ong).

Azway further explains on the Kuala Lumpur underground Indie Rock scene is limited and the real underground venues<sup>5</sup> are 'Rumah Api' located at Ampang and 'BTNK' in Pandan Indah (both shown in Figure 2) operating in Kuala Lumpur, and the closing down of the major venues such as Orange, Paul's Place, One Café, and Doppo Kafe has affected much presence of the local Indie Rock music scene. Local underground venues are for Indie music performances. These are social venues for the alternative music culture, entrance is cheaper than to jazz clubs and discos around the city.

These places attracted mostly teenagers and young adults with an age between fifteen and twenty-five. One of the most serious problems underground venues had to face was consuming alcohol and drugs by demographically underaged before arriving at the premises of the underground gig venues, making the venues 'hotspots for the cops' (Azway, 2011, ARCPA 01305, 0:04:55-0:05:30).

Currently, most Indie Rock artists or musicians performing in club gigs are hired by different clubs or cafés for a short period of time of the week within the Klang Valley. Such venues like 'The Laundry' and 'Lust KL' are more selective when hiring local Indie Rock artists or musicians. These venues, which also hire artists or musicians of different genres on other evenings of the week, are business enterprises that provide featured performers or general entertainment. The venues are more obviously commercial in nature and cater to a mixed crowd of different social classes instead of the apparently pure alternative crowd from underground clubs.



**Figure 2: Location of Underground clubs in Kuala Lumpur: 1) Rumah Api, 2) 'BTNK'. (Open source, modified by Frank Ong).**

Echoing Azway's statement, Ming also expresses dissatisfaction of the limited performance venues for Indie Rock music in Kuala Lumpur (Ming, 2011, accessible: 01320, 0:17:28-0:17:58). He further promoted that 'Live' houses are currently very popular with Indie Rock artists in Japan and Hong Kong and implied the same being true for Kuala Lumpur. It seems that there are only two live houses in Kuala Lumpur and these venues are usually rented by organizers to stage events or music performances. These two live houses are, as can be concluded, 'KL Life Center' situated at Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, and 'The Blackbox' at Solaris Dutamas, Jalan Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur. These venues have hosted a variety of live show events including local Indie Rock shows since 2009.

### CYBERSPACE IN LOCAL USE

The alternative media, blogs, and websites are sources where members of the local Indie Rock culture exchange information and communicate ideas. Here, the internet is used as a social tool creating alternative means of socializing, doing business, and exposure of a specific ideology and culture. It provides the connection for cultural exchange, educational and information updates. This is also the main source for self-learning and gathering of new musical and cultural techniques and thoughts.

The local Indie Rock community sets up blogs, websites, and joins social networks like 'facebook' and 'twitter' of their favorite artists. If chosen to do so, the artists can be directly connected with their fans, keep them updated on their gig dates and provide other personal information. This creates a closer relationship eliminating social class limitations between the artist and the masses, which assist the fans in understanding the artists' music and provide independent music companies and artists an alternative solution in doing business.

Local websites that solely promotes Indie Rock music concerts and activities are quite rare. There are a few that allow visitors to gain updated information on upcoming events and general information of the local Indie scene. **Junk Gigorama** is a local website that focuses on upcoming concerts and shows

around Klang Valley. The creators of Junk Gigorama are interested in what is happening musically in the South East Asia region. The website supports also mainstream popular despite alternative music live concerts and shows. It allows visitors to be connected to its social media network 'Facebook', 'Tweeter' and 'Gigorama' for instant alerts and receiving immediate updates. The website is credited to Bluedots Sdn. Bhd in Petaling Jaya and can be accessed by logging on to <http://junk.gigorama.net/>. **Malayapark.com**, a website supporting the local Indie Rock and Indie Pop music communicates in a mixture of the Malay and English language. At the bottom of the webpage, it provides a long list of local Indie Rock, and Pop artists and their youtube links. By observing the youtube links referred in the website, there are solo artists and bands that are made up of different races residing in Malaysia and it seems that the multicultural exchange of language and social acceptance is shared through the choice of Indie Rock music artists of this website. At the bottom of the page it is stated that the website is designed by 'Joe' and it is part of the 'Malaysian Underground Community Resources'. It can be accessed by logging on to <http://malayapark.com/wp/>.

Local Indie Rock artist websites mainly provide a local platform where the local Indie Rock community can get information and interact with the artists. This provides a direct interaction between the fans and, possibly more importantly, anyone who wants to gain access to the artists. The '**Rithan Deja Voodoo Spells**' facebook is the official social media website for the band 'Deja Voodoo Spells'. The top part of the page displays an old Ibanez Jem 7D guitar belonging to the guitarist of the band. The cover of the band's third album title 'Dangerous Knowledge' is also displayed as a thumbnail on the page. The site can be accessed through <https://www.facebook.com/rithandvs>. Another band '**Love Me Butch**' also uses facebook to provide people an opportunity to comment on and communicate with the band and among their fans. Both bands use 'Tweeter', 'My Space' and 'Youtube' as their promotional and communicational tool; 'Love Me Butch'–Facebook is accessible through <https://www.facebook.com/lovemebutch>. Many other Indie Rock artists also use such social media sites to promote their products and themselves to an audience they want to face directly in contrast to mainstreamed popular music, where audiences are kept rather anonymously and in a distance.

### SHORT SUMMARY ON THE INDIE ROCK MUSIC SCENE IN KUALA LUMPUR

The local Kuala Lumpur Indie Rock music scene is growing with a community supporting its own music and culture. They practice online communication and are connected to their own scene. The Indie Rock music community projects itself with an international identity through collaborating and associating itself with the international and regional scene. More performing venues and gigs are needed for musical exposure and for the local Indie Rock artists to grow and sustain themselves.

## REFERENCES

- 8TV. 2010. *SHOUT AWARDS*. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from Shout Awards 2010: <http://www.shoutawards.com.my/2010/index.html>.
- AIM. 2011. *Anugerah Industri Musik*. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from <http://www.aim.org.my/>.
- Azway 2011. Interview with Frank Ong. ARCPA 01305.
- Brown, Steven., & Volgsten, Ulrik. 2006. *Music and Manipulation*. New York: Berghahan Books.
- DIGI. 2009. *DigiMusic Pluz*. Retrieved January 29, 2012, from DigiMusic Pluz: <http://ct.digi.com.my/index.do>.
- Eagleton, Terry. 1991. *Ideology: An Introduction*. London: Verso.
- Indie youth fest*. 2011, May 6. Retrieved September 16, 2012, from [http://Indieyouthfest.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=263&Itemid=135](http://Indieyouthfest.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=263&Itemid=135).
- Livescape*. 2012. In *Rockaway Festival*. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from [www.rockawayfest.com](http://www.rockawayfest.com).
- Matusky, Patricia A., & Tan Sooi Beng. 2004. *The Music of Malaysia*. London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Ming 2011. Interview with Frank Ong. ARCPA01320.
- MTV World Stage*. 2012. Retrieved 2012, from <http://worldstage.mtvasia.com/>.
- Rithan 2011. Interview with Frank Ong. ARCPA 01322.
- Rithan, Meng, Anthony Yap, and Azway 2013. Interview with Frank Ong. ARCPA 01322.
- Rock the World*. 2008, August. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from <http://www.facebook.com/malayaparkofficial>.

Cite as:

**Xiao Mei [萧梅]. 2019. Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music. *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 42-51.**

## **EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ON CHINESE TRADITIONAL MUSIC**

### **Abstract**

'Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music' has a history of thousands of years, making it difficult to present this topic comprehensively. Therefore, the larger theme "Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music within a Dialogue of Civilizations and Cultures" that is partly discussed here will be limited to the contemporary history and the appearance of Chinese traditional music after the first encounters with 'so-called' Western music. This paper is mainly a reflection on the author's personal experiences, views on certain aspects of the topic, and a wider consideration of historical events that are connected to it.

### **Keywords**

education, tradition, Chinese music, dialogue, cultural views

### **Xiao Mei [萧梅]**

Xiao Mei [萧梅] is a professor at the musicology department of Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She is the Director of the Research Institute of Ritual Music in China, an appointed Researcher of the Museum for Oriental Instruments. Beyond this, she is the President of the Association for Traditional Music in China and a Member of the Executive Board of ICTM since 2011, founding member of the ICTM Study Group on East Asian Music, and Chair of the National Committee of the ICTM in China. She has been collecting and studying traditional, folk and ritual music of the Han people and other groups in China such as Mongolian, Oroqen, Naxi, Miao (Hmong) and Zhuang over a long period of time.

### **Contact**

e\_xiaomei@126.com

# EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ON CHINESE TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Xiao Mei [萧梅]

## *Abstract*

‘Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music’ has a history of thousands of years, making it difficult to present this topic comprehensively. Therefore, the larger theme “Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music within a Dialogue of Civilizations and Cultures” that is partly discussed here will be limited to the contemporary history and the appearance of Chinese traditional music after the first encounters with ‘so-called’ Western music. This paper is mainly a reflection on the author’s personal experiences, views on certain aspects of the topic, and a wider consideration of historical events that are connected to it.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords** education, tradition, Chinese music, dialogue, cultural views

## AGE OF EMPIRE VERSUS NATION-STATE

From a Chinese perspective, 1840 is regarded as the year when modern Chinese history began. In 1840, when the Opium War broke out, gunfire from the West opened the gates of China. After that, the traditional idea that all lands belong to the emperor was challenged. The system that had held for thousands of years, where the key relationships were between groups in one land that one emperor ruled, was altered. From 1840, the key feature was the international relationship between China and various other countries.

After 1840, many revolutions and changes in China failed and people began to wonder how to turn this country into a powerful nation, and how to save its endangered independence. This also inspired the social elites to build a new national spirit and promote the establishment of a powerful new nation-state. Learning from the West and developing science and democracy were the main approaches that were adopted to realize this goal. A new national education system was required to support these ideas, and the old-style private schools, which tutored students for imperial examinations, were transformed into schools for the public. In short, the subjects of an empire were to be turned into citizens of a nation-state. The scholar and reformer Liang Qichao (梁启超) once said that in order to improve the populace's cultivation and spiritual education poetry and music are of great importance (Liang, 1959 [1902]: 77)<sup>2</sup>.

However, intellectuals at that time faced a great challenge in exactly deciding which of the many Chinese music genres were the most suitable for this purpose. They could not identify which of the many musical traditions – including many different kinds of Chinese song types, Chinese *xiqu* (drama) music, storytelling, repertoires for musical instruments and other combined musical genres – could be used to represent this type of new China. And which musical tradition could be representative enough to be taught within the newly established national education systems, and could become known as *guoyue* (国乐) or ‘national music’.

By 1840, the court music which had been so important in China for centuries no longer existed. The music of the literati, such as that performed on the zither *guqin* (古琴), was thought to be private music

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper evolved from a keynote with the title Education and Research on Chinese Traditional Music within a Dialogue of Civilizations and Cultures” for a conference in Australia held 3 years back.

<sup>2</sup> The original text is: “盖欲改造国民之品质,则诗歌音乐为精神教育之一要件”.

or noble music and also unsuitable. At that time, folk songs of the ordinary people were also considered to be unsuitable as they were viewed as simple, superficial, or shallow. Therefore, there was no musical form that was suitable for representing China as a modern nation-state. Moreover, the western symphony orchestra was considered a superior musical genre, and one that Chinese intellectuals wanted to emulate as part of a new national music which could represent the modern nation-state and solidify a spirit of a new society.

But did Chinese music traditions really have nothing at all? If so, how could this country exist for so many years? In fact, music has been incredibly important in Chinese society since ancient times. However, musical activities during earlier times had two characteristics that are crucial to this discussion, and explain why the intellectuals in the 1840s encountered the situation that are described.

1. The first of these two key characteristics was the very nature of music within Chinese society. In terms of Chinese traditional culture, it is difficult to find a term that exactly corresponds with the contemporary western concept of "music". In Chinese language, we use "yue" (樂) to refer to the activities within the rituals of worshipping that are fundamental to Chinese politics and civilization for millennia. Such yue was thought of as being more than an auditory art which is defined by the movement of sound through time. Rather, it was considered to be a performative language that included physical movement, gestures and actions, and was expressed in poetry, singing, dancing and the playing of musical instruments. What we now call "music" developed over thousands of years according to these parameters. The resulting forms of yue were intimately related to their ritual function, and thus unsuited to being decontextualized and used in the service of a modern nation-state.

2. The second key characteristic was the diversity in China's various forms of yue or music. This was partly a result of the natural diversity in such a vast country. But it also had a socio-political rationale. Music was intimately tied to rituals, including ancestor worship and life cycle rituals related to one's birth, adulthood, marriage, and death. All these were related to ancestor worship and family reproduction. This is Chinese cultural consciousness which is centred on family bloodlines, and which was supported through ritual and yue – music. While it resulted in a very rich musical landscape, no single musical genre was suitable for representing the entire nation in the new political climate of modern China.

Now, let's return to China of the 1840s, and look at how the intellectuals of that time attempted to solve this problem of creating a new music for the Chinese nation-state. One important way of the scholars was to learn from the West. During that time, there were three ways in which Chinese people had access to western music and music views.

(1) First, missionaries brought some western music to China. Western music education was introduced in 1845 through missionary schools. There were music classes in the curriculum (Figure 1). The second figure shows the textbook *Enlightenment of Music Principles* (Figure 2), which was written by the missionary C.W. Mateer's wife Julia Brown in 1864.

(2) Secondly, western music was accessed through scholars who went abroad to study, including the first president of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Xiao Youmei and the pioneer of Chinese musicology Wang Guangqi.

(3) Finally, people who went to study in Japan learnt about music from the West in Japan. They saw what happened in Japan after the Meiji Reform: Western music was popular and music became a common subject. Japan was an influential model for Chinese intellectuals wishing to learn from the West, because Japan was also located in Asia and had experienced power and prosperity in its modern history.

At that time, there were three different ideas about the building of a universal music in China. Some advocated for wholesale westernization, some for nationalism, as the thought of quintessence of Chinese traditional music, and some for a combination of Chinese and Western musical forms and approaches.



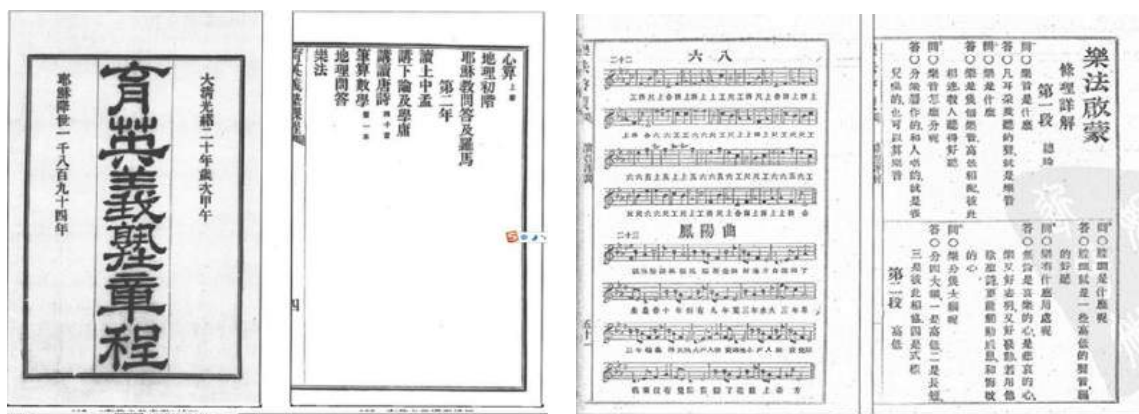


Figure 1: “Constitution of Yuying school”, published in 1894<sup>3</sup>; Figure 2: *Enlightenment of Music Principles* published in 1872<sup>4</sup>.

There should be introduced as an example Xiao Youmei (1884-1940, Figure 3). He is the founder of an affiliated music school (音乐传习所) of Peking University and Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He wrote *Study of the History of Chinese Orchestra before the 17<sup>th</sup> century* [17 世纪以前中国管弦乐队的历史的研究] in 1916 (Xiao, 2004), which is the first systematic study of Chinese traditional instrumental music ensembles in China. His work was based on early literature to explain the musical instrument combinations, music education system, and music applications before the Qing dynasty in China. Also, inspired by the classification and description of western musical instruments, he put forward a system of categorizing ancient Chinese musical instruments<sup>5</sup>. After Xiao Youmei, Wang Guangqi (1891—1936, Figure 4) went to study musicology at the University of Berlin. In 1934, he received a doctoral degree from the University of Bonn with his dissertation *A Study of Classical Chinese Opera / Die chinesische klassische Oper* [论中国古典歌剧]<sup>6</sup> (Wang, 2009). What these two scholars’ studies have in common is that they compare Chinese music and Western music, and are thus directly related to comparative musicology. Wang Guangqi once was a student of Erich Moritz von Hornbostel. Both scholars, Xiao Youmei and Wang Guangqi, tried to look for a direction in which China’s music should develop by comparing Eastern and Western tonal systems.

It is worth mentioning that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an examination of Chinese musical traditions focused on identifying the shortcomings of Chinese musical traditions that were supposedly apparent through learning about music from the West. The outcomes of this comparison were then used to innovate new elements. Taking Wang Guangqi for an example, he put forward a comprehensive system for the evolution of musical temperaments, tone, music notation and musical instruments. To complete this task, they believed it was necessary to collect ancient Chinese music and folk music, while at the same time scientific methods applied to Western music should be adopted to make a new national music. In other words, the contents were taken from traditions identified as Chinese while the authoring tools and methods of presentation were added from the West.

<sup>3</sup> In 1845, founders of Ningpo Boy’s school, missionary D.B. McCartee and R.Q. Way moved to Hangzhou in 1867. They changed the name of the school into Yuying School (育英义塾) and then into Zhijiang University (之江大学) in 1914. This is quoted from *Zhong Guo Jindai Yinyue Jiaoyushi Jinian / Chronological Record of Modern Chinese Music Education 1840-2000 (new edition)*, ed. by Sun Jinan, Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press: 4.

<sup>4</sup> The Mengyang School (蒙养学堂) set up by a missionary from the Presbyterian Church, C.W. Mateer (1836-1908) and his wife Julia Brown (1837-1898) in 1864. Julia was writing a textbook, *Enlightenment of Music Principles* [乐法启蒙]; quoted from *Zhong Guo Jindai Yinyue Jiaoyushi Jinian / Chronological Record of Modern Chinese Music Education 1840-2000 (new edition)*, ed. by Sun Jinan, Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press: 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> He also wrote “A Comparative Study of Chinese music and Western Music” (1920); “Introduction to the musical scale in the East and the West at All Times” (1930); “Evolution of Chinese ancient music” (1931) and others.

<sup>6</sup> He also wrote “The Comparison of Tonal System Between the East and the West” (1926); “The Music of the Oriental” (1929).



**Figure 3: Xiao Youmei; Figure 4: Wang Guangqi (photos by courtesy of the Music Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Arts).**

The people who really practiced this approach were those like Liu Tianhua and Yang Yinliu, who never went to study abroad.



**Figure 5: Liu Tianhua (photo open access); Figure 6: Yang Yinliu (photos by courtesy of the Music Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Arts).**

Liu Tianhua (刘天华 1895-1932, Figure 5) set up the Society for the Advancement of National Music (国乐改进社) in 1927. Like Xiao Youmei and Wang Guangqi introduced earlier, he advocated a combination of Chinese and Western elements. He tried to create a new way of combining tradition with the then experienced modernity. In order to achieve this goal, he planned investigations on musicians, musical composition, music notation, musical instruments and the nationals' aesthetic feelings of musical compositions. He was collecting books and musical instruments related to national music, recording national music and making improvements in musical notation and musical instruments. Overall, his studies were mainly concerned about creativity and teaching, especially regarding traditional instrumental music (Liu, 2009). His pioneering work regarding playing the erhu laid a strong foundation for an unmatched creativity and an education legacy of traditional musical instruments. Hearing his work "Bright Journey" (光明行, composed in 1931), it becomes clear that in this piece, Liu Tianhua has used a marching rhythm and a kind of modulation deriving from harmonic progressions in major chords to composite a revolutionary Chinese music "Marching on Bright Road" .

Yang Yinliu's (杨荫浏 1899-1984, Figure 6) studied and made mainly contributions to the construction of Chinese music theories as well as to studies of modal temperament in ancient repertoires through analysing those notations. He dedicated his research to Chinese traditional music, especially the old type of the seven strings zither *Qin* (琴学), musical archaeology and instrumentation, and other less prominent fields (Yang, 2009).

What these scholars, Liu and Yang, shared in common was that both of them paid great attention to the gathering and collection of music practices and folk music and introduced creatively a unique field work method among those engaged in Chinese music circles.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF A UNIVERSAL MUSIC KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM ABOUT CHINESE TRADITIONAL MUSIC BETWEEN 1949 AND 1980

Before that time, the first modern scholars of education and research on Chinese traditional music were using individual and informal working methods and approaches. Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China, from 1950 to 1960, the ideas and methods that they advocated were further refined to reach a national level. Chinese musicians undertook a number of activities in three key areas to develop a universal knowledge system for Chinese traditional music:

First, a professional education system of traditional music was established. The theory of the music of China's nationalities was developed as a major project and its outcomes in the "Music Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Arts" and nine major music conservatories, allowing those schools to be a place where traditional music researchers were nurtured. Also, the nine major music conservatories developed a major in the performance of traditional instruments based on instrumental traditions of the Han nationality in music performance, and they produced systematically courses and textbooks. The sources of those courses and textbook materials were drawn from the second area of activities undertaken by Chinese musicians at that time lead by the Music Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Arts in 1964 and later following projects.

As part of the second area of activities in 1950-1960, musicians and researchers looked for and collected various materials. Large-scale investigations on national folk music were organized by institutes on different levels, which was then called 'looking for properties and heritage'. Local, regional, and central governments organized festivals on folk music and dance performances of different scales. Figures 7 to 9 give some rough examples.



**Figure 7: Mongolian ensemble in the first National Folk Music and Dance Performance in Beijing, 1953; Figure 8: Tibetan ensemble during the National Music Week in Beijing, 1956; Figure 9: Kam singing group in the second National Folk Music and Dance Performance held in Beijing, 1957 (all photos by courtesy of the Music Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Arts).**

Also, many of folk musicians were invited to teach skills and music repertoires in conservatories of music, such as Wu Jinglue as master of the old zither *guqin* (古琴), Lin Shicheng as master of the *pipa* (琵琶), Zhao Chunfeng as player of the Suona (唢呐), Yang Yuanheng as *guanzi* player (Chinese oboe, 管子) went to the China Central Music Conservatory. The blind Sun Wenming taught as a master of the *erhu* (two-string fiddle, 二胡) in the Shanghai Conservatory of Music; Luo Jiuxiang as a master of the half tube zither *zheng* (箏) at the Tianjin Conservatory of Music, and many more.

Various resources were used to make textbooks for education (Figure 10). For example, in the early 1950s, the research division of the Central Conservatory of Music collected folk songs, not only including those of the Han but also of some of the minorities, instrumental music, ballads, Chinese *xiqu* (drama) music as well as texts written for folk music performances. Finally. In the early 1950s, the research division of the Central Conservatory of Music collected materials that included 20,939 folk songs; among which were 16,939 songs of the Han and about 4,000 songs of the minorities; 914 pieces and 45 sets of instrumental music; 2,572 pieces and 53 sets of ballads; 3,440 pieces and 27 sets of local

dramas' music; more than 100 kinds of text writings for folk music; more than 4,000 pictures of music events and informal practice; wire recordings of about 400 hours, and some others. This is mentioned in *Works of Abing* (Yang [1952] 2009, 7: 495-548).



**Figure 10: Collage of study material collected during this period of time (photo collage open access).**

This development reveals the huge influence that academic thoughts mainly from Eastern Europe, including Russian developments, but also fundamentally from the activities of Bartok and Kodaly as deliverers of methods and thinkers in terms of textual collections and the reorganization of folk music pieces, had on Chinese scholars at that time (Bartok, 1961; Kodaly, 1964).

During that period, the main goal of Chinese musicians' collection, reorganization of and research into traditional music was to contribute to the construction of a new Chinese music, including Chinese music theory and compositions with the meaning of what was known about it in Western music. While it facilitated unprecedented achievements in national music education, it also brought some danger to Chinese traditional music awareness. In other words, the construction of a national music in that time transcended the locally limited heritage mode based on bloodline and geographical relationships and moved into being an integrated art education system centred on a universal knowledge system that was yet to be strengthened. In terms of methods: using various methods of western musicology of that time to collect and interpret Chinese traditional music could not be avoided and the partly erasure of differences amongst musical cultures in China was seemingly the price to be paid for it.

## WHAT WAS LOST?

Here are some post-1980-reflections and practices inspired by ethnomusicological views of that time that was then called *minzu yinyue xue* (民族音乐学), a term that was fully taken over from the West.

In the 1980s, after the end of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese musicians began to absorb ideas from ethnomusicology – understood as the study of music in culture – through their communications with international scholars. During that time, Chinese academic circles recommenced the exchange with international scholars, especially with North American ethnomusicologists. One of the most widely used writings was, for example, *Folk Music in the United States: An Introduction* (compiled by the Music Research Institute at Shanghai Conservatory of Music (1984), comprising a number of writings contributed by early influential ethnomusicologists. These communications inspired the Chinese academia to reflect on their earlier research. Mutual communication included lectures given by foreign

scholars, Chinese scholars going abroad and an exchange of ideas with scholars from Hongkong and Taiwan.

As mentioned above, a large-scale collection of traditional music was conducted in China. In comparison with Western music, musicologists were suddenly taken by the notion of “absolute music”, which instead of integrative Chinese traditional ‘*yue*’ led to the phenomenon that the relationship between music and festivals, beliefs or rituals as well as the true meaning of locality have been overlooked. The scholars focused on music production and not the process of music making in its social context. Moreover, with regard to the construction of a new music system for China, folk music was transformed in a condescending manner. This is what could be called de-contextualization.

Especially, the music practice kept through the then modern staff or cipher notation, the classification of traditional music was referred to, followed an identical path as the one of Western thoughts. In return, the music analysis of Chinese traditional music was also referred to in Western music theory. There have been changes related to the tonal construction of any music tradition. For instance, western staff notation is not completely suitable to describe an actual Chinese tune. To mention an example, when I sing a piece of a *Kunqu* (昆曲) song one can follow it through looking at the applied cipher notation *gongche* (工尺谱) used in *Kunqu* while listening to the specific melody *Bubujiao* (步步娇, which is the name of the *Qupai*). The example shows that it is not one pitch as a notated tone as often provided in Western classical music, but it consists of a certain range of frequencies. The Chinese ethnomusicologist Shen Qia named this phenomenon *Yinqiang* (音腔; Shen, 1982). *Yinqiang* (音腔) is one tone step, but it can have gradual changes of its actual pitch and all kinds of changes in timbre and dynamics. It is sad to observe that after a hundred years of formal music education, some of our students at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music consider the sound of *Yinqiang* as out of tune. This fact shows the students’ perception has been trained and shaped in an unwanted direction by neglecting the differences in the music itself.

In addition, there had been changes relating to musical transmission. The modern music education system required a hierarchy of choices and textbooks. Orally transmitted musical legacies were altered by the use of new staff and cipher notation. This also changed the original focus in Chinese traditional music in the perspective of the performers. The music became centred on texts and composers, leading also to a reduction of musical aspects such as creativity and interpretation of traditional musical frameworks.

Additionally, there had been changes related to stage musical performance. The rich and diverse range of instrumental music ensembles suitable for local music genres was transformed into a new kind of Chinese orchestra resembling Western symphonic orchestras. This inevitably brought changes to traditional musical instruments and their performance, especially to features such as the employment of a unified temperament, changes in volume, and a reform of instrumental timbre.

During this period, the most important feature of academic work was a reflection on the methodology of fieldwork. The scholars began to consider the relationship between the researchers and those being researched. In the past, scholars thought that since they studied the culture of their own nation, they could regard themselves as part of the group. This led naturally to imagining themselves as representatives of a particular ethnic group or region. So, they began to emphasise local knowledge. Music studies should not only be concerned with the music itself, but should also consider the behaviour of the musicians in the corresponding social and cultural environment. In terms of education, such an approach also became standard for Masters and PhD theses. Hence the large number of musical ethnographies provided educational resources and promoted the implementation of the educational policy of ‘musical education in the mother tongue’ (母语教育).

Ritual music, religious music, and historical court music were once again the focus of interest and research. In these areas, studies of shamanic music, Taoist music, music used in Buddhist context and the ritual music of popular beliefs were the most prominent.

## SHADOWS OR DIALOGUE:

### EXPERIENCES AND CURRENT ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL PRACTICES IN CHINA

From the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the present, a hundred years passed by but the education and research of Chinese traditional music still got a strong impact from Western music practices, musicology, and ethnomusicology as well as in whatever subcategory such as music theory and comparative musicology prior to 1980 or ethnomusicology after 1980. Nowadays, Chinese scholars are concerned about and may think deeply whether Western academic thoughts, concepts, and methods cast a shadow over Chinese scholars, or has there been a scholarly dialogue between China and the Western world over the past century.

First, let's go back to the issue of "local knowledge". For the past thirty years, as we focused our studies on ethnographic cases, the questions around these studies were: why, in China's long history, was it able to maintain such a long-lasting culture? What kind of civilized world did create it, and how could that be reflected through music? To answer these questions, I'm afraid that using only ethnographic methods focusing on case studies ('one place at one time') situated among small-scale societies is somewhat limited. Chinese scholars recognized that China is a multi-ethnic country and that while the Han are the major ethnic group, China's musical culture is characterized through inclusion of the music of various communities in different places. Therefore, now it is time to ask how to incorporate an in-depth exploration of 'local knowledge' in balance with studies that move beyond the local. Chinese scholars to truly see the relationship and mutually affecting the dynamics among different cultures in the course of history. This is an important new direction. There are four broad research areas in which Chinese scholars have been working now:

At first, I think that in China, Western ethnomusicology is defined as studying the 'other' in foreign countries. This seems to have been the main goal of research for a long time. The epistemology along with its methodology is developed for a field work in this sense. As experienced through currently available literature, Chinese scholars have been working domestically. Their main field is 'at home'. Now we face the problem of not really recognizing the diversity within the Chinese communities. Chinese scholars may have to explore possibilities to show the perspectives of different cultures within the overarching Chinese culture. Particularly different scholars of smaller communities, including living among the minorities, conduct research more easily on their own groups. They may easily understand personal relationships and cultural features. Of course, those scholars take more efforts on how to 'jump' outside the limited circles of Chinese scholars ('跳出', jump to the outside). One important method for the recognition of the self in culture by Chinese scholars is to look at themselves in the mirror, to take a comparative view in order to balance the difference. And the word comparative here is different from the meaning of comparative studies at the early age of musicology, it is not aiming at similarities, but at the differences. These studies can be conducted by comparing the music of the East and the West, or by comparing the music of the 56 officially different ethnic groups within China.

Another approach is focused on area studies concerning a regionalized cultural geography. An area study includes the idea of mapping zones of musical cultures onto a map of China's territories. In the 1980s and 1990s, these studies were based upon tonal system structures, with reference to culture, history, language, migration of population and geographical background (Qiao, 1998). Studies with this goal also include geographical groupings of ethnic minority music based on topography, historical origins and the geographical distribution of ethnic groups. Until now, many scholars developed regionally-oriented studies of music. The outcomes of it and the ongoing efforts include conducting research on just one musical genre throughout just one region – such as research into the funeral music of the middle and lower reaches of Yangtze River (长江中下游丧葬仪式音乐研究), or research on the wind and percussion music of the central Hebei Province (冀中笙管乐研究). There is also a research on the music used in Theravada Buddhism of China (南传佛教文化圈研究, Yang, 1999). And it also includes comparative studies of cross-border cultures. Since China has a long borderline, and many ethnic groups have been divided into various groups due to politics or border issues, questions like what separation changes and how to do a useful cross-border research (跨界族群音乐文化研究 Yang, 2011; Zhao, 2011). Besides, cross-cultural studies are also very important, like the comparative study of shamanic

music in southern and northern China (南北方萨满音乐比较研究), and the study of shamanic music on the Sino-Vietnamese border.

For these regional studies, we need to go back to combine a general investigation or survey with the consideration of a special topic and/or specific cases. One example of this is the research that has been undertaken on wind and percussion music in central Hebei Province. When people were doing investigations in one village after another in the Beijing-Hebei region they discovered the extent of the area where wind and percussion music was performed, and then went on to undertake specific research on topics such as music scores, musical composition, the *gongdiao* theory (宫调理论), musical instruments, music associations and musicians. This allowed them to complete a study on the nature, history and contemporary evolution of wind and percussion music in a specific region. Their results were presented in seven doctoral dissertations, more than twenty master's theses, about 50 academic papers and one English monograph, written by Stephen Jones<sup>7</sup>.

Lastly, there have to be mentioned historical studies in ethnomusicology. The Chinese civilization has a long history yet Chinese music scores have traditionally only provided a concise summary or skeleton of the music played or sung with just the main framework written down. Under such circumstances, it seems difficult to study the sound of ancient music. On the one hand, interpretations of ancient music scores can help if the context is understood. On the other hand, it is also possible to trace back to ancient music practices by investigating existing traditional music. For example, Huang Xiangpeng completed his research on melodies (曲调考证)<sup>8</sup> by investigating living musical genres. Others have conducted research on ancient drum music in Xi'an (西安鼓乐) and compared their outcomes with available knowledge about music in the Tang Dynasty (7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries).

These are currently the most important research approaches amongst the many Chinese scholars. It is a pity that due to language barriers, there is little direct communication between Chinese and the international academia in this regard. Therefore, the world that we see – and the West that we know – is far from complete. In the current context of complex global relationships, it is of utmost relevance to communicate with the world, to reach a mutual understanding, to enhance academic and social relationships in a dialogue of academic culture. I do hope that the younger generations can improve this situation.

## REFERENCES

- Béla, Bartók. 1961. *Batuoke Lunwen Shuxin Xuan* (巴托克论文书信选, Selected essays and letters of Bartók). Beijing: Renmin Yinyue Chubanshe. Selected translation based on Bartok Bela, edited by Szabolcsi Bence.
- Folk Music in the United States: An Introduction*. 1984. [Compilation of texts]. Shanghai: Music Research Institute at Shanghai Conservatory of Music.
- Huang, Xiangpeng [黄翔鹏]. 2007. *Huang Xiangpeng Wencun* 黄翔鹏文存 [Collected essays of Huang Xiangpeng]. Jinan: Shandong Wenyi Chubanshe.
- Huang, Xiangpeng [黄翔鹏]. 1989. “Shizhe ru si fu — Guqu Gouchen he Qudiao Kaozheng Wenti” 逝者如斯夫—古曲钩沉和曲调考证问题 [Time goes as a stream: Ancient piece Gouchen and research on melody]. *Wenyi Yanjiu* 文艺研究 [Literature & Art Studies] 4: 101-106.
- Huang, Xiangpeng [黄翔鹏]. 1990. “Nian nu jiao Yuediao de Mingshi zhi Bian — Songci Qudiao Kaozheng Sanli” 念奴娇乐调的名实之变 — 宋词曲调考证三例 (The change of name and reality of Nian Nu

---

<sup>7</sup> Jones, Stephen. 2004. *Plucking the Winds: Lives of Village Musicians in Old and New China*. Leiden: Chime Foundation.

<sup>8</sup> Huang, Xiangpeng [黄翔鹏]. 1989. “Shizhe ru si fu — Guqu Gouchen he Qudiao Kaozheng Wenti” 逝者如斯夫—古曲钩沉和曲调考证问题 [Time goes as a stream: Ancient piece Gouchen and research on melody]. *Wenyi Yanjiu* 文艺研究 [Literature & Art Studies] 4: 101-106; Huang, Xiangpeng [黄翔鹏]. 1990. “Nian nu jiao Yuediao de Mingshi zhi Bian — Songci Qudiao Kaozheng Sanli” 念奴娇乐调的名实之变—宋词曲调考证三例 (The change of name and reality of Nian Nu Jiao's melody: Three examples of research on melody of Songci). *Yinyue Yanjiu* 音乐研究 [Music Research] 01: 34-44.

- Jiao's melody: Three examples of research on a melody of Songci). *Yinyue Yanjiu* 音乐研究 [Music Research] 01: 34-44.
- Jones, Stephen. 2004. *Plucking the Winds: Lives of Village Musicians in Old and New China*. Leiden: Chime Foundation.
- Kodaly, Zoltan. 1964. *Lun Xiongyali Minjian Yinyue* 论匈牙利民间音乐 (On Hungarian folk music). Beijing: Renmin Yinyue Chubanshe.
- Liang, Qichao [梁启超]. 1959. *Yinbingshi Shihua* 饮冰室诗话 (Ice-drinking room collected works). Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe.
- Liu, Tianhua [刘天华]. 2009. *Liutianhua Jiyi Yu Yanjiu Jicheng* 刘天华记忆与研究集成 (Anthology of Liu Tianhua's memory and research). Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaoyu Chubanshe.
- Qiao, Jianzhong [乔建中]. 1998. "Zhongguo Chuantong Yinyue de Dili Tezheng yu Zhongguo Yinyue Dilixue de Jianshe" 中国传统音乐的地理特征与中国音乐地理学的建设 (Geographical features of Chinese traditional music and the construction of Chinese Music Geography). *Zhongyang Yinyue Xueyuan Xuebao* 中央音乐学院学报 [Journal of Central Conservatory of Music] 03: 3-9.
- Shanghai Yinyue Xueyuan Yinyue Yanjiusuo 上海音乐学院音乐研究所, Anhui Sheng Wenxue Yishu Yanjiusuo 安徽省文学艺术研究所. 1984. *Yinyue yu Minzu* 音乐与民族 [Music and Nationality]. Restricted publication.
- Shen, Qia [沈洽]. 1982. "Yinqiang Lun" 音腔论 [On the Yinqiang]. *Zhongyang Yinyue Xueyuan Xuebao* 中央音乐学院学报 [Journal of Central Conservatory of Music] 04: 13-21.
- Sun, Jinan ed. [孙继南编著]. 2012. *Zhongguo Jindai Yinyue Jiaoyushi Jinian 1841-2000 (Xinban)* 中国近代音乐教育史纪年 1840-2000 (新版), [Chronology of modern Chinese music education history 1840-2000, New Version]: 5-6. Shanghai: Shanghai Yinyue Xueyuan Chubanshe.
- Wang, Guangqi [王光祈]. 2009. *Wang Guangqi Wenji (Diyi Juan)* 王光祈文集 (第一卷) [Collected essays of Wang Guangqi: Volume 1]. Chengdu: Bashu Shushe.
- Xiao, Youmei [萧友梅]. 2004. *Xiao Youmei Quanji (Diyi Juan)* 萧友梅全集 (第一卷) (Xiao Youmei Collection: Volume 1). Shanghai: Shanghai Yinyue Xueyuan Chubanshe.
- Yang, Minkang [杨民康]. 1999. "Lun Zhongguo Nanchuanfujiao Yinyue de Wenhuaquan he Wenhuacong Tezheng" 论中国南传佛教音乐的文化圈和文化丛特征 [On features of cultural circles and cultural clusters of Chinese Theravada Buddhist music]. *Zhongguo Yinyuexue* 中国音乐学 [Musicology in China] 4: 103-14.
- Yang, Minkang [杨民康]. 2011. "Kuajie Zuqun yu Kuajie Yinyuewenhua —— Zhongguo Yujing xia de Kuajie Zuqun Yinyue Yanjiu de Yiyi he Fanchou" 跨界族群与跨界音乐文化——中国语境下跨界族群音乐研究的意义和范畴 (Transnational ethnic groups and transnational music culture: the meaning and scope of research on music of transnational ethnic groups). *Yinyue Yanjiu* 音乐研究 [Music Research], 6: 9-13.
- Yang, Yinliu [杨荫浏]. 2009. *Yang Yinliu Quanji* 杨荫浏全集 (Yang Yinliu Collection). Nanjing: Jiangsu Wenyi Chubanshe.
- Zhao Talimu [赵塔里木]. 2011 "Guanzhu Kuajiemizu Yinyuewenhua" 关注跨界民族音乐文化 (Concerning the Music Cultures of Cross-Border Ethnic Groups) *Yinyue Yanjiu* 音乐研究 [Music Research], 6: 5-8.
- Zhongguo Yishu Yanjiuyuan Yinyue Yanjiusuo 中国艺术研究院音乐研究所 [Music Research Institute of Chinese National Academy of Arts]. [1964] 2005. *Minzu Yinyue Gailun* 民族音乐概论 (Overview of ethnic music). Beijing: Renmin Yinyue Chubanshe.



Cite as:

Li Ya [李亚] and Yin Xiang [尹翔]. 2019. Playing Jiangnan Sizhu as a Social Game: An Evening of Beautiful Music. *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 52-56.

## PLAYING JIANGNAN SIZHU AS A SOCIAL GAME: AN EVENING OF BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

### Abstract

This review combines fragments of Li Ya's thesis on "Ensemble Tradition and Cultural Interpretation of *Jiangnan Sizhu*"<sup>1</sup> and the project of "Reviving Sonic Memories from the Past: Historically Informed Performance in *Jiangnan Sizhu*", which took place in Shanghai on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

*Jiangnan sizhu* (江南丝竹) refers to the ensemble music played by musical instruments considered being made of silk and bamboo in the Yangtze Delta, including the south of Jiangsu Province, West Zhejiang Province, and Shanghai. This area is called Jiangnan. In terms of the applications and functions, there are two types of traditional silk and bamboo music in the Jiangnan area, of which one is the ritual performance, another is playing for entertainment. In Shanghai, some people play *sizhu* (丝竹) music in their daily life and call it "bexiang sizhu" (白相丝竹) in Shanghai dialect, which means having fun. *Jiangnan sizhu* is played as an ensemble music in tea houses, cultural activity centres in street communities and at home.

The project of "Reviving Sonic Memories from the Past: Historically Informed Performance in *Jiangnan Sizhu*" is based on the thesis of Li Ya [李亚]. Her thesis explored the cultural contexts of playing *Jiangnan sizhu* in Shanghai and analysed the behavior of performers and important factors forming musical features of *Jiangnan sizhu* in order to reveal hidden interpersonal relationships in the musical context. What is particularly important is her understanding of the Shanghai dialect, including "ge jiasheng" (掰家什, which means playing some musical instruments together) and "tan tou" (摊头, places where people play *Jiangnan sizhu*). This is necessary in exploring the aesthetic concepts of the *Jiangnan sizhu* performers, a process of culturally recognizing interpersonal communication and social interaction.

This review is insofar dedicated to this thesis as well as to the event that was supported through the preceding research on local musical knowledge and cultural concepts of *Jiangnan sizhu*.

### Keywords

*Jiangnan sizhu*, social interaction, cultural environment, structural analysis, interpretation of terms

### Li Ya [李亚]

is a graduate of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where she completed her PhD. Currently, she is a lecturer at Shanghai Normal University's Music College. She also works for non-governmental and non-profit organizations, namely the Shanghai Institute for the Protection and Development of Silk and Bamboo Music focusing on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Chinese traditional Music.

### Yin Xiang [尹翔]

is a PhD student at Shanghai Conservatory of Music majoring in ethnomusicology. She is interested in traditional music of South China and is maintaining multiple daily tasks in the department.

### Contacts

aliceya929[@]163.com

yinxiangyvonne[@]163.com

---

<sup>1</sup> Li Ya [李亚]. 2018. Ensemble tradition and Cultural Interpretation of Jiangnan Sizhu. *Music Research*, 5: 84 - 92. [江南丝竹的“合乐”传统及其文化阐释, 《音乐研究》2018年第5期, 第84-92页]. The modified excerpts provided here, were translated by Gisa Jähnichen.

# PLAYING JIANGNAN SIZHU AS A SOCIAL GAME: AN EVENING OF BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

Li Ya [李亚] and Yin Xiang [尹翔]

## Abstract

This review combines Li Ya's thesis on "Ensemble Tradition and Cultural Interpretation of *Jiangnan Sizhu*"<sup>1</sup> and the project of "Reviving Sonic Memories from the Past: Historically Informed Performance in *Jiangnan Sizhu*", which took place in Shanghai on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

*Jiangnan sizhu* (江南丝竹) refers to the ensemble music played by musical instruments considered being made of silk and bamboo in the Yangtze Delta, including the south of Jiangsu Province, West Zhejiang Province, and Shanghai. This area is called Jiangnan. In terms of the applications and functions, there are two types of traditional silk and bamboo music in the Jiangnan area, of which one is the ritual performance, another is playing for entertainment. In Shanghai, some people play *sizhu* (丝竹) music in their daily life and call it "bexiang sizhu" (白相丝竹) in Shanghai dialect, which means having fun. *Jiangnan sizhu* is played as an ensemble music in tea houses, cultural activity centres in street communities and at home.

The project of "Reviving Sonic Memories from the Past: Historically Informed Performance in *Jiangnan Sizhu*" is based on the thesis of Li Ya [李亚]. Her thesis explored the cultural contexts of playing *Jiangnan sizhu* in Shanghai and analysed the behaviour of the performers and important factors forming musical features of *Jiangnan sizhu* in order to reveal hidden interpersonal relationships in the musical context. What is particularly important is her understanding of the Shanghai dialect, including "ge jiasheng" (哏家什, which means playing some musical instruments together) and "tan tou" (摊头, places where people play *Jiangnan sizhu*). This is necessary in exploring the aesthetic concepts of the *Jiangnan sizhu* performers, a process of culturally recognizing interpersonal communication and social interaction.

This review is insofar dedicated to this thesis as well as to the event that was supported through the preceding research on local musical knowledge and cultural concepts of *Jiangnan sizhu*.

**Key Words:** Jiangnan sizhu, social interaction, cultural environment, structural analysis, interpretation of terms

Traditional *Jiangnan sizhu* not only has a musical expression full of interesting and mysterious tones, but also contains customs and meaning from outsider the music realm. These customs and meanings have an unbreakable bond with regional culture. The following are some characteristics of *Jiangnan sizhu* activities:

## "哏" – CULTURAL SEMANTICS EXPRESSED IN SPECIFIC TERMS

Playing *Jiangnan sizhu*, performers described as "go to *Tān Tóu Báixiàng Xiāng*" (摊头白相相). They don't have to bring their own musical instruments. Before the event, the host, *Tan Tou*, tunes the instruments and put them on the table for the musicians to choose. It shows that the activities of the *Jiangnan sizhu* are flexible and have the characteristics of a game. Of particular interest is that musicians use "哏"[ghak in Shanghainese] to express their musical behaviour. This term is interpreted in Shanghainese as: "1) two hands together; 2) hug; 3) clamp it in the armpit." It can be seen that the word is related to establishing a relationship.

---

<sup>1</sup> Li Ya [李亚]. 2018. Ensemble tradition and Cultural Interpretation of Jiangnan Sizhu. *Music Research*, 5: 84 – 92. [江南丝竹的“合乐”传统及其文化阐释,《音乐研究》2018年第5期,第84-92页]. The modified excerpts provided here, were translated by Gisa Jähnichen.

There are other words similar to it, such as "ghak bhangyhou", which means falling in love, or "ghak dhao", which means making friends with somebody. These words show that "ghak"(𪛗) not only refers to making friends, but also for playing *Jiangnan sizhu* as a way to get acquainted with each other. Regarding "𪛗", musicians involved in the research explain the following:

"If two crickets fight we call it '𪛗'. This word means we are competing with each other. It is the fun of playing *Jiangnan sizhu*".<sup>2</sup>

"I think there are three meanings of '𪛗'. Firstly, it refers to making friends; secondly, it means combat. Finally, it means the exchange of the ideas and the emotions between us."<sup>3</sup>

The insights obtained through semantic analysis is that the music experience of the player refers to the relationship in performing *Jiangnan sizhu*, and the sound highlights the meaning in the communication of performance, as talking with each other. Therefore, the interpretation of the *Jiangnan sizhu* has to consider the cultural environment and interpersonal relationships in a specific way to that place and time.

### JIANGNAN SIZHU: THE SOCIAL GAME

The understanding of the meaning of *Jiangnan sizhu* cannot be separated from the performing context and the behaviour. A typical afternoon session lasts about three hours. The traditional instruments are placed on a large round table and the performers are seated in a circle. Usually, a particular combination of musicians plays a set of two or three pieces, after which most of the players get up and either yield their places or switch to other instruments. The activities are mostly hosted by a senior or the owner of the place. Sometimes, an out-of-town visitor may be asked to take part, which is considered of being a special honour. During one session, it is common that different combinations of musicians play the same piece several times. In this way, one is able to hear the different improvisation styles used by the performers and get a taste of their individual artistic conceptions.

Performing musicians don't have any music score, and they are also not simply playing from memory. Instead the music puts a strong emphasis on interpretation. Each time there is a little difference and many new ideas are generally encouraged. With regard to the combination and number of musical instruments used, players are divided into two categories. The one is named 'dan dang' (单档) and the other 'shuang dang' (双档). *Dan dang* is the most common combination, it refers to an ensemble consisting of one *pipa*, one *yangqin*, one *sanxian*, one *dizi*, one *sheng*, one *xiao* and possibly others. Although two *erhus* might be used, they play different tunes and fingerings, The different roles are known as "main *erhu*" and "assistant *erhu*". Asked for the reason why the two *erhus* are so different, the musicians explained: "*Jiangnan sizhu* has to avoid that everyone is playing the same melody. If we play the same melody together, we will be unhappy with each other. 'Main *erhu*' and 'assistant *erhu*' have different tunes and playing methods. So, we can avoid this situation. If one is playing, so this player has to give others space to play freely. Then, we will be happy."<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, *Jiangnan sizhu* activities focus on social interaction and creating friendships based on the participants' mutual interest in the music. As the performers don't have scores to follow while playing, but rather play from orally stimulated memory, they are more in a position to show themselves individually in the music they are playing. Different understandings of every piece of music and even the player's disposition will show off naturally in the course of performance. Moreover, the techniques and temperament have both become decisive factors in a lasting partnership. Therefore, within the *Jiangnan sizhu* community, each group of musicians has different styles and strengths and will be called to perform for different types of occasions based on their strengths. These music sessions provide an open forum for musicians to naturally develop their individual personalities, concepts, and creative

---

<sup>2</sup> Liu Yuehu [刘跃华]. 2015. Audio recording, 18 May, at Shanghai Changqiao Shenyun Jiangnan Sizhu Club [上海长桥申韵丝竹乐团].

<sup>3</sup> Yang Pingsheng [杨平生]. 2016. Audio recording, 12 January, at Shanghai National Music Research Club [上海国乐研究会].

<sup>4</sup> Yao Weiping [姚卫平]. 2015. Audio recording, 8 April, at Shanghai Changqiao Shenyun Jiangnan Sizhu Club [上海长桥申韵丝竹乐团].

abilities. The previous explanation is only one small part out of Li Ya's article delivered in 2018. A number of highly appreciated articles on *Jiangnan sizhu* were already published about it in various Chinese journals.

## THE EVENING OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2019

The event of importance to this review took place on the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2019, at the 'Beaufort Terrace' (海上梨园), No. 10, Wenchang Road, Yuyuan, Shanghai. It was the result of a close collaboration between musicians, instrument makers, and scholars.<sup>5</sup> Listening to *Jiangnan sizhu* is also a spectacular memory that evokes the 'past' of Shanghai's old town through string instruments, specific aesthetics and style, embodied history and how this history may have sounded. Li Ya explained already in her doctoral thesis many details and based her research on direct observation, face to face communication with the musicians, and previous important literature.

Entering the performance hall, the title "Exploration of a Musical Culture with Historical Awareness" was displayed on top of the stage. It turned out that this music gathering, which has been in preparation for more than a year, needed a lot of detailed work and that during the preparation still many surprises were found on old records interesting to researchers and the participating community that is collecting and restoring early musical instruments. The old recordings were studied and combined with everything that is known about the tradition of *Jiangnan sizhu*. This undertaking reflects a search and longing for some unique local Chinese music culture. As the general plan of the event, Xiao Mei [萧梅], professor at Shanghai Conservatory of Music, said when talking about the original intention of this gathering: "Aesthetics and auditory perceptions are constructed. A century of modern education has left traces and moved away from the historical practice. Newly shaped performance and listening habits of the 'Concert Hall' type are far different from a 'historically aware performance'. The gathering does not aim at returning to the past, but through retrospection of history and tradition, it aims at the returning to the truth, realizing the vitality of the people in trying to explore future possibilities." (Xiao Mei [萧梅], 2019).

The teams participating in this tea-circle gathering are two long-established *Jiangnan sizhu* clubs, which are indeed very different in their playing compared to the "concert" behaviour in a nowadays familiar sense, since they are set up in the traditional way of "a table". The two club heads sit in a circle, looking at each other and interact. The old instruments used by the performers, including those instruments taken over from the Qing dynasty, *qinqin*, *sanxian*, *erhu*, and the *yangqin*, the *xiao*, the *pipa*, and some others, are taking part in the rejuvenation of the long-awaited cycle 'Jiangnan Sizhu Eight Famous Music Pieces'. The complete version of 'Sihe Ruyi' (四合如意), also known as 'Bridge' (桥), fully demonstrates the structural characteristics of the traditional *Jiangnan sizhu* and the profound interpretation skills of the musicians.

Of the three modes of the piece 'Zhonghua Liuban' (中花六板), the musicians clearly show the changes of the same framework in different adjustments. This kind of "playful" change is not only reflected in the melody extension, the change in the fingering order, but also the different temperaments evolving in the pieces through the dialogue between various instruments. Then, the lyrical piece 'Nichang Melody' (霓裳曲) played on the old instruments becomes a 'new' piece and the delicate silk strings in this gentle and elegant music call for a beautiful imagination.

It is unforgettable that the special guests, Tang Liangxing [汤良兴], Tang Liangfu [汤良甫], and the Shanghai Changqiao Shenyun Sizhu Group (上海长桥申韵丝竹乐团), have presented their great skills in musical communication between the masters. It is seen in the interspersed changes, the embellishments, and the variance in the performance. Tang Liangxing's demonstration of the 'ancestral instrument' on a century-old *pipa* realizes a small climax within the event. The material of the instrument

---

<sup>5</sup> The event was organized by the Research Institute of Ritual Music in China (RIRMC) at Shanghai Conservatory of Music, supported by the Shanghai Jiangnan Sizhu Research Institute for the Development of Protection and the Beaufort Terrace, Shanghai Normal University's Music College, the National Music Department, the Yangtze River Delta Jiangnan Sizhu Association, the Shanghai Oriental Musical Instrument Museum, which is also a national 'double-first-class institution, meaning a 'University construction project AND one of Shanghai's supported high-level local college construction projects'.

is fine and the body is light, which is especially delicate in the hands of Tang Liangxing. After plucking the strings one by one, it is felt that the traditional craftsmanship has much to offer. Following a brief introduction to the historical source of this art, Tang Liangxing played it on the spot, and then he cheered the audience up from ‘Lao Liuban’ (老六板) and ‘Fan Wang Gong’ (凡忘工) to the ‘The Golden Snake Dance’ (金蛇狂舞).

As a typical representative of the Jiangnan regional culture, *Jiangnan sizhu* comprises many musical pieces deriving from different sources and styles since the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The representative piece of the Taoist Chenghuang Temple Music played by the Pudong Kangwen Jiangnan Sizhu Club (浦东康文国乐社), ‘Yu Furong’ (玉芙蓉) is calm and delicate. The piece ‘Slow Liuban’ (慢六板), has a quite touching melody, and the artistic conception is far reaching.



**Figures 1 and 2: Scenes of the evening (photos courtesy by Zhang Shan [张珊]).**

The final part of the evening proceeded with the Xinyue team [昕悦组合] from the Department of Chinese Traditional Instruments at Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Under the guidance of Cheng Haihua [成海华], the group interpreted the music pieces ‘Walk on the Streets’ (行街) and ‘Yangba Melody’ (阳八曲) joyfully and with great care.

The three groups performed in the evening to let the audience feel the typical mood and experience together the changing light with different interpretations of traditions in various time periods. Seemingly, the theme of the event ‘Back into history, finding the roots of the tradition, and changed feelings’ was appreciated. Gao Chunming [高春明], president of the Shanghai Intangible Cultural Heritage

Association, commented that the Collection of *Jiangnan sizhu* is an activity that is preserving history, which means that it is also an exploration of the diversity of music that is not in the focus of protection. Shi Yin [史寅], the director of the Oriental Musical Instrument Museum of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, also spoke highly of the academic significance of the event, and expressed his hopes on how to apply this knowledge of an excellent traditions such as *Jiangnan sizhu* in the educational context.<sup>6</sup>

It was a rainy night, but it could not stop the Shanghai audience's love for *Jiangnan sizhu*. The 180 seats reserved in the Beaufort Terrace were not only packed, but eventually more than 200 people were attending. Many people were standing and listening to the whole performance and the explanations. Fortunately, nearly a half of the audience was young people in this concert, and they all said that 'the traditional *Jiangnan Sizhu* has been yet unmatched.' The concert also received the attention of Shanghai's Opera Radio, which gave full coverage in online interviews and live broadcasting.

## REFERENCES

- Gao Chunming [高春明]. 2019. Comments on the Occasion of the Jiangnan Sizhu-Evening, 20th March, 2019. Private audio recording.
- Liu Yuehu [刘跃华]. 2015. Audio recording, 18 May, at Shanghai Changqiao Shenyun Jiangnan Sizhu Club [上海长桥申韵丝竹乐团].
- Li Ya [李亚]. 2018. Ensemble Tradition and Cultural Interpretation of *Jiangnan Sizhu*. *Music Research*, 5: 84–92. [《江南丝竹的“合乐”传统及其文化阐释》，《音乐研究》2018年第5期，第84-92页。]
- Shi Yin [史寅]. 2019. Comments on the Occasion of the Jiangnan Sizhu-Evening, 20th March, 2019. Private audio recording.
- Xiao Mei [萧梅]. 2019. Speech on the Occasion of the *Jiangnan Sizhu-Evening*, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2019. Private audio recording.
- Yang Pingsheng [杨平生]. 2016. Audio recording, 12 January, at Shanghai National Music Research Club [上海国乐研究会].
- Yao Weiping [姚卫平]. 2015. Audio recording, 8 April, at Shanghai Changqiao Shenyun Jiangnan Sizhu Club [上海长桥申韵丝竹乐团].

---

<sup>6</sup> Shi Yin [史寅]. 2019. Comments on the Occasion of the Jiangnan Sizhu-Evening, 20th March, 2019. Private audio recording.

Cite as:

**Jähnichen, Gisa and Sarath Chandrajeewa. 2019. Some Thoughts on Expectations: The Second Music Education Alliance Across the Belt and Road Conference, CCOM Beijing, 2019. *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 57-59.**

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON EXPECTATIONS: THE SECOND MUSIC EDUCATION ALLIANCE ACROSS THE BELT AND ROAD CONFERENCE, CCOM BEIJING, 2019**

### **Abstract**

This interview is to review the event of the THE SECOND MUSIC EDUCATION ALLIANCE ACROSS THE BELT AND ROAD CONFERENCE, CCOM BEIJING, 2019, as well as the thoughts of a participant who is one of the most recent members of this initiative. He is also one of the authors in this volume representing the case that a co-operation of this format should always be substantiated by active research.

### **Keywords**

Interview, Silk Road Culture, Co-operation, Education, China, Sri Lanka

### **Gisa Jähnichen**

Prof. Dr., born in Halle (Saale), Germany, currently working as professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, was doing research over more than 30 years in South East Asia. Magister (Bachelor & Master) in Musicology and Regional Studies on South East Asia from Charles University Prague (Czech Republic), PhD in Musicology / Ethnomusicology from Humboldt University Berlin (Germany); Professorial thesis (Habilitation) in Comparative Musicology from University Vienna (Austria). Extensive field researches lead her to Southeast Asia, East Africa, Southwest and Southeast Europe. Together with Laotian colleagues, she built up the Media Section of the National Library in Laos. Gisa Jähnichen is member of ICTM, Chair of its Study Group on Musical Instruments, and member of other Study Groups. She is editor of the book series *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Popularis* (New Series). She is also the secretary of the Training & Education Committee in the International Association for Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) and an IASA ambassador.

### **Sarath Chandrajeewa**

Sarath Chandrajeewa [full name: Rathnayake Mudiyanseelage Sarath Chandrajeewa], Senior Prof. Dr., is currently the Vice Chancellor of the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka. He is a reputed expert in sculptures, which is his main teaching and research subject. His studies started at Kelaniya University in Sri Lanka, then he specialized in bronze casting at the Royal College of Art in London, doing later his Master of Fine Arts and his Doctor of Philosophy in Moscow at different high-ranking institutions. He won a number of important international awards and published widely on colours and shapes.

### **Contact**

gisajaehnichen[ @ ]web.de

vc[ @ ]vpa.ac.lk

# SOME THOUGHTS ON EXPECTATIONS: THE SECOND MUSIC EDUCATION ALLIANCE ACROSS THE BELT AND ROAD CONFERENCE, CCOM BEIJING, 2019

**Interview with Sarath Chandrajeewa (University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo) by Gisa Jähnichen (Shanghai Conservatory of Music)**

## **Abstract**

This interview is to review the event of the THE SECOND MUSIC EDUCATION ALLIANCE ACROSS THE BELT AND ROAD CONFERENCE, CCOM BEIJING, 2019, as well as the thoughts of a participant who is one of the most recent members of this initiative. He is also one of the authors in this volume representing the case that a co-operation of this format should always be substantiated by active research.

**Keywords:** Interview, Silk Road Culture, Co-operation, Education, China, Sri Lanka

In the context of this high-ranking event conducted at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing (Chen Nan, 2019), I had the chance to ask an invited guest some questions arising from the program. The person I asked came from Sri Lanka being the Vice Chancellor of the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sarath Chandrajeewa. His expertise regards sculptures and rather ancient architecture. As one of the very few, he contributed an academic talk to the discussion meetings that were organized for all leading people from various Music Academies, Arts Universities, and University Faculties during the 3-day event from 29 April to the 1 May 2019. I admired his determination in dealing with any kind of request and his strong will to make the best out of any difficult situation.

At current times in Sri Lanka, the reputation of close connections to China is not very high. However, being different from what is often propagated, the facts do speak another language and there are many facts and details to be considered.

I present the questions and answers as they were put and answered by Sarath Chandrajeewa directly here:

*Question 1: Do you think that the idea of a network of education and artistry that is growing along an old trade route (Silk Road) and now along a route of global co-operators can have a lasting impact on the different regions which are touched by this route?*

This is an attractive concept and is activated at this moment showing first results. The old Silk Road is mainly a trade route. However, also knowledge and wisdom travelled through this road in ancient times. One interesting example is the Chinese monk Faxian who walked along this route in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. He travelled from China to Sri Lanka using sometimes caravans. He was passing the Taklamakan Desert, one of the dangerous deserts in the world. After reaching India he had taken a trade ship to cross the Palk Strait and stayed in the Abhayagiriya Monastery of Sri Lanka for two years. He collected Buddhist teachings of Vinaya Pitaka and went back to China using the sea route of the Silk Road.

*This story is well-known to many scholars and Buddhist laymen. Interesting is the fact that this story could be taken as a metaphor in not only showing the positive results, but also the way of sacrificing*



*comfort in order to achieve the necessary changes in life. Not only for nations and regions, but also in the personal view of a single human being. Sarath Chandrajeewa continues:*

There are benefits of education and artistry, especially in music, dance, visual arts and any craft. There were many Chinese exhibitions, concerts and cultural shows in the past years in Sri Lanka and a lot of students have opted to study in these streams. To my knowledge, eight students have enrolled in Chinese universities to study music and visual arts in the past year.



**Figure 1: Prof. Dr. Sarath Chandrajeewa playing on a replica of a lithophone exhibited in the small museum of the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, China (30 April 2019, photo by Gisa Jähnichen).**

*These might be just numbers to others, but studying abroad is a very sensitive issue for Sri Lankan students. There are destinations that are traditionally held in high regard such as any university situated in the UK or US, at least in Australia or New Zealand. The option to study in Asian universities is often disregarded as not being good enough. The only exception is India, where most Sri Lankan students who want to study abroad may go for a few reasons such as low admission fees, familiarity with living patterns, and simply tradition.*

*The purpose of the event in Beijing could not be made clearer than with the words of Sarath Chandrajeewa:*

Various countries participated in the recently held ‘The Second Music Education Alliance across the Belt and Road Conference’. This shows their motivation to enter the network of music education and artistry. Also, the Sixtieth anniversary of the Shandong University of Arts was held last year in October 2018 with a participation of 32 fine arts universities from all over the world. All attendees were leading artists. China is a country with an impressive cultural history and products. This all attracts other countries. It also is a meeting point for global cooperators. So, these regions can have a lasting impact of education and artistry depending on the political and economic stability of each country.

*Without saying it, he expresses that economic stability is a basic precondition for any cooperation. This is what the event in Beijing tried to convey: finding stability and balance. There is nothing to be prioritized: the arts, economy, infrastructure, everything is important and depends on each other. This is what Sarath Chandrajeewa has to say about what he thinks could be changed to the better, more effective and more helpful in the future of arts education:*

Language barriers should be minimized. Cultural shows, exhibitions, and education systems that not only talk about teaching but also about learning should be subject of exchange activities.

The future of arts education depends on the cultural values and thoughts unique to each country. No specific art education system can be introduced to the whole world at the same moment. Prominence should be given to express humanity rather than counting on market value.

*He also thinks that “any initiative will have space for both long- and short-term projects”. It goes unsaid that these short-term or long-term projects should be purposeful for many people, institutions, and countries, and not simply to justify expenses or to accumulate personal merits. In this regard the big number of participants is not only organizationally challenging, but also a way to control effectiveness.*

*Sarath Chandrajeewa wishes mainly to “produce good citizens with a sense of appreciation for diverse cultures and art forms”. He is a reformer with his own profile, a strong personality, and willing to “frequently discuss with all parties the vision of their institution. He always expects results and takes actions accordingly”.*

*However, nothing good comes without feedback about possible improvements. Thinking of what is worth to be corrected in the approach to arts education in general, Sarath Chandrajeewa answers with very few words: “Respect the other traditions and styles; Freedom to engage in the arts; Encouraging people who are engaged in traditional arts to do experiments”.*

Sarath Chandrajeewa believes that teaching, research, and creative work are well balanced at his institution. Therefore, the University of the Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo produces good artistes and researchers that serve the society. He knows many excellent examples of Masters and PhD holders, as well as great teachers.

Considering all these positive statements is yet one perspective that should not be ignored. Nevertheless, positive statements are never completely free of a critical undertone. While saying that respect is a point to be improved, and that ethical issues in the arts should be set more into the centre compared to market values, the Vice Chancellor of a relatively small country situated half way of the traditional Silk Route, contributes remarkably to the understanding of the arts’ future for all. One can only wish that many of the participants join these ideas that will be further nurtured through planned actions in the coming years.

## REFERENCES

Chen Nan (2019). Musicians from along Silk Road meet at Beijing event. *Chinadaily.com.cn*, 7 May. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/07/WS5cd1316aa3104842260ba4e9\\_2.html](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/07/WS5cd1316aa3104842260ba4e9_2.html). Accessed 8 June 2019.

Cite as:

**Dordzhieva, Ghilyana. 2019. Revisiting Some Thoughts on The Kalmyk Dombra: Two Instruments in One Body? *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 60-63.**

## **REVISITING SOME THOUGHTS ON THE KALMYK DOMBRA: TWO INSTRUMENTS IN ONE BODY?**

### **Abstract**

This review is to add some details that are often overlooked in rather general classifications of musical instruments. The instrument in question is the dombra and the information added is its role among people playing it seen from the authors personal view.

### **Keywords**

dombra, Kalmyk culture, organology, classification, playing practice

### **Dordzhieva, Ghilyana**

Ghilyana Dordzhieva, PhD, is an independent researcher and an educator at “The Traditional Song Project”. She studied ethnomusicology at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in Saint Petersburg, where she also completed her PhD. Her special interest is the culture of the Kalmyks and related people of central Asia.

She was one of the first members of the 1st session of the “Visiting Fellow Program” organized by the "Asia-Europe Music Research Center" at Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 2018.

### **Contact**

ghilyana[[@](mailto:ghilyana@yahoo.com)]yahoo.com

# REVISITING SOME THOUGHTS ON THE KALMYK DOMBRA: TWO INSTRUMENTS IN ONE BODY?

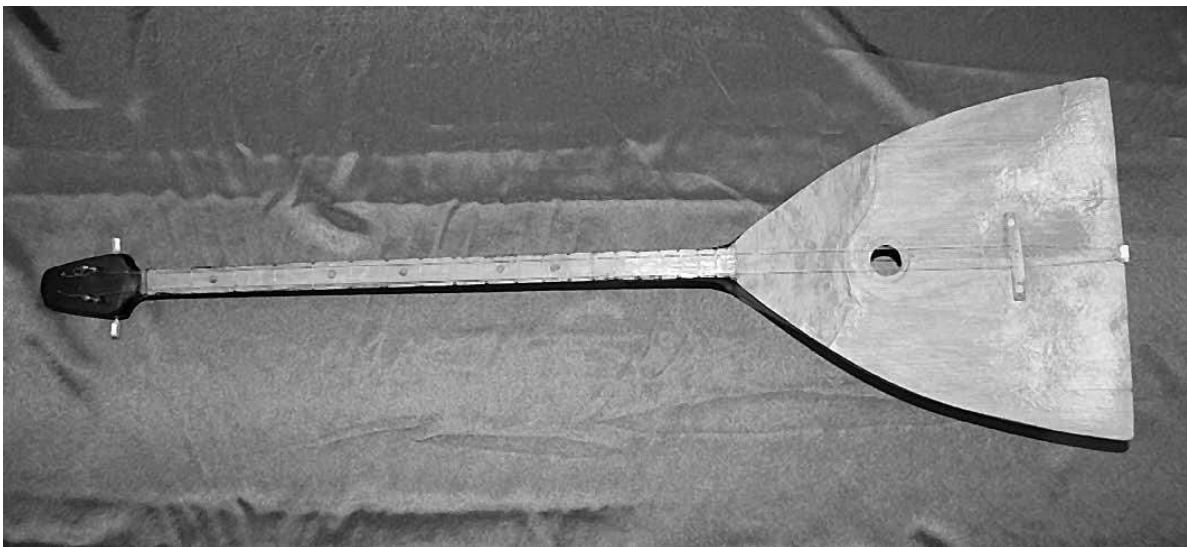
**Ghilyana Dordzhieva**

[Member of the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the “Visiting Fellow Program” organized by the “Asia-Europe Music Research Center”]

## Abstract

This review is to add some details that are often overlooked in rather general classifications of musical instruments. The instrument in question is the dombra and the information added is its role among people playing it seen from the authors personal view.

**Keywords:** dombra, Kalmyk culture, organology, classification, playing practice



**Figure 1: Dombra of the Kalmyks (photo by the author).**

The dombra is the most widely used musical instrument among the Kalmyks. The two-string, long-necked lute under the term *dombra* was first mentioned in early ethnographical descriptions of the late 18th century.<sup>1</sup> Typically, it is an instrument with a triangular or trapezoidal glued body, with some rare mentions of an oval shape. The strings as well as tied-on frets made from the sheep's smaller intestine, later were replaced with the fishing line.

Although the Kalmyk musical culture is deeply rooted in the Oirad<sup>2</sup> traditions, in the new geographical and cultural environment the instrument developed a distinct local character and the new name *dombra* for the old instrument. The Kalmyk *dombra* and the Western-Mongolian *topshuur*<sup>3</sup> have similar principles of construction and the same anthropomorphic approach to the instrument body with common terms for its parts such as *tolgha* (head), *chik* (ear), *elkn* (liver), *nurn* (back). The forms and genres of *dombra* music (*dombri kelkh* – to sing with dombra, *dombri tsokh* – to play dombra) represent the original picture with traces of earlier systems and obvious innovation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pallas P.S. Travels through the southern Provinces of the Russian Empire, in the years 1793 and 1794. London, 1802, 2 volumes.

<sup>2</sup> Once living united in a compact area, the ethnic groups of Oirads were widely scattered and surrounded by a different majority in Mongolia, China, and Russia since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>3</sup> Also, it is in close relationship with the Altaian and Tuvian *topshuur/topshulur*.

## DOMBRA AND EPIC SINGERS

*Dombra* is the main instrument to perform the Kalmyk epic *Jangar*, which is an exclusively male tradition. Also, there are few archival recordings of the violin as an instrument supporting the narrators, and few mentions about the *hur* (bow string instrument). Among some Western-Mongolian groups *topshuur* is used primarily to accompany the heroic epics *baatarlag tuul*<sup>4</sup>. According to my observation during my fieldwork in Hovd aimag, Altai Uriangha *tuul'chi* (epic singer) Baatrin Urtnasun<sup>5</sup> kept his *topshuur* adorned with the blue *hadag* (ritual scarf) in the revered place of the *ger* (house) on the right male side. In old Mongolia, women were prohibited from playing *topshuur*.<sup>6</sup> The performance of epic tales and praise songs with the accompaniment of *topshuur* were meant to ensure a successful hunt. Moreover, there was belief in the healing power of the *topshuur* sound.



Figure 2: Dmitriy Sharaev, Kalmyk jangarchi, 2018 (photo by the author).

## DOMBRA AND DANCE TUNES

Altai Urianghai, Zakchins and Torguts used to accompany *bii* (dances) on *topshuur*<sup>7</sup>. However, the vigorous, impetuous, and colorful *dombra* dance tunes became the dominant part of the Kalmyk music in the 19-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The famous Kalmyk *jangarchi* Mukebün Basangov, in his epic songs often repeats a poetical formula which describes a girl playing *dombra* and a boy dancing. Indeed, in the near past to play festive music and to accompany virtuoso male dances during *när* (celebration or feast) became the girls' and women's duty.

The old Kalmyk dance *Savarding* with leading upper body and hand movements was mentioned in 19<sup>th</sup> century descriptions (Deping, 1884: 141)<sup>8</sup>. Nowadays Western-Mongolian groups represent *Savarding* as a symbol of their culture, while the Kalmyk dances are characterized by swiftness, advanced leg

<sup>4</sup> Pegg, Carol (2001). *Mongolian Music, Dance, and Oral Narrative: Performing Diverse Identities* (Donald R. Ellegood International Publications). Washington: UWP: 81.

<sup>5</sup> Baatrim Urtnasun, 73 years old, recorded by the author on 25<sup>th</sup> of July, 2003 in Balkhuun gazr Duut somon Khovd aimag.

<sup>6</sup> Pegg, Carol (2001). *Mongolian Music, Dance, and Oral Narrative: Performing Diverse Identities* (Donald R. Ellegood International Publications). Washington: UWP: 172.

<sup>7</sup> Pegg, Carol (2001). *Mongolian Music, Dance, and Oral Narrative: Performing Diverse Identities* (Donald R. Ellegood International Publications). Washington: UWP: 39.

<sup>8</sup> Original source: Депинг Г.Б. Историческое обозрение нравов и обычаев всех народов, содержащее сравнительное описание обыкновений, обрядов, жилищ, пищи, одежд, свадеб, похорон, игр, празднеств, войн, суеверий, каст и пр. у древнейших и новейших народов различных стран, предшествуемое аналитическим оглавлением. Спб., 1886, с. 141.

work, and rapid pace with steady *accelerando* through entire performance of a tune. It should be presumed that chronologically the new dancing style appeared in parallel with the innovations in Kalmyk male traditional clothes when Mongolian *deel* was replaced by *beshmet* (outerwear, tightly fitting the chest and waist). One of the outcomes of 17-19<sup>th</sup> centuries' military conflicts on the southern borders of the Russian empire was the spreading of some Islamic peoples' features (male dress, male dancing temper) into neighboring warring male populations, among them not only Kalmyks but Russian Cossacks. Probably, it was also the period when the old name *topshuur* was supplanted by the Turkic word *dombra*.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 3: Portrait of A.N. Haruzina in the year 1887. (Photo by A.B. Kyselvekaya, public domain).**

Although P.S. Pallas assumed borrowing of the term *dombra* from the Kazakhs, it seems more likely that the new word was taken from the people with whom the Kalmyks were bound by a persistent and fierce war of many years – Turkic Nogai or Nogai Horde settled in the Caspian steppes until pushed from their by the Kalmyks and Russians. Probably, the alien origin of the term may explain some of the negative connotations associated with the word *dombra*: ‘*kenä boln chign dombrt biilkh*’ (dance

<sup>9</sup> Although some researchers argue the Iranian origin of the term *dombra*, Kalmyks assimilated the word rooted in the language of the Turkic-speaking people.

under someone's tune or to lose self-reliance), '*dosk dombr bolkh*' (turn into the board of dombra or lose everything, go broke).

To conclude a brief review, I would like to note that older forms of the *dombra* playing music were connected with the earlier beliefs and female practices, among them imitating dances, including crane dances, game-dance *Tek* (the goat dance), and milk songs. These texts require the special consideration.

This writing is based on my field recordings made in Kalmykia in Russia, Uvs and Hovd aimags of Mongolia, and Inner Mongolia in China.

## REFERENCES

Pallas, Peter Simon. 1802. *Travels through the Southern Provinces of the Russian Empire, in the years 1793 and 1794*. 2vols. London: Strahan.

Pegg, Carol (2001). *Mongolian Music, Dance, and Oral Narrative: Performing Diverse Identities* (Donald R. Ellegood International Publications). Washington: UWP.

Deping, G. B. 1886. *Historical observation of habits of all people consisting of comparative descriptions of daily tasks, rituals, living conditions, food, clothing, weddings and funerals, games, ceremonies, wars, superstitious acts, and others among the old and new populations of various countries in order to prepare for an analytical approach*. N.p. [Депинг Г.Б. Историческое обозрение нравов и обычаев всех народов, содержащее сравнительное описание обыкновений, обрядов, жилищ, пищи, одежд, свадеб, похорон, игр, празднеств, войн, суеверий, каст и пр. у древнейших и новейших народов различных стран, предшествуемое аналитическим оглавлением. Спб., 1886].

Cite as:

**Jakovljevic, Rastko. 2019. The 22nd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Musical Instruments, Lisbon, Portugal, 10-13 April, 2019. *AEMR-EJ*, 3: 64-66.**

## **THE 22ND SYMPOSIUM OF THE ICTM STUDY GROUP ON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, LISBON, PORTUGAL, 10-13 APRIL, 2019**

### **Abstract**

This is an event review of the 22ND SYMPOSIUM OF THE ICTM STUDY GROUP ON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS LISBON, PORTUGAL, APRIL 10-13, 2019. The event is not only described in more detail, but also discussed as an event providing future possibilities in academic exchange.

### **Keywords**

International Council for Traditional Music, Study Group Symposium, Musical Instruments, research directions, current academic issues

### **Rastko Jakovljevic**

Rastko Jakovljevic, PhD, music anthropologist, graduated at the University of Durham (United Kingdom) with a doctoral dissertation on *Marginality and Cultural Identities: Locating the Bagpipe Music of Serbia* (2012), supported by the H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia and Department of Music. His research is primarily focused on the music of the Balkans, anthropology of music, critical theory, cultural studies, popular music and applied ethnomusicology. Dr. Rastko Jakovljevic was a Research Fellow at the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts in Belgrade, Serbia. As a Primary Investigator, he was leading projects on Sound Digitization and Archiving, collaborating with renowned sound archives and institutes in Europe. In 2015 Dr. Jakovljevic joined the University of Texas at Austin where he was teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in ethnomusicology and was awarded the prestigious Harrington Fellowship for research. Dr. Jakovljevic is an active member of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), the Society of Ethnomusicology (SEM), the Royal Music Association (RMA), and the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE).

### **Contact**

ralfy[ @ ]yahoo.com



# THE 22ND SYMPOSIUM OF THE ICTM STUDY GROUP ON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS LISBON, PORTUGAL, 10-13 APRIL, 2019

**Rastko Jakovljevic**

## **Abstract**

This is an event review of the 22ND SYMPOSIUM OF THE ICTM STUDY GROUP ON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS LISBON, PORTUGAL, APRIL 10-13, 2019. The event is not only described in more detail, but also discussed as an event providing future possibilities in academic exchange.

**Keywords:** International Council for Traditional Music, Study Group Symposium, Musical Instruments, research directions, current academic issues

This spring, the ICTM Study Group on Musical instruments held its general biennial symposium from April 10 till 13, 2019 in Lisbon, Portugal, hosted by the School of Social Sciences and Humanities NOVA University of Lisbon (Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa), and its Institute for Ethnomusicology – Center of Studies in Music and Dance. The Program Committee (Rastko Jakovljevic, Richard K. Wolf, Gisa Jähnichen, Timkehet Teffera) reviewed and made selection from over fifty submitted proposals, while the Organizing Committee (João Soeiro de Carvalho, Salwa Castelo Branco, São José Côrte-Real, Maria Espírito Santo) provided flawless scientific and well organized logistic support from the host institution.

With over forty participants, renowned experts in the field of organology and anthropology of music, presenters displayed new research and findings in twelve individual sessions. The official program of this Symposium primarily focused in three main areas of investigation: 1) Musical Instruments and the Senses; 2) Mobility and Colonization of Musical Instruments and Instrumental Repertoires; and 3) New Research. Between each session, participants had an opportunity to develop substantial discussions on the matters of current ethnomusicological research, musical instruments, rising issues in methodology, and a large number of interdisciplinary topics.

A particularly interesting aspect of this symposium was the diversity of presentations and presenters, valued high in this study group and entire ICTM, with the participation of scholars and experts from many different countries, regions and almost all the continents. In addition, an increase in participation of the young scholars indicated a strengthening of membership and rising interest in the topics that this Study Group fosters.

Senses and timbre in Ryukyuan sanshin (H. Wan), the role of traditional instruments in establishing sense of place in Austria during French Revolution (S. Girling), digital musical instruments, senses and computer-aided interactions (M. Scherzinger), sensual and virtual communication within lute maker Carlos Jorge practice (G. Jähnichen), authenticities and decolonization of cavaquinho (N. Cristo), autopoietic of lute construction (C. Jorge Pereira Rodriguez) were seen as a primary interest of the first two sessions. In the sequences of the next discussions, attention shifted to more structural (organological), and historical perspectives of the music instrumental traditions of Ottoman kopuz and şeşhane (E. Soydaş), shadarghu in Timurid period (G. Tsuge), perceptions, interpretation and spirituality of Ethiopian bāgāna (T. Teffera), with additional poster presentation on tuning systems in Southeast Asian instrumental practices (R. Bader) displayed current trends of new organology. However, the discussion broadened the spectrum of focus that these presentation raised, following not just issues of classification, historical perspectives, and music practices, but also touching the questions of knowledge and dissemination, social context and its significance for music creation, and the place of research in current political climate throughout the world.

Going deeper from aspects of preservationism and roles that musical instruments have for cultural expression, the fourth session covered new findings in classification methods and taxonomies in Buddhist Sri Lankan instrumental music (E. J. Peiris), categorization, context and functions of the musical instruments of Sri Lanka (C. P. Meddegoda), and Ramayana epic and its iconography (T. Patarateeranon). Turn to more conceptualized research in organology followed presentations on gestalt principles and belonging (M. Bartmann), and organological specificities of Chinese nanyin (X. Fan), a paper that was presented in absence of the author. In the intermediate session, participants had the honor to be addressed by El-Shawan Castelo Branco, current President of the ICTM, presenting new information on research and activities of this organization.

Returning to the main topic of music and the senses, the next sessions covered important aspects of sonority and spatiality in Tboli music instruments (E. Jimenez), followed by an analysis of timbre in traditional Thai Ensembles (L. Xiangkun), and the motor perception of the performance process on the marimba presented by a newcomer to the Study Group (A. On-ying Yip). A shift to topics concentrated around identity politics was brought by presentations on Afro-Descendant identity and friction drums (C. Ruiz Rodriguez), mobility and identity of bajo sexto ensembles (R. Godina Valerio), drums of the Brazilian Samba as a vehicle of expression and identity (N. Zeh), and guitar music as a social support among marginalized communities in the South of the United States of America (H. Aguilar).



**Figure 1: Massimo de Bonfils shows the new instrument under discussion (Photo courtesy by Gisa Jähnichen).**

The next sessions brought intriguing findings of music instruments in various theoretical approaches, with a wide scope of research in museology in contrast with current research strategies. Accordingly, presentations explained novel catalogization of the Georgian musical instrument collections (N. Razmadze), music instruments as a metaphor of colonial power (R. Rangeeth Dias), and new

constructional and technological advances of violin building (M. de Bonfils, M. Fabretti and L. Minervino, Figure 1). In addition, perspectives of social importance of instruments were enlightened by the following research of particular musical instruments in the educational system of Japan (R. Fujita), moving to the controversial meanings and social reality of subway instrumental music in New York (R. Jakovljevic), and expressions of instrumental music among American-Lithuanian immigrants in the United States of America.



**Figures 2 and 3: Scenes from the Symposium (photos courtesy by Ahmad Faudzi Musib).**

This symposium was enriched with research in methodology and multi-layered graphical visualizations of instrumental performances (J. Ambrózová), and evolutive developments in instrumental practices from the Carpathian Cultural Enclaves (R. Roşu). The last sessions covered specific research conducted in an interdisciplinary field, revolving around issues of musical instruments and synesthesia (I. Popova), the aesthetics of Korean traditional gayageum (J. Clark), aspects of individual versus collective music in Nivkh traditional practice (I. Tangiku and C. Shinohara-Tangiku), going forward to the questions of sound imagination and ethnography (A. Kocan), colonial impact on the Sape tradition (A. Faudzi Musib), and intriguing aspects of instrumental music from the perspective of the Nicaraguan Revolution (E. J. Bendaña Rivas).

In addition to the rich scientific program, there were diverse and entertaining social events, such as a visit to the National Museum of Ethnology, including a special exhibit on music makers and their building practices, traditional music performance and business meetings.

The next symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Musical instruments is to be held in 2021, with submission guidance, locations and host institution to be confirmed later. Discussed were the guidelines for the new publication of *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Popularis (New Series)*, volume VI, as an official scientific collection of studies in musical instrument research, edited by Gisa Jähnichen, which should be published until the end of the current year.

Situating recent research in organology and its belonging contextual background as a field of inclusive contemporary theory, rather than pure analytical discipline, this meeting offered a place to discuss the place and role of ethnomusicology in general, future directions in research, as well as engagements of the ICTM and its many study groups in creating new ways of understanding music and musicianship beyond its canonical areas of interest and influences, classifications and general categorizations. This proved that the field is strengthening its interest within, between and beyond its main scope of action, which is a rather positive movement in its disciplinary development. Following improvements in the past years, the ICTM Study group on Musical Instruments as one of the oldest chapters of this world research organization remained dedicated to the profound quality and excellence in contemporary ethnomusicology, following new trends in the field, and welcoming its growing membership from around the world.