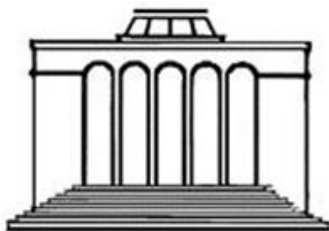
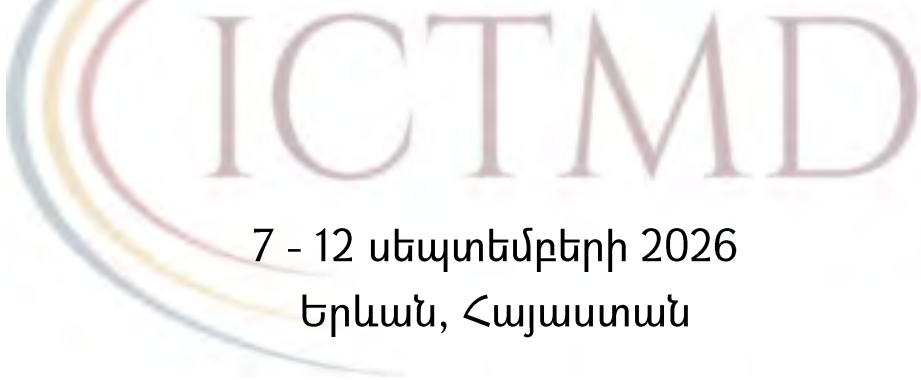


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գիտության կոմիտեի աջակցությամբ

Published with the support of Higher Education and Science
Committee of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and
Sports of the Republic of Armenia



**«Երաժշտությունը և
փոքրամասնությունները»
գիտահետազոտական խմբի 13-րդ
սիմպոզիում**



**7 - 12 սեպտեմբերի 2026
Երևան, Հայաստան**

ԾՐԱԳԻՐ ԵՎ ՀԱՄԱՌՈՏԱԳՐԵՐ

Երևան
ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատարակչություն
2026

**13th Symposium of the ICTMD
Study Group on Music and Minorities**



**7 - 12 September 2026
Yerevan, Armenia**

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

Yerevan
“Gitutyun” Publishing House of NAS RA
2026

UDC 78(082)

13th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities

7 - 12 September 2026

Yerevan, Armenia

<https://music-minorities.sci.am/>

Organized by the Study Group Music and Minorities of the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance.

Hosted by the Institute of Arts, Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory, and Kayt Cultural Hub.

Program and Abstracts

Edited by Tatevik SHAKHKULYAN, Svanibor PETTAN, and Kai TANG

The cover features a fragment of Martiros Sarian's *Hayastan*, reproduced with the kind permission of the Martiros Sarian House-Museum of Yerevan.

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13th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities

<https://music-minorities.sci.am/>

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Institute of Arts
Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory
Kayt Cultural Hub

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The Organizing Committee gratefully acknowledges the generous support and collaboration of the institutions and organizations that contributed to the realization of the 13th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities.

- Higher Education and Science Committee of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia
- National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

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Ashot SAGHYAN
**The President of the National
Academy of Sciences of the
Republic of Armenia**



Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

I am glad to welcome you to Yerevan within the framework of the 13th International Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities.

It is a great honor for the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia to host this prestigious event.

This is the first time Armenia has become the center of this significant scientific platform, which underscores our country's commitment to promoting international cooperation and dialogue between musical cultures in the field of ethnomusicology.

Music is a universal language that not only enables the preservation of national and ethnic identity, but also builds bridges between peoples.

Your research, dedicated to the musical heritage of minorities, is of key importance in enriching cultural diversity and mutual understanding.

This symposium is the best opportunity for the exchange of experience, the generation of new scientific ideas, and the establishment of long-term professional ties.

I am confident that these days spent under the hospitable roof of the Institute of Arts will be rich in meaningful discussions and productive outcomes.

I wish you fruitful work, new creative achievements, and unforgettable impressions in Armenia.

Welcome to Yerevan
Բարի գալուստ Երևան



Kai TANG

PhD

Chair of the Study Group on

Music and Minorities

Chair of the Program

Committee

Welcome to the 2026 Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities!

Over the past decades, the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities has been dedicated to bringing together music and dance scholars who engage with underrepresented individuals and communities. We accommodate diverse traditions of music and dance from around the world and promote socially engaged research and documentation. Study Group symposia have been serving as platforms for scholars, practitioners, and community members to stay up to date on emerging trends, open new directions for research, and sustain ongoing conversations across diverse traditions and perspectives.

This symposium welcomes participants from 33 countries around the world, with presentations spanning a wide range of topics organized around four main themes:

Under the theme of **Music, Dance, and the Conceptualization of Minorities**, we have invited discussions on the role of music and dance in processes of minoritization, as well as on how minority communities use music and dance to imagine their collective past and present, negotiate power relations, and exercise agency.

Sacred Music and Dance among Minorities and Diasporas is a theme deeply rooted in Armenian cultural and scholarly traditions. Presenters from across different continents will join the dialogue to explore the intersections of

faith, displacement, musical and dance creativity, and broader socio-cultural transformations.

Under the theme of **Popular Music and Dance among Minorities**, sixteen papers examine genres, repertoires, and traditions from diverse parts of the world, contributing new perspectives to ongoing discussions on topics ranging from hybridity and representation to political resistance and social change.

New Research accommodates the excellent submissions that do not fit neatly within the three themes above but demonstrate the breadth, vitality, and diversity of research conducted by members of our scholarly community.

In addition to our paper sessions, we will have photo and book exhibitions, concerts, workshops, and, of course, one event you simply cannot miss: the excursion on the final day of the symposium! All these activities are designed to provide opportunities for you to exchange ideas, share your work, and meet potential future collaborators. Together, we hope to build connections and strengthen our collective efforts to advance the study of music, dance, and minorities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Tatevik Shakhkulyan and the entire Armenian team. Organizing a symposium of this scale requires an enormous amount of work, much of it taking place behind the scenes. Our local colleagues have worked tirelessly to coordinate the many practical details and ensure that all of us feel welcome here in Yerevan.

I would like to conclude this message with a quotation from the ICTMD website: “As a non-governmental organization in formal consultative relations with UNESCO and by means of its wide international representation and the activities of its Study Groups, the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance acts as a bond among peoples of different cultures and thus contributes to the peace of humankind.”



Anna ASATRYAN

Acting Director of the Institute of Arts
Doctor of Sciences (Arts), Professor
Honored Art Worker of the
Republic of Armenia

***Thanks to the Symposium, the world will hear the voices of minorities
(including local Armenian groups) through music, and for one
week, Armenia will become the global academic center for the
protection of cultural rights***

I cordially welcome the participants and guests of the 13th International Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities.

The symposium will bring together ethnomusicologists, cultural studies experts, and performers on a global academic platform to discuss, document, and value the musical and dance traditions of ethnic, linguistic, religious, and social minorities.

This is not only an academic gathering, but also a response to current political, social, and cultural challenges through the prism of music and dance.

Hosting the 13th International Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities in Yerevan is a significant event in the academic and cultural life of Armenia. It holds deep relevance both on a global scientific scale and locally (for Armenia), driven by the following factors:

Globalization and the Preservation of Cultural Identity

In the contemporary world, globalization processes often lead to the loss of cultural identity among small communities. Music and dance are the most vital means of preserving and expressing the identity of minorities.

Migration Crises and Displacements

Due to political and military upheavals occurring worldwide, millions of people have become refugees or forcibly displaced. When a community loses its historical homeland, music and dance become the 'portable homeland' they carry with them to maintain a connection to their roots. This is a topic of profound relevance, both scientifically and humanitarily.

Highlighting Armenia's Multicultural Heritage

Armenia, a country with a rich history, is home to various national minorities (Yezidis, Assyrians, Greeks, Russians, Ukrainians, Kurds, and others). The symposium provides an excellent platform to showcase the cultural diversity of minorities living in Armenia to the international academic community, as well as to highlight how Armenia respects and preserves their cultural rights.

The Issues of the Diaspora and Artsakh

The concept of a 'minority' can also be examined within the context of the Armenian people themselves. The Armenian Diaspora acts as a cultural minority in various countries, making the study of their musical life immensely important.

Following the forced displacement of the Armenians of Artsakh, the preservation and reinterpretation of their culture, dialect, song, and dance hold a vital significance in Armenia. The symposium will demonstrate experiences in research, documentation, and safeguarding in the contexts of the Diaspora and Artsakh within the frame of efforts for sustainability of Armenian cultural identities.



Tsovinar MOVSISYAN
Acting Rector of Yerevan Komitas
State Conservatory
PhD of Art, Docent

It is a great honor for the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory to host the 13th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities. As Armenia's leading institution of higher music education, the Conservatory has always combined artistic training, scholarly research, and the preservation and study of musical heritage.

Bearing the name of Komitas Vardapet – a pioneering figure in Armenian musicology, ethnomusicology, and comparative music studies – the Conservatory continues his legacy by fostering research and education in diverse fields of music. The study and transmission of traditional music have always been an important part of the institution's mission, particularly through its Department of Folk Music, which houses a significant archive of Armenian traditional music as well as the musical heritage of various communities living in Armenia, including Syrian, Yezidi, and other cultural traditions.

The Conservatory views music as a powerful means of preserving cultural memory, expressing identity, and building dialogue among communities. Hosting the Music and Minorities Symposium is a valuable opportunity to bring together researchers and musicians from around the world to explore the ways in which musical traditions survive, transform, and continue to enrich our shared cultural landscape.

We warmly welcome all participants to Yerevan and hope that the symposium will become a space for meaningful exchange, collaboration, and new perspectives on the role of music in diverse communities.

Koriun DAVTYAN
Kayt Cultural Hub



It is my great pleasure to welcome you to Yerevan for the 13th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities.

At Kayt Cultural Hub, we believe that research, cultural practice, and education are strongest when they work together. Supporting initiatives that preserve, interpret, and share musical heritage has always been at the heart of our mission. It is therefore a privilege for Kayt to contribute to this symposium as an organizer.

We are especially delighted to present the symposium's cultural program, workshops, and performances. We hope these events will offer opportunities not only to learn about music and dance heritage in Armenia, but also to experience them through listening, participation, and personal encounters.

This contribution has been made possible through the generous support of Kayt's partners and friends from Armenia's IT sector, who share our belief that culture, education, and scholarship are worthy of long-term investment. Their commitment has enabled us to help create a meaningful cultural program alongside the symposium's academic discussions.

I hope that your days in Armenia will be filled with inspiring conversations, new friendships, and unforgettable musical experiences.

On behalf of Kayt Cultural Hub, I warmly welcome you to Yerevan and wish you a successful and memorable symposium.



Tatevik SHAKHKULYAN
PhD
Chair of the Local
Arrangements Committee

It is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the 13th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities in Yerevan, Armenia, taking place from 7 to 12 September 2026.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the current and former chairs, coordinators, and members of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities for choosing Yerevan as the venue for this symposium and for entrusting us with the opportunity to welcome this international community of scholars, performers, and practitioners.

We are honored to welcome colleagues from 33 countries across the world for scholarly exchange, creative dialogue, and artistic engagement. The symposium brings together researchers, performers, and practitioners to explore the diverse ways music and dance shape identities, sustain communities, and articulate experiences of minority and diasporic groups across cultural, social, and political contexts.

Beyond the academic program, we warmly invite you to join the cultural events, which have been carefully designed to reflect many of the themes of the symposium and to offer insights into Armenia's diverse musical traditions, communities, and cultural heritage.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our host institutions – Institute of Arts of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, Yerevan

Komitas State Conservatory, and Kayt Cultural Hub, as well as to our partners, sponsors, volunteers, and all those whose dedication has made this symposium possible.

Yerevan, one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, offers a meaningful setting for these conversations – a city where ancient heritage and contemporary cultural life meet. I hope that its rich musical traditions, vibrant cultural institutions, and warm hospitality will provide an inspiring environment for discussion, collaboration, and discovery.

I wish you a productive, enriching, and memorable symposium and look forward to the conversations, performances, and connections that will emerge during our time together.

THE ICTMD STUDY GROUP ON MUSIC AND MINORITIES

As a non-governmental organization in formal consultative relations with UNESCO, and through its wide international representation and the activities of its Study Groups, the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance acts as a bridge among people of different cultures and thus contributes to the peace of humankind. The Study Group on Music and Minorities was established in 1999 to bring together music and dance scholars who work with underprivileged and underrepresented individuals and groups. Promoting socially engaged research and documentation, the Study Group accommodates diverse traditions of music and dance from around the world and welcomes new topics, interdisciplinary studies, and innovative perspectives that advance scholarly knowledge. The Study Group's symposia provide a platform for exchanging research ideas, keeping up to date with emerging trends, and building new collaborations. For the purpose of this Study Group, the term *minority* means communities, groups, and/or individuals, including Indigenous, migrant, and other vulnerable groups that are at higher risk of discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, or social or economic deprivation.

INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Founded in 1944, the Institute of Arts is the country's leading research institution dedicated to the study of Armenian and world art. The Institute conducts fundamental and applied research in music, theatre, cinema, architecture, fine arts, and cultural heritage. The Institute of Arts hosts the specialized Scientific Degree-Granting Council in Art History and Theory, which stands as the sole body of its kind in Armenia. The Department of Music, one of the Institute's most distinguished divisions, has made significant contributions to the study of Armenian traditional, sacred, and professional music, ethnomusicology, music history, and the preservation of musical heritage. The Institute also maintains important archives and scholarly collections and publishes critical editions, monographs, and academic journals. The Institute has published the definitive collected works of Alexander Spendiarayan, spanning eleven volumes (1955–1984), and Komitas, encompassing fourteen volumes (1960–2006).

Furthermore, the Institute of Arts is heavily engaged in the preservation, scholarly investigation, and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage, as

exemplified by the thirteen-volume series *Armenian Traditional Music* (2008–2015), among other initiatives.

The Institute of Arts also houses the Aram Kocharyan Audio Archive, a unique repository of its kind, which comprehensively documents the distinct musical profile of historical Armenia.

YEREVAN KOMITAS STATE CONSERVATORY

Founded in 1921, the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory is Armenia's leading institution of higher education in music and one of the country's foremost centers of artistic and scholarly excellence. Named after Komitas Vardapet, the founder of Armenian national musicology, the Conservatory has played a central role in preserving and advancing Armenia's musical traditions while fostering innovation in performance, composition, conducting, and scholarship. The Conservatory offers undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs across a broad range of musical disciplines and is home to distinguished faculties in performance, composition, musicology, conducting, music education, and related fields. Alongside its educational mission, it serves as a vibrant cultural center, hosting concerts, festivals, conferences, competitions, masterclasses, and artistic collaborations that contribute significantly to Armenia's musical life and strengthen its international academic and cultural partnerships.

KAYT CULTURAL HUB

Kayt Cultural Hub is an innovative non-governmental organization committed to cultural education, community engagement, and creative research initiatives, with a special focus on Armenian and regional folk musics and arts. Bringing together scholars, musicians, educators, and cultural practitioners, Kayt develops interdisciplinary projects that connect research, artistic practice, and public participation.

Through concerts, workshops, interactive educational programs, community choirs, children's initiatives, and outreach activities, Kayt promotes creative approaches to the transmission of intangible cultural heritage. The organization is particularly committed to engaging children, young people, and underrepresented communities, creating inclusive spaces where traditional music becomes a living, shared experience. By combining scholarship with artistic innovation and participatory methodologies, Kayt fosters dialogue across generations and cultures while strengthening the role of traditional music in contemporary society.

VENUES

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Conference Hall of the Presidium of NAS RA

Address: 24 Marshal Baghramyan av., Yerevan

YEREVAN KOMITAS STATE CONSERVATORY

Address: 2 Mark Grigoryan str., Yerevan

Fourth Floor Auditorium

Third Floor Auditorium

First Floor: Sound Archive Hall

ARAM KHACHATURIAN HOUSE-MUSEUM

Address: 3 Zarobyan str., Yerevan

KOMITAS MUSEUM-INSTITUTE

Address: 28 Arshakunyats av., Yerevan

PROGRAM

Monday, 7 September

Opening day

Venue: National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia
Conference Hall of the Presidium of NAS RA

09:30 10:00	REGISTRATION
10:00 10:30	OPENING REMARKS Anna Asatryan, <i>Acting Director of the Institute of Arts</i> Pavel Avetisyan, <i>Vice-President of NAS RA</i> Tsovinar Movsisyan, <i>Acting Rector of Komitas State Conservatory</i> Kai Tang, <i>Chair of the Program Committee</i> Tatevik Shakhkulyan, <i>Chair of Local Arrangements Committee</i>
10:30 12:00	OPENING ROUNDTABLE <i>The ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities: Reflections on its Past, Present, and Future</i> Chair: Svanibor Pettan Panelists: Ursula Hemetek (Austria), Lasanthi Manaranjanie Kalinga Dona (Sri Lanka), Gergana Panova-Tekath (Germany), Svanibor Pettan (Slovenia), Kai Tang (Austria)
12:00 13:00	EXHIBITION: Pictures and Publications <i>Romani and Sinti Musicians in Slovenia</i> , a guided picture exhibition by Katarina Bogunović Hočevar <i>Exhibition of publications about music and minorities</i>
13:00 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 15:00	KEYNOTE LECTURE: Deborah Wong (USA) Chair: Kai Tang <i>How Music Makes Minorities: Synonym, Antonym, Metonym, Metonymy</i>
15:00 15:30	Coffee Break

15:30 17:30	SESSION 1: Cross-Theme Session	
	Chair: Tatevik Shakhkulyan	
	Gay Jennifer Breyley (Australia)	<i>Conceptualizing Kurdish Identities through Music and Dance in Iran</i>
	Anna Arevshatyan (Armenia)	<i>On a unique musical tradition of bell ringer's singing, preserved in Saint James Monastery of Jerusalem</i>
	Marko Kölbl, Faisal Jailani (Austria)	<i>A Popular Turn in Ethnomusicological Minority Studies?</i>
	Koriun Davtyan (Armenia)	<i>Demarginalization through Cultural Transfer: the TBOT Model in Borderline Communities of Armenia</i>
17:30 19:00	CULTURAL PROGRAM: Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory A welcoming evening reception featuring <i>Tagpar Band</i> and <i>Karin Folk Song and Dance Group</i> , guided Armenian and minorities dance experience for all symposium participants.	

Tuesday, 8 September

Theme 1: MUSIC, DANCE, AND THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MINORITIES

Venue: Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory

09:00 11:00	SESSION 2: Third Floor Auditorium Memory, Rememberings, and Identity Chair: Tomasz Nowak	
	Tatevik Shakhkulyan (Armenia)	<i>From Regional Tradition to Displaced Identity: Artsakh Music and Dance after Forced Migration</i>
	Carol Silverman (USA)	<i>Performing Social Memory: Dance, Ritual and Trauma among Kosovo Romani Migrants in Western Europe</i>
	Zuzana Jurková (Czechia)	<i>Rememberings of Minorities in the Post-totalitarian Czechia</i>
	Marianna Ostankovich, Dilyara Mukanova (Kazakhstan)	<i>Composition as an Act of Cultural Memory: Musical Strategies for Preserving Minority History</i>
09:00 11:00	SESSION 3: Fourth Floor Auditorium Music Heritage: Construction, (Re)presentation, and Scholarly Agency Chair: Lilit Yernjakyan	
	Solomon Gwerevende (Austria) (online)	<i>Beyond the “Forgotten”: Re-conceptualising Doma Identity through Music and Dance Heritage in Zimbabwe</i>
	Zhang Xueyang (China, Malaysia)	<i>“A Thousand Voices, A Thousand Tones”: Micro-tone Characteristics of Miao Folk Songs in Xiangxi, Hunan Province, China</i>
	George Pioustin (USA)	<i>Staging Minority Heritage: State Intervention and the Gendering of Syrian Christian Performance Traditions in Kerala</i>

	Gagik Ginosyan, Abel Matevosyan (Armenia)	<i>Armenian Gyond or Yezidi Govand?</i>
11:00 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 13:00	SESSION 4: Third Floor Auditorium Community Music and Musical Communities in Migration Chair: Marko Kölbl	
	Ani Hakobyan (Armenia)	<i>The Musical and Ritual Life of the Greek Community in Armenia</i>
	Samantha Sebastian (United Kingdom)	<i>Intravocality: The Songworlds and Livelihoods of Overseas Filipino Workers</i>
	Peter Lell (Austria)	<i>Continuity, Disruption, or Transformation? Musical Practices of Afghan Musicians in Exile in Germany</i>
11:30 13:00	SESSION 5: Fourth Floor Auditorium Artistic Structures and Cultural Interfaces Chair: Teona Lomsadze	
	Nana Amowee Dawson (Ghana) (online)	<i>Asempayetsia as Artistic Methodology: Decolonial Composition, Akan-Mfantse Folklore, and the Reconfiguration of Musical Knowledge</i>
	Sona Simonyan (Armenia)	<i>Ethnic Minorities in Aram Khachaturian's Gayane Ballet</i>
	Lilit Martirosyan (Armenia)	<i>Yezidi Musical Traditions in Armenia</i>
13:00 14:30	Lunch Break	

14:30 16:00	SESSION 6: Third Floor Auditorium	
	Minoritization Chair: Lasanthi Manaranjanie Kalinga Dona	
	Rose Merin (India) (online)	<i>Performing the Sacred Minority: Nangiarkoothu and the Politics of Cultural Belonging in South India</i>
	Eva Kirchmayer Bilić (Croatia)	<i>Marginalized Voices: Croatian and Armenian Women Composers in Global Musical Culture</i>
	Teona Lomsadze (Georgia)	<i>Minoritised from Home: Georgian Traditional Music in the British-Georgian Diaspora</i>
16:00 16:30	Coffee Break	
16:30 18:00	SESSION 7: Third Floor Auditorium	
	Music, Politics, and Resistance Chair: Carol Silverman	
	Rima Tigranian (Armenia)	<i>From 'Enemy Music' to Estrada: How Did Armenian Jazz Survive and Transform?</i>
	Hripsime Pikichian (Armenia)	<i>Ritual Dances and National Identity in Soviet and Post-Soviet Armenia</i>
	Mary Serobyan (film) (Armenia)	<i>A Life Told in Songs: "Grandmother Tamar" from Western Armenia to Aparan (Film)</i>
18:10 19:20	Armenian Wind Instruments Workshop: Fourth Floor Auditorium	
	Conducted by Norayr Kartashyan	
18:10 19:20	Armenian Percussion Instruments Workshop: Third Floor Auditorium	
	Conducted by Grigor Davtyan	
18:10 19:20	Komitas singing: Sound Archive Hall	
	Conducted by Tatevik Shakhkulyan	

Wednesday, 9 September

Theme 2: SACRED MUSIC AND DANCE
AMONG MINORITIES AND DIASPORAS

Venue: Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory

09:00 11:00	SESSION 8: Third Floor Auditorium Ritual and Lamentation Chair: Ursula Hemetek	
	Marios Chatziprokopiou (Greece)	<i>Lamenting in the Diaspora; performing Ashura in Piraeus</i>
	Amos Darkwa Asare (Austria)	<i>Performing Death and Identity in Duakor: Funerary Music and Dance in a Minority Community</i>
	Manami Suzuki (Japan)	<i>Women's Voices across Alevi Ritual and Public Performance: Lamentation, Assertion, Self-Representation</i>
	Linda Sargsyan (Armenia)	<i>Seraphim and Cherubim Angels in Folk Songs</i>
09:00 11:00	SESSION 9: Fourth Floor Auditorium Cosmology, Ritual Knowledge, and Sacred Soundscapes Chair: Deborah Wong	
	Gretel Schwörer-Kohl (Germany)	<i>Sacred Music and Dance of the La Hu Nyi People in Northern Thailand</i>
	Soegiarto Hartono (Indonesia) (online)	<i>Sacred Cosmology as Minority Knowledge System: Directional Ritual, Embodied Astronomy, and Gender Authority in Minahasa Rumages</i>

	Pankaj Rawat (India) (online)	<i>Sacred Soundscapes of Identity and Belonging Jāgar Ritual Music in the Uttarakhand Himalayas</i>
	Gisa Jähnichen (China) (online)	<i>Southern Chinese Drums</i>
11:00 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 13:00	SESSION 10: Forth Floor Auditorium Sacred Traditions in Diaspora and Cross-Cultural Contexts Chair: Gay Jennifer Breyley	
	George Mürer (USA)	<i>Approaching Musicological and Choreological Resonances and Interfaces Between Kurds, Armenians, and Syrian Christians in West Asia</i>
	Lilit Harutyunyan (Armenia)	<i>From Oral Chant to Notation: Preserving Assyrian Sacred Music</i>
	Lolita Emmanuel (Australlia)	<i>Loss, Memory and the Creative Reassembly of Syriac Chant in Diaspora</i>
13:00 14:30	Lunch Break	
14:00 17:00	Exhibition of Minority Arts, Crafts, and Cultural Expressions Courtyard of the Komitas State Conservatory	
14:30 16:00	SESSION 11: Fourth Floor Auditorium Migration, Identity, and Community Performance Chair: Ioannis Christidis	
	Ani Ginosyan (Armenia)	<i>Armenian Traditional Dance outside Armenia</i>
	Xiaotong Yang (New Zealand)	<i>“Silent” Transformation: Themes of Cantonese Folk Religion in Early-Twentieth-Century New Zealand Chinese Community Music-making</i>

	Chae-Lin Kim (Austria)	<i>“Gott gebärdet gern” (God is pleased to sign) – Religious Songs by the Berlin Sign Choir</i>
16:00 16:30	Coffee Break	
16:30 18:00	SESSION 12: Fourth Floor Auditorium Reframing Sacred Practice: Transmission, Materiality, and New Voices Chair: Peter Lell	
	Lusine Kagramanyan (Austria)	<i>The Cradle as Sanctuary: Matriarchal Authorship and the Armenian Lullaby as Sacred Ritual</i>
	Fulvia Caruso (Italy) (online)	<i>Beyond Urban Borders: Faith, Culture, and Musical Practices in Migratory Contexts</i>
	Hu Yile (Hong Kong / France) (online)	<i>Who Performs? Where, and for Whom? – Tibetan Monastic Music and Dance as a Medium between the Sacred and the Secular</i>
19:00	CULTURAL PROGRAM: Komitas Museum-Institute Guided tour in Museum Many Voices, One Stage: Expressions of Minority Cultures A concert featuring performances by diverse communities, including ethnic minorities and artists with disabilities, celebrating cultural expression, identity, and inclusion through music and dance.	

Thursday, 10 September

Theme 3: POPULAR MUSIC AND DANCE AMONG MINORITIES

Venue: Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory

09:00 11:00	SESSION 13: Third Floor Auditorium Representation, Identity, and Power Chair: Zuzana Jurková	
	Mojca Kovačič (Slovenia)	<i>Discrimination Histories and the Political Economy of Language in Carinthian Slovene Popular Music</i>
	Ioannis Christidis, Luna Al-Mousli (Austria)	<i>SWANA Dancefloors in Vienna: Electronic Music and Affective Politics in Diasporic Nightlife</i>
	Shaun Williams (Romania)	<i>“Maneaua Romilor”: The Making of a Subversive Romani Genre in Socialist Romania</i>
	Kai Viljami Åberg (Finland)	<i>Voices, Power, and Representation: Romani Identity in Finnish Popular Music</i>
09:30 11:00	SESSION 14: Fourth Floor Auditorium Cultural Agency and Community Chair: Gergana Panova-Tekath	
	Hasmik Harutyunyan, Stella Davtyan (Armenia)	<i>Dance Traditions in the Yezidi Community of the Armenian Village of Azatan</i>
	Giulia Maggiora (Portugal)	<i>“Batuku, gaita, tabanca, pra todo sítio na rua...” Sonic Practices of Resistance and Affirmation in the Portuguese Cape Verdean Diaspora</i>
	Harutyun Baghdasaryan, Arpenik Ghazaryan (Armenia)	<i>“The Will”</i>

11:00 11:30	Coffee Break	
12:00 13:00	CULTURAL PROGRAM: Aram Khachaturian House-Museum Concert by Eva Kirchmayer Bilić Croatian and Armenian Women Composers	
13:00 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 16:00	SESSION 15: Third Floor Auditorium Memory and Intercultural Exchange Chair: George Mürer	
	Margarit Sargsyan (Armenia)	<i>The Dance Song “Tamzara” in Armenian Tradition and Its Parallels in the Culture of the Kurds, Greeks and Assyrians</i>
	Garegin Masuryan (Armenia)	<i>Issues of Formation and Transformation of Armenian Dance: Traditional Dance under Foreign Domination</i>
	Marianna Tigranyan (Armenia)	<i>The Ritual Roots of the Armenian “Lorke” and the Kurdish “Lurke” Dance Song</i>
	Jultje Aneke Rattu (Indonesia) (online)	<i>Embodying Ritual Efficacy: Sacred Maengket Music and Dance in Minahasan Diaspora Contexts</i>
14:00 16:00	SESSION 16: Fourth Floor Auditorium Cultural Boundaries, Exchange, and Belonging Chair: Hande Sağlam	
	Naira Kilichyan (Armenia)	<i>Traditional Kochari: Memory of Movement in Armenian and Greek Dance Cultures</i>
	John Plemmenos (Greece) (online)	<i>“Nor Do the Senseless Animals Themselves Ever Mate Outside Their Own Species”: Minority Friction and the Role of Music as Ethnic and</i>

		<i>Religious Catalyst in Late-18th Century Istanbul</i>
	Marjeta Pisk (Slovenia)	<i>Performing Belonging: Dialect, Genre Hybridity, and Minority Identity at the Senjam Beneške Piesmi</i>
	Jannatul Ferdous (Bangladesh)	<i>Strategic Stages: How Chakma Youth Negotiate Identity Through Music, Dance, and Theatre in Bangladesh.</i>
16:00 16:30	Coffee Break	
16:30 18:00	Music and Minorities Study Group Welcome Meeting: Third Floor Auditorium	

Friday, 11 September

Theme 4: NEW RESEARCH

Venue: Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory

09:00 11:00	SESSION 17: Third Floor Auditorium Preservation, Archives, Representation, and Cultural Memory Chair: Gretel Schwörer-Kohl	
	Hande Sağlam (Austria)	<i>Archiving the Minority: Early Sound Traces of Turkish Communities in Berlin</i>
	Sevilay Çınar (Türkiye)	<i>Preconditions of Archival Visibility: Women's Voices in the Turkish Folk Music Collection of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv</i>
	Baia Zhuzhunadze (Georgia)	<i>Traditional Music of Georgians Living in Turkey: On the Example of Bayar Şahin's Archive</i>
	Anna Adamyan (Armenia)	<i>Hamshen Armenian Songs in Contemporary Armenian Music: Preservation and Growing Interest</i>
11:00 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 13:00	SESSION 18: Third Floor Auditorium Hall Music, Memory, and Resilience in Communities Facing Challenges Chair: Alma Bejtullahu	
	Tomasz Nowak (Poland)	<i>Music as a Means of Overcoming the Trauma of Displacement in the Light of the Lemkos' Memoirs, Poland</i>
	Maria Gharabekyan (Armenia)	<i>The Art of the Tagh and the Epic Song in the Works of Levon Astvatsatryan, a Prominent Armenian Composer and Representative of the French Diaspora</i>

	Neil van der Linden (The Netherlands)	<i>The music and celebrations of the Bo Kaap minority community in Capetown.</i>
11:30 13:00	SESSION 19: Fourth Floor Auditorium Music, Identity, and Ritual among Minority Communities in Iran Chair: Mohammad R Azadehfar	
	Mohammad R Azadehfar (Iran) (online)	<i>Dual Home, Dual Identity: Afghan Musical Practices and Hybridity between Tehran and Herat</i>
	Hossein Reza Asadi (Iran)	<i>Laki Folk Music and Collective Identity in Lorestan, Iran</i>
	Anoush Estik (Armenia, Iran)	<i>Ritual Musical Instruments Used in the Churches of New Julfa, Isfahan</i>
13:00 14:30	Lunch Break	
14:30 16:00	SESSION 20: Fourth Floor Auditorium Music, Identity, and Negotiated Belonging in Transcultural Contexts Chair: Mojca Kovačič	
	Gertrud Maria Huber (Austria)	<i>Playing the Alpine Zither: Reflections on the Disappearance of a Musical Practice among the German-Speaking Minority in the USA</i>
	Bharath Ranganathan (India, Slovenia) (online)	<i>Autoethnographic Reflections on Transculturality of Indian Music in Slovenia</i>
	Alma Bejtullahu (Slovenia)	<i>Romani Musicians in Slovenian Narodnozabavna Music</i>
16:00 16:30	Coffee Break	

16:30 18:00	SESSION 21: Fourth Floor Auditorium Traditional Sources in Art Music and Dance: Composition, Transcription, and Embodied Practice Chair: Katarina Bogunović Hočevar	
	Mohamad Hamami (Syria)	<i>Sounding and Moving Presence: Popular Music, Dance, and Minority Cultural Agency between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus</i>
	Heghine Sargsyan (Armenia)	<i>Arrangements of Komitas' Compositions in Ara Sevanyan's Art</i>
	Hayarpi Ananyan (Armenia)	<i>Traditional Dance in Armenian Festival Settings: Embodied Memory and Community Participation</i>
18:00 19:00	CLOSING Performance by Nairyan Vocal Ensemble Komitas's songs in an inclusive performance using Armenian Sign Language	

Saturday, 12 September

EXCURSION

Time: 10:00 – 18:00

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Information</i>
Garni Temple	1st century pre-Christian temple
Geghard Monastery Complex	Medieval Christian monastic complex, partially carved into the rock; UNESCO World Heritage Site
Symphony of Stones	Natural basalt formation; a geological heritage

Cultural Program:

Sacred Music Performance by the Khazer Choir

Performance of Armenian Folk Songs by Kayt Band

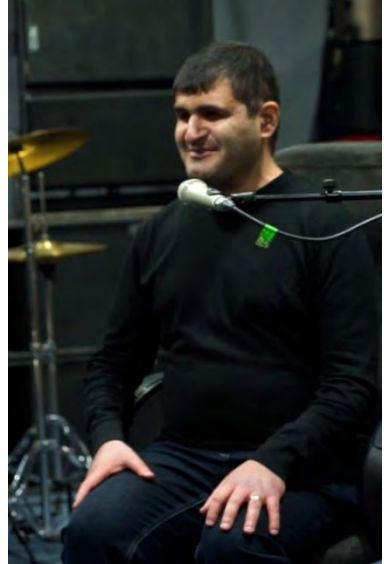
CULTURAL PROGRAM

MARAT HARUTYUNYAN is a folk singer and educator from Karabakh. Born and raised in the region, he dedicated many years to teaching and preserving traditional music in schools across different cities of Karabakh. His family roots extend across various towns and villages of Karabakh, reflecting the rich cultural diversity of the region.

Following the displacement of the Armenian population from Karabakh in 2020, Marat was forced to leave his homeland and now lives in Yerevan. His life and artistic work reflect experiences of cultural continuity, displacement, and resilience. As both a displaced

person and a blind musician, he brings a unique perspective on identity, inclusion, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Marat performs *Iriknakə Tyus a Yekal* (“The Sun has Risen”), a well-known folk songs of Karabakh. For generations, the song has served as a powerful symbol of the identity, collective memory, and cultural resilience of the Armenians of Karabakh.



Performance at Session 2

Monday, 8 September 2026, 09:00

Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory

TAGPAR BAND



Tagpar is a traditional Armenian folk band dedicated to preserving and performing the music of celebrations and rituals. Drawing on the rich traditions of Armenian weddings, community festivals, and family gatherings, the ensemble presents dance tunes and folk songs that have accompanied communal life for generations. Many of these traditions have also been preserved within Armenian minority communities around the world, where music and dance have played an important role in maintaining cultural identity and continuity. Its repertoire features Armenian dance suites and festive songs, brought to the stage in an engaging concert program that invites audiences to experience the vitality of Armenia's living musical heritage.

Drumming performance at the Welcoming Evening Reception
7 September 2026 | 17:30–19:00
National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

KARIN TRADITIONAL FOLK SONG AND DANCE GROUP



Founded in 2001 by renowned dance ethnographer, choreographer, and folklorist Gagik Ginosyan, *Karin* Traditional Song and Dance Group is one of Armenia's leading organizations dedicated to the preservation, revival, and transmission of Armenian traditional song and dance.

The ensemble has researched, documented, restored, and brought to the stage traditional dances and songs from different regions of Armenia and Armenian minority communities across the diaspora, preserving not only artistic heritage but also collective memory and cultural identity.

Beyond performances, Karin has played a major role in the revival of traditional Armenian dance as a living cultural practice. Through educational programs, open dance classes, research, and community initiatives, the group has introduced thousands of people to Armenian dances, making them an active part of contemporary cultural life.

Traditional Armenian Music and Dance performance at the Welcoming Evening Reception

Monday, 7 September 2026 | 17:30–19:00

National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

MANY VOICES, ONE STAGE: EXPRESSIONS OF MINORITY CULTURES

The Komitas Museum-Institute is pleased to host *Many Voices, One Stage: Expressions of Minority Cultures*, a special concert presented as part of the 13th Symposium of the ICTMD Music and Minorities Study Group.

Bringing together performers from diverse minority and underrepresented communities in Armenia, the concert celebrates music and dance as powerful expressions of identity, cultural continuity, and inclusion. The concert features an inclusive bell ensemble of children with Down syndrome, an Armenian folk dance ensemble including blind and deaf performers, an inclusive choir, representatives of Armenia's Assyrian and Greek communities, and performers of the Armenian ashugh tradition.

Together, these performances reflect the symposium's commitment to dialogue, diversity, accessibility, and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through performance.



Sun-bells



Paros Chamber Choir

The special guest of the concert will be *Yerakhosutyun*, one of the few ensembles in Armenia preserving the traditional art of *sazandars*, folk instrumentalists who were once widespread throughout Armenia but whose musical tradition has become increasingly marginal in contemporary cultural life.

Wednesday, 9 September 2026 | 19:00–21:00

Komitas Museum-Institute

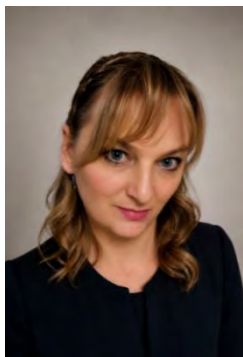
CROATIAN AND ARMENIAN WOMEN COMPOSERS

Performed by

Eva Kirchmayer Bilić (piano)

Arpi Vardanyan (piano)

Ani Ghazaryan (soprano)



Eva Kirchmayer Bilić is a Croatian pianist, educator, researcher, and artistic director of the Armenian–Croatian musical collaboration. She holds a Master’s degree in Piano Performance from the Academy of Music, University of Zagreb, where she also teaches. An active concert pianist, chamber musician, and collaborative artist, she has performed and given masterclasses across Europe, North America, the Middle East, and the South Caucasus. As Vice President of the Armenian-Croatian Community in Zagreb, she contributes significantly to strengthening cultural ties between Armenia and Croatia.

Arpi Vardanyan is an Armenian pianist who completed her studies at the Tchaikovsky Specialized Music School in Yerevan before continuing at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory and the Academy of Music, University of Zagreb, where she earned her Master's degree in Piano Performance in 2021. An award-winning pianist, Arpi has appeared as both a soloist and chamber musician at numerous concerts and festivals in Armenia and abroad.

Ani Ghazaryan is an Armenian soprano and a Master’s student at Komitas State Conservatory, where she also completed her Bachelor’s degree. She previously studied at the Babajanyan Musical-Pedagogical College. She has participated in numerous international and national competitions and masterclasses and has performed at the Opera Studio of Komitas State Conservatory.

PROGRAM

Dora Pejačević (1885–1923)

Chanson sans paroles/Pjesma bez riječi

Impromptu, op. 9

Warum? / Why? Op. 13 (lyrics by Dora Pejačević)

Jelena Pucić-Sorkočević (c. 1784–1865)

Sento che l'alma

Gayane Chebotarian (1918–1998)

Prelude No. 2: Allegro grazioso (from the cycle *Six Preludes*)

Prelude No. 3; Adagio con duolo

Geghuni Chtchyan (born 1929)

Melancholy (lyrics by Hovhannes Shiraz)

Ararat (lyrics by Hovhannes Shiraz)

Ivana Lang (1912–1982)

Waltz, Op. 50 (from the cycle *Four Compositions for Piano*)

Small colorful world / Mali šaroliki svijet, suite for piano 4 hands:

Prelude, Tango, Waltz, Gallop

Concert

Thursday, 10 September 2026 | 12:00–13:00

Aram Khachaturian Museum Concert Hall

NAIRYAN VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Yelena Azaryan
Alisa Manukyan
Anna Minasyan
Naira Mughdusyan (*Artistic Director*)
Mariam Mughdusyan (*Producer*)



Nairyan Vocal Ensemble was founded in 2015 as a cultural program of the Mughdusyan Art Center in Yerevan. The ensemble is dedicated to preserving and promoting Armenian classical, sacred, and traditional music. Nairyan is known for its predominantly a cappella polyphonic performances, presenting works by Armenian composers, traditional songs, and distinctive interpretations of contemporary arrangements.

The ensemble has performed at numerous concerts, festivals, and cultural events in Armenia and abroad, including in the USA, Uruguay, Argentina, Germany, Switzerland, Egypt, and Russia. Since 2018, Nairyan has developed a distinctive inclusive project combining polyphonic a cappella singing with the simultaneous presentation of songs in sign language, making musical performances more accessible to people with hearing impairments. Through this approach, the ensemble has gained recognition for its distinctive and inclusive performance practice. Alongside its musical activities, Nairyan addresses social issues, including women's rights, the prevention of domestic violence, and women's empowerment, through musical and audiovisual projects.

Performance during the Closing
Saturday, 11 September 2026 | 18:00

Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory
KHAZER CHOIR



Founded in Yerevan in 2013 by Ani Navasardyan, *Khazer* Choir is dedicated to the preservation, revival, and transmission of Armenian sacred and traditional vocal heritage. The choir takes its name from the ancient Armenian system of musical notation – *khaz* – which for centuries served as a unique means of recording Armenian liturgical music.

Through its performances, *Khazer* brings to life the distinctive sound world of Armenian sacred and folk music, drawing inspiration from the legacy of Komitas, who played a central role in the study, preservation, and reinterpretation of Armenian musical heritage.

The choir's work highlights the role of music as a carrier of collective memory and cultural identity. For Armenian minority communities living outside their historic homeland, sacred and traditional music has long served as a means of preserving cultural heritage and maintaining connections across generations and geographical boundaries. By reviving and sharing Armenian sacred music, *Khazer* contributes to the ongoing transmission of a unique cultural voice within the broader landscape of world musical diversity.

Sacred Music Performance at Geghard Monastery
Saturday, 12 September 2026

KAYT BAND



Kayt Band is an Armenian folk ensemble founded in Yerevan to preserve and reintroduce the traditions of Armenian folk music through historically informed performances on traditional instruments. The ensemble's repertoire is drawn primarily from songs and instrumental melodies preserved in oral tradition and documented by Armenian collectors and ethnomusicologists from the nineteenth century onward.

Committed to reviving rarely – if ever – performed works, *Kayt Band* has presented the first concert performances of numerous Armenian folk songs and instrumental pieces, bringing them back into contemporary musical life while remaining faithful to their traditional character. Through performances, recordings, and educational activities, the ensemble seeks to bridge Armenia's musical heritage with present-day audiences including Armenian minority communities living outside Armenia, for whom traditional music can serve as an important expression of cultural identity and continuity.

Armenian folk music performance

Saturday, 12 September 2026

Garni

WORKSHOPS

RHYTHM WORKSHOP: ARMENIAN PERCUSSION TRADITIONS



Discover the rich rhythmic language of Armenian traditional music through a hands-on workshop led by percussionist Grigor Davtyan. Participants will explore characteristic Armenian rhythmic patterns and actively engage in learning and performing them using traditional percussion instruments. Designed for musicians and non-musicians alike, the workshop offers an interactive introduction to the vital role of rhythm in Armenian musical culture.

ARMENIAN WIND INSTRUMENTS WORKSHOP

Led by renowned musician Norayr Kartashyan, this workshop introduces participants to the diverse family of traditional Armenian wind instruments (aerophones). From the UNESCO-inscribed duduk to the distinctive blul and other indigenous instruments, participants will discover their unique sounds, performance techniques, and cultural significance through live demonstrations and discussion.



SINGING KOMITAS: AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

This participatory workshop invites attendees to experience the music of Komitas through collective singing. Led by Tatevik Shakhkulyan, participants will learn and perform selected works by Komitas based on traditional Armenian songs while exploring his unique approach to collecting, arranging, and preserving folk music heritage.

Tuesday, 8 September 2026 | 18:10–19:20

Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory

EXCURSION

The symposium excursion offers participants an opportunity to experience some of Armenia's most remarkable historical, cultural, and natural landmarks. Garni is the only surviving Greco-Roman colonnaded temple in the region, dating from the first century CE. Overlooking the dramatic Azat River Gorge, the temple stands as a remarkable testament to Armenia's pre-Christian past.

We will then descend into the gorge to visit the *Symphony of Stones*, a



striking natural monument formed by towering basalt columns created through volcanic activity. This extraordinary geological formation is one of Armenia's most distinctive natural attractions. The excursion continues to Geghard Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage

Site founded in the 4th century and expanded over the centuries into the surrounding cliffs. Renowned for its medieval architecture, intricate stone carvings, and exceptional acoustics, Geghard remains one of Armenia's most treasured spiritual and cultural monuments.

A special performance of medieval Armenian music will offer an opportunity to experience Armenian sacred music within the monastery's unique acoustic and spiritual setting. The excursion will conclude with a performance featuring contemporary interpretations of Armenian folk music.



OPENING ROUNDTABLE

Chair: Svanibor Pettan

Panelists: Ursula Hemetek (Austria), Lasanthi Manaranjanie Kalinga Dona (Sri Lanka), Gergana Panova Tekath (Germany), Svanibor Pettan (Slovenia), Kai Tang (Austria)

The ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities: Reflections on Its Past, Present, and Future

The proposed roundtable is inspired by the first 25 years of symposia of the Study Group (2000–2025) and aims to provide reflections on the lessons learned on the way to its current positioning. Even though the Study Group's definition of minorities envisions space for very diverse individuals, groups, and communities, the ethnic minorities still prevail in presentations and publications. How to diversify it? The first Study Group's decade was marked by the symposia hosted by European Slavic countries, followed by the opening towards various hosting countries in Asia. How is the absence of its symposia on other continents reflected in the membership profile? The Study Group so far successfully cooperated with three other Study Groups in hosting joint symposia. Which other Study Groups would make optimal strategic partners and why? The recent change of the Council's name calls for the question on how to increase the presence of dance studies within the scope of the Study Group; collaboration with the Study Group on Ethnochoreology and addition of dance to the Study Group's name would be worth of consideration.

The Study Group's symposia and its publications inspired broadening of the scope of ethnomusicological research, enriching of its theoretical and methodological base, and raising of public sensitivity for the others. The discussants will reflect on how these processes work in their own geographic, academic, and cultural environments. They will also use the examples of their own research to provide the Study Group with the constructive suggestions for the future work. In the final part of the roundtable, the audience will be invited to participate in the discussion.

The participants in the roundtable bring in their experiences and views from the relevant areas of applied ethnomusicology, ethnochoreology, medical ethnomusicology, and Indigenous studies.

Ursula Hemetek is the Director of the Music and Minorities Research Centre at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, that she founded with the money of the Wittgenstein Prize in 2019. From 2011–2022 she was Head of the Department for Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology, from 2017–2021 Secretary General of the ICTMD (International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance). She is the founding chair of the ICTMD Study Group Music and Minorities which she chaired from 1999–2017.

Lasanthi Manaranjanie Kalinga Dona is a musician, ethnomusicologist and professor at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. She earned her academic degrees in Sri Lanka (BA), India (MMus), and Slovenia (PhD), and presents internationally the results of her research on various minority musics, music therapy, and medical ethnomusicology. A founding chair of the ICTMD National Committee of Sri Lanka, she was the principal host of the previous symposium of the Study Group on Music and Minorities in Colombo in 2023.

Gergana Panova-Tekath is Professor of International dance at Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen and Strategic Head of Municipal Integration Management in Oberhausen, Germany. Trained as a dancer and choreographer and former Professor of Ethnochoreology at the Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, she holds a PhD in cultural philosophy and communication and a DSc in ethnomusicology. Her research focuses on dance across political paradigms and national contexts, particularly in relation to diaspora, intercultural communication, and embodiment.

Svanibor Pettan is Emeritus Professor at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, known for his research on music on a war-peace continuum, minorities, applied ethnomusicology, and institutional history of ethnomusicology. He served as founding Chair of the Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology, Chair of the Study Group on Music and Minorities, Secretary General and President of the ICTMD. His newest publications include the book *Being an Ethnomusicologist* and an upcoming edited volume on Romani and Sinti musicians in Slovenia.

Kai Tang received her PhD in ethnomusicology from Harvard University. She taught in the Sociology Department at Peking University before joining the Music and Minorities Research Center in 2022. Her articles appeared in journals such as *Ethnomusicology*, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, and *Journal of the Austrian Musicological Society*. In addition to her service in the ICTMD, Kai is the elected chair of the Society for Ethnomusicology's Ethics Committee. Her current research focuses on music and the invention of ethnic minorities in China.

EXHIBITION

Katarina Bogunović Hočevar
University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Romani and Sinti Musicians in Slovenia: Social Status, Cultural Practices and Interactions

This photographic exhibition was created within the research project of the same title (ARIS project J6-50204), funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS). The exhibition presents the musical heritage of Romani and Sinti communities in Slovenia from the early twentieth century to the present day. Based on original historical research, it brings together archival documents, historical photographs, and contemporary portraits of musicians. It highlights the diversity of musical practices, identities, and life stories that have shaped Slovenian musical culture, while emphasizing the important contribution of Romani and Sinti musicians to Slovenia's musical and cultural life.

The exhibition is organised in two sections. The historical part presents archival documents and photographs that reveal the long-standing presence of Romani and Sinti musicians in Slovenian musical life. The contemporary section focuses on living musicians and demonstrates the continuity, vitality, and diversity of their artistic practices. By bringing these stories into public view, the exhibition seeks to challenge long-standing stereotypes and encourage a more inclusive understanding of Slovenia's shared musical heritage while opening new perspectives for future research.

Katarina Bogunović Hočevar is an Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of Musicology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her research focuses on 19th and 20th century music history, Slovenian music, musical institutions, music analysis, and aesthetics. She has published extensively and is the author and editor of several scholarly books. She also curates exhibitions and collaborates with major Slovenian musical institutions on publications and documentary projects. From 2017 to 2021, she served as President of the Slovenian Musicological Society.

MONDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2026 | 12:00–13:30
National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Deborah Wong

University of California, Riverside (USA)

How Music Makes Minorities: Synonym, Antonym, Metonym, Metonymy

This presentation is a workbook. I reflect on methods for understanding how music can parse, define, refute, expand, or transform what a minority is, or what minoritized subjectivities do in the world. I offer three examples for how close listening and close reading of music and dance model methods for minoritized thinking. Is a musical work a synonym for a community? Is censorship the antonym to minority survival? I will consider whether a song is a metonym for a people, a community, or a worldview. Ethnomusicologists routinely move quickly and gracefully between the particular and the structural; we are good at connecting different scales of understanding. My subject is Japanese American singer, songwriter, and activist Nobuko Miyamoto. Asian American minority status is unstable and dynamic. Miyamoto fiercely remembers the WW2 Japanese American incarceration camps and connects them to ongoing federal practices of immigrant detention. She writes about her rage when refusing to comply with a TV producer's effort to whitewash US history. She writes songs that connect Asian America to African American and Chicana struggle. I will listen to a song, read her memoir, and parse her choreography. Exactly how does music stand in relation to minoritized social justice?

Deborah Wong is Professor Emerita of Music at the University of California, Riverside. Committed to public sector work at the national, state, and local levels, she focuses on Asian American music, performance, and community building. She has written three books: *Louder and Faster: Pain, Joy, and the Body Politic in Asian American Taiko* (2019), *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (2004), and *Sounding the Center: History and Aesthetics in Thai Buddhist Ritual* (2001).

SESSION 1: Cross-Theme Session

Gay Jennifer Breyley

University of Adelaide, Monash University (Australia)

Conceptualizing Kurdish Identities through Music and Dance in Iran

The Kurdish people constitute the world's largest stateless nation, with Kurdistan covering parts of Iran, Türkiye, Iraq, and Syria. Over 30 million Kurdish people live in this region, with their imposed status as “minority” varying in lived experience from state to state and region to region. The Kurdish diaspora is also large, numbering at least 2 million. In Iran, many Kurds live on their mountainous ancestral lands, while many are displaced to other regions for economic, social, and/or political reasons. Kurdish people in Iran face systemic repression, surveillance, and, in many cases, state-directed violence. This paper argues that, for “traditional” practitioners, popular musicians, and experimental artists alike, music-making, dance, and oral storytelling serve as effective conduits of collective memory and post-memory, personal and communal emotion, and advocacy across a range of causes. These causes range from working people's and women's rights to recognition and promotion of Kurdish identity, language, and cultural history. Iran's diverse Kurdish communities share rich musical, literary, spiritual, and ideological traditions, along with a capacity to adapt these to ever-shifting conditions. Focusing on examples of Kurdish traditional music, hip hop, and electronic sound art, the paper examines the motivations and possibilities for minority music-making and dance in Iran, along with their significance for conceptualizing and negotiating Kurdish identities. The paper draws on extensive ethnographic research, including interviews with performing artists and other members of Iran's Kurdish communities.

Gay Breyley is an adjunct associate professor in the Elder Conservatorium of Music at the University of Adelaide and a sessional lecturer in the Faculty of Arts at Monash University. Her research focuses on “minority” music cultures, sociopolitical change, and translocal cultural practices, especially in West Asian and diasporic contexts. She has published widely in this field, including an award-winning book on Iranian music and popular entertainment, co-authored with Sasan Fatemi.

Anna Arevshatyan
Institute of Arts (Armenia)

**On a Unique Musical Tradition of Bell Ringer's Singing,
Preserved in Saint James Monastery of Jerusalem**

The Armenian community of Jerusalem, one of the oldest Christian communities in the Holy Land, was significantly reshaped in the twentieth century by survivors of the Armenian Genocide who arrived from various provinces of historical Armenia, bringing with them diverse regional musical traditions. Within this diasporic environment, the songs of the bell ringer preserved at the Saint James Monastery until the late 1970s represent a rare and previously undocumented musical practice.

This paper argues that bell ringer's singing constitutes a liminal musical genre situated between liturgical chant and vernacular folk expression. Through the analysis of two representative examples – one connected to the hymn repertoire and another displaying features of spiritually inflected folk song – the study demonstrates that these songs preserve stylistic and modal features that do not fit neatly within conventional categories of Armenian sacred or secular music. Rather than functioning solely as liturgical signals, the songs reveal a hybrid expressive layer shaped by memory, migration, and communal adaptation within the diasporic setting of Jerusalem.

The paper further suggests that the disappearance of this tradition from contemporary Armenia, alongside its preservation in Jerusalem, reflects broader processes of cultural displacement and selective continuity within Armenian diasporic communities. By examining the repertoire musically and contextually, the study contributes to discussions of fragile musical transmission, the transformation of regional traditions in exile, and the permeability of boundaries between liturgical and folk practices in Armenian music culture.

The originality and distinctive character of this repertoire were also recognized by composer Yervand Yerikanyan, who incorporated bell ringer's songs into his folk opera-ballet *Mokats Mirza* in the 1980s.

Anna Arevshatyan, Doctor of Sciences and Professor, graduated from Komitas State Conservatory. She is a leading researcher at the Institute of Arts, where she has spent her academic career. For many years, she also taught at Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. She is the author of 13 monographs and more than 100 papers published in Armenia and abroad. She is a member of several international professional associations and serves on the Board of the Union of Composers of Armenia.

Marko Kölbl, Faisal Jailani
University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)

A Popular Turn in Ethnomusicological Minority Studies?

Since its beginnings, ethnomusicological research on music and minorities has predominantly focused on traditional music. Following the discipline's logic, folk, traditional, and related musical styles and dances occupied the center of scholarly attention, not least because they demonstrated cultural belonging through clearly ethnically defined expressive practices. Today, nearly 30 years after the founding of our study group, questions of which musical styles are relevant to minority members' lived realities are receiving increasing attention. From everyday listening to community festivities and club nights, popular music forms are core cultural expressions in many ethnic minority settings. This paper investigates a possible popular turn in ethnomusicological minority studies. We examine the significance of popular music production within ethnic minorities and migrant communities, encompassing music created within these communities, music from countries of origin, and transcultural or postmigrant pop phenomena. We explore its role in community events, expanding from weddings and religious festivities to nightlife and club culture. We further analyze traces of folk/traditional/folklore, showing how identitarian motives manifest sonically in ethnically marked pop music, and unpack the political implications of popular music for ethnically marginalized groups. This paper draws on extensive ethnographic fieldwork on popular music with ethnic minorities and migrant communities in Austria. We develop our theoretical arguments through case studies from our own communities, the Croatian minority in Burgenland and Afghan refugees in Europe respectively. Drawing on qualitative findings, documentary material, and online sources (social media and streaming platforms), the paper aims to bridge ethnomusicological minority studies with popular music research, highlighting its significance both within and beyond the discipline.

Marko Kölbl, Assistant Professor, chair of mdw's Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology. He researches music/dance relating to minorities and migration as well as gender and sexuality, singer of traditional Burgenland-Croatian music. Extensive international fieldwork, particularly with the Croatian minority in Burgenland and on Afghan music in exile.

Faisal Jailani is an Afghan vocalist and Hindustani classical vocal coach. He studied music at Kabul University and is currently pursuing an MA in Ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw). He has worked as a musician and music educator in Afghanistan and Pakistan and served as Artistic Program Manager at The Black Hole in Islamabad. His artistic and scholarly work is informed by experiences of exile and displacement, with a particular focus on music education in exile.

Koriun Davtyan
Kayt Cultural Hub (Armenia)

**Demarginalization through Cultural Transfer:
The TBOT Model in Borderline Communities of Armenia**

Historically, the rural populations of Armenia's border regions have been the primary guardians of local folk traditions. However, the inhabitants of villages such as Khachik, situated directly on border, face a contemporary reality characterized by security threats, geographic isolation, and severe resource scarcity. While ethnically part of the Armenian majority, these communities exist in a state of sociopolitical and cultural "minoritization," where their distance from the capital and proximity to conflict zones result in limited access to high-quality arts and music education and cultural resources.

This paper presents the "Sun Is Up" project as an innovative intervention to mitigate this marginalization through the TBOT (Transform, Build, Operate, Transfer) model. Unlike traditional charitable initiatives, TBOT serves as a method for sustainable knowledge and technology transfer, aiming to establish cultural self-sufficiency within isolated villages. By rooting the educational process in local folk culture – specifically traditional singing, dancing, and craftsmanship – the project elevates regional heritage to a professional artistic standard while fostering community resilience.

Based on fieldwork and the ongoing implementation in Khachik, this study examines how the TBOT model facilitates the transition of a community from a passive recipient of culture to an active, self-sustaining producer. I analyze how high-quality music and arts education act as tools for community empowerment and psychological stability in high-risk environments. The paper argues that by professionalizing local traditions and ensuring local ownership through "Transfer", the TBOT model provides a scalable solution for preserving the cultural vitality of minoritized borderline populations facing the risk of cultural stagnation and rural exodus.

Koriun Davtyan is the founder and CEO of Kayt Cultural Hub, an innovative organization dedicated to safeguarding Armenian intangible cultural heritage. With over 12 years of experience as a CFO-level financial analyst, he combines corporate strategic expertise with a passion for folk culture. Koriun is a performer of Armenian folk songs and dances, leading initiatives like the *Kayt* and *Tagpar* bands. His leadership extends to community-building projects, aimed at fostering cultural self-sufficiency across Armenia.

SESSION 2: Memory, Rememberings, and Identity

Tatevik Shakhkulyan
Institute of Arts (Armenia)

From Regional Tradition to Displaced Identity: Artsakh Music and Dance after Forced Migration

The Armenians of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) share ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity with the broader Armenian population: their language is Armenian, their self-identification is Armenian, and their musical and dance traditions form an integral part of Armenian cultural heritage. Historically, Artsakh music was understood not as minority culture, but as a regional variant within the Armenian tradition.

However, following the recent forced displacement of the Artsakh population for political reasons, the cultural status of this music has undergone a significant transformation. Detached from its geographic homeland, Artsakh music and dance have acquired new functions: as vehicles of collective memory, as symbols of loss and continuity, and as markers of a community negotiating integration within the Republic of Armenia.

Based on fieldwork among displaced Artsakh Armenians, this paper examines the trajectory of these traditions from lived village practice to staged performance contexts. By comparing earlier documented forms with current manifestations, I analyze processes of folklorization, symbolic intensification, and stylistic transformation. The paper asks whether Artsakh music may now be considered a form of minoritized culture – not ethnically, but socio-politically – and explores the risks and potentials facing this tradition in conditions of displacement.

Tatevik Shakhkulyan holds a PhD from the Institute of Arts. Her research interests include traditional Armenian music, the music of Komitas Vardapet, and counterpoint in Armenian and Western traditions, with a particular focus on 20th and 21st-century developments. She is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Arts, a Lecturer at Yerevan State Conservatory, and the ICTMD Liaison Officer for Armenia. She is the author of monographs, textbooks, and edited volumes.

Carol Silverman
University of Oregon (USA)

**Performing Social Memory: Dance, Ritual and Trauma among Kosovo
Romani Migrants in Western Europe**

After massive displacement in 1999, Kosovo Roma now form a dynamic transnational community comprising many West European states. For these diasporic Roma, dance is both a valued art form and a profound social act. Most often embedded in ritual, dance highlights the performative enactment of social memory plus accomplishes contemporary identity work. I analyze the relationship among migration, space, and gender by focusing on dance as a primary site of community security in a world of precarity. Kosovo Roma form an “affective community” (Hutchison 2016) which serves both to negotiate historical trauma and display status.

Via scholars of memory and embodied performance such as Diana Taylor and African-American scholars such as Kellie Jackson who link resistance to joy, I explore how Roma rebuild their culture in the face of continual discrimination. More complex than merely evoking nostalgia, music and dance are affective bridges between past and present. During multiple long ritual events that are planned months in advance and require huge financial outlays, dance is the central performative means to demonstrate both respect for history and traditions, plus elevated class status and new gendered roles. Kosovo Romani thus enact an urban imaginary via music and dance. Embodying affective modalities in ritual, dance reaffirms their sense of belonging to a community despite dispersal. Tracing the “intimacy of neighborhood and politics of the state” (Gray 2013) dance in ritual events (now mostly in banquet halls rather than homes) reconfigure embodiment and space by invigorating kinship networks in a European-wide diaspora.

Carol Silverman is an anthropologist and folklorist who has been involved with Balkan Romani music and culture for over 40 years. An award-winning Professor Emerita at the University of Oregon, she writes about music/dance, policy, heritage, gender, and human rights issues among Roma. She has published numerous articles and two books: *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (Oxford 2012) won the Allan Merriam Book Prize from the Society for Ethnomusicology; and *Balkanology* (Bloomsbury 2021) analyzes Bulgarian wedding music. Carol works with the NGO Voice of Roma and the European Roma institute for Arts and Culture, is a music curator for RomArchive.eu, singer and teacher of Balkan songs.

Zuzana Jurková
Charles University Prague (Czechia)

Rememberings of Minorities in the Post-totalitarian Czechia

In the book *Prague Soundscapes 2: Music and Collective Remembering in Today's Prague* (Jurková 2026), I examine public musical presentations of the past over the last two decades. The basic framework is formed by Jan Assmann's concept of the temporal dimension of the connective structure (2011) and Astrid Erll's formulation of the presentation of the past as “an expressive indications of the needs and interests of those who remember in the present” (2011). The Prague material clearly shows the formation of a new historical narrative of post-totalitarian society after the Velvet Revolution of 1989.

In my presentation, I focus on the functioning of music in the collective remembering of the two most visible “autochthonous” minorities in the Czech lands: Jews and Roma, whose public memory was silenced by a totalitarian imposed narrative. From a diachronic perspective, I discuss the differences in their public formation after 1989, the roles of main agents, the dynamics of majority-minority rememberings, and the way in which – with difficulty and non-obviously – these minority rememberings (sometimes with the help of music, sometimes in spite of specific music) become part of the national narrative, thanks to which the newly formed society can held together on the symbolic level (Langenohl 2010).

Zuzana Jurková is the head of the Anthropological Studies and of the Ethnomusicological program at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University, focused on the research of musics of minorities (*Voices of the Weak* 2009, *Sounds from the Margins* 2013). She concentrates on Romani music (numerous publications, e.g. *Romani Musicians in the 21st Century* 2018; *Music – Memory – Minorities: Between Archive and Activism* 2020), the history of Czech ethnomusicology, and urban ethnomusicology, including music as manifestation of collective remembering (*Prague Soundscapes* 2014; *Prague Soundscapes 2: Music and Collective Remembering in Today's Prague*).

Marianna Ostankovich and Dilyara Mukanova

Kazakh National University of Arts named after Kulyash Baiseitova (Kazakhstan)

Composition as an Act of Cultural Memory: Musical Strategies for Preserving Minority History

At the intersection of cultural traditions, composition goes beyond an aesthetic statement and becomes a way of preserving, rethinking, and transmitting a certain cultural experience. Musical work emerges as a form of its representation, embedding artistic ideas alongside historical, identity-related, and existential meanings.

A revealing example of such compositional strategy is the experience of the Kazakhstani composer and musicologist Marianna Ostankovich (Romanova), a member of ICTMD and the Association of Composers of Kazakhstan, whose biography and creative practice are formed at the intersection of Kazakh and Armenian spiritual traditions.

Marianna was born into a family of musicians, which significantly shaped her professional path and led to a compositional engagement with cultural memory encompassing both ethnic and familial-dynastic dimensions. Her father, A. Romanov, was a Soviet Kazakhstani composer and the founder of the Professional School of Composition of Southern Kazakhstan. Her mother, M. Khachaturyan, is a pedagogue and composer. The synthesis of two cultural principles is observed in Marianna's work, where Armenian intonational reflection (as a "sound archive of memory") and Kazakh musical imagery (a tribute to the traditions and historical environment of her homeland) coexist within a single artistic space. One of the vivid examples of such synthesis is the string quartet cycle "Native Tunes", performed by leading ensembles of Kazakhstan.

Marianna Ostankovich's compositional practice may be regarded as a form of spiritual mediation, in which musical composition becomes a space for dialogue between different historical narratives and a means of articulating identity within the contemporary cultural landscape.

Marianna Alexandrovna Ostankovich (Romanova) is a Kazakhstani composer, musicologist, member of the Association of Composers of Kazakhstan. She is the author of symphonic, chamber instrumental and vocal works of various genres, the compiler of scientific collections as well as the author of a number of papers published both in Kazakhstan and abroad. Participant and laureate of not only international composer competitions but also various creative festivals. The works of Marianna Ostankovich are regularly performed both in Kazakhstan and abroad.

Dilyara Mukanova is a student at the Kazakh National University of Arts and a scholarship holder of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Foundation. Laureate of international music competitions in violin and piano performance, music theory and composition. Participant in international academic conferences and author of publications in conference proceedings.

SESSION 3: Music Heritage: Construction, (Re)presentation, and Scholarly Agency

Solomon Gwerevende

University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)

Beyond the “Forgotten”: Re-conceptualising Doma Identity through Music and Dance Heritage in Zimbabwe

The Doma people, a minority group in Zimbabwe’s Kanyemba region of Mashonaland Province, have historically faced marginalization and misrepresentation in national narratives because of their disability, ethnicity, and indigeneity, often being referred to as the “two-toed tribe”, or “the forgotten and backward people”. This paper challenges these stereotypes by exploring how Doma music and dance serve as essential tools for self-representation and identity reclamation. These cultural expressions play a vital role in affirming Doma identity amid historical marginalization, particularly as mainstream Zimbabwean heritage – such as the UNESCO-recognized mbende dance and mbira music – receives increasing recognition. Through ethnographic fieldwork, netnographic research and archival analysis, this study reveals how the Doma utilise performance to navigate their minority status within the broader framework of Zimbabwean identity, emphasizing their distinct sonic and kinetic expressions. By examining specific musical repertoires and movement patterns, the paper highlights these cultural practices as dynamic means of resilience and social cohesion. Ultimately, it advocates for the recognition of Doma music and dance heritage as crucial to decolonizing Zimbabwean ethnomusicology, ethnochoreology and heritage studies, and to transforming perceptions of minority groups from a “deficit-based” model to one that acknowledges cultural agency.

Solomon Gwerevende is a research associate at the Music and Minority Research Centre at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. He holds a PhD in applied ethnomusicology from Dublin City University. He also holds a Choreomundus-International master’s degree in dance knowledge, practice, and heritage. He has published over 15 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters in the broad areas of Intangible cultural heritage, ethnochoreology, and ethnomusicology.

Zhang Xueyang
Universiti Teknologi Mara (China, Malaysia)

“A Thousand Voices, A Thousand Tones”: Micro-tone Characteristics of Miao Folk Songs in Xiangxi, Hunan Province, China

The Miao ethnic group of China possesses a rich musical heritage in which micro-tones play a fundamental role in shaping stylistic identity. Yet despite their prevalence across both vocal and instrumental music, microtones in Miao music remain severely under-researched, often dismissed as mere “ornaments” or inaccurately transcribed in standard notation systems. This study addresses this gap through an ethnomusicological and acoustic analysis of micro-tones in Xiangxi (short for Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in the western part of Hunan Province) Miao folk songs.

Based on a mixed-method approach combining ethnographic fieldwork and spectral analysis, this research documents and examines 15 representative Miao songs across five distinct tonal categories: Gao Qiang (高腔), Ping Qiang (平腔), etc. Using advanced acoustic analytical tools and notation system including Sonic Visualiser, GMAS, etc., the study captures precise data on microtonal pitch frequencies, melodic contours, durations, intensity, and ornamentation patterns in these fifteen Miao songs. The basic rules and musical characteristics of these microtonal elements in Miao songs were statistically analyzed. Preliminary fieldwork, including in-depth interviews with several national and provincial intangible cultural heritage inheritors, revealed that some microtones in Miao songs, such as sliding tones, vibrato, humming tones, and “crying tones”, are not arbitrary decorations but sonic embodiments of the Miao people’s migratory history and environmental imitation. This paper argues that microtones play an important role in multiple aspects of Miao music: (1) distinguishing Miao singing from Han musical systems; (2) differentiating regional sub-styles within the Miao category itself; (3) encoding historical memories and emotional expressions that cannot be obtained through the standard pitch system. The study critiques the inadequacy of conventional staff and numbered notation in representing these microtones, and proposes that systematic documentation of microtonal characteristics is crucial for both scholarly understanding and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

Zhang Xueyang, a Chinese national, graduated from the Communication University of China, majoring in sound engineering and from the Central Conservatory of Music, majoring in Music Recording. She is currently a third-year PhD student in Music at the Universiti Teknologi Mara. Since her student years, she has been engaged in recording and worked professionally in audio production. She composes electronic and folk music. Her current PhD research focuses on the music of the Miao ethnic group in China.

George Pioustin
University of California, Los Angeles (USA)

**Staging Minority Heritage: State Intervention and the Gendering
of Syrian Christian Performance Traditions in Kerala**

This paper examines the role of the postcolonial Indian state in reshaping the performing arts of a religious minority community in Kerala, focusing on two Syrian Christian traditions: margamkali and parichamuttukali. Historically embedded in communal and devotional settings, these performance forms did not adhere to rigid gender binaries. In earlier practice, margamkali functioned as a single, composite art form performed by men, within which elements now identified separately as parichamuttukali were integrated. In the decades following Indian Independence, particularly with the institutionalization of state-sponsored school youth festivals in Kerala, these traditions were reorganized within new classificatory frameworks. Within this competitive structure, margamkali was codified as a “women’s” round dance representing refinement and antiquity, while parichamuttukali was designated as a distinct “men’s” performance emphasizing valor and discipline. What had once existed as a unified performance practice was thus administratively bifurcated and gendered.

Drawing on archival recordings from the late colonial period, subsequent restudies, festival documentation, and ethnographic observation, this paper traces how state cultural policy, curricular inclusion, and competitive staging contributed to the gendered bifurcation and aesthetic standardization of these traditions. I argue that festivalization and state intervention transformed fluid community practices into emblematic minority “heritage arts,” aligning them with broader postcolonial projects of cultural management and regional identity formation. By foregrounding the state as an active agent in minoritization, this study demonstrates how public institutions shape the categories and visibility of minority performance traditions, highlighting the intersection of gender, religion, and state power in the making of cultural heritage.

George Pioustin is a PhD student at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research interests include performance traditions within Indian Christianity, Indian classical music, music and migration, as well as minority studies. George is a recipient of Fellowship in Indology instituted by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, for the ‘Outstanding Persons in the Fields of Culture’, UNESCO–Sahapedia Fellowship 2017, Serendipity Arts Grant 2018 among other accolades. A trained Carnatic vocalist, George also writes for the arts supplement of the leading national newspaper in India, *The Hindu*. He is currently serving as the Editor in Chief of Ethnomusicology Review.

Gagik Ginosyan and Abel Matevosyan

Karin Center for Research and Study of Traditional Armenian Culture (Armenia)

Armenian Gyond or Yezidi Govand?

This paper is devoted to a comparative analysis of the Armenian Gyond and Yezidi Govand traditional dances, aiming to reveal their formal performance characteristics, the etymology of their names, their regional distribution, as well as genealogical similarities and differences. As circle dances, Gyond and Govand have played a significant role in the social, ritual, and festive cultures of Armenian and Yezidi communities, functioning as important means of communal cohesion and the expression and preservation of cultural identity.

The study is based on an unpublished work by Armenian dance scholar, Honored Worker of Culture of the Republic of Armenia, and founder of the *Karin* Armenian Traditional Song and Dance Ensemble, Gagik Ginosyan. His research examines the structural features of movement, rhythmic organization, spatial arrangement, and the etymology of the dance names, drawing upon the studies of several authoritative scholars. Particular attention is given to the etymological analysis of the dance names through the combined use of linguistic and historical sources, as well as to regional variants shaped by historical contact, coexistence, and cultural interaction. Issues of origin are also addressed, discussing possible ancient layers of the Gyond–Govand dance complex and the pathways of cultural transmission.

The research is grounded in a comparative analysis of fieldwork materials, video recordings, archival documentation, and written sources. A separate section addresses traditions of preservation, including community-based transmission, contemporary stage adaptations, and the vitality of these dances in external cultural environments. The paper concludes that Armenian Gyond and Yezidi Govand constitute interconnected yet distinct cultural systems, both of which are of considerable importance for the study and preservation of the region's intangible cultural heritage.

Abel Matevosyan is a dance instructor with the *Karin* Traditional Armenian Song and Dance Ensemble, a member of the *Karin* Research Center for the Study of Armenian Traditional Culture, and a surgeon at *Astghik* Medical Center.

Gagik Ginosyan (1966–2024) was a renowned Armenian dance ethnographer, choreographer, and folklorist. He was the founder and artistic director of the *Karin* Traditional Song and Dance Ensemble and the *Karin* Research Center for the Study of Armenian Traditional Culture. Through decades of research, documentation, teaching, and performance, he played a leading role in the revival of Armenian traditional dance as a living cultural practice. His work contributed significantly to the preservation, reconstruction, and transmission of dances from historical Armenia and Armenian communities throughout the diaspora.

SESSION 4: Community Music and Musical Communities in Migration

Ani Hakobyan
Institute of Arts (Armenia)

The Musical and Ritual Life of the Greek Community in Armenia

Across diverse socio-political contexts, “minority” may denote an imposed status, a structural condition, or a relationally negotiated identity. This paper examines how traditional music and dance function as agentive cultural strategies in the articulation of minority identity within the Greek community of the Republic of Armenia. It foregrounds communal singing and traditional dance as key sites through which belonging is performed and transmitted within a shared Christian socio-ritual framework.

Formed through Pontic Greek settlements (1750–1800) and later migrations, the community today numbers approximately 900 members and occupies a distinct yet integrated position in Armenian society. Drawing on ethnomusicological fieldwork, the study focuses on the Greek community choir in Alaverdi, particularly the children’s ensemble, where repertoires are transmitted predominantly through unison singing, alongside traditional dance practices sustained in community settings.

The paper argues that collective vocal and dance practices enable the articulation of minority identity both internally, through cohesion and intergenerational continuity, and externally, through resonance with Armenian socio-cultural contexts. Traditional dance, in particular, serves as an embodied mode of memory and identity maintenance, complementing vocal expression. These dynamics are shaped by shared Christian ritual life and perceived parallels in historical experiences of displacement and survival.

Ani Hakobyan is an ethnomusicologist specializing in traditional Armenian music, with a particular focus on lullabies. She earned her PhD in Arts in 2023 from the Institute of Arts, and her doctoral research examined traditional Armenian lullabies. She teaches at the Romanos Melikyan State Music College and is a researcher at the Institute of Arts. Her research interests include folk music, musical dialects, archival folklore collections, and the transmission of cultural memory through song. Ani is the author of *Armenian Folk Songs and Melodies, Ijevan* (2012).

Samantha Sebastian
University of Oxford (United Kingdom)

**Intravocality: The Songworlds and Livelihoods of
Overseas Filipino Workers**

In this paper, I present intravocality as a process through which minoritised ‘Overseas Filipino Workers’ (OFWs) are collectively constructed. OFWs’ living conditions are framed by distinctive narratives by which they come to be identified as *bagong bayani* (national heroes) and exploited commodities, sometimes even modern-day slaves. Combining participatory research methods with multi-sited ethnography, I partnered with civil sector organisations to explore how these narratives are reinscribed and resisted by migrant workers’ everyday, testimonial, and commemorative engagements with songs, singing and other voicing practices.

I ask: What political regimes of feeling rationalise the Philippines’ labour export policies (and critiques thereof), and how are they performed in hit popular songs, singing competitions, and diasporic radio shows, addressed to and embodied through migrant labourers’ bodies? How do voices bring into being and mobilise collectives around the figure of the Overseas Filipino Worker? And how does the OFW of this oral-aural imaginary relate to the more prosaic vocal practices in the ordinary lives of individual migrant workers, such as epistolary messages sent home, lulling employers’ children to sleep, and creating community in karaoke gatherings?

In answering these questions, I reveal the distinction between OFWs’ everyday musical lives and the music they engage with in official events (such as Migrant Workers Day celebrations), and the important stories and perspectives they feel are missing from the songs that are typically written and sung about them.

Samantha Sebastian is an Associate Professor of Music at the University of Oxford. Her research interests include music and migration, intercultural relations, and collective voice. One strand of her research focuses on the everyday musical lives of migrant and former refugee communities, in emigration, diaspora and resettlement. Another focuses on music as public pedagogy, addressing self-representation and intergroup conflict. In other projects she has examined the construction and experience of ‘diversity’ in secondary school music curricula. Samantha’s current project is on the voicing of global labour migration amongst Overseas Filipino Workers.

Peter Lell
University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)

**Continuity, Disruption, or Transformation?
Musical Practices of Afghan Musicians in Exile in Germany**

This presentation examines how forced migration affects the continuation of professional musical practices in exile. Focusing on musicians from Afghanistan who were forced to flee their homeland due to prolonged political instability and persecution, it explores how they have adapted their musical practices since finding refuge in Germany. Based on ethnographic fieldwork centred on musical practices involving the Afghan rubab, the study explores how these practices are reconfigured in the context of displacement, and the challenges that musicians encounter in exile. The findings reveal that the loss of economic foundations and the disruption of established pedagogical structures, particularly master-apprentice relationships, pose significant challenges to the preservation of this musical tradition. Further challenges include precarious living conditions, limited access to social infrastructure and legal uncertainty, all of which complicate professional music-making. Nevertheless, the musicians' practices also reveal strategies of adaptation, continuity and creative negotiation within this new environment.

Peter Lell is an ethnomusicologist, music researcher, and musician. He is currently a Research Fellow at the MMRC working in a project that develops the future positioning of the research center. He is also currently completing his dissertation within the structured doctoral programme "Music Matters." His dissertation project examines how knowledge and skills connected to the Afghan rubab are transmitted in contemporary contexts of displacement and exile. He has published in various academic journals, edited volumes and journalistic media. His research interests lie at the intersection of music, migration, and displacement, with a focus on ethics, power, and knowledge production.

SESSION 5: Artistic Structures and Cultural Interfaces

Nana Amowee Dawson
University of Cape Coast (Ghana)

Asempayetsia as Artistic Methodology: Decolonial Composition, Akan – Mfantse Folklore, and the Reconfiguration of Musical Knowledge

Eurocentric conceptions of excellence continue to shape how musical knowledge is produced, evaluated, and legitimised within academic institutions, often marginalising indigenous epistemologies and artistic modes of inquiry. This paper introduces Asempayetsia, a compositional framework developed through doctoral research grounded in Ghanaian Akan–Mfantse folklore, the Kodzi, as an art-based, decolonial methodology for musical research and knowledge production. Drawing on Walter Mignolo’s notion of epistemic disobedience and Sankofaism as a philosophy of cultural return, Asempayetsia reframes composition as an epistemic act rather than a purely aesthetic one. The framework operates through a triadic process of artistic translation: cultural excavation, compositional translation, and audiovisual reinscription. Through this process, oral narratives, ritual logics, and performative structures embedded in Kodzi are not only represented but also reactivated within contemporary visual-programmatic musical forms. The paper situates this methodology within broader global and regional discourses on cultural sustainability and heritage governance, engaging with frameworks such as UNESCO’s safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, WIPO’s discourse on cultural property, and the African Union’s Agenda 2063. Rather than treating Akan–Mfantse music as a minority tradition to be documented, the study foregrounds indigenous artistic practice as a site of theory-making and scholarly agency. By presenting Asempayetsia as a transferable artistic methodology, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions within ICTMD on music, minoritisation, researcher positionality, and the ethical reconfiguration of knowledge production in ethnomusicology and artistic research.

Nana Amowee Dawson is a Ghanaian composer, music theorist, educator, and interdisciplinary artist whose work engages African music, indigenous knowledge systems, and decolonial creative practices. He holds a PhD in Music Theory and Composition. His doctoral research reimaged the Akan–Mfantse folklore (Kodzi) as a visual-programmatic musical form. He developed the Asempayetsia framework, an African-centred artistic methodology for translating, sustaining, and reclaiming indigenous knowledge in contemporary creative and academic contexts. His current research explores intersections of African art music, technology, and cultural heritage.

Sona Simonyan
Komitas Museum-Institute (Armenia)

Ethnic Minorities in Aram Khachaturian's *Gayane* Ballet

Aram Khachaturian (1903–1978), a renowned Armenian composer, is considered the founder of Armenian ballet. His second ballet, *Gayane* (1942), is popular worldwide and has been performed in many countries to date.

The ballet depicts the Soviet era in Armenia, agricultural and collective farm (*kolkhoz*) life. A Kurdish community is featured in the ballet's plot. One of the main characters is Aishe, who is a representative of the Kurdish community and has a decisive role in the plot. A large number of scenes involve this character (e.g., Scene of Aishe, Monologue of Aishe, Loneliness of Aishe, etc.). The ballet also includes other Kurdish characters, such as Jamal and Izmail, whose appearances are connected with different revisions of the libretto.

Gayane is a young Armenian women. Her dances in the ballet are inspired by Armenian and other ethnic folk traditions. Among them is the Lezginka, a dance of the Lezgins, which is one of the most famous scenes in the ballet.

The Kurdish people have settled in Armenia since around the 11th–12th centuries and have a large community. Unlike them, the Lezgins as a result of individual migrations live in Armenia in small numbers.

The aim of this paper is to clarify the importance of ethnic minorities, especially the Kurdish people, in the plot, to explore the Kurdish characters according to various librettos from different periods, to analyze the music of the ballet, understanding how the composer conveys the diversity of nations and characters through music, and to present the history of the Kurdish and Lezgin people in Armenia.

Sona Simonyan is a musicologist and education program specialist. She received her Bachelor's (2018) and Master's (2020) degrees in Musicology from the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory and studied Ethnomusicology at the University of Aveiro (Portugal) in 2019. Since 2017, she has been working at the Komitas Museum-Institute as a Researcher and Education Program Specialist. She has taught music theory at the B. Kanachyan Art School and the Arno Babajanyan State Musical-Pedagogical College.

Lilit Martirosyan
Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory (Armenia)

Yezidi Musical Traditions in Armenia

This paper presents a study of the musical traditions of the Yezidi community in Armenia, focusing on the analysis of musical language. In this context, the term encompasses the integrated system of modal organization, metric-rhythmic structures, and the intonational logic of melodic development. Although a small number of scholarly works and a single collection of notated materials address Yezidi music, existing research remains limited in scope. These studies are largely based on general ethnographic or descriptive approaches, rarely engaging in systematic analysis of musical structures. Consequently, the main fundamental aspects of Yezidi musical thinking and expression remain insufficiently explored.

The aim of this research is to examine Yezidi music through its internal musical parameters, including melodic organization, modal systems, rhythmic structures, form principles, and performance-related expressive means. The study draws on a diverse range of sources, including audio recordings, video materials, and published notated materials. These sources enable comparative analysis across different genres and performance contexts, with particular attention to processes of oral transmission, as well as questions of stability and variation within these processes.

Methodologically, the paper combines musicological analysis with ethnographic approaches, allowing musical structures to be interpreted in relation to performance practice and cultural meaning. While the primary emphasis lies on musical analysis, Yezidi musical culture is also examined within the broader historical, socio-cultural, and communal context of Armenia, addressing issues of minority identity, cultural continuity, and social memory. By foregrounding musical language as the primary analytical entry point, this study offers a new perspective on the study of Yezidi musical culture and contributes to a deeper, critically grounded understanding of musical expression.

Lilit Martirosyan is a musicologist, pianist and organist. She is a lecturer in the Music History Department at the Komitas State Conservatory and Coordinator for International Student Admission and Education. She previously lectured at Arno Babajanyan State Musical-Pedagogical College of Yerevan, held administrative roles in quality assurance and international cooperation. Martirosyan received her education in Piano Performance and Musicology at the Komitas State Conservatory and completed postgraduate studies at the Institute of Arts. Her research focuses on medieval Armenian music and regional musical cultures.

SESSION 6: Minoritization

Rose Merin

Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala (India)

Performing the Sacred Minority: Nangiarkoothu and the Politics of Cultural Belonging in South India

Nangiarkoothu is a solo women-performed Sanskrit dance-theatre tradition from Kerala, South India, often regarded as the only surviving model of the earliest “classical” dance-drama performed by women. Historically practiced by the Nangiar performer caste within the temple-centred koothambalam, the form was embedded in regimes of ritual exclusivity that restricted participation and viewing along caste and religious lines. Although postcolonial state patronage and UNESCO’s designation of Intangible Cultural Heritage have enabled Nangiarkoothu to circulate beyond temple spaces into secular, national, and international arenas, dominant discourses continue to sacralise the form and uphold rigid ritual protocols as normative. This paper examines Nangiarkoothu through the lens of “minoritization”, arguing that “minority” here functions not as a numerical category but as a condition produced through aesthetic canons, religious authority, and heritage regimes. Drawing on historical shifts and case studies of performers across caste, gender, and religious locations, including K.J. Yesudas, Kalamandalam Hyderali, RLV Ramakrishnan, Kalamandalam Husna Banu, Mansiya V.P., and Annie Johnson, the paper traces how inclusion within the classical canon is mediated by mechanisms of exclusion that mark certain bodies as perpetually marginal, even within celebrated traditions. The paper then analyses Mathruvilapam (Lament of a Mother), a contemporary Nangiarkoothu production that premiered on 06 February 2026 at St. Paul’s Church, Kottayam, Kerala, India. Based on Kristhu Bhagavatham, a Sanskrit epic narrating the life of Jesus Christ, the work mobilizes the formal grammar of Nangiarkoothu to stage a Christian sacred narrative within a Hindu-derived performance canon. This intervention foregrounds the agency of dance in reconfiguring religious plurality, cultural belonging, and the conceptual boundaries of minority performance.

Rose Merin holds a PhD from the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, and MA and MPhil degrees from the University of Hyderabad. She is a trained Carnatic classical singer, classical dancer (Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, and Kuchippudi), and theatre performer. She has presented her research at national and international conferences and has published widely. Her research interests include the performance of religion, gender, class, caste, and the body; music, dance, and literature; cultural politics and policy; performance and cultural studies; historiography; and minority studies.

Eva Kirchmayer Bilić
Music Academy, University of Zagreb (Croatia)

**Marginalized Voices:
Croatian and Armenian Women Composers in Global Musical Culture**

This paper presents the lives and works of women composers from Croatia and Armenia from the 18th century to the present day, highlighting their significant roles within historical and cultural contexts on both national and global levels. Despite the geographical distance between the two countries, notable similarities can be observed in the cultural, historical, and political circumstances that shaped the roles of women composers within their societies: particularly the limited opportunities for representation within national and international musical frameworks. The paper provides an overview of several prominent Croatian and Armenian composers, with a particular focus on Dora Pejačević, Ivana Lang, Gayane Chebotaryan, and Geghuni Chtchyan, analyzing their compositional styles in relation to the aesthetic discourses of Croatian and Armenian musical cultures, within the historical and stylistic periods in which they lived, from the influence of traditional and sacred heritage up to contemporary musical expressions.

Special attention is given to the marginalized positions these composers occupied within both local and international musical circles, a situation further intensified by geopolitical location and limited global visibility. Although their artistic voices are distinctive and of equal artistic value, women composers have historically remained underrepresented in dominant music-historical narratives, resulting in their works being largely overlooked and insufficiently recognized.

This paper seeks to contribute to the inclusion and recognition of underrepresented women composers from Croatia and Armenia, fostering scholarly dialogue and a more inclusive understanding of global musical heritage, to which these composers have made significant contributions.

Eva Kirchmayer Bilić is a collaborative pianist and professor at the Music Academy, University of Zagreb. She holds an MA in Piano, studied organ at the Institute of Church Music, and continued piano studies in Frankfurt am Main as a DAAD scholarship holder. She performs internationally as a pianist, organist, and harpsichordist. Her activities include concert organization, workshops, and publications in music education and scholarship. She is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Zagreb and Vice President of the Armenian-Croatian Community.

Teona Lomsadze
International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony
of Tbilisi State Conservatoire (Georgia)

**Minoritised from Home:
Georgian Traditional Music in the British-Georgian Diaspora**

In recent years, Georgian emigration has increased rapidly, with diasporic communities (including the British-Georgian diaspora) contributing significant financial support to the homeland. Despite this economic role, a legislative change in 2025 restricted participation in parliamentary elections to residents within Georgia, effectively curbing the political agency of emigrants. For many in the UK, unable to travel due to economic or legal constraints, this measure constituted a clear form of political minoritisation. Amid an almost two-year-long wave of domestic protests following the 2024 parliamentary elections, Georgian traditional music emerged as a tool of resistance both inside Georgia and within diasporic communities abroad. Protesters labelled *usamshobloebi* (“homeland-less people”) by supporters of the conservative government used singing to assert presence and belonging. Inspired by performances at protests in Tbilisi, London-based Georgian activists formed a weekly choir in March 2025 to learn and perform polyphonic songs for demonstrations. Over time, the choir, named Imano Choir, expanded its repertoire and began performing at various community events. This paper explores how members of the British-Georgian diaspora use traditional music to navigate political minoritisation imposed by the home state. Focusing on the Imano Choir, it examines how singing Georgian music functions not only as cultural preservation but also as a form of political expression, community-building, and emotional support. It argues that through the practice of traditional music, members of the British-Georgian diaspora cultivate a sense of symbolic co-presence with homeland social life, creatively negotiate constraints on political participation, and reshape patterns of community organisation.

Teona Lomsadze holds a PhD in Arts (Ethnomusicology) from the Tbilisi State Conservatoire and an MA in Music Management from the University of Leeds. She is a former Georgian Studies Fellow at the University of Oxford. She is currently a senior researcher at the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of the Tbilisi State Conservatoire and serves as Georgia’s regional representative at ICTMD. She teaches Georgian traditional singing to a UCL-based choir in London and serves as co-manager and teacher at the Georgian Music House in London.

SESSION 7: Music, Politics, and Resistance

Rima Tigranian

Yerevan State University (Armenia)

From 'Enemy Music' to Estrada: How Did Armenian Jazz Survive and Transform?

This research looks at underground jazz communities in Armenia during the Soviet period and into the post-Soviet era, focusing on how social and political conditions shaped jazz as a minoritized cultural practice. It traces how jazz moved through different symbolic roles: as “bourgeois music,” “enemy music,” a “politically acceptable” form, and later partly absorbed into Soviet estrada. Each shift changed how jazz was perceived, practiced, and experienced, shaping the development of underground directions. The research shows that during the Soviet period, underground jazz groups became spaces for artistic expression, social connection, and subtle negotiation with political power. Jazz was more than music: it was a way for musicians to position themselves socially and culturally in an environment where artistic choices carried political weight. In the post-Soviet era, jazz communities continued to evolve under new political, economic, and cultural conditions. Marginalization did not disappear; it changed, shaped by market pressures, shifting cultural hierarchies, and debates about national identity. Underground jazz musicians developed strategies to navigate visibility, participation, and artistic freedom in these changing contexts. Based on ethnographic observations, interviews, and historical materials, this research argues that underground jazz acts as a form of minoritized practice, showing how music can shape identity, social belonging, and subtle forms of resistance. It highlights the ongoing dialogue between music, politics, and community in transitional societies.

Rima Tigranian is a musicologist specializing in Armenian, Soviet, and global jazz, as well as Soviet cultural policy and Soviet-Armenian art history. She graduated from Komitas State Conservatory with a degree in Musicology and earned a master's degree in Cultural Studies from Yerevan State University. She is currently pursuing doctoral research on the formation and development of jazz in Armenia and its cultural contexts. She has collaborated with the Armenian State Jazz Orchestra and various jazz clubs and ensembles in Armenia.

Hripsime Pikichian
Institute of Arts (Armenia)

Ritual Dances and National Identity in Soviet and Post-Soviet Armenia

This paper examines traditional dance as a mechanism of resistance to Soviet and post-Soviet globalization, through which communities validated and redefined national identity. Soviet cultural policy sought to construct a unified worldview and the image of the “Soviet citizen.” The slogan “National in form, socialist in content,” widely used in the 1930s, guided republics to establish national song and dance ensembles under cultural centers, embedding folklore into the Soviet framework.

In rural settlements, particularly among families resettled from Western Armenia, ritual music and dance remained integral to daily life. These practices, transmitted alongside dialect and traditions, became vital for self-identification and spiritual continuity after the 1915 Armenian Genocide. Early amateur ensembles often emerged from such communities, preserving heritage within new environments.

From the 1960s, student festivals at Yerevan Polytechnic Institute provided key venues for sustaining rural ethnographic culture. These festivals revived the memory of Historical Armenia and reinforced identity for generations raised under Soviet ideology. Traditional dances migrated from rural to urban contexts, entering ceremonies such as weddings and acquiring symbolic meaning.

The paper highlights four ritual dances: *Khngi Tsar* (bride’s solo), *Yarkhushta* (martial group dance), *Ishkhanapar* (Dance of the Prince), and the *Dance with Candles*, a ritual marking the bride and groom’s entrance into the community. Through comparative analysis, the paper will present the meaning, purpose, and distinctive features.

Hripsime Pikichian is an ethnomusicologist and cultural anthropologist. She is an Associate Professor at the Department of Cultural Studies of Yerevan State University and Head of the Ethnic Musicology Group at the Institute of Arts. She holds a PhD in Cultural and Social Anthropology from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography. Her research focuses on traditional Armenian music, ritual practices, cultural identity, and everyday musical life. She is the author of publications, including monographs and edited volumes on Armenian music, folk arts, and regional song traditions.

Mary Serobyán
Our Songs and We project (Armenia)

**A Life Told in Songs: Grandmother Tamar from Western
Armenia to Aparan**

Born in Aparan to parents originating from the historic regions of Van and Mush, Tamara Hakobyan – affectionately known as Grandma Tamar – is recognized for her distinctive voice and her long-standing role as a soloist in the traditional ensembles *Masunk* and *Kantegh*. Her life and artistic practice offer a compelling lens through which to explore the continuity of Armenian musical traditions within shifting cultural and social contexts.

This film is structured around an intimate, dialogic encounter, tracing her life from childhood memories to her sustained engagement with traditional music, dance groups, and community festivals. Through storytelling and song, Grandma Tamar articulates a personal yet collectively resonant narrative, revealing how musical knowledge, memory, and identity are transmitted across generations. Positioned within the broader framework of music and minorities, the film highlights the role of individual bearers of tradition in maintaining and reshaping intangible cultural heritage. Her repertoire and recollections reflect layered histories of displacement, belonging, and cultural resilience, rooted in familial ties to Western Armenian regions.

Rather than presenting music as a static artifact, the film emphasizes its lived and evolving nature. Humor, memory, and performance intersect organically, illustrating how everyday practices sustain cultural expression.

In a contemporary environment characterized by speed and fragmentation, this project foregrounds the value of attentive listening and intergenerational dialogue. The film ultimately invites reflection on the significance of voice, presence, and continuity in the preservation of minority musical traditions.

Mary Serobyán is a folk music archivist and documentary filmmaker working on Armenian folk culture. Her work focuses on documenting and preserving Armenian folk music through interviews with musicologists, ethnographers and tradition bearers, as well as filming folk music events. She is a member of the project *Our Songs and We*, which combines documentary research with public outreach, including open classes on Armenian folk music aimed at making traditional repertoires accessible to wider audiences.

SESSION 8: Ritual and Lamentation

Marios Chatziprokopiou
University of Thessaly (Greece)

Lamenting in the Diaspora: Performing Ashura in Piraeus

This paper examines sacred musical and embodied practices of Shi'i ritual lamentation in the migratory context of contemporary Greece. Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork (2014–present) among the Pakistani Shi'i community of Piraeus, I focus on the commemoration of Ashura, marking the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and his followers at Karbala (680 CE). Through ritualized acts such as collective crying, responsorial chanting, rhythmic chest-beating, public processions, and communal meals, Ashura produces an immersive soundscape in which voice, breath, tempo, and synchronized movement generate public mourning.

Media representations in Greece often isolate ritual bloodshed, reinforcing Islamophobic narratives that frame Shi'i embodiment as culturally “incompatible” with “European” values. Focusing on emic perspectives, I show how, positioned as a double minority – both Muslim and Shi'i – and shaped by hierarchical differences, community members navigate xenophobia and social estrangement in various ways. On the one hand, community elites act as cultural mediators with the host society and increasingly reframe Ashura from sacrificial suffering toward universal themes of justice and humanitarianism, often by promoting the substitution of ritual bloodletting with organized blood donation. At the same time, many participants articulate counter-narratives by emphasizing resonances between Shi'i devotional embodiment and Greek Orthodox embodied practices of faith, such as large-scale pilgrimages and possession rituals, thereby repositioning Ashura within a broader landscape of Mediterranean religiosity. Foregrounding sound and corporeal performance, this paper illuminates how sacred musical and embodied repertoires of lament are reshaped in this diasporic context of the European South, revealing the interplay between embodied faith, minority identity, and the politics of recognition.

Marios Chatziprokopiou is Assistant Professor in Performance Studies and Writing at the University of Thessaly, Greece. He holds an MA in Social Anthropology from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris, France) and a PhD (summa cum laude) in Performance Studies from Aberystwyth University (United Kingdom). His research focuses on performances of mourning and lament, migration and displacement, gender and sexuality, and embodied acts of faith. He has published widely in international edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals.

Amos Darkwa Asare
University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna (Austria)

**Performing Death and Identity in Duakor:
Funerary Music and Dance in a Minority Community**

Funerary rituals constitute a critical site for the performance of identity, memory, and social continuity within minority communities. In Duakor, a minority community situated within a predominantly Christian cultural environment in Cape Coast, Ghana, funerals remain one of the most resilient spaces where indigenous worldviews, social structures, and spiritual beliefs are publicly enacted through music and dance. This study examines how funerary music and dance function as performative mechanisms through which the Duakor community negotiates death, affirms collective identity, and sustains cultural knowledge in the face of religious and sociocultural marginalization. The research addresses the problem of how minority funeral ritual practices survive and adapt within dominant religious and cultural contexts that often delegitimize indigenous expressive forms. Drawing on ethnographic methodology, the study employs both active and passive observations, semi-structured interviews with ritual specialists, elders, and youth participants, as well as audiovisual documentation of funerary performances. Analytical attention is given to musical structures, choreographic patterns, performative roles, and the symbolic meanings embedded in sound and movement. Findings reveal that funerary music and dance in Duakor operate as embodied archives of history, belief, and social order. These performances not only mediate relationships between the living, the dead, and the ancestral realm but also serve as acts of cultural resistance and continuity. The study concludes that funerary performance in Duakor is not merely commemorative but constitutive of community identity.

Amos Darkwa Asare is a Research Associate at the Music and Minorities Research Center, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria. He holds a PhD (Cotutelle) in Ethnomusicology and Cultural Policy from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, and the University of Hildesheim, Germany. His current research focuses on the musical traditions of the minoritized Duakor fishing community in Cape Coast, Ghana. His interests include cultural policy for the performing arts, Indigenous music and healing rituals, and music and cultural policy in minoritized contexts.

Manami Suzuki
Kyoto University (Japan)

**Women's Voices across Alevi Ritual and Public Performance:
Lamentation, Assertion, Self-Representation**

This paper examines women's voices in Alevi ritual performance and their extension beyond ritual contexts, focusing on how sacred sound functions as a medium through which religious experience, memory, and communal identity are articulated and strategically reworked. Taking *mersiye* (lamentation) as a point of departure, the paper explores how women's ritual singing embodies grief and solidarity as shared forms of religious practice within Alevi communities. In contemporary diasporic contexts, these vocal practices increasingly circulate beyond ritual settings through concerts, cultural events, and digital platforms. Within such spaces, references to Zeyneb – a female figure from the Karbala narrative increasingly foregrounded in contemporary Alevi self-presentation – are frequently mobilized. Rather than taking these representations at face value, the paper examines how shifts from the traditional paradigm of the grieving mother (Fatma) toward that of an active witness and accuser (Zeyneb) reflect changing aspirations concerning how Alevi communities seek to be seen in European public spheres. While these developments generate new forms of visibility for women's voices, they also situate performers within specific expectations related to gender, representation, and communal belonging. The paper further analyzes women's engagement in instrumental performance, particularly on the *saz*, a stringed instrument historically associated with male authority in public speech, ritual leadership, and practices of resistance. Women's performance on the *saz* functions as a powerful symbolic practice through which Alevi communities articulate images of openness, equality, and resistance – images that are simultaneously enabling for the performers yet subject to political instrumentalization by both internal and external actors. Rather than interpreting these changes as evidence of a linear progression in gender relations, this paper argues that they reflect ongoing, complex negotiations over religious expression shaped by displacement, external gazes, and broader strategies of minority self-representation.

Manami Suzuki is a Research Fellow at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, and holds a PhD in musicology (2020). Her research focuses on contemporary religious and musical practices among Alevi and other Islamic communities in Europe and Turkey, with particular attention to sound, ritual performance, gender, and minority self-representation. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, her work examines how voices, instruments, and performance contexts shape religious experience in both ritual and public settings.

Linda Sargsyan
Institute of Arts (Armenia)

Seraphim and Cherubim Angels in Folk Songs

The millennia-old history of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church has found reflection not only in written sources transmitted by enlightened clerics –such as *sharakans*, *tags*, *gandzes*, and psalms – but also in penitential and devotional songs created and performed by the rural population. Among the samples collected by ethnomusicologists from various regions, a significant portion consists of *Avetis* and other songs dedicated to the Holy Virgin Mary, which are distinguished by their simple melodic structure and stable poetic form.

Folk spiritual songs describing church feasts and rituals embody characteristic features of traditional rural singing. Within popular religious beliefs, high-ranking angels – Seraphim and Cherubim – hold a special symbolic significance and are also subjects of praise. Songs dedicated to these angels have been preserved most extensively in the folk musical tradition of Javakhk.

The present-day region of Javakhk is part of Georgia and comprises the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions. Historically, however, it formed part of the Gugark province of Greater Armenia, as mentioned in the 5th century by the Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi in his *History of Armenia*. In the 19th century, Javakhk became one of the major centers of Armenian migration, where tens of thousands of Armenians from Western Armenia settled after escaping the Ottoman massacres during a historically turbulent period.

The lifestyle, rich folklore, feasts, and rituals of the Armenians of Javakhk were documented by the prominent ethnographer Yervand Lalayan. During the Soviet period, extensive fieldwork was conducted both in Armenia and in Armenian-populated regions beyond its borders. Ethnomusicologists Matevos Muradyan and Zaven Tagakchyan carried out audio recordings in 1967 and 1970 in the regional center of Akhalkalaki and surrounding areas of Javakhk.

This Armenian diaspora center has preserved a large number of spiritual songs, including approximately six samples dedicated to the Seraphim and Cherubim angels. These recordings remain entirely unpublished and are being studied and presented for the first time in the present paper.

Linda Sargsyan is a musicologist and Junior Researcher at the Institute of Arts. She graduated from the Department of Musicology at Komitas State Conservatory, earning her bachelor's and master's degrees in 2023 and 2025, respectively. Her research focuses on key issues in Armenian traditional music.

SESSION 9: Cosmology, Ritual Knowledge, and Sacred Soundscapes

Gretel Schwörer-Kohl

Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (Germany)

Sacred music and dance of the La Hu Nyi people in Northern Thailand

The La Hu Nyi (Red La Hu) are a subgroup of the around 100 000 La Hu living in Northern Thailand. They speak a Tibeto-Burman language and migrated from Myanmar to Thailand during the last 150 years, living in diaspora since then.

Besides their own language, and their traditional costumes, their sacred music and dances are crucial in shaping, sustaining, and expressing the identities of the minority.

In temple services, the village priest and his assistants, following a strong hierarchy, worship their creator god G'ui Sha. The rituals are accompanied by songs, and a small temple ensemble, comprising mouth organs, drums, gongs and cymbals. The sacred music and dances are performed in the village temple and on the adhering dance ground. The paper will examine dances of the two main festivities of the La Hu Nyi: the several days lasting New Year's ceremonies, and the moon rituals performed twice a month, every full and new moon, as the La Hu people follow the moon calendar. Surprising how these religious offerings have survived in the fragile society surrounded by Buddhist monks and Christian missionaries. Strong powerful religious leaders have strengthened the community cohesion in the past and hopefully will be successful in future to keep the precious cultural heritage of the La Hu Nyi.

Gretel Schwörer-Kohl studied Ethnomusicology, Anthropology, and Art History at the Universities of Freiburg, Cologne, Hamburg, and Bangkok. She has conducted fieldwork in Thailand and Myanmar since 1974. Since 1999, she has been Professor of Ethnomusicology at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.

Soegiarto Hartono
Kolintang.id (Indonesia)

**Sacred Cosmology as Minority Knowledge System: Directional Ritual,
Embodied Astronomy, and Gender Authority in Minahasa Rumages**

This paper examines the Rumages ritual song cycle of the Minahasa people (North Sulawesi, Indonesia) as a cosmological knowledge system encoded in sacred music and dance, challenging its colonial framing as mythology. Despite constituting under 1% of Indonesia's population, Minahasa communities have sustained complex intellectual traditions through ritual performance while navigating minoritization since early colonial encounters.

The study analyzes the 28-verse Song of Karema, as interpreted by J.A.T. Schwarz (1907), not as folklore but as embodied astronomy. This sung cartography encodes celestial mechanics, directional ontology, and mathematical reasoning. The ritual structure reveals (1) a counterclockwise cosmological reading by Karema, a female Walian, establishing cardinal orientation as sacred pedagogy; (2) a zigzag directional sequence enacted by Lumimuut (SE-NE-SW-NW) that suggests a continuous, cyclic solar trajectory in oral interpretation, with the northwest emerging as the sole axis of divine response; and (3) mathematical patterning embedded in genealogical verses, including ternary progressions (1-3-9) and rhythmic asymmetry symbolized by the unequal staffs of Toar and Lumimuut.

Building on Schwarz's astronomical insights while reassessing their colonial limits, we argue Rumages functioned as integrated knowledge combining music, movement, geometry, arithmetic, and cosmology. The analysis reveals women not as passive tradition bearers but as active cosmographers and knowledge architects within Minahasan epistemology. We conclude sacred music and dance operate as resilient knowledge infrastructure transmitting scientific and ethical systems across ancestral and diasporic contexts, with women occupying central positions of ritual and epistemic authority.

Soegiarto Hartono holds a Master of Education from the University of the People (USA) and is the Founder of Kolintang.id. He serves on the Executive Board of the National Kolintang Association (PINKAN), focusing on the preservation and international dissemination of Minahasan musical heritage through inclusive and multisensory pedagogy. His research interests include embodied music learning and the Directional Chord Symbol (DCS) system as an accessible notation framework.

Pankaj Rawat
TCS iON (India)

Sacred Soundscapes of Identity and Belonging Jāgar Ritual Music in the Uttarakhand Himalayas

Sacred ethnomusicology studies music in its sociocultural contexts, especially sacred and spiritual traditions. In the Uttarakhand Himalayas, diverse musical practices reflect local lived experiences and environments. Among them, Jāgar stands out as a ceremonial folk ritual deeply embedded in the region's cultural and religious life. It involves invoking local deities and ancestral spirits for blessings, healing, and the well-being of the community, blending traditional tales, heroic ballads, and folklore. Despite broader research on Indian folk music, limited scholarship has examined the intersections of sacred music with social identity and caste dynamics – a gap that this study addresses. The research explores how Jāgar shapes spaces of belonging, mediates hierarchies, and sustains communal cohesion. Ethnographic fieldwork conducted across selected villages involved 120 informants, including Jāgariyās (lead singers), Pashwā (ritual mediums), and villagers, through a combination of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, audio-video analysis, and diverse methodological approaches. Integrating the ASEB matrix and SWOT frameworks, the study reveals that Jāgar transcends performance, acting as a living archive of folklore that subverts and reinforces caste dynamics. A central finding is the paradoxical position of hereditary drummer communities. Although historically marginalized within caste hierarchies, they hold ritually indispensable roles during Jāgar ceremonies, where their music becomes a conduit for divine presence. This temporary elevation highlights how sacred performance can both challenge and reproduce social boundaries. At a time of rapid modernization and the erosion of oral traditions, Jāgar continues to serve as a living archive of folklore, belief, and collective identity. The paper argues that sacred music practices such as Jāgar play a crucial role in preserving cultural memory while shaping evolving forms of belonging in Himalayan communities.

Pankaj Rawat is a cultural geographer and ethnomusicology researcher specializing in the relationships between music, space, and society in the Indian Himalayas. He completed his PhD in Geography at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, with a focus on the geography of traditional music in Uttarakhand. His research explores sacred music traditions, cultural identity, and community belonging through ethnographic and spatial approaches. Dr. Rawat is a member of ICTMD and the British Forum for Ethnomusicology and currently serves as a Geography Subject Matter Expert with TCS iON.

Gisa Jähnichen
Shanghai Conservatory of Music (China)

Southern Chinese drums

Southern Chinese drums are varied. I will take the Yandun dagu (the big Yandun drum) of a small group of Han Chinese around Yandun as an example to report on the handling of drums in Chinese performances. One of the issues raised will be the sustainability of their existence in the given performance context at some local stages. Ritual duties that can no longer be fulfilled and an overemphasis on melodic applications in research, which pose a major challenge, may contribute to the disappearance of specific drums, especially the very large drums that are still manufactured today.

Drums are currently as national symbols of extraordinary interest, yet difficult to define and make suitable for the stage. Regularly, Yandun drums are ordered for business openings that have the purpose of entertainment and opening ritual in one. Special invited drummers make up for the missing loudness, which can indicate a social crisis and a longing for the past, when the powerful sound of large Yandun drums predominated. In any case, locally accepted details of playing styles come with certain contextual 'sacrifices.' This paper may suggest actual modifications in how the drums are handled. It will expand the perspective for future changes. The example of the Yandun Daggu should not replace existing descriptions but contribute to future considerations in the context of popular culture.

Gisa Jähnichen is teaching and researching at Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She is an active member of the ICTMD and the elected chair of the ICTMD SG on Musical Instruments. Together with Xiao Mei she edited a book about Drums and Drum ensembles along the Great Silk Road. She also wrote many papers, books and editions that are widely spread around the world.

SESSION 10: Sacred Traditions in Diaspora and Cross-Cultural Contexts

George Mürer

Hunter College and Columbia University (USA)

Approaching Musicological and Choreological Resonances and Interfaces between Kurds, Armenians, and Syrian Christians in West Asia

The geography that today is designated as Eastern Türkiye has a long history as a homeland for Armenian, Kurdish, Êzîdî, and Syrian Orthodox Christian populations, alongside various Arab, Turkish, Alevi, and Jewish communities. Scholars such as Estelle Amy de la Brétèque, Melissa Bilal, and Michael Chyet have probed nodes of confluence between oral tradition, song forms, and narrative arts across these communal, religious, and linguistic boundaries with attention to political history and experiences of collective trauma. In this paper, I center Kurdish dance repertoires with explicit local affiliations, often anchored to sites that were formerly populated by Armenian, Êzîdî, and Syrian Christian communities. As these repertoires are not scheduled or canonized through state sponsored institutions (at least not in the context of the performers and communities who are the focus of my ongoing fieldwork), there is a wide opening for interpretation regarding origins and directional flows among linguistically and confessionally distinct communities. I aim here to raise ethical and methodological questions and also to offer a digest of some of the narratives that have presented themselves to me, as I envision future research trajectories.

George Mürer is an adjunct assistant professor of music at Columbia University and Hunter College. He holds a PhD in Ethnomusicology from The Graduate Center, City University of New York. His research explores complex cultural landscapes such as Kurdistan and the Persian Gulf, focusing on music, cross-cultural exchange, and the experiences of marginalized minority groups, including Kurds, Baloch, Hazara, and Imazighen. He is associate editor of the *Kurdish Studies Journal* and is pursuing an MFA in Integrated Media Arts at Hunter College.

Lilit Harutyunyan
Komitas Museum-Institute (Armenia)

From Oral Chant to Notation: Preserving Assyrian Sacred Music

This paper examines the musical structure of the Assyrian Divine Liturgy as preserved in the Assyrian community of Armenia, drawing on the notated collection of liturgical chants transcribed at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory and later published in the United States. The volume, based on recordings of clergy from the Assyrian Church of the East, represents a rare instance in which an orally transmitted Syriac chant tradition was systematically documented within a professional musicological framework. The transcription employs European staff notation with adapted signs to reflect microtonal inflections, recitative declamation, and modal nuance, offering a valuable analytical source for the study of Assyrian sacred music. Using this published corpus, the paper investigates melodic contour, range organization, modal structures (often confined within tetrachordal and pentachordal frameworks), recitation formulas, and cadential patterns. Particular attention is given to the syllabic, free declamatory style of performance and its relationship to liturgical text. By analyzing this transition from oral practice to written notation, the study explores how musical structure functions as a carrier of theological meaning and communal memory within a minority context. The Assyrian liturgical repertoire in Armenia thus emerges not only as a preserved heritage but as a living modal system whose documentation enables deeper engagement with issues of minority identity, transmission, and sacred sound.

Lilit Harutyunyan is the Head of the Research Department at the Komitas Museum-Institute. She holds a PhD in Arts from the Institute of Arts. Her research interests include archival materials related to Komitas Vardapet, his personal library, his ethnomusicological heritage, Armenian medieval music, and traditional Armenian music. She also teaches Ethnography and the New Armenian Notation System at Komitas State Conservatory. She is the author of scholarly articles on Armenian medieval and folk music.

Lolita Emmanuel
University of Sydney (Australia)

Loss, Memory and the Creative Reassembly of Syriac Chant in Diaspora

This paper examines how direct experiences of loss and grief during creative work involving Syriac chant, a monophonic and highly ornamented Christian vocal practice, both reflect and intensify broader struggles with fragile cultural transmission in diaspora. For Assyrians, an Indigenous people of Beth Nahrain (spanning present-day Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey), Syriac chant is deeply intertwined with cultural identity, trauma and resilience. Following genocide and ongoing persecution in their homelands, many Assyrians now live in diaspora and consider these chants “archaeological artefacts” that testify to their ancient presence in Mesopotamia and their continued practice of one of the world’s oldest Christian liturgical traditions (Jarjour 2018). This heightened significance can also generate tensions around the chant’s practice and transformation in various contexts.

I explore these tensions as an Assyrian pianist working in a collaborative, experimental microtonal piano-violin project with the violinist and daughter of late composer Nouri Iskandar, who passed away early in our collaboration. A pioneer in Syriac chant music, Iskandar’s passing not only marked a profound personal and community loss, but also reflected the fragility of cultural transmission of diaspora. By tracing our creative decisions while readapting his chant arrangements, I examine how we negotiate embodied cultural memory, creativity and remembrance amid fragmentation. This paper offers a practice-based account of how sacred musical traditions are creatively reassembled for continuity in diaspora, contributing methodological insight to Syriac chant scholarship and empirical perspective to ethnomusicological discussions of affect, embodiment, and creativity and survival amongst minoritised communities (Grabera and Sumera 2020).

Lolita Emmanuel is a pianist and Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. Her practice-based research explores cultural resilience in Assyrian music-making across the transnational diaspora, focusing on memory, reassembly, and continuity. She collaborates with violinist Sousan Eskandar to honour the legacy of her father, composer Nouri Iskandar, reimagining his modal polyphonic works through experimental duo performance. Lolita performs with and advises the Assyrian Arts Institute (US), and tutors and guest lectures at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

SESSION 11: Migration, Identity, and Community Performance

Ani Ginosyan

Karin Center for Research and Study of Traditional Armenian Culture(Armenia)

Armenian Traditional Dance outside Armenia

This paper aims to provide an examination of the role of traditional Armenian dance groups operating abroad and their impact on the preservation of national identity, social cohesion, and the revitalization of cultural life. Having moved beyond its original ritual context, traditional Armenian dance in the diaspora undergoes a process of transformation, functioning as a means of identity expression, collective memory, and the maintenance of intergenerational continuity.

The study analyzes the organizational models of dance groups, their teaching methods, staging practices, and their relationship to dance traditions, with particular focus on Europe, Russia, the United States, and other regions. Members of these groups act as representatives of a national minority, while dance activity serves as an important medium for social integration and self-expression within a foreign cultural environment. Participation in dance groups strengthens both individual and community ties.

This paper undertakes a comprehensive attempt to compile a complete register of traditional Armenian dance groups operating abroad, based on interviews, archival sources, and digital materials. This register may serve as a resource for both documentary purposes and future research in the fields of Armenian studies, diaspora studies, and ethno-choreography. The findings demonstrate that traditional Armenian dance groups in the diaspora not only fulfill functions of cultural preservation but also play a significant role in organizing community life and processes of identity reconstruction, while seeking to respond to the challenges faced by national minorities.

Ani Ginosyan is the Artistic Director of the Karin Traditional Song and Dance Ensemble, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Song and Dance Academy Educational and Cultural Foundation, and a member of the Karin Research Center for the Study of traditional Armenian culture.

Xiaotong Yang
Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand)

**“Silent” Transformation: Themes of Cantonese Folk Religion
in Early-Twentieth-Century New Zealand Chinese Community
Music-making**

Since the first arrival of Chinese miners on the Otago goldfields of southern New Zealand in 1866, scattered reports of Chinese joss house temples could be found in newspapers. However, as the twentieth century approached, and as poorer, predominantly working-class gold miners were replaced by the more educated middle class, a large proportion of whom practised Christianity, Chinese religious worship gradually faded from the public eye and fell silent in the archives. Yet, the absence of Chinese folk religious practices in newspapers did not mean that they ceased to exist or were completely taken over by Christianity, as is portrayed in some historical narratives of Chinese communities in New Zealand.

In this paper, by examining folk religious ideas expressed through auspicious Chinese characters inscribed on a group of Cantonese percussion instruments used by the Wellington Chinese, as well as an instance of percussion music performed by a Cantonese band in Auckland (both dating back to the early twentieth century), I show that themes in Cantonese folk religion continued to play an integral part in local music-making and identity negotiation. I argue that, when migrant and minority communities appear to have adopted religious practices of mainstream society, ideas and practices of folk religion do not simply disappear – they take on new forms and continue to influence identity expression.

Xiaotong Yang is an ethnomusicologist and erhu performer whose doctoral research at Victoria University of Wellington examines the identity expression of Chinese communities in early-twentieth-century New Zealand. Drawing on archival and historical methods, her work sits at the intersection of Chinese studies, historical ethnomusicology, and cultural anthropology. She serves as ICTMD Representative on the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee's Youth Working Group and is a committee member of ICTMD's Early Career Scholars Network.

Chae-Lin Kim
University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)

**“Gott gebärdet gern” (God is pleased to sign)
Religious Songs by the Berlin Sign Choir**

Deaf people who see themselves as a linguistic and cultural minority have a comparatively autonomous culture called Deaf culture. This culture is closely connected to their language: sign language. But is this language also ‘singable’? What about singing together, for example during church services? Is there a musical form through which they express their faith? Having been a member of the Berlin Sign Choir, which is affiliated with the Protestant Deaf Church in Berlin and consists mainly of deaf members, I had the privilege of learning numerous religious songs in sign language, which are performed during worship services. There are two types of songs practiced by the sign choir; one based on spoken lyrics that have been adapted into sign language (poetry), and the other that is originally written in sign language.

In my presentation, I will discuss the signed song “Gott gebärdet gern” (God is pleased to sign), which is an example of the latter type and is performed only visually, i.e. independently of sounding music. This song challenges our sound-based and hearing-centric understanding of music, as well as the ‘biblical’ idea that deafness must be ‘cured’ or ‘healed’, a notion typically rooted in hearing-centered theology. In this song, God is portrayed from the perspective of deaf people as someone who is (supportive of) signing. Drawing on Deaf Liberation Theology (Hannah Lewis), I will demonstrate how the Christian faith is reinterpreted within Deaf culture through singing and praising in sign language.

Chae-Lin Kim is a cellist and ethnomusicologist and a postdoctoral researcher at the Music and Minorities Research Center, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. She leads an FWF-funded project, “Music for the Eye? An Ethnographic Study of Sign Choirs in German-speaking Countries.” She holds a diploma in cello performance from Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts, an MA in Musicology from Freie Universität Berlin, and a PhD in Musicology from Berlin University of the Arts. Her research focuses on Deaf culture, sign choirs, and sign language literature.

SESSION 12: Reframing Sacred Practice: Transmission, Materiality, and New Voices

Lusine Kagramanyan

University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)

The Cradle as Sanctuary: Matriarchal Authorship and the Armenian Lullaby as Sacred Ritual

This paper examines the Armenian lullaby (*oror*) as a sophisticated mechanism of transgenerational identity programming within minority and diasporic contexts. Departing from its dismissal as a marginal domestic genre, this research frames the lullaby as a “portable sanctuary” through which women exert spiritual and cultural authority – a form of authorship traditionally obscured by patriarchal musicological structures. The study acknowledges and builds upon the extensive research of Margarita Brutyan, Robert Atayan, Mushegh Aghayan, Hasmik Apinyan, Melissa Bilal, and Lusine Azaryan, among many others, and the father of Armenian ethnomusicology, Komitas Vardapet,.

Notably, while Komitas situated these compositions within “lyric” or “work” songs –preceding their later categorization as an independent genre, this paper argues for their recognition as a distinct sacred rite. Utilizing contemporary artistic research from the Lyon Biennale as well as field research in diaspora across France and Armenia, I analyze the *oror* as an instrument of “force” and an exile prayer that preserves cultural memory across fragmented geographies. The research identifies the maternal voice as a priestly medium; its monodic and modal characteristics function as a domestic extension of Armenian sacred chants, effectively sacralizing a secular space shaped by a long history of transgenerational trauma and modes of survival (Bilal 2004). By evaluating how these practices are maintained or adapted in the diaspora, the paper illuminates the intersection of faith, gendered agency, and cultural survival, reclaiming the Armenian lullaby as a critical nexus of female authority and liturgical continuity.

Lusine (Lucia) Kagramanyan is an Armenian artist, sound researcher, and aspiring ethnomusicologist. She is pursuing parallel studies in Ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna and Fine Arts and Critical Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Her research investigates the intersections of Armenian cultural identity, gendered soundscapes, and minority heritage. As the host of NTS Radio’s Panorama Yerevan and a resident at Radio Alhara, she utilizes broadcasting as a contemporary archive, curating diverse sonic narratives that span liturgical traditions, regional folkways, and modern electronic experiments.

Fulvia Caruso
University of Pavia (Italy)

Beyond Urban Borders: Faith, Culture, and Musical Practices in Migratory Contexts

In the context of migration, the opportunity to practice one's worship is essential. It is not merely a matter of living out one's faith, but of expressing one's culture through the language that conveys a specific heritage and belief system.

For this reason, religious practice often transcends the boundaries of one's immediate residence. Individuals frequently undertake journeys of several hours to find a place where they can participate in a rite performed exactly as it was in their country of origin. This occurs even when a place of worship for the same faith exists within their own city but fails to meet specific cultural expectations.

Consequently, the links between the "space of worship" and the "space of daily life" are severed. The boundaries of neighbourhood, municipality, or region lose their significance in favour of a reunion with a specific community of practitioners. How does this phenomenon impact music-related worship practices? How can rehearsals be conducted or hymns be learned if the community lives far apart during the week?

After a decade of studying and documenting these dynamics within the confines of a single city, I have expanded my scope to realize that just as much – if not more – occurs beyond the urban borders where various minorities reside. In this paper, I intend to present the preliminary results of this new research framework.

Fulvia Caruso graduated in Ethnomusicology from Sapienza University of Rome, where she also earned a PhD in Cultural Anthropology. Since 2015, she has been Associate Professor at the University of Pavia, having served as Assistant Professor since 2008. She also teaches at the School of Specialization in Musical Heritage jointly held by Bologna University, Sapienza University of Rome, Pavia University. In 2024, she became Secretary General of ESEM and representative of the Italian ICTMD National Committee. Her research focuses on music and migration, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) heritagization, ritual music, and oral poetry.

Hu Yile

University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong, China)
and École française d'Extrême-Orient (France)

Who Performs? Where, and for Whom? – Tibetan Monastic Music and Dance as a Medium between the Sacred and the Secular

This study draws on first-hand archaeological iconography and performance materials collected through fieldwork and integrates approaches from religious studies, archaeology, and musicology. Using imagery related to music and dance from archaeological sites in Western Tibet as a historical point of reference, and juxtaposing it with repertoires widely practised in contemporary monasteries, the paper examines how the boundaries of monastic performance traditions are drawn, negotiated, and reworked. It addresses three interrelated sets of questions. First, how do performer identities (deities, donors, monastics and lay participants), performance settings (interior ritual spaces, forecourt courtyards, and festival routes), and performance purposes (offering, instruction, and community cohesion) jointly delimit what counts as “sacred performance”? Second, how do religious norms shape instrumental ensembles, instrument types, and dance practices, making them integral to religious instruction and liturgical ritual? Third, how have diverse cultural elements within sacred music and dance circulated into Tibetan regions, been absorbed by local cultural frameworks, and subsequently adapted and reinterpreted in monastic repertoires? Centering Tibetan monastic music and dance, this paper argues that these practices function as performative religious media that build perceptible, participatory bridges between sacred and secular domains, thereby illuminating the intersections of faith, identity, and creativity across diverse social, cultural, and political contexts.

Hu Yile is a PhD candidate in Musicology at The University of Hong Kong and a visiting student at the École française d'Extrême-Orient. Her research focuses on musical iconography and music archaeology, particularly representations of musical instruments and performance scenes in Buddhist visual culture. She has conducted extensive fieldwork at archaeological sites and Buddhist cave temples featuring musical imagery, including the Kizil and Dunhuang grottoes, the ruins of the Guge Kingdom, Tholing Monastery, and the Dungan-Phiyang grottoes in Tibet.

SESSION 13: Representation, Identity, and Power

Kai Viljami Åberg

University of Eastern Finland (Finland)

Voices, Power, and Representation: Romani Identity in Finnish Popular Music

This lecture examines Finnish popular music from the mid-twentieth century to the present, focusing on how Romani identity has been constructed, represented, and contested within musical and cultural practices. Drawing on ethnomusicology, popular music studies, and postcolonial theory, it analyzes the shifting dynamics of ethnicity, representation, and power. Historically, Romani identity in Finnish popular music has been shaped through romanticizing, exoticizing, and othering representations, particularly in schlager and film music. These depictions draw on broader European imaginaries of “Gypsyess” and reinforce majority cultural authority by defining Romani identity from an external perspective. In contrast, more recent genres – including rock, rap, religious music, and works by Romani artists – foreground Romani identity as self-articulation, counter-discourse, and cultural agency. Such music challenges entrenched stereotypes, foregrounds internal diversity, and articulates experiences of marginalization and resilience. The lecture pays particular attention to musical structures, lyrical themes, language use, and visual performance as key sites where ethnicity is produced and negotiated. It is grounded in over thirty years of ethnographic fieldwork among Romani communities in Finland and internationally. From an ethnomusicological perspective, music is understood as a social practice and a medium of cultural knowledge, memory, and identity work. Postcolonial theory further enables a critical analysis of voice, authority, and representation, asking who defines Romani identity and whose voices are heard. The lecture argues that popular music constitutes a crucial arena in which ethnic identities and power relations are continuously negotiated and redefined.

Kai Åberg is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Eastern Finland, a Finnish ethnomusicologist and musician specializing in Romani and traditional music. Since the mid-1990s, he has conducted extensive fieldwork among Finnish Romani communities and across Europe. His research explores Romani music traditions, performance practices, and the intersections of music, identity, gender, and ethnicity, with particular attention to the ethical dimensions of studying minority music cultures. He is the author and editor of several publications, including *These Songs Tell About Our Life, You See: Music, Identity, and Gender in Finnish Romani Music* and *Finnish Romani Music*.

Mojca Kovačič
ZRC SAZU Institute of Ethnomusicology (Slovenia)

**Discrimination Histories and the Political Economy of Language
in Carinthian Slovene Popular Music**

This paper examines popular music among the Carinthian Slovene minority in Austria after 2000 as a practice of minority presence in environments shaped by long-standing discrimination and contemporary cultural-economic pressures. Rather than treating multilingualism primarily as an identity marker, I analyze how presence is produced through (1) infrastructures of participation (venues, festivals, cross-border circuits, and “safe” minority institutions) and (2) the political economy of language across live performance, media exposure, and digital distribution.

Empirically, I develop post-2000 case studies that link language choices to both stigma and market logics. First, I show how dialect can be framed as economically “narrow” yet becomes an aesthetic-political asset and a recognizable scene position, including through venue strategies that deliberately exceed minority cultural circuits. Second, I trace how experiences of marginalization shape language regimes and affective orientations, including reflexive avoidance of German, Slovene as a medium for socio-critical messaging, and strategic uses of English for wider legibility. Third, I discuss how minority cultural infrastructures (e.g., student clubs and networks) support participation and visibility beyond formal institutions, and how English is sometimes used strategically to increase legibility and create affective distance.

Methodologically, the paper combines historical contextualization with qualitative analysis of lyrics, media materials, and interviews. I argue that discrimination histories and platform- and market-oriented constraints co-produce language choices and scene-making, making popular music a key arena where minority presence is negotiated both symbolically and economically.

Mojca Kovačič works at the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). Her research focuses on folk singing, instrumental music, and contemporary practices of popular music and sound phenomena. She explores both their musical and sonic characteristics and the historical, social, and political contexts. Her work addresses themes such as music and nationalism, cultural heritage, and sound policies, music in migration contexts, language choices in popular music, affective dimensions of music, and heritage making processes.

Ioannis Christidis, Luna Al-Mousli
University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)

**SWANA Dancefloors in Vienna:
Electronic Music and Affective Politics in Diasporic Nightlife**

Electronic dance music and dancefloor cultures have historical roots in Black and queer minoritized communities in the United States, where collective dancing alongside practices of bodily autonomy and safer space-making functioned as affective-political responses to social exclusion. While these roots have been obscured through the mainstreaming and commercialization of electronic music scenes, this paper argues that similar affective-political dimensions are being reworked within contemporary nightlife spaces in Europe by actors from Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) backgrounds to negotiate intersecting forms of discrimination. The paper takes Vienna as a case study, where DIY-organized events play a crucial role in sustaining non-mainstream electronic music cultures. Within this landscape, SWANA-oriented parties have emerged as distinct yet often precarious spaces hosting DJs and music producers from the SWANA region and its diasporas. These events are shaped both by the direct effects of political developments in the SWANA region on diasporic communities and by their mediation within the Austrian public sphere, including processes of racialization, exclusion, and heightened scrutiny of SWANA cultural and political expression. Drawing on field research conducted at SWANA party events in Vienna, alongside interviews and dialogical knowledge-making, the paper examines how electronic dance music becomes a platform for negotiating social and political realities through embodied interaction on the dancefloor. Engaging approaches to affective politics, understood here as the ways feelings, embodied intensities, and collective interactions shaped by music and dance become politically meaningful, the paper conceptualizes the dancefloor as an affective space of collective affirmation among intersectionally minoritized groups without requiring legibility to majority society.

Ioannis Christidis is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw), and Co-Investigator on the project “(Un)heard Neighbors? An Urban Ethnomusicology of Proximity.” He also develops a postdoctoral project on “SWANA Electronic Dance Music on European Dancefloors” at the Music and Minorities Research Center. His research focuses on music and minorities, SWANA electronic dance music, protest music, and religious music and sound. He completed his PhD at mdw in 2024.

Luna Al-Mousli is an award-winning author, graphic designer, and cultural curator whose books have been translated into numerous languages. She also performs as DJ قامارين (Qamareen), drawing on music from the Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) region and blending pop, indie, and electronic sounds. Al-Mousli is co-founder of the Raqsouna event series, which celebrates the SWANA diaspora and creates spaces for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in Vienna. Her work explores identity, politics, and memory.

Shaun Williams
Independent scholar (Romania)

**“Maneaua Romilor”:
The Making of a Subversive Romani Genre in Socialist Romania**

This paper examines the postwar transformation of the manea into a Romani dance genre and its role as a medium for subversive expression under Romanian state socialism. While earlier usages of the term manea referred to non-metrical songs of lament associated with an imagined Ottoman past, after 1947 the genre disappeared from public performance and re-emerged within Romani communities as a rhythmic dance performed in private settings.

Drawing on unpublished field recordings from the 1950s–60s, archival documents, and ethnographic interviews with Romani musicians, this paper traces how a small repertoire of socialist-era manele became a vehicle for subversive satire and social commentary. Amidst the institutional erasure of Roma as a recognized minority, lyrics addressing assimilation and marginality circulated privately within Romani communities. Meanwhile, Romani artists recorded these same melodies for state-run media as instrumental pieces, preserving what anthropologist James C. Scott has termed “hidden transcripts”: critiques legible to insiders yet obscured from the authorities.

This paper argues that such crossings did not neutralize the manea’s subversive potential, which persisted through embodied memory and shared listening practices. Rather, much like the *čoček* in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, the manea became emblematic of Romani cultural resistance to policies of assimilation and erasure. In the context of contemporary Romanian culture, where the widespread popularity of manele has frequently been at the center of moral panics and crises of national identity, this paper provides historical insight into the subversive roots of the genre and its importance as a Romani expressive form.

Shaun Williams is an ethnomusicologist, musician, and documentary filmmaker based in Bucharest, Romania. He earned his PhD in Ethnomusicology from Indiana University in 2025 with a dissertation on Romani professional musicians (*lăutari*) and the politics of memory and identity in communist and post-socialist Romania. His research examines how music sustains cultural continuity and enables subtle forms of resistance amid assimilation and erasure. He has conducted extensive ethnographic research among Romani, Ruthenian, and Hutsul communities in Ukraine and Romania. His interests include musical performance, identity, popular music, and minority rights.

SESSION 14: Cultural Agency and Community

Hasmik Harutyunyan and Stella Davtyan

Shirak Center for Armenian Studies

Gyumri's branch of the Komitas State Conservatory (Armenia)

Dance Traditions in the Yezidi Community of the Armenian Village of Azatan

Azatan village of Armenia is located in the Shirak region, boasting an ancient history and an Early Christian historical-cultural heritage. In the 1950s – following the end of World War II – due to the difficult economic situation and specifically the efforts to restore animal husbandry, several dozen Yezidi families resettled there from the Armavir region to engage in sheep farming.

For around 75 years, the Yezidi community established in Azatan has lived in favorable conditions, maintaining harmonious relations with the ethnic Armenian majority. Within the framework of the community's ethnic identity, music and especially traditional dance occupy a significant place.

Our paper is dedicated to the genre characteristics and the diversity of traditional dances in the cultural life of this small Yezidi community, through which the community resists marginalization. The study is based on materials we collected during fieldwork expeditions conducted in Azatan between 2018 and 2020, focusing primarily on traditional dances.

Ritual and festive content plays a vital role here. Wedding dances and New Year (April) dances carry the most significant functions. These are exclusively group dances, where the dancers often form circles, emphasizing the collective rhythm and footwork (e.g., Mevan-mevan, Zva bin). Ritual dances also play a major role in the ceremony of the “Eida Azdit”. This holiday has played a crucial role in the life and destiny of the Yezidi people. It has consistently contributed to the preservation of Yezidi identity, religion and culture from ancient times to the present day. The constant companions of the Yezidi dances in Azatan are the zurna and the dhol (played with sticks), performed by musicians who are residents of the same village. The youngest among them, Khdr Broyan, is a highly talented performer who, despite his youth, is frequently invited to perform in other Yezidi communities both in Armenia and abroad.

Hasmik Harutyunyan is a musicologist, PhD in Arts, and Researcher at the Shirak Center for Armenian Studies, where she also serves as Scientific Secretary. She graduated from Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory and received her PhD in Arts in 2005. She has worked at the Kumayri Reserve-Museum in Gyumri and is the Director of the Gyumri branch of Komitas State Conservatory.

Stella Davtyan is an MA student at the Gyumri branch of Komitas State Conservatory.

Giulia Maggiora

University of Aveiro

“Batuku, gaita, tabanca`, pra todo sítio na rua...” Sonic practices of resistance and affirmation in the Portuguese Cape Verdean diaspora

Following Cape Verde (CV)’s independence in 1975, the increased migration to the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA) led to the intensification of both music circuits connected to the recording market and expressive practices in informal contexts. In this paper, I firstly propose to reflect on *batuku*– a performative practice involving music and dance, predominantly female, originating in the interior of Santiago (CV) – as an expressive form that strengthens identity and a sense of belonging within the Santiago community, while reconfiguring collective memories. Based on dialogical ethnography developed during my master’s research in collaboration with the Batucadeiras das Olaias, a batuku group based in LMA, I seek to observe how these women, through music and dance, contribute to the construction and maintenance of sonic, musical, and bodily memory. Simultaneously, they establish a model of cultural resistance that does not conform to practices associated with hegemonic Western culture. Furthermore, I introduce the initial stages of my doctoral research, which delves into expressive practices within religious festivities both in LMA and CV. These events are organized primarily by women, through mutual aid strategies, and help strengthen the transnational Cape Verdean community. Such festive moments function as spaces for identity negotiation, reinvention of tradition, and reinterpretation of the past. In this paper, I also aim to present an ethnographic mapping of religious and community festivities, to analyze the emergence of informal networks mobilized and sustained by women associated with batuku activities.

Giulia Maggiora holds a Master’s degree in Music from the University of Aveiro, specializing in Ethnomusicology and Popular Music Studies. Her research explores Cape Verdean batuku with the Batucadeiras das Olaias and women in rap with the collective Hellas, focusing on identity, gender, and resistance. Her participatory and dialogical ethnography emphasizes collaboration and knowledge co-construction with communities. She is currently a PhD student at the University of Aveiro and INET-md, supported by an FCT scholarship, researching women’s performative practices as forms of cultural memory and transnational belonging in the Cape Verdean diaspora.

Harutyun Baghdasaryan and Arpenik Ghazaryan
Bekor National Educational and Cultural Center NGO (Armenia)

“The Will”

In this paper, we will present the relationship between individuals with disabilities and culture, focusing on dance as a means of therapy and social integration. The study is based on our practical experience working with individuals with motor impairments, schizophrenia, and visual and hearing impairments. The traditional song and dance group *Bekor* dances with participants from these groups, demonstrating that individuals with and without disabilities can be equal in art. This is necessary for fostering self-confidence among dancers of socially vulnerable groups and for audiences to fully perceive these people in art. We will talk about the recently-established group whose participants represent socially vulnerable groups whose direct communication in everyday life is difficult. The group includes individuals with visual and hearing impairments. Participants with visual impairments rely on verbal communication, which is not accessible to participants with hearing impairments. Participants with hearing impairments communicate with gestures, which is not accessible to those with visual impairments. Thus, we needed to find a “tool” that would enable communication between the individuals of these two groups. Armenian dance became that “tool”. The paper will further present the methodology used in teaching these groups, highlighting how dance classes contribute to increasing social inclusion, fostering mutual support within the communities and strengthening participants’ cultural identity and connection to their homeland. The paper also includes a video material that demonstrates the participants’ collaborative achievements and progress.

Harutyun Baghdasaryan is a philologist and traditional dance instructor. Since 2008, he has been a member of the *Karin* Traditional Song and Dance Ensemble. Since 2016, he has worked as an instructor of Armenian traditional song and dance, actively engaging in inclusive dance initiatives and working with people with special needs through dance. In 2018, he founded the *Bekor* Traditional Song and Dance Group. Since 2025, he has served as the Head of the *Bekor* National Educational and Cultural Center NGO.

Arpenik Ghazaryan is a historian and teacher of History and Social Studies. She graduated from the Faculty of History and Law of Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University and has been teaching in schools since 2009. Since 2019, she has been writing historical stories and running the *Arpiik* creative project. She is also a mentor teacher with Visual Armenia.

SESSION 15: Memory and Intercultural Exchange

Margarit Sargsyan
Institute of Arts (Armenia)

The Dance Song *Tamzara* in Armenian Tradition and its Parallels in the Culture of the Kurds, Greeks and Assyrians

The dance song represents an ancient syncretic genre characterized by the organic unity of music, poetic text, and choreographic expression. It has historically occupied a significant place in the traditional cultures of Armenians and other peoples of the East. In modern contexts, however, a clear process of differentiation between song and dance has emerged: dance is now predominantly accompanied by instrumental music, while the song increasingly functions as an autonomous artistic form. Consequently, the historically unified structure of the dance song is gradually being disrupted. This phenomenon was systematically noted by ethnographer Srбуhi Lisitsyan, who observed that in earlier stages of traditional Armenian culture, dances were performed with vocal accompaniment. The subsequent development of instrumental performance practices contributed to the gradual marginalization and, in some cases, the disappearance of the verbal component. The separation of poetic text, melodic structure, and the kinetic “text” of dance has frequently resulted in the weakening of the dance’s semantic content and functional significance. Nevertheless, in a number of instances, the principal song text has been preserved within collective memory and continues to accompany the dance, particularly in the absence of instrumental music. This tendency is evident in the traditional dance song *Tamzara*, which originated in Shabin-Karahisar, in Tamzara village (Sebastia vilayet), and later spread among neighboring peoples, including Kurds, Greeks, and Assyrians. A comparative analysis of its Armenian, Kurdish, Greek, and Assyrian variants reveals both shared genre-specific features and distinct performance characteristics. This study aims to examine these traditions within the broader framework of intercultural interaction and cultural exchange.

Margarit Sargsyan is a Researcher at the Department of Folk Music of the Institute of Arts. She graduated from the Department of Musicology at Komitas State Conservatory. Her research focuses on the collection, documentation, transcription, and analysis of Armenian folk music, with particular emphasis on dance-songs and dance traditions. She is the author of papers, compiler of three volumes in the *Armenian Traditional Music* series, and author of music education programs for kindergartens and public schools of Armenia.

Garegin Masuryan

Karin Center for Research and Study of Traditional Armenian Culture (Armenia)

**Issues of Formation and Transformation of Armenian Dance:
Traditional Dance under Foreign Domination**

This paper is devoted to the study of the formation and historical development of Armenian traditional dance, with particular emphasis on the transformations that occurred under conditions of foreign domination. As an important component of national intangible cultural heritage, Armenian dance has survived for centuries within complex political and social environments, during which the Armenian people often existed in their historical homeland as a political and cultural minority, subjected to administrative, social, and cultural norms imposed by ruling powers.

The paper analyzes the transformations recorded in Armenian traditional dances during the periods of Persian, Arab, Seljuk, Ottoman, and Russian rule, interpreting them as strategies for minority survival and the preservation of identity. Changes in movement structure, performance practices, musical accompaniment, as well as the place and time of dance performance, and especially dance nomenclature are examined, highlighting processes of linguistic adaptation, cultural interaction, and, in some cases, enforced norms. Particular attention is paid to the fact that many dances have preserved their structural and semantic foundations despite name changes and external modifications.

The study is based on the synthesis and comparative analysis of historical, ethnographic, and dance studies sources, field research materials, and oral tradition. The paper demonstrates that under conditions of foreign domination, Armenian traditional dance functioned not merely as a form of cultural passive survival, but as an active carrier of identity, reflecting the interconnected processes of adaptation, resistance, and cultural continuity within a minority context.

Garegin Masuryan is a member of the *Karin* Armenian Traditional Song and Dance Ensemble and Head of the *Karin* Research Center for the Study of Traditional Armenian Culture at the National Song and Dance Academy Educational and Cultural Foundation.

Marianna Tigranyan
Institute of Arts (Armenia)

**The Ritual Roots of the Armenian *Lorke* and the Kurdish
Lurke Dance-Song**

Bird dances have been documented in many ancient cultures around the world, and Armenian tradition is no exception. The origins of such dances date back to the period of animal worship – totemism – and are closely associated with archaic rituals and early belief systems. Traditional Armenian bird dances include *Krngave*, *Ghaz-Ghaz*, *Havku*, *Kaqav*, *Lachin*, and others. Among them is the wedding circle dance *Lorke*, which initially carried ritual role but over time lost its original function and evolved into a folk-lyrical context. Dance scholars identify the regions of Vaspurakan and the Alashkert plain in historical Armenia as the birthplace of *Lorke*. These areas are considered part of the Armenian ethnogenesis and early settlement. Due to historical developments in the 17th–18th centuries, Turks and Kurds settled in these regions. Ethnographic sources, dance researchers, and tradition bearers themselves indicate that Kurdish and Turkish communities did not traditionally practice circle dances – especially mixed-gender group dances – since men and women did not dance together, in accordance with prevailing Islamic norms. Nevertheless, at pilgrimage sites, festive gatherings, and communal celebrations, Kurdish and Turkish men would join Armenians and participate in circle dances. As a result, many traditional Armenian songs, games, and dance melodies were adopted and localized by neighboring peoples. *Lorke* appears in Kurdish folk dance under the name *Lurke*. For many years, the full content of the song remained unknown to Armenian scholars, as the surviving versions were limited to a repeated refrain (“*Lorke, lorke, khanume lorke*”). Only through recordings of *Lurke* performed by Kurdish (Yezidi) tradition bearers living in Armenia – who constitute a national minority – has it been possible to reconstruct the original content of *Lorke* and to clarify its role and significance within wedding rituals. The study of the *Lorke* circle dance is therefore of considerable importance, as it enriches the corpus of ritual and humorous dance songs and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of traditional Armenian wedding circle dances.

Marianna Tigranyan holds a PhD in Art and is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Arts and Associate Professor at Folklore Studies Department of Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. Her research focuses on traditional Armenian music, with particular emphasis on traditional wedding ritual. In 2016, she defended her dissertation on “*Traditional Armenian Wedding Songs of Praise in the Context of an Ancient Ritual.*”

Jultje Aneke Rattu
Sam Ratulangi University (Indonesia)

**Embodying Ritual Efficacy:
Sacred Maengket Music and Dance in Minahasan Diaspora Contexts**

Sacred performance traditions play a vital role in sustaining ethnic and cultural continuity and spiritual meaning within minority and diaspora communities. Maengket, a traditional Minahasan music and dance form, functions as a ritual practice through which collective memory, cosmological knowledge, and social belonging are embodied and transmitted. This article examines how sacred Maengket is maintained and transformed among Minahasan diaspora communities, focusing on the performative processes that preserve ritual efficacy despite spatial and sociocultural displacement. Drawing on qualitative ethnographic research, including participant observation and in-depth interviews with cultural practitioners and community leaders, the study analyses Maengket performances in religious and communal settings beyond their place of origin. The findings show that the sacred Maengket serves as an embodied archive of cultural memory, where movement, rhythm, and vocal expression enact shared histories and spiritual values. Although choreographic structures, musical arrangements, and performance contexts are adapted to new environments, these changes do not diminish ritual potency. Instead, such flexibility enables the continuity of sacred meaning and communal authority. This study argues that the sacred Maengket demonstrates how ritual performance operates as a dynamic site of negotiation between tradition and change. Through embodied practice, music and dance mediate identity formation, reinforce social cohesion, and sustain cosmological orientations in diaspora life. By highlighting performance and adapting contextualization, this article contributes to broader discussions on ritual efficacy, embodied memory, and the sustainability of indigenous sacred arts in trans-local contexts.

Jultje Aneke Rattu is a lecturer and researcher in linguistics, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies, specializing in language, music, ritual performance, and indigenous cultural heritage in Indonesia, particularly in Minahasan contexts. Her research applies ethnographic and interdisciplinary approaches to explore embodied practices, ritual efficacy, and cultural continuity among minority and diasporic communities. She has participated in nationally funded research projects and contributes to academic publications, curriculum development, and community-based cultural research.

SESSION 16: Cultural Boundaries, Exchange, and Belonging

Naira Kilichyan

Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports RA (Armenia)

Traditional Kochari: Memory of Movement in Armenian and Greek Dance Cultures

Armenian and Greek peoples have developed rich and multilayered cultural heritages over centuries, with dance traditions forming a central component of their intangible cultural expression. Their long coexistence in Asia Minor fostered dynamic cultural interactions in which traditions were not only transmitted across generations but also intersected, influenced one another, and at times merged to create new cultural formations. These processes were never static; progressive and regressive transformations continuously reshaped cultural practices, occasionally modifying, enriching, or disrupting it. The interconnections between Armenian and Greek dances are particularly noteworthy. Shared elements appear in similar dance names, song texts, movement structures, melodic patterns, and in customs and social practices surrounding performance. Such parallels reflect long-standing cultural dialogue rather than isolated development. The founder of the Armenian choreology, Srбуhi Lisitsyan, documented Armenian dance songs that include references to Greeks. This paper approaches folk dance not only as a distinct national expression but also as a manifestation of intercultural exchange. Focusing on Kochari as a case study within Armenian and Greek contexts, it examines variants performed in Armenia, within the Greek community of Armenia, and among Armenian communities in Greece, considering both traditional and staged interpretations. Particular attention is given to the movement and musical differences between Armenian and Pontic Greek Kochari, highlighting them as vivid examples of regional cultural interaction and creative reinterpretation. Together, these forms illustrate how shared heritage can produce diverse yet equally valuable expressions of collective memory and artistic identity.

Naira Kilichyan, PhD, is an ethnochoreologist specializing in Armenian traditional dance. She studied dance at the Armenian State Pedagogical University and completed postgraduate studies in Dance Anthropology at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. She is the author of Armenia's UNESCO nomination for *Kochari: Traditional Group Dance*, a monograph, and around 50 articles. She also holds certificates in Movement Studies and Modern Greek Language and Culture. She is Head of the Department for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage at Armenia's Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

John Plemmenos

Hellenic Folklore Research Centre, Academy of Athens (Greece)

“Nor Do the Senseless Animals Themselves Ever Mate Outside Their Own Species”: Minority Friction and the Role of Music as Ethnic and Religious Catalyst in Late-18th Century Istanbul

This paper attempts to review the cultural relations between Greek and Armenian minorities in the context of the Ottoman Empire, and the role of music as social and emotional “mediator.” Historical relations between Greeks and Armenians are attested since the Byzantine times but were often tense due to their dogmatic variations (Christian orthodox vs. monophysite). Yet, both communities coexisted after the Fall of Constantinople (1453) and the establishment of the Ottoman Empire over their regions. Several testimonies of Greek-Armenian encounters come from the 18th century and include important musical information. For example, the prominent Armenian composer Hamparsum Limondjian (1768–1839), in his youth, is said to have studied under Petros the Peloponnesian (1730–1778), a charismatic cantor of the Greek Patriarchate in Istanbul. Gregorios Levitis (1778–1821), precentor of the same Patriarchate, in his adolescence, is reported to have frequented the Armenian Church, from which he was bitterly detached by his desperate father! Cultural and social exchange between the two minorities is also recorded in Greek literature, such as the romance collection, *Effects of Love* (1792), a story of which is set in an Armenian mansion, where Greek and Armenians meet for dinner and fun, and where a forbidden romance unfolds between a Greek young gentleman and the host’s daughter. Although the literary names have been changed, one can conjecture that the Armenian host, an Ottoman minter, may be identified with Hovhannes Düzyan, the Armenian director of the Ottoman Imperial Mint, who helped Hamparsum receive music education, while staying in his mansion in Kuruçeşme, Istanbul. In this context, music exchanged between the fellow diners through vocal songs acts as a catalyst enabling both the communication between the two lovers and the (temporal) transcendence of cultural and religious barriers between Greek and Armenian visitors (before the tragic end of the story).

John Plemmenos holds an MPhil and PhD in Ethnomusicology from the University of Cambridge, supported by a British Academy scholarship. He is Senior Research Fellow at the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens and Chair of the ICTMD Greek National Committee. He has taught at several Greek universities and conducted fieldwork in Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Albania. His research focuses on ethnomusicology, folk music traditions, and Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan musical cultures. He is author of several monographs and numerous scholarly articles.

Marjeta Pisk
ZRC SAZU, Institute of Ethnomusicology (Slovenia)

Performing Belonging: Dialect, Genre Hybridity, and Minority Identity at the Senjam Beneške Piesmi

The development of contemporary Slovenian minority music in the Udine/Videm area has been significantly shaped by the *Senjam beneške piesmi* (Festival of Venetian Slovene Song), organized since 1971 by the Cultural Association Rečan. Conceived as a festival of original compositions, the Senjam has functioned as both a musical platform and a site of linguistic activism within the Slovene-speaking community of Venetian Slovenia (Benečija), a historically marginalized minority region in northeastern Italy. A defining feature of the festival is the mandatory use of local Slovene dialect of Benečija in the song lyrics, while musical style remains unrestricted. This openness has enabled the incorporation of diverse contemporary genres – ranging from rock and pop to hip hop, punk, and metal – thus fostering stylistic innovation alongside linguistic continuity. In minority communities that were long denied the right to use their language in public life, music often becomes one of the most powerful media for expressing collective belonging and negotiating identity. In this context, the language of the song plays a central role as a carrier of identity and representation. Even when performers do not use a particular dialect or minority language in everyday communication, its use on stage constitutes a performative act of affiliation and symbolic self-representation (Bohlman 2004). The Senjam thus contributes not only to the emergence of new repertoires, but also to the maintenance and public valorization of dialect speech as a living expressive medium. In this paper, I will therefore address the interplay between continuity and transformation: how elements framed as “national” have been preserved, reinterpreted, or strategically recontextualized within contemporary stylistic idioms. I will examine the public reception of these developments, considering how shifting aesthetic preferences, generational perspectives, and minority politics have influenced responses to genre hybridity. Special emphasis will be placed on the role of new technologies which have significantly expanded the circulation, visibility, and discursive framing of festival performances. In this sense, the festival provides a productive case study for exploring how minority musical practices negotiate tradition, modernity, and mediated publics.

Marjeta Pisk is a folklorist at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). Her research focuses on marginalized folk song traditions and cultural practices in border regions. She examines processes of heritagization, the dynamics of genre hybridity, and the ways in which folk song and music articulate social difference and belonging. Her work addresses the intersections of tradition, modernity, and cultural policy, with particular attention to Slovenian-speaking communities in border regions.

Jannatul Ferdous
University of Chittagong (Bangladesh)

**Strategic Stages: How Chakma Youth Negotiate Identity
Through Music, Dance, and Theatre in Bangladesh.**

The Chakma are an Indigenous nation native to the Indian subcontinent and western Myanmar. As the largest indigenous group in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), their identity is shaped by a complex transborder history. In the Rangamati district, Bangladesh, this heritage intersects with histories of displacement, political marginalisation, and ongoing struggles for recognition. Today, Chakma youth navigate an environment dominated by Bengali media, national integration policies, and global digital flows. While scholarship has focused on how Chakma youth use digital media to combat misrepresentation, less attention has been paid to the institutional training grounds where these practices are developed. This paper inquires, "How do Chakma youth strategically employ music, dance, and theatre to negotiate identity and belonging in contemporary Bangladesh?" Drawing on ethnographic observations of rehearsals and interviews with performers at Rangamati cultural institutions, this paper investigates hybrid performance as a site of strategic negotiation. Setting Chakma lyrics to popular Hindi and Bengali melodies, or adapting traditional circular dances to electronic rhythms, demonstrates that youth actively create new forms rather than passively absorbing outside influences. This paper contends that these performances serve as strategic interventions for Chakma youth to assert their presence and claim belonging. However, these "modern" expressions frequently cause generational tensions over cultural authenticity. Finally, by alternating between local stages and social media, Chakma youth show a sophisticated navigation of minority identity in a rapidly changing state.

Jannatul Ferdous is an Assistant Professor at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh. Her research focuses on the musical and performance traditions of Indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, particularly the Chakma, Marma, and Rakhain. Through ethnographic fieldwork, she examines ritual and funeral traditions, popular music, dance, and theatre, focusing on identity, cultural continuity, and modernity in changing sociopolitical contexts. Her recent work explores youth engagement with popular culture and institutional performance spaces in Rangamati. She is the author of *Pagla Kanai* and *Paye Paye Himachal*.

SESSION 17: Preservation, Archives, Representation, and Cultural Memory

Hande Sağlam

University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)

Archiving the Minority: Early Sound Traces of Turkish Communities in Berlin

This paper examines Ursula Reinhard's field recordings made in Berlin between 1971 and 1985, focusing on musicians who migrated from Turkey to Germany in the context of 1960s labor migration. Preserved at the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv but not yet systematically catalogued, these recordings have remained largely unheard and unexamined in scholarly discourse until now. They document some of the earliest musical expressions of immigrants from Turkey in Berlin and constitute unique archival sources for understanding the early cultural life of these communities.

Rather than treating these materials as neutral historical documents, the paper approaches them as archives shaped by specific epistemological frameworks and institutional priorities. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concept of the archive, it asks: which minority voices were recorded and preserved, which were framed as representative, and which remained unheard? How did early ethnomusicological practices participate in constructing knowledge about Turkish migrant communities as a minority within German society? This presentation will examine these recordings through critical listening in order to trace the early stages of the history of Turkish minorities in Berlin, from their arrival in the 1960s to their later musical and cultural developments. Particular attention will be given to representatives of the Âşık tradition. The paper will show how their performances document continuity with Anatolian expressive culture while also reflecting processes of adaptation, negotiation, and identity formation within minority contexts.

Methodologically, the study will apply the found-footage approach from film and media studies to ethnomusicological archive analysis. Through this approach, historical sound recordings will be treated not as fixed or complete documents, but as materials requiring critical listening and contextualization. Missing metadata, undocumented performers, and silences in the archive will be conceptualized as "epistemological silences" that indicate broader structures of minority representation and archival authority.

Hande Sağlam is Head of Archive at the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. She received her PhD in ethnomusicology from the same institution with a dissertation on Alevi and Sunni characteristics of the Âşik tradition in Sivas, Anatolia. Her research focuses on Âşik music, music and minorities, intercultural musical practices, archival methodologies, and fieldwork methods. She has conducted numerous research projects on music and minorities and served as Secretary of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities from 2017 to 2025.

Sevilay Çınar
State Conservatory of Turkish Music,
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University (Türkiye)

**Preconditions of Archival Visibility: Women's Voices
in the Turkish Folk Music Collection of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv**

Becoming an artist in the field of music, as well as the documentation and archiving of artistic practice, may be understood as processes shaped by certain preconditions. Women's presence in music history is often related not only to limitations within performance environments but also to the ways performances are recorded and documented. This paper examines the archival visibility and representation of women's voices in the Turkish folk music collection of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, approaching the archive not merely as a site of preservation but as a discursive space in which cultural memory is produced through processes of selection, classification, naming, and preservation.

Within the Anatolian âşık music tradition, the limited access of women performers such as Döne Sultan and Güllühan Hanım to master-apprentice transmission, the acceptance of Fatma Oflaz as Derdimend "Ana," and the recording of some performers under anonymizing labels such as "V.T. Hanım" or "Bayan S." demonstrate how women's voices have been positioned differently in both performance contexts and archival documentation. These examples suggest that the visibility of women's voices in cultural memory is shaped by selective cultural and archival processes. Drawing on the concept of retrospective declaration of presence, developed in previous research on women âşıks, the paper asks: Under what conditions do women performers' voices become visible in archival documentation? How do archival practices of classification, naming, and recording shape their representation in cultural memory? How can women performers' voices be understood as minority voices in archival representation? Based on recordings, catalog data, and field documentation from the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv collection, the study argues that the archive not only preserves sounds but also constructs their representation within cultural memory. The archival visibility of women's voices is therefore discussed beyond numerical minority, considering women performers' voices as minority voices in archival representation and focusing on inequalities in representation and documentation processes.

Sevilay Çınar is Professor at the State Conservatory of Turkish Music at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University. Her research focuses on Turkish folk music, âşık traditions, archival studies, and gender in music. She completed her doctoral research on women âşıks and has since worked on issues of performance, representation, and cultural memory in folk music traditions. Her recent work examines archival recordings in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, exploring the relationship between documentation practices and the visibility of women performers.

Baia Zhuzhunadze
International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State
Conservatoire (Georgia)

**Traditional Music of Georgians Living in Turkey:
On the Example of Bayar Şahin's Archive**

There are approximately 1 million people of Georgian ancestry in Turkey according to the newspaper Milliyet. Immigrant Georgians are called “Chveneburi”, but autochthonous Muslim Georgians use this term as well. Traditional music of Georgians living in Turkey is an interesting subject of research from the point of intercultural interactions. This singing tradition reflects cultural memory of Georgian Diaspora in Turkey. One of richest and unique archive representing this singing tradition is the Bayar Şahin's archive. Şahin (born in 1965) is a well-known singer, songwriter and collector of Georgian traditional music in Turkey. His archive includes up to 450 audio and 300 video samples of musical and oral folklore of the 1970s-2020s. Most of the material was recorded by Şahin during the intensive fieldworks between 2000s-2018s. Earlier recordings have been collected by him from various personal archives. The geography of the records covers all districts of Turkey inhabited by Georgians. Unfortunately, most of the performers from these recordings are no longer alive. The cultural memory of these singers has preserved polyphonic musical thinking and older layers of Georgian traditional repertoire. There are songs which cannot be found any more in Georgia. In 2020, within the framework of the research project “Support to Diaspora Initiatives” of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, I had the opportunity to work on this archive. The project aimed to analyze, systematize and digitize archival material. As Bayar Shahin's archive has never been researched by ethnomusicologists, this paper is the attempt to address this issue.

Baia Zhuzhunadze is a Researcher at the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State Conservatoire and International Relations Manager at the Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chant. She holds a Master's degree in Musicology and is a PhD student in Cultural Studies at Tbilisi State University. Her research interests focus on the interrelations and interactions between Georgian and adjacent musical cultures.

Anna Adamyan

Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan (Armenia)

**Hamshen Armenian Songs in Contemporary Armenian Music:
Preservation and Growing Interest**

This paper examines the contemporary presence of Armenian Hamshen songs in Armenian musical life, focusing on two interrelated processes: their preservation within cultural memory and the growing interest in their inclusion in contemporary academic and popular music. Traditionally passed down orally, the Armenian songs of Hamshen served as an important means of collective memory, preserving the identity and historical experience of minorities from generation to generation. Recently these songs have been increasingly penetrating the contemporary Armenian music scene, gaining new popularity and relevance.

Drawing on contemporary cultural studies, the author considers these processes as forms of “sound preservation,” in which musical heritage is preserved not only through documentation and archiving but also through active performance, arrangement, and reinterpretation. The analysis includes selected choral works by composer Anna Azizyan, in which traditional Hamshen songs are integrated into an academic compositional context, as well as recordings by *Kayt* and *Katil* bands, which reflect the preservation and revival of the musical heritage of minorities. The author notes that the artistic reinterpretation of these songs ensures the continuity of cultural memory, and the growing interest in them reflects a broader shift from marginality to cultural recognition within the Armenian musical discourse. The study concludes that contemporary Armenian music plays an important role in ensuring the visibility, identity, and continuity of minorities.

Anna Adamyan is a pianist, PhD in Arts, and Associate Professor at the Department of Music Education of Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University. She graduated from the Piano Department of Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory and completed her doctoral studies in Musical Art. Her research interests include piano music history, performing arts, music psychology, music education, and piano pedagogy. She is the author of papers published in local and international journals, as well as essays and reviews on Armenian musicians and musical life.

SESSION 18: Music, Memory, and Resilience in Communities Facing Challenges

Tomasz Nowak
University of Warsaw (Poland)

Music as a Means of Overcoming the Trauma of Displacement in the Light of the Lemkos' Memoirs, Poland

The Lemkos are a community culturally linked to the territory of modern-day Ukraine and the central Carpathians. However, until the end of World War II, they inhabited the Polish-Slovak border. In 1947 the community was forcibly relocated from the Carpathians to western and northern Poland. As a result of these relocations, the Lemkos were disintegrated, deprived of most of their property and some of their civil rights. These relocations were therefore traumatic for the Lemkos, both personally and socially.

For many years, the communist authorities in Poland prohibited discussion of this ethnic minority. Only four decades ago did documentation and publications devoted to the Lemkos begin to appear. However, thanks to this long silence, recent decades have witnessed an explosion of Lemko memoirs. The personal documents created in this way have provided us with a unique opportunity to analyze the Lemkos' experiences after the relocations from their personal perspective. For an ethnomusicologist, it's interesting to note how important music, and especially song – both secular and religious – was for them. Above all, it helped the Lemkos process the trauma they experienced. Music supported them in rebuilding broken intra-group relationships. It also allowed them to overcome negative stereotypes shared by their new neighbors and build their own positive self-image. In my paper, I will use the method of analyzing personal documents (Trzuszczńska 2013), supported by my own fieldwork experience. I will also draw on the concepts of cultural memory (Assmann 2008) and nostalgia (Wildschut, Sedikides, Arndt, Routledge 2006).

Tomasz Nowak is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Systematic and Cultural Musicology and Deputy Director of the Institute of Musicology at the University of Warsaw. He is also Chair of the ICTMD Polish National Committee. He studied musicology, dance theory, and cultural management and has conducted fieldwork in Central and Eastern Europe. His research focuses on musical and dance traditions among Polish minorities, changes in Polish musical and dance traditions, Upper Lusatian musical cultures, and the traditions of Polish Carpathian highlanders. He is author of four books and over 100 articles and chapters.

Maria Georgi Gharabekyan
Arno Babajanian Music College (Armenia)

**The Art of the Tagh and the Epic Song in the Works of Levon Astvatsatryan,
a Prominent Armenian Composer and Representative of the French
Diaspora**

The aim of this study is to examine the oeuvre of Levon Astvatsatryan, one of the most distinctive and intellectually refined Armenian composers of the second half of the twentieth century. Particular attention is given to his original interpretation of the traditional spiritual genre of *tagh*, as manifested in the prologue to *Havik* and his arrangement of the folk epic song *Mokats Mirza* in his symphonic music.

Astvatsatryan belongs to the generation of Armenian composers that emerged in the 1960s, a group distinguished by a pronounced intellectual orientation and a creative outlook closely aligned with contemporary Western aesthetic thought. Of particular significance is the composer's relationship with national musical traditions. He sought to create a unified artistic space in which different historical epochs coexist, revealing the enduring relevance and modernity of folk and spiritual creativity.

The composer's creative maturity coincided with the period of Soviet rule, during which artistic production was expected to serve ideological purposes. Such conditions posed significant challenges, particularly for Astvatsatryan as a repatriate from France. For an artist committed to intellectual freedom, existence under conditions of pervasive control proved especially difficult. The transition from a European cultural environment to the Soviet artistic system was profoundly challenging.

Critical reception of Astvatsatryan's work was ambivalent. As a figure operating on the margins, he was perceived simultaneously as a representative of the Armenian diaspora and as an innovator employing twentieth-century compositional techniques that diverged from officially sanctioned norms.

Maria Gharabekyan is a musicologist from Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh). She graduated from Komitas State Conservatory and has been teaching music theory at a music school since 2003. She currently teaches at Arno Babajanian Music College. Since 2024, she has been a PhD student at the Institute of Arts. Her research interests include Armenian art music and 20th-century music, with a particular focus on the musical life of Nagorno-Karabakh. She is the author of scholarly articles on the musical culture of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Neil van der Linden
Independent scholar (The Netherlands)

The musical identity in the South-African Malayan Community

This presentation examines the musical heritage of the Bo Kaap or Cape Malay community in South-Africa. They descend from Malayan archipelago (“Indonesian”) Muslim scholars and political leaders, often nobility. Out of fear of insurgencies, they were deported by the Dutch colonial authorities to Capetown, where they were settled in the Bo Kaap neighbourhood. The community adopted Afrikaans-Dutch as language, mixed with Arabic and Portuguese. For a long time it continued using Arabic script. Currently there are about 325,000 Cape-Malayans. During Apartheid they were considered ‘coloured’, so had more ‘rights’ than black South-Africans. Remarkable are the distinctive harmonic singing in religious chants, rare in Islam, blending Malayan musical styles with Dutch, Portuguese and ‘indigenous’ influences. When during British rule Muslims from the Subcontinent arrived, influences from Subcontinent Sufi-rituals were blended in. The Rampies sny ceremony commemorates the Prophet’s birth. Outside religious practices there are the moppies (cheerful songs) and ghoemaliedjies named after the ghoema drum. The Kaapse Klopse New Year’s carnival traditionally started in Cape Malay neighbourhoods and became a general musical celebration feast. I will also discuss how the community and its heritage including musical practices face existential threats from gentrification in the Bo Kaap neighbourhood and socioeconomic dilution elsewhere, including highlighting how the community continues to deal with such globalisation while preserving a by itself already syncretic heritage. Cape Malayans are a small community, but what is happening here is exemplary for what is happening to musical heritage of other minorities throughout the world, including other syncretic music cultures.

Neil van der Linden curates music, theatre and visual arts projects related to the South-West Asia and North- and South-Africa, writes reviews for the Songlines music magazine and on opera, music, theatre and film in Dutch magazines, and is independent researcher on music and relations between culture and (geo-)political affairs.

SESSION 19: Music, Identity, and Ritual among Minority Communities in Iran

Mohammad R Azadehfar
University of Arts (Iran)

Dual Home, Dual Identity: Afghan Musical Practices and Hybridity between Tehran and Herat

For over three decades, successive waves of Afghan migration to Iran have fostered dynamic and multifaceted cultural exchanges. Within this diasporic context, Afghan migrants have preserved their regional musical heritage while simultaneously absorbing Iranian classical and popular aesthetics, forging complex, hybrid sonic identities. The geopolitical upheavals of 2025, however, prompted a mass repatriation to regions such as Herat, fundamentally reshaping the contemporary cultural landscape of Afghanistan.

This study examines the phenomenon of “reversed acculturation,” focusing on how returnees reintroduce Iranian-inflected musical practices into the Afghan social fabric. Through ethnographic interviews and formal musical analysis, the research traces how “dual homes” manifest in performance and composition, as musicians negotiate their ancestral roots against their Tehran-honed artistic experiences. This paper argues that the music of returnees constitutes a vital arena for identity reconstruction amid transnational mobility and post-conflict recovery. By illuminating the role of music in facilitating hybridity, this work advances scholarship on transnationalism and the resilience of minority artistic expression in migratory contexts (Wheeler, 2015: 56).

Mohammad Reza Azadehfar is a full professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of Arts, Iran. His research and publications primarily focus on Iranian music and interdisciplinary studies. He earned his PhD from the University of Sheffield, followed by a PostDoc at SOAS University of London. In 2010, he was elected Dean of the Music Faculty, where he established the Ethnomusicology program and taught for several years. In 2014, the Executive Board of the ICTMD appointed Azadehfar as its Liaison Officer for Iran.

Hossein Reza Asadi
Independent scholar (Iran)

Laki Folk Music and Collective Identity in Lorestan, Iran

This paper explores how the folk musicians of the Laki community – a distinct minority in Iran’s central Zagros region – cultivate collective identity through the endurance of their musical traditions. Rather than treating heritage as a static artifact, Laki practitioners engage in a dynamic process of self-conceptualization, using sound to navigate their place within the broader Iranian cultural landscape. Drawing on four months of ethnographic fieldwork in Lorestan (June–September 2025), this study integrates interviews with local artists and participatory observation to understand the human agency behind Laki music’s defining tonal structures and repetitive motifs.

The findings suggest that contemporary Laki artists serve as vital bridges between generations; they uphold the emotional and structural authenticity of their ancestors while thoughtfully integrating modern digital tools and cross-cultural collaborations. These musical interventions are not just artistic choices but acts of cultural resilience that protect the Laki’s unique social memory from being subsumed by more dominant regional narratives. By centering the lived experiences of these musicians, this inquiry contributes to ethnomusicological discourses on UNESCO safeguarding frameworks and the survival of minority vernaculars amidst rapid sociocultural change.

Hossein Reza Asadi is an Iranian vocalist and scholar-artist dedicated to preserving Laki musical heritage. Born in Lorestan, he combines the Persian Classical Radif system with ancient Zagros vocal forms such as Houreh and Moureh. A student of Mohammad Reza Shajarian, Asadi is known for his measured ornamentation and poetic repertoire. His discography, including the symphonic-folk album *Henaras*, reflects his commitment to cultural resilience. Beyond performance, he explores therapeutic musicology, using music in therapeutic settings and contributing to the safeguarding of Iran’s living intangible cultural heritage.

Anoush Estik
Institute of Arts (Armenia, Iran)

The Tradition and Contemporary Expressions of Ritual Instrument Usage in the Armenian Apostolic Church of New Julfa

Based on a wide range of historical, source-based, and ethnographic data, this paper provides a characterization of the ritual musical instruments used from the 17th century to the present in the Armenian Apostolic churches operating within the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly in the Armenian Diocese of Isfahan. Special attention is given to the role and specific features of the church bells and bell towers, especially during religious ceremonies and significant community events. According to historical sources, since 1604, when Shah Abbas I of the Safavid Empire resettled Armenians displaced from various parts of Eastern Armenia and Old Julfa to the capital city of Isfahan and to the provinces of Chaharmahal and Fereydan –he granted them the right to freely practice their religious and secular traditions. Accordingly, Armenians under state patronage and local Muslim residents coexisted in mutual respect and tolerance of each other’s religious and secular customs. Within this context, the Christian liturgical chants and the tolling of church bells, as well as the calls to prayer (*Azan*) heard from mosques and minarets, were perceived as natural expressions of Iran’s multiethnic environment. This coexistence demonstrates the skillful policies of Iran’s past and present religious and political leaders, as well as the cultural sensibilities of the local population regarding interreligious and interethnic harmony. Evidence of this coexistence includes the numerous churches across Iran, some of which are maintained by the state, while others are cared for by the Armenian Religious Council and the Department of Churches. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of some neighboring Muslim countries, which not only fail to preserve but also actively attempt to erase traces of Armenian cultural heritage that have existed for centuries within their present administrative territories.

Anoush Estik graduated from the Conservatory in 1999 as a concert performer, folk orchestra musician, and teacher, and trained in the Armenian folk instrument oud. She has taught at the Women’s Art School of Isfahan and Armenian schools in New Julfa. Since 2003, she has conducted the Shushanik Women’s Church Choir, performing as an organist and singer during liturgical services. She is currently a PhD student at the Institute of Arts, researching Armenian liturgical instruments, musical heritage, and the cultural identity of the New Julfa Armenian community.

SESSION 20: Music, Identity, and Negotiated Belonging in Transcultural Contexts

Gertrud Maria Huber

University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)

Playing the Alpine Zither: Reflections on the Disappearance of a Musical Practice among the German-Speaking Minority in the USA

German-speaking people from Western Europe were the largest immigrant group in North America in the 19th century. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, they had a strong influence on the cultural and intellectual landscape in the United States, especially in the “German Belt” and in urban and industrial centers. This includes the introduction of the chromatic European zither. Since the zither is a niche instrument even in German-speaking countries in Europe, there is very little scientific research on this instrument, let alone on its distribution and function in the German diaspora.

In my presentation, I will show material that I collected over two decades for my 2014 dissertation on zither playing in the USA. Using organological parameters, local characteristics, performance aspects, and the sociocultural context, I discuss the social function of zither playing as a marker of identity for German immigrants and the role of zither music in US society in general. The significance can be seen in Alpine and Bavarian traditional music culture, the popular song “Edelweiss” in the *Sound of Music* Broadway production, Germanness, and the Loreley enthusiasm.

Given the increasing disappearance of the instrument from the musical practice of German immigrant communities and its lack of further dissemination in North America, I ask why other European musical instruments such as the guitar, accordion, violin, and organ have been successfully integrated from a minority context into broader national dissemination in US society, while the zither did not undergo a comparable development.

Gertrud Maria Huber is a senior lecturer at the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology, mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. She holds a PhD in Folk Music Research and studied music education at the Nuremberg-Augsburg University of Music and the Richard Strauss Conservatory in Munich, specializing in zither, harp, dulcimer, clarinet, folk music, and jazz. An active performer and ensemble director, she has performed internationally, including as zither soloist with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Kurt Masur.

Bharath Ranganathan
University of Ljubljana (India, Slovenia)

**Autoethnographic Reflections on Transculturality of Indian
Music in Slovenia**

This paper explores the cultural presence of the Indian diaspora in Slovenia through the lens of artistic research, where participation and performance serve as both method and outcome. The community is numerically small and institutionally limited, yet music and dance generate vital spaces of belonging and visibility. By engaging directly in these practices, such as teaching, performing, and joining collective celebrations, I reflect on how diaspora is lived and sustained through artistic acts that blur boundaries between research and cultural contribution.

Fieldwork reveals that improvised networks ranging from Diwali gatherings to Bollywood workshops and Hindustani or Carnatic concerts are central to how identity is expressed and negotiated. Participation in these events not only enabled observation but also created moments of co-production, where my involvement became part of the very practices under study. The reciprocity of such engagement highlights how diaspora in Slovenia is articulated less through fixed institutions than through fragments of performance, where individual agency and collective creativity intersect.

The paper aims to show how embodied participation offers unique insight into the ways diasporic identity is sustained and reimagined, especially in a small central European context such as Slovenia.

Bharath Ranganathan is a musician and academic hailing from Bangalore, India. He is currently a doctoral candidate under the mentorship of Dr. Svanibor Pettan at the University of Ljubljana, where he is researching the intersection of society, culture and music of Indian origins, in Slovenian society.

Alma Bejtullahu
University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Romani Musicians in Slovenian Narodnozabavna Music

The music genre Narodnozabavna glasba (NZG, also known as Oberkrainer Musik in German speaking world, or Slovenian folk-pop music) encompasses a very popular musical practice based on modern interpretation of polkas, waltzes and marches. The NZG genre combines Slovenian local traditional music practices with Western popular music, depending on trends of the time, and offers various possibilities for sonic exploration. It is a relatively novel music genre that is quite successful in music industry. Nevertheless, it is often considered as one of the most important signifiers of Slovenian tradition but also of Slovenian national identity or Slovenianess (Stanković 2021: 168 and 2015: 11). With that in mind, the present research aims to examine Romani musicians' contribution to this music exploration. As Pettan argues in his earlier research in Kosovo, Romani musicians play music of different origins, including musics that signify various national identities, interacting at the same time with various (ethnic) groups. This interaction is important to Romani musicians for several reasons, including the economic one (Pettan 2002). Based on analyzing music examples and interviews with musicians, this research seeks to further explore these arguments in Slovenian contemporary context, namely by examining how Romani musicians incorporate their musical experience, including regional Romani music from eastern Slovenia, into NZG music. In addition, if the NZG is influenced by the processes of cultural, economic and social modernization very often under the contemporary market rules (Stanković 2021), this research focuses on how Romani musicians recognize these rules and turn them into their favor.

Alma Bejtullahu (PhD) is an ethnomusicologist whose research focuses on music at the intersection of minority and ethnic identities, gender, intergenerational relations among immigrant communities, and their representation through music. She is currently an Assistant Researcher on the project *Romani Musicians in Slovenia: Status, Cultural Practices, and Interactions*. She recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Würzburg, researching the Albanian community in Germany and its musical practices. She is a member of the Executive Board of the ICTMD Study Group on Multipart Music.

SESSION 21: Traditional Sources in Art Music and Dance: Composition, Transcription, and Embodied Practice

Mohamad Hamami

Hamami Events (Syria)

Sounding and Moving Presence: Popular Music, Dance, and Minority Cultural Agency between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus

This paper explores how popular music and dance practices among Arabic-speaking and migrant minority communities in the Eastern Mediterranean and the South Caucasus – particularly in Armenia–function as embodied strategies of presence, resilience, and cultural negotiation. Situated at the intersection of popular expression, migration, and minority identity, the study examines how music and dance circulate across community spaces, informal economies, and digital platforms, often beyond institutional or commercial frameworks. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, performance analysis, and practitioner perspectives, the paper focuses on community-based musical and dance practices enacted in weddings, festivals, streets, social gatherings, and online environments. These practices frequently combine locally rooted repertoires with popular musical idioms, hybrid choreographies, and contemporary performance aesthetics, challenging rigid distinctions between “traditional” and “popular.” Dance is approached not merely as accompaniment to music, but as an embodied archive through which memory, affect, and social belonging are enacted and transmitted. The paper further interrogates the role of analog and digital technologies – including amplification systems, recording tools, and social media – in shaping visibility, circulation, and modes of participation. While such technologies enable translocal connections between minority communities in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the diaspora, they also reproduce power asymmetries related to access, representation, and cultural legibility. Theoretically, the paper draws on decolonial approaches, performance studies, and minority studies to argue that popular music and dance among marginalized communities operate as sites of cultural agency rather than derivative or assimilative practices. By foregrounding sound and movement as relational, political, and socially situated acts, the study contributes to broader discussions on how minorities actively shape popular culture within global and local entanglements.

Mohamad Hamami is an internationally active violinist, conductor, and scholar specializing in the musical cultures of the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, and their diasporas. He holds a Doctorate in Music from the University of Salford (UK), focusing on Classical Arabic music, archiving, and the transmission of minority musical repertoires. He is founder and conductor of the SharQ Orchestra, a multinational ensemble dedicated to Arabic and cross-cultural musical traditions. His work combines performance, ethnography, and cultural documentation, focusing on music and dance among marginalized and migrant communities.

Heghine Sargsyan
Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature and Art (Armenia)

Arrangements of Komitas' Compositions in Ara Sevanyan's Art

This paper explores selected aspects of the creative legacy of the distinguished kanon performer and composer Arshavir Ferjulyan, known as Ara Sevanyan (1915–2011). The study draws on archival materials recently repatriated to Armenia and sheds new light on a musician whose contribution has long remained underrecognized in his homeland. Sevanyan's life was shaped by dramatic historical events. After surviving the Armenian Genocide, his family moved from Van to Echmiadzin and later settled in Yerevan. During World War II, Ferjulyan was conscripted into the Red Army and was later taken prisoner and held in prisoner-of-war camps in Mariupol and Kielce. After the war, he emigrated to the United States, where he adopted the name Ara Sevanyan. His artistic formation began at the Yerevan Conservatory, where he studied with Anushavan Ter-Ghevondyan, and continued in Germany under composer Georg von Albrecht. Among Sevanyan's notable achievements was his proposal of equal temperament for the traditional Eastern kanon, an innovation that expanded the instrument's possibilities as both a solo and orchestral instrument. A similar approach was later introduced in Armenia by Khachatur Avetisyan. Alongside his performance career, Sevanyan was also a prolific composer. His legacy, preserved today in the University of Southern California Music Library and the Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature and Art of Yerevan, includes original works as well as numerous arrangements of Armenian folk melodies for various instruments and ensembles. Of particular interest are his transcriptions of works by Komitas Vardapet–*Kaqavi Yerg*, *Chem Krna Khagha*, *Dle Yaman*, and *Tsitsernak*—which form the focus of this study. Because of the dramatic course of Sevanyan's life, both his biography and artistic achievements remained largely unknown in Armenia for decades. Only recently has it become possible to repatriate documentary materials related to his life and work. These materials confirm Sevanyan's important role in the development of Armenian kanon school and in promoting Armenian music internationally – a contribution recognized in the international press of his time.

Heghine Sargsyan is a musicologist and researcher specializing in Armenian traditional instrumental music. She holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Musicology from Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. She is a researcher at the Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature and Art and at the Komitas Museum-Institute, and is also engaged in teaching. Since 2025, she has been a PhD student at the Institute of Arts.

Hayarpi Ananyan
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan (Armenia)

**Traditional Dance in Armenian Festival Settings:
Embodied Memory and Community Participation**

This paper examines the role of traditional dance in Armenian festival settings as a practice of reconfiguring cultural memory, identity, and community participation. It argues that festivals do not merely present traditional cultural material, but through embodied and collective participation contribute to the formation and reinterpretation of contemporary Armenian identity by reproducing communal modes of engagement found in both dance and play practices. The research is based on long-term participatory observation and focuses on the activities of the *Masunq* ensemble, incorporating an autoethnographic perspective, while also considering the experiences of other groups and participants. Three festivals were analyzed: the Wine Festival in Areni, the Taghik Festival in Gavar (Carpet Weaving), and the Seven-Stone Yard Games Festival in Gyumri.

Festival environments include a variety of dance and play practices, ranging from those that remain in active circulation to those that are revived or reinterpreted. The study shows that festivals function as participatory spaces where these practices are collectively experienced through teaching, shared movement, and interaction. In this process, dance and play operate as embodied practices that foster a sense of communal belonging and continuity. The boundary between performer and audience becomes less rigid, allowing participants to engage directly in shared cultural action.

Festivals act not only as sites of cultural presentation but as environments where communal experience is activated and extended beyond the event itself into other social contexts, supporting the ongoing relevance of these practices.

Hayarpi Ananyan is a museum specialist and researcher with two decades of experience in Armenian traditional dance. She is co-leader of the *Masunq* Traditional Song and Dance Ensemble. She works as a Senior Laboratory Assistant at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography and is pursuing a PhD. Her research focuses on the performance, transmission, and community significance of Armenian traditional dance. Her doctoral research examines the relationship between dance and national identity through ethnographic dance ensembles in Soviet and independent Armenia.

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