

1st Official Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on GLOBAL HISTORY OF
MUSIC

Mobility and Transcultura in Music and Performance in Global Civilisations

13-14 May 2021

Sichuan Conservatory of Music

Chengdu, China

On May 13th-14th, 2021, the 1st Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Global History of Music was held (online) in Sichuan Conservatory of Music, China. This Symposium is co-hosted by the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) and Sichuan Conservatory of Music, undertaken by its Academy of Chinese Traditional Music and supported by Musicology Department. The topic of this Symposium was *Mobility and Transcultura in Music and Performance in Global Civilisation*, with three sub-topics: 1. Isolation, Collaboration, Adaptation: Performance practices along and beyond the regions of the Great Silk Road; 2. Economic perspectives of musical change and exchange: the role of trade in music history of global civilisations; 3. Music, Dance, Drama, and Puppetry: Inclusive performance practices and their histories.

A total of 63 abstracts have been received, among which 54 were approved by the Academic Committee. During the two days of the Symposium, scholars from 19 countries gathered on ZOOM meetings to present their papers. In addition to 13 sessions (simultaneously in two meetings), there were also two keynote speeches, which up to a thousand scholars and students from all over the world have attended online.

At the opening ceremony, Dean LIU Liyun of Sichuan Conservatory of Music welcomed the participants and expressed his honour in hosting this Symposium. He also invited the participants to visit Chengdu, Sichuan Province in future. Then, President Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco of ICTM congratulated the organisers on the opening of this Symposium. She fully appreciated the significance and importance of this Symposium, and wished everyone its great success. Chair Razia Sultanova of the Study Group on Global History of Music introduced the general information and topics of this Symposium, and expressed her gratitude to the Programme Committee and Local Hosts for their preparatory work.

Two honoured keynote speakers on this Symposium were Edwin Seroussi and Tan Sooi Beng. Edwin Seroussi's speech was titled *Diasporas and Global Musical Networks: Jewish Perspectives*, in which he emphasised the concept of "diaspora" with its connotations of "separate consciousness" and "gulf", and discussed diaspora and globalisation from Jewish perspectives. He mentioned that Jews have maintained extensive communication networks among the continents in two millennia, and they are "fluid dispersed groups" instead of unchanged constants. As music-making remains an important profession among the Jews, their fluidity has made them unexpected agencies of musical globalisation. In his speech, Professor Seroussi also gave examples of the connections between Jewish music and its influence on global cultures from the Mediaeval times up to now.

Tan Sooi Beng's keynote speech was titled "*Mobile Performers, Multiple Centres, Modern Sounds: An Alternative History of Global Musical Contact in British Malaya*". She believes that during the past two centuries, cross-border flow of trade, entertainment, pilgrimage, immigration,

or labour was crucial to the transformation of economics, politics, and cultures of many societies around the world, especially in Asia where it has brought new technologies to create new forms of cultural expressions both globally and locally. In her speech, she proposed her opinion of “multi-centered cultural production” that for the various peoples in Malaysia and Singapore, sound mixing is a means to challenge the colonial hegemony of art and express their alternative experience of modernity.

Besides excellent presentations, Local Arrangements Committee has prepared special promotion videos of Sichuan Province and Sichuan Conservatory of Music. The Committee has also spent three months in producing a music ethnographical film *The Sound Memories of China*, featuring 13 traditional Chinese music genres including Guqin, Jiangnan Silk-and-Bamboo, Grand Songs of the Dong People, Sichuan Zither Storytelling, being screened during the breaks between sessions. It is the Committee’s hope to showcase the music soundscape of Sichuan and China to international scholars by means of this “virtual concert”.

The Programme Committee of this Symposium comprised Razia Sultanova (University of Cambridge), Xiao Mei (Shanghai Conservatory of Music), Margaret Walker (Queen's University, Canada), and Yang Xiao (Sichuan Conservatory of Music), among whom Razia Sultanova and Xiao Mei were responsible for general preparation of organization, Margaret Walker for contacting the participants, and Yang Xiao being in Programme Committee and Local Arrangements Committee at the same time, for arrangement of sessions. Other staff for this Symposium consisted of the faculty members and students in Sichuan Conservatory of Music.

Thanks to the ICTM Programme Committee, Local Arrangements Committee, and local staff, the 1st Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Global History of Music came to a successful close. As Yang Xiao said at the Opening Ceremony, “focusing on the global interaction of regional musical cultures reminds us to face to the intimate relationship of human-being and the destiny of our community, and this is the realistic meaning of our meeting.” We look forward to the profound influence of this Symposium, as well as to the next Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Global History of Music!

Xiao Mei (Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China)

Yang Xiao (Sichuan Conservatory of Music, China)