

# THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SYMPOSIUM OF THE ICTM STUDY GROUP ON 'GLOBAL MUSIC HISTORY' IN PALERMO, SICILY

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## Abstract

The second Official Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Global History of Music was held in Palermo, Sicily, from 7 to 9 June 2023, under the title *'An entire ocean in a drop of water': Island Musics, Performance Identities, and Sound Archives*. More than fifty scholars and researchers from all over the world came together in eleven sessions and three panels to discuss some of the most relevant topics of our time in the field of ethnomusicological studies, such as the function and value of archives, the musical traditions of the diasporas, and the historical dimension of music in prevalent oral tradition and mentality. The three days of the symposium held in Palermo were marked by an in-depth examination of cross-cutting themes, to which scholars from seventeen different countries contributed, including Russia, Italy, Azerbaijan, Canada, Germany, Austria, Portugal, Argentina, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Ireland, China, the United States, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia. Some participants delivered their papers through online presentations, while most of them gathered to share the results of their latest research.

## Keywords

Global History of music; Island musics; Performance identities; Sound archives; Diasporic music.

From 7 to 9 June 2023, the second Official Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Global History of Music was held in Palermo, Sicily, under the title *'An entire ocean in a drop of water': Island Musics, Performance Identities, and Sound Archives*. The symposium, organised in collaboration with the Italian Committee of the International Council for Traditional Music and the University of Palermo, took place at the 'Antonio Pasqualino' International Puppet Museum in Palermo. The event was made possible thanks to the fruitful synergy between the hard-working and indefatigable Sergio Bonanzinga (Programme Chair of the Symposium, University of Palermo), Razia Sultanova (Chair of the Study Group, University of Cambridge, UK), and the hospitality offered by Rosario Perricone (Director of the International Puppet Museum).

More than fifty scholars and researchers from all over the world on oral tradition gathered in eleven sessions and three panels to discuss some of the most relevant topics of our time in the field of ethnomusicological studies, such as the function and value of archives, the musical traditions of the diasporas, and the historical dimension of oral tradition music. In particular, the topic of the global history of music was discussed from an ethnomusicological perspective, a reflection that takes into account different kinds of sources: figurative, literary, dialogic, sound, and audiovisual ones. In this regard, Razia Sultanova stated, 'we have been privileged to witness exceptional keynote papers presented by Anthony Seeger, Peter Wiegold, and Sergio Bonanzinga, as well as engaging panels organised by Zhiyi Qiaoqiao Cheng, Gisa Jähnichen, and Nico Staiti'.

What was said during the days of the symposium involved an in-depth reflection on the issues related to sound archives, including their nature and functionality, their arrangement and conservation, the legal and technological issues surrounding them, methodological reflections, and new questions on the roles of the observer and the observed as imposed by the contemporary world.

The title of the symposium, *'An entire ocean in a drop of water': Island Musics, Performance Identities, and Sound Archives*, refers precisely to the idea of observing and analysing an island, not only from a geographical point of view but also from a linguistic, political, and cultural sense overall. These analytical approaches make us think of islands within islands, of routes and itineraries connecting complex territories or bridging separate places. In the very title of the Symposium, a concept conveyed by the great Persian Sufi poet Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (1207–1273) surfaces, an image that refers to small portions of space that are placed at the intersection of larger parts, thus,

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roughly speaking, not just ‘a drop in the ocean’, as one might say, but rather ‘the entire ocean in a drop’, as quoted.

Such considerations encouraged and nurtured the contemplation of a more accurate awareness concerning the application of an up-to-date scientific observation of ‘other musics’ and ‘local soundscapes’ within today’s more inclusive multicultural frames. These aspects include, as stated in the Symposium programme, ‘the practices of learning vocal and instrumental techniques of oral transmission, also through institutional training courses within the Conservatories, to project themselves into various forms of musical, theatrical, and cinematic performances characterised by a stratified hybridization of cognitive, executive, and compositional skills.’

The three days of the symposium held in Palermo were marked by an in-depth examination of cross-cutting themes, to which scholars from seventeen different countries contributed, including Russia, Italy, Azerbaijan, Canada, Germany, Austria, Portugal, Argentina, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Ireland, China, the United States, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia. Some participants delivered their papers through online presentations, while most of them attended in person to share the results of their latest research. The conference sessions made specific reference to three main themes: Archives on the move: from the preservation of intangible memories to their uses and functions in the contemporary world; What are the global paths of music-making? Is difference the ‘third way’?; Island sounds and the echoes of diasporic cultures.

The first main theme was explored by several papers, including (selection): ‘Audiovisual archives and ethnographic recordings in the age of YouTube’ (Anthony Seeger); ‘Archives in transformation. Recent approaches and interpretations’ (Gerda Lechleitner, Susana Sardo, and Miguel A. García); ‘Crossing of time scales and global paths between colonialism and nationalism: three case-studies in the XX century history of Cambodian Music’ (Giovanni Giuriati); ‘Heritages yet to be unlocked: reflections and proposals on the enhancement of archives in ethnomusicology’ (Costantino Vecchi); ‘New media, Moroccan musicians and the changing landscape of spirit possession: an analysis of YouTube videos’ (Silvia Bruni); ‘Musical Heritage in Contemporary. Audiovisual Narratives by Chinese Experience’ (Zhiyi Qiaoqiao Cheng, Xiao Mei, Liu Guiteng, and Yan Dujiukun); and ‘The nature of Ottoman “court music”: identity, context, and practice’ (M. Emin Soydaş). The second main theme was deepened through various papers, among them were: “‘Between two waves of the sea”: in search of the Third Orchestra’s performance identity’ (Peter Wiegold); ‘Looking for the tides and surfing on the waves in search of historical sources of “gamelan elektronik” on the Island of Bali’ (Nico Mangifesta); ‘Cosmic stones: sounding guanche and speculative indigeneity in the Canary Islands’ (Mark Lomanno); and ‘From banned to the shared memory of one billion Chinese: The example of the Teresa Teng Memorial Hall’ (Kaixuan Niu and Zhian Zhao). The third and concluding main theme was examined thanks to the presentations dealing with (selection): ‘Exiled and re-exiled performance practices from African communities’ (Rastko Jakovljevic, Chinthaka P. Meddegoda, Gisa Jähnichen, and Lin Zhi); ‘Cultural Islands and Musical Identities: People and Cultures Flows Among the Chinese Migrants in Europe Today’ (Francesco Serratore); ‘Negotiating Musical and Cultural Spaces within the Chinese Diaspora: The Toronto Chinese Orchestra as Case Study’ (Yao Cui); ‘The Sicilian sound: overlapping waves in the wide sea of tradition’ (Sergio Bonanzinga); ‘From Tebourba to Naples: Sonic Dwelling and Tunisian Diaspora in Mejri’s “Fanfara Station”’ (Salvatore Morra); ‘Diaspora and islands at home, inland: Changing music repertoires and identity in Portuguese Crypto-Jewish communities’ (Judith Cohen); ‘Non-aligned encounters: musical experiences of African students in Yugoslavia’ (Linda Cimardi); ‘History and ethnography of double clarinets in the Mediterranean area: a shared approach between ethnomusicologists and instruments makers and players’ (Nico Staiti, Rosario Altadonna, Giuseppe Roberto, Danilo Gatto); and ‘Spirits, diasporic sounds, and digital spaces during the Burmese Spring Revolution’ (Lorenzo Chiarofonte).

The rich scientific programme of the symposium also featured an amazing concert titled *Sounds from Sicily, Calabria, and the Cyclades Islands*, with the participation of Rosario Altadonna and Giuseppe Roberto (Sicilian bagpipe a paro, monocalamus and bicalamus cane flutes, accordion, jew’s harp, voice), Danilo Gatto (Calabrian bagpipe menzetta), Nico Staiti (frame drum), Antoniou Yiannis (tsampouna, lyra), and Manos Vasilas (ntoumpaki). Finally, the magnificent venue of the ‘Antonio Pasqualino’ International Puppet Museum provided the stage for a captivating Sicilian Puppets show (*The Siege of Paris*) by the Compagnia Opera di Pupi Briigliodoro.