

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

Rastko Jakovljevic

Abstract

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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