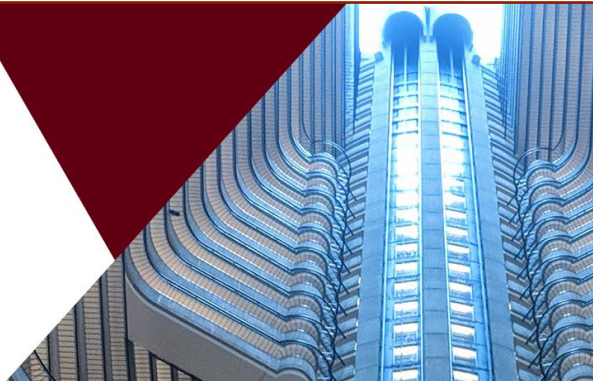


# SEM Newsletter

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Email articles and shorter entries for consideration to [semnewslettereditor@gmail.com](mailto:semnewslettereditor@gmail.com).

Copy deadlines:  
Winter Issue (15 December)  
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*SEM Newsletter* is a vehicle for the exchange of ideas, news, and information among the Society's members.

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# SEM 2025 Annual Meeting in Atlanta

**Alan Burdette**  
**SEM Executive Director**

Join us for the 70th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Atlanta, Georgia. This year's conference will be held on October 23-26, 2025, with a preconference on October 22 titled "HBCU Connections: Engaging Students in Black Music and Ethnomusicology." We have a full program of exciting presentations and registration is already strong for our first in-person meeting since 2023.

Atlanta has long been a thriving city in the American southeast with a vibrant history. With a metropolitan area population of more than 6 million people, the population of the city proper is half African American with growing international diversity as economic opportunities and a vibrant cultural life have drawn people from around the world. With numerous galleries, museums, and the National Center for Civil Rights and Human Rights, Atlanta is rich with educational, advocational, artistic, and of course, musical offerings.

SEM will meet in the Marriott Marquis hotel, located in the heart of downtown Atlanta with an indoor connection to the Peachtree Center MARTA Station with a connection to the ATL airport as well as other locations around the city. The hotel is within walking distance of numerous restaurants and attractions. Visit the conference website for a full list of nearby restaurants. We also have negotiated an affordable \$204 a night rate, making it easy to stay onsite and just steps away from conference sessions and social events.



Although we hope to see nearly 1000 attendees in person, SEM has added a hybrid element to this year's Atlanta conference in response to travel concerns and as part of our ongoing effort to accommodate challenges to in-person attendance. We have not made this decision lightly because a hybrid conference comes with financial risks, significant costs, and requires additional labor. The conference is first and foremost an in-person event, but we have made it possible for presenters who are unable to travel to give their presentation virtually, and for virtual attendees to view an online feed of in-person conference presentations and submit questions to presenters via chat.

The preliminary program is now posted on the conference website, and we encourage you to check it out and register to join us in October. Register before September 15 to get the early-bird discount! Visit the [2025 conference area of the SEM website](#) for general information about the meeting and check back regularly as more information will be posted in the upcoming weeks on special events.

We look forward to seeing all of you in Atlanta!

## SEM News and Announcements

### Film Screening Organized by the *Journal of Audiovisual Ethnomusicology*

At this year's SEM Annual Meeting in Atlanta, the *Journal of Audiovisual Ethnomusicology* (JAVEM) will host a special film screening from 9:30pm to 11:30 pm on Thursday, October 23, at the Limelight Theatre (349 Decatur St SE, Atlanta). Two recent works will be featured:

*Mind, Hands, Work: Fidel Sambou Builds an Ekonting* (dir. Scott Linford) — A portrait of Senegalese musician-sculptor Fidel Sambou, exploring instrument making as a creative, embodied process and highlighting his innovations in crafting the Jola ekonting.

*Forbidden Sound* (dir. Meng Ren) — A vivid documentary on Hip Hop in China, examining its history, underground scenes, and the cultural and political challenges faced by artists working under censorship and social constraint.

The *Journal of Audiovisual Ethnomusicology* (JAVEM) is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed streaming journal sponsored by the Society for Ethnomusicology. Dedicated to advancing the use of multimedia as both method and medium in ethnomusicology, JAVEM provides a vital public platform for ethnomusicological films. By hosting screenings and multimedia installations, the journal creates opportunities for scholar-filmmakers to reach broader audiences, engage diverse stakeholders, and foster dialogue across academic and public spheres.

Join us for an evening of music, film, and conversation that showcases cutting-edge work in audiovisual ethnomusicology and reflects the renewed energy surrounding film as an essential ethnomusicological practice.

### World Music Pedagogy: From the SEM Education Section to the Schools

This note is to acknowledge the work of the SEM Education Section, many members of whom have been contributing for 40-plus years to the integration of ethnomusicological principles into music education practice. One route that has become central to the Section's work is World Music Pedagogy (WMP), a teaching method for advancing the understandings and skills of students in schools and in university programs (see the 7-volume series, *Routledge World Music Pedagogy*, 2018-2021). Since the early 1980s, Saturday-morning SEM Education Section sessions have been designed for teachers and are intended to model through WMP practices many ethnomusicological considerations for "passing it on," that is, transmitting and teaching musical practices from across the world to learners of all ages.



Introductory Experiences on the Gamelan, featuring Christina Sunardi, Departments of Music and Dance, University of Washington.

Washington in 2008. These WMP courses are taught by a blend of ethnomusicologists, culture-bearing musicians, and seasoned educators who provide teachers with music-making experiences as well as cultural

A week-long WMP course is now a common offering every summer for teachers in various locations and was initiated by Patricia Shehan Campbell, Amanda Soto, and Christopher Roberts, among other Education Section members at the University of

histories, contexts, and meanings of songs, rhythms, and instrumental works. WMP's five-dimensional teaching-learning framework is attendant to principles of orality (learning by listening), *ngoma* (multi-sensory experiences in music), and cultural integration. Additionally, social justice issues play a role in the WMP training, particularly in the music-culture units that are modeled within the course. The WMP courses and SEM Education Section World Music Pedagogy sessions differ in lengths, experiences, and expectations, with the full-length courses running 25-40 hours (including assigned projects that lead to a Certificate of Accomplishment), while the Saturday-morning WMP sessions are intended as brief workshops for exploring selected musical cultures that can be taught and learned.



Experiences in Senegalese Drumming, featuring Thione Diop of Dakar and Seattle, on djembe, sabar, dun dun, and tama.

In-person courses in these ethnomusicologically based World Music

World Music

Pedagogies are now offered in multiple locations in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and most recently in Asia (Bangkok, Thailand; Changchun, China), while an online course was initiated to draw teachers (and students, too, of music, cultural studies, and education). WMP course coordinators are now joining hands with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings (SFR) in offering a Certificate of Accomplishment, and providing WMP-oriented lessons frequently based on SFR archived recordings, liner notes, and a growing Folkways video library of performances and interviews with recording artists.

Hats off to SEM Education Section members who are teaching in or coordinating WMP courses, moving ethnomusicological principles into practice, including Sarah Bartolome, Juliana Cantarelli Vita, Will Coppola, Clayton Dahm, David Hebert, Karen Howard, Chee-Hoo Lum, and Sarah Watts. They are at the core of a movement to diversify the music and music teaching/learning experiences that teachers are offering to their K-12 and university-level students.

For more information about (1) the SEM Education Section, contact [Carrie Danielson](#) and (2) the World Music Pedagogy courses, contact [Patricia Shehan Campbell](#).

### **SEM Seeks New Journal Editor for *Ethnomusicology***

The Society for Ethnomusicology invites proposals from Society members who wish to be considered for the editorship of the journal *Ethnomusicology*. The journal is published three times annually, each issue running approximately 208 pages and including major research articles as well as book, recording, film, video, and multimedia reviews. The premier journal in the field for more than sixty years, *Ethnomusicology* has played a central role in the expansion of the discipline in the United States and abroad.

SEM is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive community and strongly encourages applications from individuals from groups that are underrepresented within the Society. The new editor will be selected by the SEM Board of Directors and will begin a one-year transition period as Incoming Editor starting in the late fall of 2025 and concluding in the fall of 2026. During the transition period, the Incoming Editor will learn procedures for the journal. Kate Brucher, the current Editor, will complete her term with the Fall 2026 issue (volume 70, no. 3), and the Incoming Editor will then begin a (renewable) four-year term as Editor in 2027. The total time commitment for the new editor is thus five years.

The editor is responsible for acquiring and editing research articles (approximately 400 pages of printed text annually), identifying referees for submissions and overseeing the review process, coordinating the material provided by review editors, and working with the University of Illinois Press, which produces the journal. The editor is assisted by an Editorial Board, whom they appoints with the approval of the SEM Board of Directors. The editor submits annual reports to the SEM Board of Directors in September and, at the SEM Annual Meeting, carries out the following tasks: provides a brief oral report during an SEM Board of Directors meeting, chairs a meeting with the Journal Editorial Board, chairs a meeting with the Journal Review Editors, and meets with the Publications Advisory Committee.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss possible institutional support with their department chairs and deans. In addition, SEM offers \$3,000 annually for editorial assistance.

Kate Brucher welcomes applicants to contact her directly at [ethnomusicologyeditor@gmail.com](mailto:ethnomusicologyeditor@gmail.com) to discuss the tasks involved in editing the journal.

Applicants should submit a statement describing: (1) previous editorial and/or administrative experience; (2) the extent to which institutional support can be expected; and (3) why they are interested in serving as Journal Editor. In addition, they should submit a curriculum vitae and a list of three referees. Applicants must be members of SEM. SEM encourages applications from women and underrepresented groups and welcomes nominations from Society members.

SEM's Publications Advisory Committee will review applications and make recommendations to the SEM Board of Directors. The deadline for receipt of applications is **November 1, 2025**. Please send all materials as email attachments to Alan Burdette, SEM Executive Director, at [semexec@iu.edu](mailto:semexec@iu.edu).



## 2025 Charles Seeger Lecture: Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje

Birgitta J. Johnson, University of South Carolina

The Charles Seeger Lecturer for the SEM 2025 Annual Meeting, held in Atlanta, Georgia, is UCLA Professor Emerita of Ethnomusicology Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. She will discuss “The Fiddle/Violin in African American Culture: Meanings and Associations.” Her retirement from UCLA in 2013 as a Distinguished Professor marked 34 years of service and leadership to the university in the Departments of Ethnomusicology, Music, and the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive. Prior to joining the faculty at UCLA in 1979, DjeDje taught at the historic Tuskegee University (1975-1979). Her collegiate education in music began as a piano major at another HBCU and the birthplace of American concert spirituals, Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Her time at UCLA actually began when she was a graduate student where she earned her master’s and doctoral degrees. It was at UCLA in the 1970s and working with “the father of African musicology” J.H. Kwabena Nketia that “Jackie” began a lifelong pursuit of researching African *and* African American musical traditions, documenting their connections as well as their distinctions. She is particularly interested in how the dynamics of urban life give rise to change and other musical activity. In addition to conducting fieldwork in several countries in West Africa (Cote d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal), East Africa (Ethiopia), North Africa (Egypt and Morocco), as well as Jamaica, she has also done ethnographic research in various parts of the United States such as California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, North Carolina, and Virginia. In her 1942 autobiography, *Dust Tracks on the Road*, anthropologist and Black feminist literary pioneer Zora Neale Hurston defined research as “...formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose” (154). Professor DjeDje’s contributions to the fields of ethnomusicology, Africana studies, history, and archiving exemplify the kinds of excellence a life of focused poking and prying can yield to the world. In the encomium for her 2020 SEM Honorary Member recognition I noted, “she is a scholar of excellence, distinction, tenacity, candor, and respect who gently pushes her students, colleagues, and community to dig deeper, ask more questions, and add to the overall cultural historical narrative from as many angles as possible. She has been a remarkable presence in the discipline of Ethnomusicology serving in numerous roles that modern ethnomusicologists strive to embody today” (Johnson 2021, 1).



Born in Jesup, Georgia, a small city in the southeast part of the state, Jackie’s desire to document African American music started in the churches in and around the small, mostly rural areas of Jesup. For her master’s thesis, she conducted an ethnographic study of the similarities and differences in the spirituals and gospel music of southeast Georgia. That thesis became the 1979 monograph *Black Religious Music from Southeast Georgia* and included a cassette tape of audio examples. Jackie was not only documenting African American sacred music in rural community churches, but she was also capturing a tradition at a pivotal crossroads—the expansion of Golden Era gospel music and Black church liturgical traditions into the era of contemporary gospel, where modern sounds, arrangements, and tastes were reaching beyond urban centers through regional radio and national television access to Black music. Ethnographic research in Black churches by culture bearing scholars was still relatively new at the time and often questioned by senior scholars in the field. Her comparative method of analysis within a music tradition yielded an analytical approach in her research that regularly illuminated the nuances within Black music traditions and proved one of her popular sayings, “Black music is not a monolith.” Black scholars of Jackie’s generation often fought the same double battle in Black music research that their predecessors (e.g., Eileen Southern, Samuel Floyd, Dominique-René de Lerma, and Deena Epstein) had to face. The sparse documentation of Black American musical traditions and contributions by

music scholars as well as ethnocentric and flagrantly biased interpretations of Black music culture from scholars, journalists, and cultural critics. It would be the diligent and ethical work of these and other Black music pioneers as well as Jackie's colleagues who would meticulously 'set the record straight' and broaden research possibilities for Black music studies at the end of the 20th century.

Jackie's doctoral research with Professor Nketia pointed her towards Black American music's origins in Africa. And with a five-year fellowship from the Ford Foundation, she started pioneering work on West African fiddle traditions. Conducting doctoral research at the University of Ghana, Legon-Accra, ethnographic fieldwork, and learning to play the one-string fiddle of the Hausa and Dagomba peoples of northern Ghana, DjeDje produced a two-volume dissertation and field recordings that was only the beginning of her exploration of African musics and west African string traditions. Even while conducting fieldwork and research in various African American contexts, Jackie regularly returned to the seemingly simple, one-string fiddle. Returning to the field, gathering more data, and tracking changes in the traditions over a thirty-year period, she published *Fiddling in West Africa: Touching the Spirit in Fulbe, Hausa, and Dagbamba Cultures* (Indiana University Press) and an accompanying songbook *Fiddling in West Africa (1950-1990s)* in 2008. The book went on to win both the SEM Alan P. Merriam Prize and the Kwabena Nketia Book Prize in 2009. The publication of the book also coincided with renewed interests in connecting American fiddle and banjo traditions with some of its African predecessors. In one conversation, Jackie noted that her publisher was surprised that the accompanying songbook had found a cult following among Canadian string band musicians. Before critically acclaimed artists like Rhiannon Giddens and the Carolina Chocolate Drops and Beyoncé and *Cowboy Carter* took up the cause to champion the African and Black roots of American banjo and fiddle traditions in the 21st century, Jackie DjeDje was laying the research groundwork by thoroughly exploring the origins that reside east of the Black Atlantic over a span of forty years.

The culmination of her work to bridge the west African fiddle to some of its diasporic offshoots west of the Atlantic was published this year. *Fiddling is My Joy: The Fiddle in African American Culture* and its 241-page resource companion *Fiddling Is My Joy Companion* (University of Mississippi Press) is an ethnomusicological *tour de force*. Combining traditional ethnographic fieldwork, deep archival research, and digital humanities, the *Fiddling is My Joy* book and resource guide finally provide a more thorough story of early folk and commercial music contributions of Black fiddle players *and* violinists to music culture in the United States. The book and its digital companion also accomplish another comprehensive win by presenting examples of fiddle traditions from all five regions of Africa and across the US with digital visual and audio examples—a long way from the cassette tapes of the late 70s. In a time of strained academic publishing channels and global accessibility challenges, DjeDje's latest work is available online via free download at [eScholarship.org](https://escholarship.org) as well as for sale in the traditional physical format. We are certain that she will dive into some of the richness of this new expansive work at this year's Charles Seeger Lecture.

For much of her academic career, Jackie has been known for her contributions and influence in the study of African music; especially due to her numerous contributions to books, encyclopedias, journals, and edited volumes on African music. In addition to chapters and articles in four volumes of the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, *New Encyclopedia of Africa*, and the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, she edited *Turn Up the Volume! A Celebration of African Music* (UCLA Fowler Museum) in 1999 and earlier in 1989 and 1992, she co-edited and edited a two-volume festschrift presented to her mentor, J.H. Kwabena Nketia. However, among the over 70 articles, edited books, chapters, and essays she has published over her career, many include her diverse research of African American sacred music, Black women composers and artists, and African American music traditions on the West Coast.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Jackie kept a hand on her ethnographic roots in church music research by documenting and publishing the first fieldwork studies to address the migration and development of gospel music in Los Angeles in various church congregations, Los Angeles-based gospel music company Specialty Records, the first generation of Los Angeles-born gospel composers, the development of gospel music in the Bay Area, prolific female composers such as Doris Akers and Dr. Margaret Pleasant Douroux, as well as the adoption of gospel music by African American Catholic churches in Los Angeles. Many of these topics were untouched in the field or music scholarship before she began her "prying with a purpose." The results of these ethnographic projects are not only in ethnomusicology journals but also Black studies and history academic journals as well as the US Library of Congress and several exhibits hosted by the California African American Museum in Los Angeles. In 1998, she co-edited the much-celebrated volume *California Soul: Music of African Americans in the West* with renowned jazz scholar, performer, and her husband, Dr. Eddie Meadows. The text included chapters from colleagues and students about the often untold stories of African American musicians, artists, and communities in Southern and Northern California who contributed to jazz, blues, gospel, rhythm and blues, and the radio and record industries on the West Coast.

Jackie has also made room for others to work alongside her in scholarly and teaching pursuits. Throughout her career she's invited African, African American, and Africanist performer-scholars to teach courses or serve in extended residencies at UCLA in programs she inaugurated or supported. In this way her students were able to interact and network with legendary performers and scholars such as JHK Nketia, Akin Euba, Margaret Pleasant Douroux, Lady-smith Black Mambazo's Joseph Shabalala, Thomas Mapfumo, Gerald Wilson, Marcus Miller, Lalah Hathaway, Kobla Ladzepo, and so many others. Every class visit or lecture demonstration she documented and deposited in the Ethnomusicology Archive. In 1999, the "Year of African Music at UCLA" activities included an album recording featuring the late [Donald Kachamba](#) in concert with UCLA Students and community musicians. During the winter quarter of 2000 at UCLA, Malian musician Cheick-Tidiane Seck was another artist in residence, and under DjeDje's guidance students had the opportunity to write essays, conduct interviews with Seck, and provide song lyric transcription on a final student produced album project, [Cheick-Tidiane Seck, West African Music Meets Jazz](#). The album essays, interviews, and lyrics were compiled into an accompanying songbook, [Cheick-Tidiane Seck with the UCLA Griot Society and Friends: West African Music Meets Jazz](#), released in 2002.

As an international flagship institution for the field, Jackie's four decades of service to UCLA cannot be understated. She has served as acting chair of the Department of Ethnomusicology (2003), chair of the Department (2005-2010), and Director of the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive (2000-2007). There was a three-year period where she simultaneously led one of the largest ethnomusicology departments and ethnomusicology archives in the world while conducting research, publishing, giving numerous invited lectures, consulting, and mentoring students. Jackie's service to the Society for Ethnomusicology is just as impactful and expansive on the national and regional levels. She has served at all levels of leadership in SEM's Southern California Chapter. She has served on numerous program and prize committees in SEM, as well as the Second Vice President for SEM (1994-1996), and more recently as an editorial board member for the *Ethnomusicology* journal (2012-2015).

In 2013, two of DjeDje's most esteemed former students, Drs. Jean Kidula and the late Kimasi Brown compiled and edited a festschrift titled *Resiliency and Distinction: Beliefs, Endurance and Creativity in the Musical Arts of Continental and Diasporic Africa* honoring her for her generational influence in the field. In his testimonial tribute, Kimasi stated, "Dr. DjeDje perpetually models...what comprehensive excellence looks like" (Johnson 2021, 5). Jackie is a two-time award recipient from the National Endowment for the Humanities and has received distinguished service and contribution awards from the Los Angeles Chapter of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, the Mu Beta Omega Chapter and Ivy Philanthropic Foundation of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and the Los Angeles Music Award from the Cultural Affairs Department of the City of Los Angeles. Before the phrase was coined, Jackie's "public facing" scholarship often came via the numerous invited talks and consulting activities she's completed. From festivals all over the state of California to live performance and radio projects for the U.S. State Department and National Public Radio, her engagement in various media forms is rich. Her consulting gifts can be found in community and national television projects as well as films, including the critically acclaimed 1985 film *The Color Purple*. She is still currently a member of the history committee at the Trinity Baptist Church of Los Angeles, one of her early L.A. fieldwork locations and current church home. These honors, awards, and consulting activities reflect Jackie's impact in academia as well as the strong community connections she makes and maintains in her work. Back in the 2020 encomium, I quoted one of Jackie's former students, Dr. Jesse Ruskin's sentiments about the ethics she instills in her students and collaborators. He and many of us recall her stressing that "doing ethnomusicology is about cultivating relationships... and requires real commitments...Cultural expression is sacred and handling other people's stories is a privilege" (Johnson 2021, 5). Today, we can still witness Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje's lifetime dedication to handling other people's stories and that she is still "touching the spirit" of Black music research and education.

## References

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Johnson, Birgitta J. 2021. "SEM Awards Honorary Memberships: Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje." *SEM Newsletter* 55(1):1, 4-5.

# Global Resonance: Musicological and Ethnomusicological Scholarship in Türkiye

Dr. Evrim Hikmet Ögüt

Professor of Ethnomusicology at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University

Providing an overview of music scholarship in Türkiye within the limits of such a brief publication is a challenging—if not impossible—task for a country of over 85 million people, marked by immense ethnic, cultural, and musical diversity, as well as by deep-rooted musical traditions encompassing education and scholarship in both formal and non-formal institutions. Nevertheless, in this piece, I aim to portray the current view of mostly musicological, ethnomusicological, and ethnochoreological scholarship by highlighting some of the key milestones in its long history which affected the direction of music scholarship in the country.

## The Roots

Although the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923, music scholarship, as in many other areas, on the one hand, demonstrates a continuity with the late Ottoman period. On the other, the agenda of the newly founded republic brought about a significant shift, shaping the trajectory of musical research and discourse. With the establishment of the Turkish Republic as a nation-state seeking to distance itself from the legacy of the multinational Empire, the official musical discourse focused on creating a national polyphonic music tradition, drawing primarily on Turkish folk songs as its source material. Consequently, the systematic collection of folk songs became one of the most prominent endeavors of Turkish music scholarship in the early decades of the state. Alongside this initiative, institutions modeled in the Western sense—such as conservatories, symphonic orchestras, and after the 1940s, a state opera—were also established during the same period; and the national radio, TRT, undertook the role of musically educating the citizens of the new republic in these formative decades.

Consequently, the body of music scholarship in the new institutions of the Republic primarily focused on the production and study of national polyphonic music. Even today, at several prominent state conservatories music education and musicological studies remain largely centered on Western polyphonic music, including the national tradition. On the other hand, soon after the foundation of the Republic, Ottoman-Turkish *maqam* music was entirely excluded from formal education. However, scholarly interest in, and the performance of *maqam* music—which had maintained a continuum since the Ottoman Empire, both in Darülelhan and in Mevlevi lodges (until the closure in 1925)—continued thereafter in civic institutions and music societies. The formal education in *maqam* music could only be revived in 1976 with the establishment of the Turkish Music State Conservatory at Istanbul Technical University.



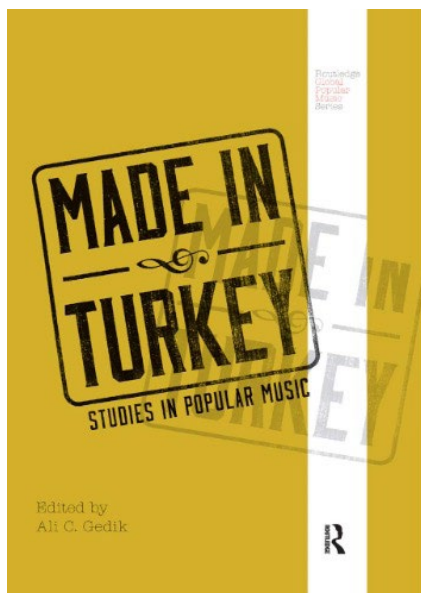
A class from the Girls' Section of Darülelhan, the first official music school of the Ottoman Empire, established in the early 20th century.

The pioneers of musicological and ethnomusicological studies in Türkiye—such as Rauf Yekta (1871–1935), Mahmut Ragıp Gazimihal (1900–1961), and Ahmed Adnan Saygun (1907–1991)—positioned the field of music scholarship in continuous dialogue not only with European traditions but also with Middle Eastern musicological discourse. Notably, Saygun was one of the founding members of the International Folk Music Council (IFMC). Scholars such as Béla Bartók, Laurence Picken, Kurt and Ursula Reinhard, Dieter Christensen, Karl Signell, Eugenia Popescu-Judet, Walter Feldman, and Owen Wright, who conducted research in Türkiye, have also contributed—albeit indirectly—to the growing academic interest in the country’s music scholarship (Özdemir 2022, 384).

### Musicology and Ethnomusicology Today

Today, the landscape of music scholarship in Türkiye reflects a broad spectrum of fields, ranging from historical musicology and ethnomusicology to ethnochoreology, music sociology, music technology, sound art, and music education. The first musicology department was established in 1976 at Ege University (later incorporated into Dokuz Eylül University in 1983), and three other well-established musicology departments were founded in the mid-1980s. While some institutions, such as Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and Istanbul University, use the term ethnomusicology to refer to ethnographic research on music, the distinction between historical musicology and ethnomusicology remains somewhat blurred in several other institutions.

Institutions focusing on musicological studies were initially divided into two main areas: the historical study of Western classical music (including contemporary Turkish polyphonic music) and the historical study of Ottoman-Turkish *maqam* music. However, over the decades, research in both has expanded to popular music studies and sociological approaches to music.



The cover of *Made in Turkey: Studies in Popular Music*, edited by musicologist Cenk Gedik and published by Routledge in 2019.

Ethnomusicological studies, on the other hand, draw on two methodological traditions: folklore studies and ethnographic fieldwork. While the collection of folk songs and their significance for the formation of the nation-state laid the foundation of the discipline, over the years—particularly with the contributions of scholars trained in the United States who emphasized ethnographic research—the field has evolved to encompass both methodological approaches. Ethnomusicological studies primarily examine musical communities and cultures in Türkiye, including the music and dance practices of minority groups, migrant communities, and religious practices. Urban ethnomusicology is a rapidly developing field in this context.

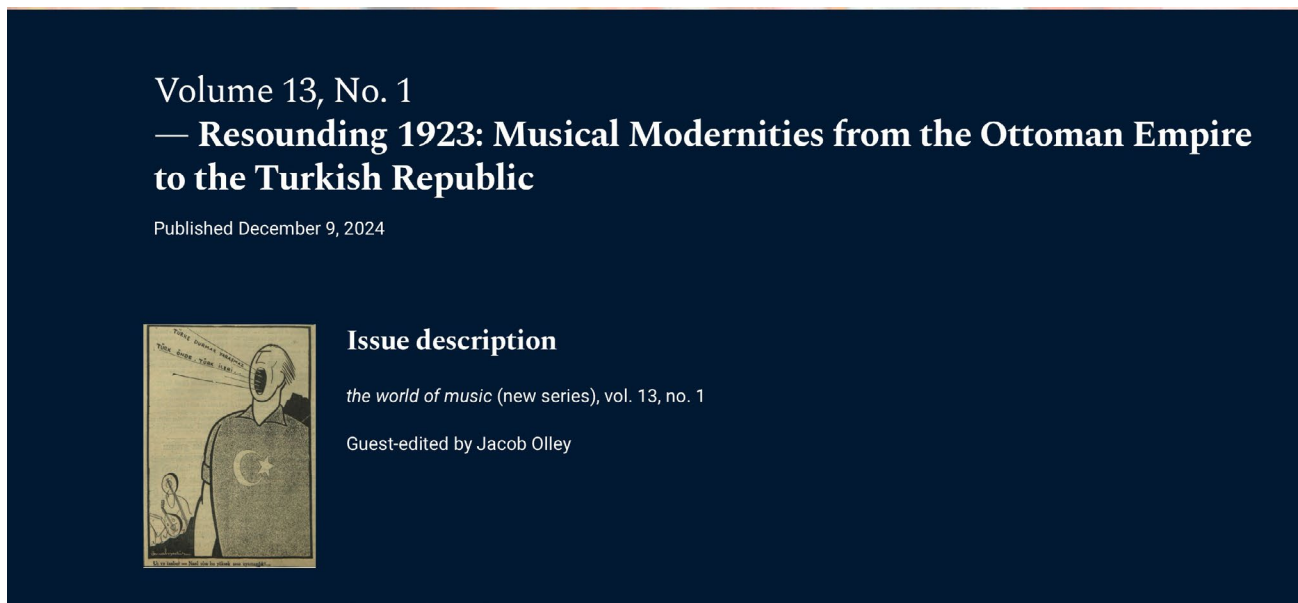
Although international connections and collaborations have always been present in the field, the İstanbul Technical University Dr. Erol Üçer Centre for Advanced Music Studies (MIAM), with its doctoral program launched in 2002, has significantly influenced ethnomusicological scholarship in Türkiye. By offering programs in English and hosting guest professors, it has provided access to the latest developments in the international field. It has fostered a new generation of ethnomusicologists who combine long-term anthropological field research with a critical perspective, including the critique of Eurocentric norms of the discipline.

As these disciplines have grown in scope and volume in Türkiye over the years, the active participation of musicologists and ethnomusicologists in international academic societies has also steadily increased. However, attendance at SEM conferences and involvement in organizational roles has remained limited—except among scholars based in North America—a situation that cannot be attributed solely to physical distance. In contrast, engagement with the ICTMD has been considerably higher, both in terms of participation in annual meetings and involvement in study groups and organizational responsibilities.

In recent years, Türkiye has also hosted several ICTMD Study Group meetings, including the Joint Symposium of the Study Groups on Applied Ethnomusicology and Sacred and Spiritual Sounds and Practices; the Joint Symposium of the ICTMD National Committees of Austria and Türkiye; the 33rd Symposium of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology; and the 8th Symposium of the Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe. Another notable ICTMD initiative was a unique Joint Field Research in Türkiye and Georgia, conducted in October 2023, which aimed at the ethnography of local peoples in the Eastern Black Sea region and the study and documentation of music/dance repertoire. Beyond these events, Türkiye remains highly active in other ICTMD study groups, such as Music of the Turkic-speaking World.

Among several international symposia held in Türkiye, the 54th IASA Conference & 4th ICTM Forum, titled “Collaborating to Preserve and Safeguard Audiovisual and Related Heritage,” and held at Istanbul University, carries particular significance given the recent renewed focus on the historical archives of early folk song collections. The archives, created by two of the Republic’s earliest institutions—Darülelhan between 1926 and 1929, and the Ankara State Conservatory between 1937 and 1951—are now undergoing reconstruction after a long period of neglect. The Karadeniz (Black Sea) Music Archive (KARMA), founded in 2011, serves as another notable example of the archives established in Türkiye.

Over the past decade, there has also been a noticeable increase in publications in scholarly periodicals issued in Türkiye on musicology, ethnomusicology, and ethnochoreology. Among the major peer-reviewed international journals published in Türkiye—indexed in leading international databases—are *Folklor & Edebiyat* (since 2008); *Rast Musicology Journal* (since 2016); *Musicologist: An International Journal of Music Studies* (since 2017); and *Journal of Ethnomusicology* (since 2018).



A recent special issue of *The World of Music* (new series) journal, edited by Jacob Olley and contributed by scholars from Türkiye.

Today, with a highly productive and engaged new generation of scholars, scholarly work in musicology, ethnomusicology, and ethnochoreology in Türkiye is conducted in more than 20 musicology departments across the country. Many institutions also host numerous international symposia, carry out projects, and publish scholarly periodicals. Research spans ethnographic studies on the geography, peoples, and cultures of Türkiye; historical research on classical and popular music; and contemporary music practices centered on urban culture, including migrant communities, while also incorporating applied projects and actively engaging with current theoretical discussions in both the field and the broader social sciences.

Among the few research centers operating independently of universities, the Orient-Institut has made significant contributions to the field, particularly through its ongoing *Corpus Musicae Ottomanicae* project, launched in 2015. Other civic initiatives include the Association of Ethnomusicology, founded in 2017, which publishes both the *Journal of Ethnomusicology* and the *Gastroethnomusicology Journal* and which organizes academic and public music events, and the Turkish Music Academic Circle (TUMAC), which brings together scholars and researchers dedicated to the study, documentation, and dissemination of Turkish music through research, education, practice, and scholarly publications.

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## Poetry Matters

Mitra Jahandideh  
Edited by Sean Williams

In this poem from Mitra Jahandideh, we are offered a glimpse into a tradition deeply embedded in both the land and the local. In evoking a calling tradition that crosses boundaries from rural to urban and present to past, the poem allows readers to cross those same boundaries by reminding them of who they are and how their connections hold them to a place.

Sean Williams



### The Endless Flow

*Khele*, the lasting call  
of those  
whose voices rose  
on mountain peaks,  
winding through quiet valleys,  
echoing at dusk in summer pastures,  
and flowed on,  
forever,  
through the green land of Talesh.

The call of those  
who cradled  
this ancient seed  
in time's palm,  
and planted it deep  
in the soil of their days,  
so it might stir to life,  
in the hush of solitude,  
in the roar of joy,  
in steps lit with hope,  
in songs too restless to be still.

### جاری تا همیشه

خله آوای ماندگار آنان است،  
آنان که صدایشان  
در بلندای کوه،  
پیچ و تاب دره‌ها،  
شبانگاه بیلاق،  
و در خطه‌ی سبز تالش  
همواره جاریست.

آوای آنان  
که این دانه‌ی کهن را  
در مشت زمان فشردند  
و در خاک روزگار کاشتند،  
تا در تنهایی خود، در هیاهوی جشن،  
میان گام‌های روشن  
آوازهای بی‌قرار،  
جان گیرد.

The call of those  
who took *khele*  
from ancient soil,  
kept it breathing  
in today's air,  
and passed it on  
to the days to come.

May this call  
from the mountain heights  
to the heart of the sea,  
flow among you,  
forever.

آوای آنان  
که آن را  
از خاک کهن برگرفتند،  
در هوای امروز زنده نگه داشتند،  
و به آینده سپردند.

باشد که این آواز،  
از فراز کوه  
تا دل دریا،  
میان شما  
تا همیشه جاری باشد!

*Khele* is a calling tradition associated with the Talesh people of Iran. Its origin lies in the geographical and occupational needs of rural Talesh communities, where it is used to communicate over distances—with one another, with livestock, or to deter wild animals. *Khele* has gained new meaning as the Talesh community has undergone significant transformations; although its everyday use has diminished, *khele* continues to be featured in local concerts. It evokes shared memories of rural life and reminds audiences of their rural roots and their connection to nature, the land, and shared history. My research demonstrates that *khele* acts in different ways: practically for communication; emotionally for self-expression; and symbolically in cultural performances.

Mitra Jahandideh, PhD, Australian National University  
Co-Chair, ICTMD Study Group on Multispecies Sound and Movement  
[Mitra.Jahandideh@anu.edu.au](mailto:Mitra.Jahandideh@anu.edu.au)

# Cheryl L. Keyes's *Sundiata Keita Overture* Wins Global Music Award

Interview by Robert Baker (October 24, 2024)

Cheryl L. Keyes, Professor of Ethnomusicology, Global Jazz Studies, and Chair of the Department of African American Studies at UCLA, was awarded the silver medal in the Global Music Awards for her *Sundiata Keita Overture* (Fall 2025), and most recently second place in The American Prize in Composition in the category of pops/light music. Keyes discussed the inspiration behind the creation of the *Sundiata Keita Overture* in an interview found in the Herb Alpert School of Music *Newsletter* (Fall 2024) that best sums it all up.

*Where did you first encounter the story of Sundiata Keita?*

After graduating from Jacobs School of Music [at Indiana University-Bloomington], I pursued my doctorate degree in Folklore-Ethnomusicology there. I always wanted to study music of the African Diaspora, particularly of West Africa. African Americans trace their lineage to this area in Africa. I encountered Sundiata when studying Bambara, which was my second language for my Ph.D.

*Bambara was the language in Mali?*

Yes, it was the lingua franca for that region. I studied African folklore as part of my Ph.D. training, and that was where I first encountered the *Epic of Sundiata Keita*. In West Africa, Sundiata's story was told by the griot or bards, in English, *jeli* or *jeliw* in Bambara. They are the ones who celebrate his legacy through the oral tradition, even today. I came across the *Epic* while studying Bambara, because the teachers were familiar with Sundiata's legacy. Sundiata is known as the founder of the Mali Empire (c. 1217). Keita is the surname inherited by those from the royal family. Last names mean something in Africa. I visited Mali, West Africa, as part of my Ph.D. training, really wanting to study the women bards, rather than the men, and it ended up becoming the beginning of my understanding the elements of poetic nuance and the role of the word and language and meaning and power as it traveled across the Atlantic (with the African diaspora) and continues to permeate and transform into other traditions and newer forms that are a continuum of West African aesthetic practices.

*So, the griot tradition gets carried on in African American culture?*

Yes, it gets carried through a number of different forms, for instance: the traditional sermon, preaching as we call it; the blues, which is a form of lyrical poetry. With the migration of Blacks from the US South to urban centers in the North as well as those immigrants from the Caribbean, all of these genres or practices become repositories of many contemporary traditions today like MCing and DJing known popularly as rap music or hip hop. I discussed this in my book, *Rap Music and Street Consciousness*.

*Your Sundiata Overture has a very distinctive theme. How did you compose it?*

I carried that melody with me for a long time. It first came to me, in parts, when I was in graduate school. The story was inspiring and heroic.

*The melody has been in your head since graduate school?*

Yes! It's gone through many iterations. If you are talking about influences, one influence is the African musical tradition and improvisation. And when I'm talking about improvisation, I want to reference Alvin Batiste, who was the jazz clarinetist and educator at Southern University, an HBCU in Baton Rouge. We called him "Mr. Bat." Mr. Bat was known for using perfect fourths. So, when I thought of the Sundiata theme, I carried this influence with me. Film music also influenced my aesthetic choices. Composers like John Williams and the great Bernard Herrmann, who scored a lot of the Hitchcock films.

*So, you imagined this as a heroic story, a heroic theme?*

If I were ever asked to compose a film score of Sundiata's epic, my overture could definitely serve as a template. There are three themes in the *Sundiata Overture*. The first theme is called the "gait," because Sundiata was born physically challenged. But when he began to walk, he had a distinctive gait. The clarinets, trombones, tuba, and bassoon capture the melo-rhythmic groove, prior to the melody performed by the strings.

*There is some interesting instrumentation as well. Does this trace back to African roots?*

One does hear instruments emulating two of those performed by griot musicians of Mali and translated by instruments in a traditional orchestra: the kora, a harp-lute, which is performed by the harp, and the balafon, which sounds like and is performed similarly to the marimba.

In the *Epic*, Sundiata and his family are forced into exile by his nemesis, Sumanguru Kanté, king of the Susu people. The second theme in my overture is called “in a pensive state,” and is about Sundiata’s exile period in which he strategizes how to recapture Mali from the clutches of Sumanguru. The third theme is called “victory dance” celebrating Sundiata’s triumph and return to Mali, signified by the intro melody of the balafon, which was Sumanguru’s instrument, whom Sundiata overthrew.

*What are your future plans for the Sundiata Overture?*

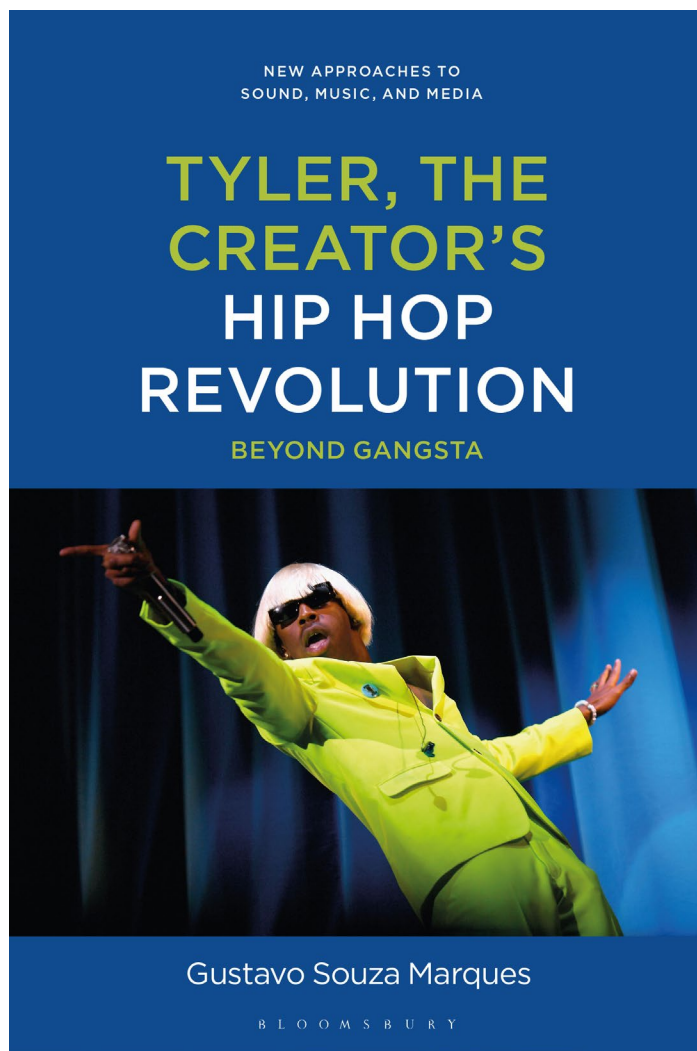
Well, given that the world premiere of *Sundiata Keita Overture* just won a silver medal from the Global Music Awards (and now 2nd Place in The American Prize in Composition in the category of pops/light music), I remain hopeful that it will be performed by more orchestras across the world. Sundiata is an important epic, especially because it demonstrates just how deep the cultural roots of African Americans really are.

Check out a recording of [Sundiata Keita Overture](#).

### Member News

Forthcoming in 2026 from Bloomsbury’s New Approaches to Sound, Music, and Media series, *Tyler, The Creator’s Hip Hop Revolution* offers a compelling exploration of the artist’s evolution as a cultural force in American music. Through close analysis of his music videos, lyrics, and performances, the book examines how Tyler redefines race, gender, and identity in contemporary Black expression.

Engaging postcolonial theory and critical race studies—including the work of Frantz Fanon—and drawing on original ethnographic research in Los Angeles, the book analyzes thought-provoking works like “Yonkers,” “Buffalo,” “Find Your Wings,” and “Sorry, Not Sorry.” Featuring a conversation with cinematographer Luis “Panch” Perez, this study positions Tyler as one of the most visionary and subversive figures in today’s music landscape.



## Conference Calendar

Compiled by Behrang Nikaeen, SEM Newsletter Editor

International Musicological Society, East Asian Regional Association Conference (IMSEA), 19-21 September, 2025, Yunnan University (Kunming, Yunnan Province, China). <https://www.imsea2025.org/call-for-papers>

Thirteenth Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies, 25-27 September, 2025, Oslo, Norway. <https://www.nsmes.org/Thirteenth-Nordic-Conference-on-Middle-Eastern-and-Studies>

The Azerbaijan-American Music Foundation Conference, 2-3 October, 2025. Online. <https://www.aamfusa.org/online-conference-oc-2025/>

The HONK! U Conference, 9 October, 2025, Tufts University. <https://honkfest.org/2025-festival/conference-2025/>

IASPM Canada Conference, 16-19 October, 2025, Toronto. <https://www.iaspm.ca/2025-iaspm-ca-conference>

The Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society, 18-21 October, 2025, Atlanta, Georgia. <https://americanfolkloresociety.org/meet-us-in-atlanta-for-the-2025-afs-annual-meeting/>

The 70th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, 23-26 October, 2025, Atlanta, Georgia. [https://www.ethnomusicology.org/page/Conf\\_2025](https://www.ethnomusicology.org/page/Conf_2025)

AMS-SMT Joint Annual Meeting, 6-9 November, 2025, Minneapolis, Minnesota. <https://www.amsmusicology.org/events/annual-meeting/>

Annual Meeting of Society for Christian Scholarship in Music, 26-28 February, 2026. Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois. <https://www.scsmusic.org>

AAA Annual Meeting, 19-23 November, 2025, New Orleans, Louisiana. <https://annualmeeting.americananthro.org/>

Technology and Musical Futures Conference, Online, 20-22 November, 2025. Submission Deadline: 21 September 2025. <https://cstm-sctm.ca/call-for-papers-appel-a-communications-conference-colloque-2025/>

MESA Annual Meeting, 22-25 November, 2025, Washington DC. <https://mesana.org/annual-meeting/future-meetings>

ISME South Asia Regional Conference, 19-21 November, 2025, Kathmandu, Nepal. <https://regionalconferences.isme.org/sarc/>

BFE-RMA Research Students' Conference, 6-8 January 2026, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, UK. <https://bfe.org.uk/conf/bfe-rma-research-students-conference-2026>

Between Research and Activism: Futures of Music and Minority Studies, 12-14 February, 2026, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. <https://www.musicandminorities.org/projekte/between-research-and-activism/>

Sounding Iran: Musical Pasts, Presents, and Futures, 7-8 February, 2026, University of California, Irvine, The Department of Music and the Samuel Jord Center for Persian Studies and Culture. [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfLCnwnIUuatQf3HtxKCvA2jeie2L\\_iICDoe1E85ziF5ZvamQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfLCnwnIUuatQf3HtxKCvA2jeie2L_iICDoe1E85ziF5ZvamQ/viewform)

Conference on Global Iranian Diaspora Studies, 29-30 May, 2026, University of Toronto, Canada. Submission Email: [gfdc.eomi@utoronto.ca](mailto:gfdc.eomi@utoronto.ca)

9th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Musics of East Asia, 3-5 July, 2026, Taiwan Music Institute, Taiwan Traditional Theatre Center, Taipei, Taiwan. Submission Deadline: 31 October 2025. Submission Email: [2026ictmdmea@gmail.com](mailto:2026ictmdmea@gmail.com)

49th ICTMD World Conference, 14-20 January, 2027, Santiago, Chile. <https://ictmd.org/ictmd2027>

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For more information about the society, its publications, groups, resources, and programs see [ethnomusicology.org](https://ethnomusicology.org).