

# Book of abstracts

## Women – Music – Futures symposium

March 9th and 10th 2023



Federation of Finnish  
Learned Societies

## **Keynote speech**

Tan, Sooi Beng – Prof., Dr., University of Science, Malaysia

### **Let the Women Performers Tell Their Stories! Patriarchy, Invisibility, and Agency in Asian Music Historiography**

Imperial and nation-state gendered historiography regarding Asia often dichotomizes male and female and constructs the latter as the ‘Other’. These dichotomies reinforce patriarchal ideology as the categories of public/domestic and material/spiritual are superimposed over male/female and modern/traditional (Chatterjee 1993, Hayami, Tanabe, and Tokita-Tanabe 2003). In colonial society, Asian women were expected to represent the spiritual and domestic spheres in the village and to maintain aspects of tradition, religion, and morality. As such they were stereotyped as victims, docile, long-suffering, and were made invisible in historiography. In contrast, it was acceptable for Asian men to play modern and public roles, receive education, and earn a living outside the community and in the cities.

Focusing on the narratives and experiences of the women performers of the Malay opera and Chinese glove puppet theatre in British Malaya in the twentieth century, this paper challenges the earlier Orientalist constructs of the Asian woman as self-sacrificing and submissive to patriarchal constraints. I illustrate that women performers found ways to negotiate the gendered structures in Chinese society. They were able to shape their own destinies as wage earners, singers, actresses, and tradition bearers; they played important roles in the cultural lives of the multiethnic people living in the port cities of Malaya. They were able to blur the dichotomies and borders of patriarchal society through their careers, lifestyles, musical performances, and networks. The notion of women’s agency is active and ambivalent; it is not seen just as resistance against but as constant negotiation and adaptation with patriarchal domination (Näre 2014). By recovering the voices of the women performers, this paper contributes to academic debates that challenge the constructs of Asian women as victims of social forces and redresses the invisibility of marginalized women performers who belong to the lower social class in music historiography.

Aditi, Aakanksha – Hyderabad Central University

### **Folksongs and Mental Health of the Marginalized Women of Bihar in India**

Scholarship on women's folksongs in Bihar has mostly focused on the lament and pain of migration. 'Bidesia' as musical performance, reflects the trauma and regenerates the collective memory of the wives of the migrant laborers, who come from the lower caste community. Women have been the carriers of folksongs in domestic spaces where music has evoked ecocentrism, migration, and cultural memories of the loved ones. Though folksongs have been a medium of expression for women in wedding rituals, festivals, child birth etc., this paper presents the recreational, community building, and therapeutic aspects of the music/folksongs in the lives of the rural women.

Music has not only played role in cultural formation but also fostered women's community. For example, recent phenomenon like 'Shiv Charcha', provides a space where women build community and therapize themselves through devotional music and songs. Also evidence from reviews, interviews, archives show that weekly gatherings of devotional music have been a community support system in the rural India, where women break-free from the household chaos and patriarchal impositions.

This study becomes even more significant after Covid-19 lockdown, which brought the debate of mental health on surface, where the urban and educated crowd could access the expensive therapy but larger marginalized population are left out. This bring us to the question of mental health of marginalized women, who are tied to the domestic labour throughout their lives. Hence tracing the origin of this phenomena called Shiv Charcha, gaining popularity among the marginalized caste women, becomes important even more after right-wing political party are using it as propaganda to win the election.

Aqua, Zoë – Babeş-Bolyai University

**Folk music transmission in Transylvania: insights from the personal history of musician Tincuța Mezei**

Transylvania is home to a rich patchwork of folk music traditions which center around bowed string instruments. Playing styles can vary widely, even between villages which are close to each other geographically. In this presentation, I will summarize some of the findings of my research on how Transylvanian folk musicians learned how to play, and how they are passing on their traditions to the next generation. I will demonstrate musical styles I have learned on violin from Transylvanian folk musicians, as well as show videos the informants playing.

Historically, instrumentalists playing folk music in Transylvania were solely male, and the field is still dominated by men. However, I've encountered a few women folk musicians during my work in Transylvania. I will profile them, considering questions of access and the challenges that are preventing more women from becoming involved in the folk music scene in Transylvania. Additionally, I will address my own experience with local musicians as an American Jewish woman.

Chen, Ying-Hsien – Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki

Ara, Hiroko – Musician

### **Performing and Studying Kantele beyond the Finnish Border: Japanese women and kantele enthusiasm**

In this presentation, we investigate why the Japanese are enthusiastic about the kantele and how the kantele takes root in Japan. The kantele is a stringed instrument rooted in Finland (the Finnish national instrument) that has enjoyed massive reception in Tokyo, Sapporo, and Western Japan (Kansai, Japan's second-largest metropolitan area). In Japan, enthusiasts form hobbyist groups to take lessons with local instructors and are eager to travel to countryside Finland to participate in kantele lessons and spend dearly on CDs, workshops, and concerts. Before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, approximately 150-200 people played the kantele regularly.

“Being healed” is a shared experience among practitioners. Why is playing the kantele healing? How is kantele experienced in the transcultural context? What does kantele mean to Japanese players? How do enthusiasts, particularly women, establish a profession surrounding kantele in the Japanese environment? This presentation deals with these questions from the observation of a researcher and performer who work closely with enthusiasts in Japanese contexts.

## **The voices of Adzewa women in the Aboakyer festival of the people of Winneba in Ghana**

Aboakyer is a deer-hunting festival celebrated annually by the Efutu people of Winneba in Ghana. During this festival, emphasis is placed on the important role of the Asafo Companies. An Asafo company is a warrior group that existed in the precolonial days and still operates in modern-day Akan communities to defend and protect their people. The rituals involved in the Aboakyer festival include two Asafo companies competing in capturing a live deer for sacrifice. Music elucidates the ritual activities of the Asafo companies during the festival. The Winneba Asafo companies have female ensembles known as Adzewa who take over musical activities when the men are out hunting. Whereas the Asafo companies are dominated by males, the Adzewa ensemble is by females. The Adzewa ensembles are seen to play secondary roles to their male Asafo companies with musical performances.

In this article, we investigate the voices of women in the Adzewa ensembles during the Aboakyer festival. We define voices as musical productions through singing and the use of instruments to address sentiments. We analyze female musicians' voices within the Adzewa ensemble as an agency for social change in a patriarchal environment. How do the Adzewa ensembles project the voices of women through musical performances in a festival dominated by men? Using participant observations, interviews and focus group discussions, we examine how the Adzewa performances, during the Aboakyer festival, provide the space and place for women to address societal issues they face. The findings reveal that when women use their voices in Adzewa performances they explicitly express the vices they have been subjected to on the one hand, and how they can be empowered to solve problems on the other hand. We conclude that Adzewa performances present a female consciousness that positions women as agents of social change.

Drum, Danielle – University of Limerick

## **LOUD WOMEN and Punk Music: Activist Performance in a Fourth-Wave Feminist Community**

LOUD WOMEN is a UK-based non-profit organization that has created a community to advocate for women and non-binary punk/alternative musicians. LOUD WOMEN's objectives include promoting women and queer fronted bands, raising money through music collaborations for organizations dedicated to supporting women and children, establishing a safe space for bands and audiences to attend concerts, and creating a website for an online community that includes forums, DIY (do it yourself), and newsletters. The organization is reminiscent of the Third-Wave feminist punk movement of the 1990s, Riot Grrrl—a community of young, middle-class, and predominately white punk musicians based in the United States. LOUD WOMEN's initiatives go beyond the Riot Grrrl movement, reflecting Fourth-Wave feminist ideals in political and social advocacy, especially for the inclusion of minorities. Fourth-Wave feminism advocates for women, LGBTQ+, and minorities, and LOUD WOMEN work within this movement, creating an international network of women and non-binary musicians and supporters via live venues and online platforms.

This research seeks to understand how musicians perform gender and sexual identity in a space supported by a community established by LOUD WOMEN that recognizes Fourth-Wave feminist ideals. By having a supportive community and a space to perform, are the musicians making political and social statements through their movements, music, lyrics, and visuals? Are they more likely to make these statements and 'perform' gender and sexuality because of the 'safe' space to perform? Historically, punk music has been a genre used by amateurs to make rebellious proclamations through on-stage gestures, aggressive lyrics, and musical techniques. How are punk and alternative music genres related to LOUD WOMEN's initiative? Are the lyrics, music techniques, and movements made on stage politically or socially provocative of certain outdated social norms? After interviewing LOUD WOMEN's founder, Cassie Fox, and analyzing the performance spectacles of LOUD WOMEN bands, such as Petrol Girls, Lambrini Girls, I, Doris, and the collaboration song project "Reclaim These Streets," it is evident that LOUD WOMEN has created a fourth-wave feminist music community.

Fuernkranz, Magdalena – Dr., University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna  
Schwarz, Gina

### **No future? Female Instrumentalists in the Austrian Jazz Scene**

Given its historical and social relevance, jazz as a culture of knowledge marginalizes women in its history. Considered to be novelty acts in a world of hegemonic masculinity and valued more for exoticized performances, its female musicians had to work hard to be accepted for their ability. Instrumentalists such as the vibraphonist Vera Auer (1919–1996) or the drummer Ursula Anders (\*1938) are hardly mentioned in Austria's jazz history. From the 1980s onwards, female musicians gained recognition, characterized by the opening of their own musical style compared to other genres and crossover projects. The position of female instrumentalists starts to emerge from side woman to bandleader, with a new generation of jazz musicians negating the dominant concept of the bandleader in ensembles consisting of musicians who have not yet completed their academic jazz training.

In order to get an overview of the situation of female instrumentalists in Austrian jazz, various aspects of the scene are examined. We focus on the historical, current and future roles of women in jazz based on artist's biographies and on the analysis of comprehensive data concerning gender distribution to question the system of inclusion and exclusion, within a hegemonic system. Our perspective poses questions of how gender is constructed, represented and negotiated through the artists' individual work and a conglomeration of works. The research includes aspects of performance, as well as writing and speaking about jazz, performative aspects of gender and the processes and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Paying particular attention to measures to improve the situation of female instrumentalists in the Austrian jazz scene, we discuss the "Gina Schwarz PANNONICA-Project", an initiative that seeks to provide insight into the careers of women in jazz and promote dialogue involving international musicians from various genres, generations and countries.



Jaehnichen, Gisa – Prof. Dr., Shanghai Conservatory of Music

## **Women in the Circle of Political Modesty: No Names in Music Research among Chinese Scholars**

One might think of knowing it all: In Chinese research institutions, people base their admiration on positioning within a professional realm. The more powerful position one holds the more admiration one gains. This process might lead to even more power in the context of music research, where topics and experiences are still strongly connected to a biologist approach. Is the name of an author or contributor important in this circle? This short study will give some simple explanations about dealing with gender perspectives in a self-adopted circle of political modesty among Chinese scholars in music research. How do names play a role in addressing research outcomes and their applications?

The observation span is 2015-2022 in major Chinese cities with larger tertiary educational institutions. All observations were made with highly aware considerations for possible repercussions. Direct conclusions must stay away from pointing out and spelling solutions. Nevertheless, some insights may help understand current issues in the field of music research, used terminology, and priorities in referencing techniques. The gender perspective includes issues that are highly sensitive among those scholars and cannot be simply broken down into straight steps. The author is fully aware of the long way needed in order to change some conventions and thinking patterns.

Liu, Yunjia – Musician

### **”Ladies” Project - Contemporary Guitar Compositions focusing on Women Characters**

Initiated by Yunjia Liu, "Ladies" Project consists of four contemporary solo guitar compositions: "Mermaid", "Fairy of the Snow", "Ophelia... a haunted sonata", and "Medusa". Each of the composition represents a woman character from various perspectives. The project is to explore the topic "What roles are ladies playing in the society nowadays?".

The presentation will focus on how the project has been initiated and developed towards different directions: solo performance, multidisciplinary approaches with visual arts, literature, theatre, dance, etc.

Project website: <https://www.yunjialiuguitarist.com/ladies-project.html>

Project video-trailer: <https://youtu.be/ixBR3k6pRtc>

Mangifesta, Nico – PhD student, Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage of Cremona, University of Pavia

Srayamurtikanti, Ni Nyoman (Sanggar S'mara Murti, ISI Surakarta) – Musician

**”Upon the edge of perceptions, leads me to the harmonization surface”: a conversation on Ni Nyoman Srayamurtikanti's Empowerment (2019)**

Female gamelan groups (gamelan wanita) appeared on the Balinese music scene just over 40 years ago. Women's participation within the patriarchal gamelan system was not historically contested, but they were usually limited in their role as dancers. Early scholars considered the impetus for this cultural change to be the empowerment of women in Indonesia, which occurred in tandem with contacts with foreign female musicians playing gamelan. During my fieldwork in Bali, I documented many changes during these years, from the performance contexts to the growth of musical communities in both number and quality.

Nowadays, a broader group of female Millennial and Gen Z musicians seem more easily to view themselves as being on an equal footing with their male counterparts. Among them emerges Ni Nyoman Srayamurtikanti, daughter of I Nyoman Suryadi, a natural artist from Celuk Village. Despite her young age, as a musician, composer, and the head of Sanggar S'mara Murti, a gamelan community that hosts an effervescent group of female musicians, she contributes to the development of the gamelan wanita phenomena.

Together with the vision of the performance of Empowerment (2021), composed for the virtual Ibudaya Festival 2021, an event dedicated to the culture and creativity of women on the island of Bali, a dialogic encounter between artist and researcher on the themes that emerge from the composition itself will follow. An innovative piece for a combined gamelan that, in the artist's intention, aims to penetrate barriers to womanhood in feminism, trying to find a harmonization with masculinity. Although Srayamurtikanti actively influences changes in the female role in gamelan music, is it correct to think of her as a female artist, or would it be better to confront her sonic explorations without considering gender?

Mohamed Abdelrahman, Maha – Researcher in Arabic musicology, The Higher Institute of Arabic Music

### **”Zar” music rituals**

Some of our most beautiful melodies came not as we might suppose from the pens of famous composers but from the folk songs which have come down to us from generation to generation. These melodies originated among the people along from one person to another. Because of their charming simplicity, many of them will endure forever as masterpieces of melody. "Zar" rituals include, the instrument prominently featured is called the tambura, a six-string instrument found across East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, Nay is a wood wind instrument and a small group of mostly women musicians and singers who play “Zar” music: chanting songs and playing hypnotic polyrhythms by banging on different types of tambourines, there is a dancer wearing a belt made of goat’s nails it’s used as an instrument by shacking the body.

"Zar" music was a traditional therapy specially for the unknown diseases or hopeless cases that was personified as a devil's touch in a specific time in history, it used to be as a purification and exorcism ritual to help pacify and cleanse the human spirit. In Egypt," zar" was seen as a means of expelling evil spirits too with the aim of freeing up the human's soul of demons. In the past it was practiced as a religious ritual and then developed into a cultural phenomenon in Upper Egypt, and it is now seen as a form of treatment that inspires harmony and peace in the soul: The patients usually start to swing left and right until they reach the state of trance. The history of " zar" is still mysterious, but many reports mention that it originated in Africa. This kind of therapy almost disappeared. However, it has gradually begun to return to Egypt. These rituals return to centuries that were held in Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and southern Iran.

"Mazaher" group is trying to bring 'zar' rituals out of the shadows into light again as a folkloric art. Parties have often been held in secret for years, for fear of those who consider the participants as charlatans, sorcerers or witches. Though zar ceremonies have been largely dissipating or outlawed, they remain part of a movement preserving it as a vital cultural heritage passed across generations. “Mazaher” group consider this kind of art needs to be protected so it’s not lost forever.

Oroza, Siboné – Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki

Nordin, Antti – Artist

**Film Abstract: “When I’m on Stage, I Rule”: Cholita Futurism in Cochabamba, Bolivia**

This documentary film is about the cholita groups who stormed the popular music scene in Bolivia in 2006. The first group, Las Conquistadoras, was composed by four young women from Potosí who performed huayño songs accompanied by high-energy zapateo (stamping dance) and electric instruments. Hundreds of cholita groups have emerged since mainly in Cochabamba, merging huayño, cumbia, Latin pop, rock, and other genres in their repertoires, giving sensuously powerful shows in social gatherings of the Quechua- and Aymara-speaking population, and media in Bolivia and its diaspora. This documentary film is based on video recordings of the performances of six cholita groups and their backing bands and my interviews with the cholita artists between February 2012 and March 2013. The video recordings were originally made in connection with my doctoral dissertation with the same title, and for music videos requested by the artists.

My research shows that the cholita groups are often family businesses owned by the lead singer or her mother, and that the cholita artists use their stage power to turn hierarchies based on gender, ethnicity, and wealth upside down. I approach these themes by claiming that a musical performance may be an instrument of personal and collective empowerment that can transform realities. I borrow theoretical ideas from Afrofuturist and Andean conceptions of “the past-future” to conceptualize cholita futurism as a form of creative empowerment that sparks from the tradition of valued femininity in Andean music and the entrepreneurial savvy of chola market women. Methodologically this research is based on an ethnographically oriented intersectional ethnomusicology, combined with a historical understanding of popular markets in Cochabamba, and the ongoing democratic and cultural revolution in Bolivia.

Direction and editing: Siboné Oroza and Antti Nordin

Original music for the film and animation: Antti Nordin

Main performers: Las Conquistadoras, Las Consentidas, Las Florecitas de Mizque, Las Traicioneras del Amor, Las Sirenitas

Language of the film: Spanish and Quechua, subtitles in English

Planner, Bernadette – BA, University of Music and Performing Arts Graz

## **Women on their way to represent Austrian Brass Music: Gender balance in musical leadership positions**

There are many different definitions of Brass Music, which are used in various music areas like folklore, light music, and symphonic music. However, the term Brass Music is especially used when connected with amateur musical society. Throughout the history of humanity, it was always very challenging for women in the domain of arts, and men dominated Brass Music for a long time. Frequently, either different classes of instruments are assigned to specific genders, or men mainly occupy leadership positions.

During the last years, a trend is perceptible in the direction that more and more women actively decide to contribute to Brass Music. Also, the music itself undergoes a transformation process, and additional innovations occur in this area. Generally, music and gender are fields, which are more and more relevant in science. Although, since the 19th century, women were occupied in domestic and salon music culture, contrary to the Brass Music domain. Even if women wanted to present their art publicly, they often had to work covered or under a false name.

Today, precisely those women, which are active parts of the Brass Music community are the focus of this research. The aim of the presentation is to introduce the first steps of a project focused on the development in Austrian Brass Music and the current situation of Women in leading positions. The Situation in Styria is examined more closely and what prompts women to take on a leadership role for example as a conductor or chairlady in the field of Brass Music. Since I am part of this scene myself, participating and observing field research as well as interviews with those affected are carried out.

Priyadarshini, Urvija – Dr., University of Hyderabad

### **Meri Awaz hi Pehchaan Hai – My Voice, my Identity**

This presentation intends to be a narrative and musical performance chronicling my journey of engagement with music. Through an auto-ethnographic exercise of working with my memories, I intend to explore the multiple meanings that music holds in my life, as well as its significance and influence on my life. I am a 37-year-old single Indian woman. I am based in an urban context and hail from a middle class, upper caste background. I am a cis het individual and belong to the religious majority in the country. Other significant markers that constitute my identity are fatness and care giving. I am a fat individual and I am a care giver to a mentally ill parent. I am also a scholar of Gender Studies and have recently finished my Doctorate in the same. I have been teaching the basics of Hindustani Vocal music since the year 2010 to a diverse group of pupils. I also compose songs occasionally. The decision to teach music is intimately tied to my identity, life circumstances and socio- economic location. Additionally, it constitutes a political choice since despite its inherent complexities teaching music is a largely non-capitalist form of work. Music does not just remain an art form needing to be transmitted in its purest form to the learners, rather it becomes a significant framework having substantial affect on my subjectivity and thus shaping my world view. All the aforesaid factors impinge upon the process of teaching and making music – what kind of melodies find an emotional appeal, what form and structure assume prominence and so on. Music becomes a dynamic site of expression of the authentic self and an instrument of coping and healing. Additionally, since the process of music making also interacts with the socio-political, cultural and economic context that one inhabits it also constitutes a site of resistance and protest against injustice.

Riihimäki, Hanna-Mari – PhD Candidate, University of Turku

### **Pop artist Vesala: a voice for generations of Finnish girls and repressed others**

The paper discusses Finnish pop artist Vesala's agency and how she and her music video "Mul ei oo lapsuudensankarii" (2019, dir. Viivi Huuska) construct reparative history while imagining new futures. The assumed equality of Finns, especially regarding gender, is considered an essential part of modern Finnishness. Still, girls' autonomy has been regulated by different mechanisms, such as the prevention of aggression, pleasure control, and the suffocation of creativity, implemented, for example, in schools (Näre 1992, 26). The gendered mechanisms of Finnish culture have long been at a turning point and are constantly in flux. Nevertheless, change is slow, which is also true regarding constructions of Finnish femininity concerning popular music.

Modern Finnish pop-femininity roots in earlier ideals of western (pop)femininity, thinness, and feminized beauty. These ideals are often underlined with the use of sexualized outfits and polished make-up. Current representations of sexualities are more diverse, for instance, more androgynous, or they otherwise portray a more significant number of non-normative bodies. However, a sexist and/or objectifying tone often prevails (Tuomi 2022).

Artists and music videos, such as Vesala and "Mul ei oo lapsuudensankarii", can help challenge gendered expectations, expedite the ongoing change in this field, and participate in larger socio-cultural meaning-making processes. Vesala is applauded for her ability to reflect the experiences of girls and women and for addressing solemn and heavy issues in her music. Indeed, Vesala's artistry and agency are significant factors in "Mul ei oo lapsuudensankarii", which also applies multiple intertextual and intermedial references. Together they depict difficult and painful relationships with femininity and Finnish culture and consequently construct alternative Finnish girlhood. Vesala's music provides a platform for self-expression and the means for voicing others: generations of Finnish women and girls and others who have somehow been repressed.



Secheyane, H  l  ne – Dr., Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles / Universit   Libre de Bruxelles  
Amezian, La  la – Musician

### **Chaabi Habibi: Popular Female Moroccan Musicians in Belgium Searching for their History and Building their Future**

Since the bilateral agreements signed in 1964 between Belgian and Moroccan governments, the Moroccan community has become one of the largest in Belgium. Moroccan cultural life thus flourishes in the country, particularly during weddings, which are the occasion for great festivities. Because of the non-mixed nature of the ceremonies, women have spaces that are only dedicated to them, where dance and music are predominant, and thus justifying the presence of entirely female ensembles. These ensembles specialise, among other things, in the popular repertoire known as *  a'bi* ('popular'), a sung repertoire transmitted orally that follows precisely the ceremonial of the wedding, taking on ritual, symbolic and identity functions. The practice of music, even more so when it is female, is subject to numerous taboos in Muslim societies; consequently, few *  a'bi* female musicians dare to display themselves publicly.

La  la Amezian, a Belgian-Moroccan singer, became interested in this heritage because of her own history. When her mother, who was renowned for performing traditional songs, started to lose her memory, La  la set herself the task of collecting and making known the popular repertoires of the Moroccan diaspora in Belgium and their history, characterised by informality and amateurism. This collaborative project, *Chaabi Habibi* ('*  a'bi* my love'), has taken several forms: creation of a female choir whose repertoire is exclusively composed of popular Moroccan songs; artistic accompaniment of a female musicians band; integration of *  a'bi* standards in her other musical projects and investigation in collaboration with H  l  ne Secheyane, ethnomusicologist who studies popular Moroccan music in Brussels. This work is financed by institutional subsidies and is permanently documented by the presence of a filmmaker who accompanies the creative and research processes. In the longer term, the aim of *Chaabi Habibi* is to create a permanent structure for the accompaniment of Moroccan popular musicians as well as a documentation centre for the traditions carried in Belgium.

In this presentation, Laïla Amezian and H  l  ne Sechehay   will present the process and the content of the Chaabi Habibi project, the different fields on which it intends to have an impact (societal, cultural, political and academic) and will show the first results of the research.

H  l  ne Sechehay   (Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles / Laboratoire de Musicologie, ULB) is a Doctor in Musicology (Universit   Libre de Bruxelles, Universit   Jean Monnet). She teaches ethnomusicology at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles (Rhythms and Rhythms department) and is the chair of ICTM Belgium. Having defend a thesis on Gnawa musical practices in Brussels, her research focuses on the repertoires of the Moroccan diaspora in Belgium and, more broadly, on the place of migrant music in multicultural contexts. She takes part in Chaabi Habibi project as a Research Associate. Laïla Amezian, a professional singer born in Antwerp, is the coordinator and artistic director of the Chaabi Habibi project supported by her organisation, Halfmoon. Through numerous projects, Laïla has always tried to explore the 'spaces' between her Moroccan cultural heritage and the music she encountered here, anchored in Belgium today. As a woman with a Moroccan immigrant background, Laïla is perfectly placed to underline the importance of expressing artistic creativity that gives meaning and autonomy.

Seye, Elina – University of Helsinki

Hanikka, Jenni – Musician

Smolander, Marjo – Musician

### **“Women of the Future” – Experiences of a Finnish-Malian Musical Collaboration**

Some years ago, the Finnish folk musicians Jenni Hanikka and Marjo Smolander discussed their experiences of working in Mali. Often the only women among local musicians, they sometimes felt that they were not treated as equals by their male collaborators. Building a career as a musician can be very difficult for Malian women, who are usually expected to marry and stay at home to take care of their household. Therefore, Hanikka and Smolander started planning a project that would bring together women musicians from Mali and Finland. With help from singer Salomé Dembélé, the project started in September 2022 with five Malian musicians from different ethnic groups and playing different instruments in addition to Hanikka and Smolander. At the end of the first intensive rehearsal period the group was given the name Sinimuso, “Women of the Future”.

During the first rehearsal period in Bamako, each participant shared a piece of music or a musical idea that was then developed by the whole group. Researcher Elina Seye observed the process and interviewed all participants about their personal histories and experiences as women musicians. The project continues with a second rehearsal period in early 2023, during which recordings are made with the intention of producing an album of the music created together. In October-November 2023, Sinimuso will play concerts in Finland and other Nordic countries, possibly also elsewhere in Europe.

The project is based on the assumption that regardless of the ethnic, cultural and other differences between individuals, women musicians have shared experiences of what it is like to work as a woman in a male-dominated industry. This assumption was confirmed in the interactions between participants. Insights from the interviews and discussions, as well as observations of the artistic process will be shared in this presentation by the Finnish members of the project.

Tiramani, Thea – PhD, Università di Pavia

## **”I want to be considered a musician”: The role of women in the Sikh music scene in Italy**

In the Sikh tradition, the musical performance of the hymns contained in the Sacred Book, is allowed for both males and females. However, despite the inclusive and egalitarian nature of Sikhism, female musicians are still excluded from musical performances at the Golden Temple, one of the most important places of worship in Sikhism. Often, only men had access to the professional musical level, while women could not receive a full education, limiting performances to a domestic context. In this article, I will investigate the situation in the Italian Gurdwaras (the Sikh temples), where I focused my research.

The direct observation shows a disparity between male and female roles and tasks. This gender-based hierarchy that was accepted by first-generation migrants is now being challenged by young people, who are demanding equal rights within the temples. In my research, I dealt with both female and male musicians; however, it is evident that it is easier for the latter to be considered musicians and to attempt a musical career. Women have access to music, can attend music lessons, have similar skills to their male peers, but their musical activity is mainly considered a hobby.

My attention has been directed towards the groups of girl musicians who rebel against the male-only career idea and use music as vehicle of gender redemption. I will follow the musical journey of two sisters, Sheagdeep Kaur (born in 2010) and Kamaldeep Kaur (born in 2002). The girls, after training in Italian temples, are now successful performers and teacher, with a strong idea about their being women.

Weir, Natalia

Marchant, Camila – artist, dancer, teacher and art therapy graduate from Arica, Chile; an afrodescendant and an active member of the Tumbe community (a member of the NGO 'Oro Negro' and the music and dance group 'Sabor Moreno')

### **Tumbe: The hidden African roots of Chilean culture**

Tumbe is a style of music and dance practised by Afrodescendants in Chile. This tradition was close to perishing, but thanks to a few committed individuals, Tumbe has been carefully safeguarded with over 30 Tumbe troupes currently in operation. No archival records exist, so the music, the rhythms and the lyrics were re-created from stories, from someone humming a tune or tapping a rhythm. These communities were matriarchal, and it was the women who preserved the tradition, 'Tumbe grandmothers' as they are known. The movement has grown rapidly in the last 20 years since 'Oro Negro' was established to preserve and safeguard the rights and culture of Afrodescendants in Chile. The purpose of this was twofold, to revive the culture and gain legal recognition. So successful was this movement, led mostly by women, that in 2019 the Chilean Government passed a law officially recognising Chilean Afrodescendants.

The following is an ethnographic study of Chilean Afrodescendants that took place in the field in 2018 and online between 2020 and 2021. It includes the voice of Camila Marchant, a local female artist who will speak on behalf of her people and of her experience. For Camila, learning Tumbe has been much more than just learning the dance steps. It has been a journey to discover her African roots, her family history and honouring the tradition of her ancestors. Through Tumbe she found her way back home. We hope to demonstrate that the tradition of Tumbe is as lively as ever and that Tumbe is a unique case study of safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage worthy of attention. It shows how music and dance served as important aspects of the revival, how Afro-Chilean cultural identity and agency are constructed, and how musicking and dancing helps the community embody their culture in the 21st century.

## **"Researchers and artists in the field of lament"**

*Kyynelkanavat*-project

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Hytönen-Ng, Elina & Kallonen, Emilia – University of Eastern Finland, Karelian Research Institute

### **“Lamenting as a safe lap”: (Auto)ethnographical research based on work in progress with a guided lamenting circle**

Amongst the Baltic-Finnic areas, we find Karelia and Ingria lament traditions closest to Finland (Honko 1975.) as the Karelian area is today shared between Finland and Russian Karelia. Karelian and Ingrian laments have been recorded internalised 19th Century onwards and since the beginning of the 20th Century. Researchers who have done extensive work on this tradition are for example Konkka (1985), Tenhunen (2006), A. Stepanova (2012), E. Stepanova (2014), and Silvonon (2022).

Traditionally the individual internalised laments orally from the women in the village community around them. The ritualistic and comprehensive expression of lamenting has included inseparably the music, the words, and the performing situation.

Laments have been presented as part of the leaving and separation rituals as well as outside them in daily life. The topics have varied from the lamenter’s personal life experiences to the situations shared by the community surrounding her. Laments have described situations of grief and longing as well as gratitude and hope, while at the same time laments have also acted as a tool to dismantle deep emotions. As the traditional relevance and the life form of the village communities have changed significantly, lamenting in contemporary Finland is now learned and practiced in lamenting courses.

In this paper, we focus on a guided lamenting circle as a representation of the contemporary lamenting community in Finland. With this lens, we describe the experiences of guiding and participating in the circle.

The lamenting circle is run by Kallonen. Hytönen-Ng has interviewed some participants as well as participated in the circle as a student. In the circle we are looking at the process of

learning and practicing laments today within the community of the circle.

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Patrikainen, Riikka & Matveinen, Liisa – University of Eastern Finland, School of Theology

**What does the rituality of laments mean to a contemporary Orthodox Karelian lamenter? A research based on long-term discussions on laments between a researcher and a lamenter**

In Europe, the tradition of laments has survived until the modern day most strongly in the areas of Eastern Europe, which is also an area influenced by Eastern Christianity. The origin of the revived laments in Finland also stems from an area with an Orthodox majority, Karelia, that is nowadays divided between Russia and Finland.

This presentation is based on the collaboration of a cantor and cultural researcher, Riikka Patrikainen, and a contemporary lamenter, Liisa Matveinen, who form one of the researcher-lamenter pairs of the Kyynelkanavat-collective. Their cooperation is centered on the parallel between religious and folk tradition in modern-day laments. The aim of their work is to examine how this parallel can be detected in contemporary laments, performed by an orthodox lamenter drawing from Karelian tradition.

Both Liisa and Riikka belong to the Orthodox minority of Finland and are Finnish Karelians. Since the beginning of the Kyynelkanavat project (4/2021-), they have recorded their discussions about laments. In this presentation, they bring out the most important themes of these discussions and reflect on them, centering on the aspect of vernacular religiosity.

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Silvonen, Viliina (Dr.) & Kuittinen, Emmi – University of Eastern Finland, Karelian Research Institute and Finnish Literature Society

**Inspiring but not always easy. Discussions between art and research**

In the Kyynelkanavat-project, our – folklorist, PhD Viliina Silvonen and folk musician, M.Mus Emmi Kuittinen – interest is entailed in the manifold aspects of laments from traditional ritual practices to present-day artistic performances. We concentrate especially on lament performances as performing arts, a genre of folk music, and we explore issues of

contexts and community, practices and emotion in connection with these laments and lamenting.

In this presentation, we shed light on the actual working in this Kyynelkanavat-project. We tell what we do and how we do. We will discuss the advantages and pros of the collaboration of an artist and a researcher (as well as the entire Kyynelkanavat collective), and reflect on the difficulties or problems we have faced. Furthermore, we briefly present our co-authored article, where text written by the lamenter and text by the researcher are side by side. This case study follows the methodological trends that emphasize the collaboration between the informant and the researcher. The lamenter writes autobiographically and the researcher analyses the written narration in the light of the theoretical framework and research history. The background of the writing is in ethnographic interviews and observation. Some media interviews, Kuittinen's published laments and performances in concerts are employed as supplementary material. The research frame, analyses and results have been discussed together.