Music, Art and Spirituality in Central Asia
29-30-31 October 2015
Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

Program

29 October
9:00-10:00 registration and coffee

10:00-10:20 Institutional greetings

10:20 Chair Giovanni De Zorzi (DFBC, University Ca’ Foscari of Venice)
Keynote. Jean During: Spiritual resonances in musical cultures of Central Asia: myths, dreams and ethics

Session 1. Chair: Anna Contadini (SOAS, University of London)
11:30 From Bones to Beauty in Kyrgyz Felt Textiles
Stephanie Bunn, University of St Andrews

12:10 The ‘tree of life’ motif in stucco mihrabs in the Zerafshan Valley
Katherine Hughes, SOAS, University of London

12.50-14.30 lunch

Session 2. Chair: Giovanni De Zorzi
14.30 Theory and Practice of Music under the Timurids
Alexandre Papas, CNRS, Paris

15.10 Sufi Shrines and Maqām Traditions in Central Asia: the Uyghur On Ikki Muqam and the Kashmiri Ṣūfyāna Musīqī
Rachel Harris, SOAS, University of London

15.50 A Musicological Study on Talqin as a Metric Cycle Shared by Spiritual and Secular-Classical Music Repertories in Central Asia
Saeid Kordmafi, SOAS, University of London

16:30-16:50 coffee break

Central Asian and Oriental Traces in Venice: a guided walk

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30 October
Session 3. Chair: Rachel Harris
9:30 Soviet Ballet and Opera: National Identity Building in Central Asia and the Caucasus
Firuza Melville, University of Cambridge

Inessa Kouteinikova, Amsterdam-St Petersbourg-Tashkent

10:50-11:10 coffee break
Session 4. Chair: Alexandre Papas
11:10 The legacy of the Central-Asian mystic Suleyman Baqirghani in the culture of the Volga Tatars: the phenomenon of the Baqirghan kitabı
Guzel Sayfullina, Netherlands

11:50 Meetings with jâhri dervishes in the Fergana Valley
Giovanni De Zorzi, University Ca’ Foscari, Venice

12:30-14:00 lunch

Session 5. Chair: Veronica Doubleday
14:00 The divine and the birds in the music of dotâr in Khorâssân (Iran)
Farrokh Vahabzadeh, MNHN/Sorbonne Universités, Paris

14:40 Meaningful Music, Unmediated Sound: Afghanistan revisited
Razia Sultanova, Cambridge University

15:20-15:40 coffee break

Session 6. Chair: Giovanni De Zorzi
15:40 Spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of female lullaby singing in Afghanistan
Veronica Doubleday, Goldsmiths, University of London

16:20 The gormanî initiation ritual as performed by the hereditary musicians of Kabul
John Baily, Afghanistan Music Unit, Goldsmiths, University of London

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October 31
Session 7. Chair: Rachel Harris
9.30 Wine, Tavern, and Samâ’ or How to Provoke Mystical Experience by Means of Audition
Janis Esots, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

10.10 The Sufi Poetry of Shah Ismail: Characteristics of a Genre
Amelia Gallagher, Niagara University

10:50-11:10 coffee break

Session 8. Chair: Anna Contadini
11:10 “Mi’raj” as a spiritual source of inspiration for two prominent miniature schools of Central Asia (Herat and Bokhara)
Anahita Alavi, College of Fine Arts, University of Tehran

11:50 Love, Music, Immortality. The Figure of a Turkmen Epic Singer
Sławomira Żerańska-Kominek, University of Warsaw

12:30-14.00 lunch

Session 9. Chair: Alexandre Papas
14.00 The Hoopoe’s Calling: The esoteric tradition of the Isma’ili community of Wakhan Pamir (Afghanistan)
Giovanni Pedrini, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

14.40 Kindling the Light: Spiritual Dimensions of the Ismaili Traditions in Badakhshan
Hakim Elnazarov, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

15.20 Discussions and closing of the conference

18:00 Sala degli Arazzi: Concert with the Ensemble Badakhshan
Abstracts and biographies

Anahita ALAVI, College of Fine Arts, University of Tehran

Mi’raj as a spiritual source of inspiration for two prominent miniature schools of Central Asia (Herat and Bokhara)

Mi’raj (the night journey of prophet Muhammad with Gabriel which started from Masjid al-haram in Mecca and arrived to Masjid al-aqsa) is one of the most significant phenomenon in history of Islam: for this reason many Muslim philosophers, poets and artists pay considerable attention to this metaphysical event from different perspectives. In particular, through the centuries Mi’raj has inspired many figurative artists and has been one of the most inspiring subject for various Persian miniature schools. The two cities of Herat and Bokhara were the major centers of the miniature in Central Asia. The miniature painting school called Herat (1433/836- 1500/880) initially flourished under the patronage of Timurids especially Shah-Rokh and it was developed during the reign of Baysunqur Mirza. With the conquest of Sheybanii Khan (Uzbek ruler) in 1500, Herat gradually lost its importance, as a center for artistic activities. Nevertheless, when Uzbeks overcame Central Asia, they tried to follow the Timurids’ principles in illustrating books tradition. Therefore, a new school of miniature painting flourished in Bokhara (1500/905-1599/1008) (the capital of Sheybanid dynasty), which was similar to the former in many aspects. Mi’raj scenes were a topic for both the school: many miniatures illustrated poetry masterworks like Haft- Orang of Jami (d.1493/898), Khanseh of Nizami (d.1211/608), Bustan of Sa’di (d.1292/691), Mi’raj Nameh of Mir Heydar. In this paper, the characteristics of the two mentioned schools will be studied through the illustrations of Mi’raj, that will be analyzed in terms of form and content. After this phase, my paper will take into exam the following themes: the relations between literature texts and illustrations; the formal elements such as figures, composition and characters’ features; the relations between dominant principles of each school; the role of artist’s imagination to represent the hell and paradise scenes; the slight movement of the figures without notable facial expression; the impact of Chines painting elements; the use of adornments.

Anahita Alavi is a Masters student in History of Art and Architecture of Islamic Middle East at SOAS, University of London. She is a teacher of Persian Miniature at Payame-Noor University of Tehran.

John BAILY, Afghanistan Music Unit, Goldsmiths, University of London

The gormani initiation ritual as performed by the hereditary musicians of Kabul

For many centuries Sufism was a widely practised form of Islam in Afghanistan. An area like Herat is filled with Sufi shrines, and is the burial place of great figures like Ansari and Jami. Herat is sometimes called Khak-e Auliya, ‘Dust of the Saints’. We may speak of the vernacular Sufism of recent times. The principal orders active in Afghanistan are the Qaderiya, Naqshbandiya, and Chishtiya. The latter is much favoured by urban hereditary musicians who perform Kabuli art music, notably ghazalkhani. The Kucheher Kharabat, Kabul’s musicians’ quarter, has two Chishti khanaghs nearby where spiritual music is performed all night on Thursday evenings, played by the denizens of the Kharabat and others. Afghan musicians in exile in Peshawar in Taliban times had recourse to the khanagah of Bacheh Qandi Agha, where lengthy discussions of Sufi poetry, especially that of Bedil, were followed by the singing of spiritual ghazals. We may speak of the protocols of the Kharabat, the (unwritten) rules of conduct amongst musicians. Paramount here is the apprenticeship system which prioritises the ustad-shagird relationship, and from which derive certain musical lineages. Central to the ustad-shagird relationship is the gormani initiation ritual. Gor refers to raw sugar, and mani is the act of giving. The ritual involves the tying of a string of seven colours round the wrist of the shagird by the ustad, and a session of mutual feeding of sweetmeats. The string is described as being like an unbreakable chain between student and teacher. There are certain analogies between tying the string round the musician’s wrist and tying a belt around a murid’s waist by a Sufi Pir. The protocols of the Kharabat appear to have been transmitted to other cities in Afghanistan like Herat and Mazar-e Sharif in association with the newly developed art music of Kabul in the early 20th century. In 1994 the rubab player Ustad Rahim Khushnawaz took on a new student, an amateur musician, and a large majles was conducted with some degree of secrecy, for this was the pre-Tabilan Mujahideen-Coalition era when music was already under severe pressure, even before the arrival of the Taliban.

John Baily is Emeritus Professor of Ethnomusicology and Head of the Afghanistan Music Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London. He holds doctorates in experimental psychology and ethnomusicology, and is trained in anthropological filmmaking. Baily has taught at The Queen’s University of Belfast, Columbia University and Goldsmiths; most of his research has been on the music of Afghanistan. He is the
author of *Music of Afghanistan: Professional musicians in the city of Herat* (Cambridge University Press, 1988) and *Songs from Kabul: The Spiritual Music of Ustad Amir Mohammad* (Ashgate, 2011). His latest monograph *War, Exile and the Music of Afghanistan. The Ethnographer’s Tale* was published by Ashgate in August this year. As part of his research he has been performing Afghan music on the Herati *dutar* and the Kabuli *rubab* since the 1970s, often accompanying the singing of his wife Veronica Doubleday.

**Stephanie BUNN, University of St Andrews**

*From Bones to Beauty in Kyrgyz Felt Textiles*

In this paper I explore how the practice, imagery and aesthetics in Kyrgyz and other Central Asian nomadic felt textile arts can inform us about spirituality in the region. I first consider the domestic contexts in which these textiles were made until recently, and especially how the practices and values attendant on making Kyrgyz felt *shyrdaks* and *ala kiiz* have been impacted on by the transition to a global economy. I suggest that women’s making practice in itself formerly reflected a moral economy which contained a specific set of beliefs about how humans might live in the world and discuss how the recent transition has affected this. I then develop the discussion to address the aesthetics of Kyrgyz felt textiles, focusing on herders’ concern with bone imagery and kin, the significance of balance, *tengdö*, and colour and the meaningfulness of the textiles. I explore these factors in regard to women makers’ understanding of human destiny, and how to live in a world where herding and hunting are key husbandry practices. I also show how different nuances of cultural background create textile works, which appear to reflect different emphases of belief. In doing so, I argue that among Kyrgyz herders, it is difficult to disentangle the relationship between spirituality, shamanistic beliefs, and human-environment relations. Drawing on the work of Rasayanagam, Kandiyoti, Aitpaeva and my own experience of 20 years of field and archival research in the region, I suggest that it is necessary to try to understand these works as cultural and creative artefacts where makers are practicing both shamanism and Islam, and that neither can be privileged in the process.

**Stephanie Bunn** is a Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. She has conducted extensive ethnographic and historical research into felt textile practices among high mountain Kyrgyz pastoralists in Central Asia, and more broadly of nomadic peoples across the region. Most recently, she has also been carrying out a collaborative ethno-historical study of Scottish vernacular basketry alongside contemporary Scottish basket-makers. Practice forms an important element of all of her research and she has done apprenticeships and learned many of the practical skills entailed in both her areas of study. Stephanie has made several collections of nomadic felt textiles for museums in the UK and worked with the British Museum to curate the first ever British Museum exhibition on Central Asian nomadic textiles, *Striking Tents*. Her publications include *Kyrgyzstan*, an edited study of the work of the Kyrgyz ethnographer Klavdiya Antipina, and *Nomadic Felts of the World* published by the British Museum Press. Most recently she has co-produced www.wovencommunities.org/ the interactive website of her current research project on Scottish basketry.

**Anna CONTADINI, SOAS, University of London**

Anna Contadini is Professor of the History of Islamic Art and Head of the School of Arts, SOAS, University of London. She was Lecturer in Islamic Art at Trinity College, Dublin and has been a Curator at the V&A (where she conducted research culminating in her book *Fatimid Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, V&A, 1998) and at the Chester Beatty Library, where her interest in music iconography started (she has recently published “Picturing music in Islamic art.” In: Ward, Rachel, (ed.), *Court and Craft: A Masterpiece from Northern Iraq*. The Courtauld Gallery with Paul Holberton Publishing, London, 2014, pp. 46-51). Arab and Persian painting is a research topic central to her work, and she has published the award winning edited volume on *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2007 and 2010). More recently she has published a single-authored book *A World of Beasts: a Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Arabic Book on Animals (the Kitāb Naʿt al-Ḥayawān) in the Ibn Bakhṭīshūʿ Tradition*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012. Another area of interest of Professor Contadini is the material culture of the Islamic Middle East, its aesthetics and context as well as its relationship with European art. She has published extensively on subjects of, for example, ivories, metalwork, glass and rock crystal objects, as well as on the artistic contacts between the Islamic World and Europe, including *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, (ed. with Claire Norton), Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.
Giovanni DE ZORZI, University Ca’ Foscari, Venice

Meetings with jāhri dervishes in the Fergana Valley

In Central Asia two main methods developed for the zikr (Arab dhikr, ‘remembering, recollection’): the jāhri (‘vocal, loud, manifest’) and the khāfī (‘silent, secret, hidden’) both with their virtues exposed in ancient treatises and both traditionally linked with particular linguistic groups and Sufi brotherhoods. In particular, the jāhri method gave life to some practices that I’ve met during my researches: first of all the zikr jāhri in itself, which flourished in a great variety of forms and rhythmic patterns. Secondly, the raqs-i samā’, i.e. the physical ‘movements’ (raqs) that can arise from the ‘listening’ (samā’) of the mystical poetry sung by the ḥāfız(ī)es. If dervishes nowadays underline the purely vocal trait of this practice, yet the presence of music and musical instruments in zikr is documented in treatises and reports from the past. Thirdly, a composite, complex, jāhri aesthetic is evident in the role and functions of the ḥāfız(ī)es: they know by heart mystical Sufi poetry composed by the great Sufi saints/poets of the past, and they primarily sings this repertoire during particular zikr phases. Yet, out of the strict brotherhood circles, ḥāfız(ī)es often had a musical performing career, while is worthy of note that some poems of their repertoire are also texts sung in Central Asian classical music (shash maqom, onikki muqam). Finally, ḥāfız(ī) and, among women, otīns can ‘sonically’ cure and heals participants in rituals called differently from place to place: the healing through verbal formulae takes us to Shamanism, and this is clearly evident in the ceremony called jāhr. Video and audio excerpts will exemplify my paper.

Giovanni De Zorzi, Ethnomusicology PhD, is currently Ethnomusicology lecturer at the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage (DFBC) of the University Ca’ Foscari of Venice. His main research areas are the Ottoman and Central Asian traditions of Art and sufi music. His activities take him to alternate a performing musical life (Ottoman ney flute), with field research, scientific writing, music and academic teaching. He collaborates with different music festivals and directed the ‘ethnic’ sections of the huge MiTO “Settembre Musica” Festival that each year takes place between Milan and Turin. Among his eighty publications, the books: Musiche di Turchia. Tradizioni e transiti tra Oriente e Occidente, con un saggio di Kudsi Erguner. (Ricordi/Universal Music, 2010); Con I dervisci. Otto incontri sul campo (Mimesis, 2013). Among his recordings: Ensemble Marâghi, Anwâr. From Samarqand to Constantinople on the Footsteps of Marâghi (2010); Ensemble Birûn (dir. Kudsi Erguner), Composers at the Ottoman Court, (2013). Ensemble Birûn (dir. Kudsi Erguner), Armenian Composers of Ottoman Music (2014).

Veronica DOUBLEDAY, Goldsmiths, University of London Spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of female lullaby singing in Afghanistan

The singing of lullabies by women in Afghanistan is very much alive today. Emanating from musical practices of unfathomable antiquity, its primary purpose is to lull a child to sleep through an intimate form of vocal and rhythmic communication. In Afghanistan lullaby singing has clear spiritual and artistic dimensions as a meditative improvisational form, and lullaby texts make frequent devotional references. Furthermore, these lullabies display significant parallels with Sufi dhikr, in their emphasis on rhythm, and repeated invocations of names of God. Lullabies are designed to promote physical effects, leading to trance-like states and eventual sleep; in this respect they also bear some similarity with Sufi techniques designed to achieve altered states of consciousness. This presentation will mainly examine lullaby singing in the Persian-language tradition of Herat, based on lullabies recorded in Herat, in context, at the cradle, at times when mothers actually needed to lull their babies. I will also make comparative references to other non-Persian-speaking regions of Afghanistan. As well as this, I will draw on the valuable work of the Iranian singer Sima Bina, who has collected, recorded and performed lullabies from all regions of her country. I shall argue that in the diverse cultures of Afghanistan, and in Iran, lullaby singing displays consistent spiritual and artistic elements. Along with frequent direct appeals to God, there is a notable imaginative tendency to evoke natural symbols such as flowers and trees. Many lullabies may be interpreted as prayers, and women have freedom to incorporate personalised hopes and aspirations into their singing. The examination of lullaby singing allows access into the private expressive traditions of women, in a privileged performance space where they may find solace and relief from their mundane concerns.

Veronica Doubleday is an ethnomusicologist, author and performer of Afghan music (as a singer and daireh player). Between 1973-7 she spent two years in the city of Herat, during which time she undertook research on miniature painting and women’s expressive culture. She has published a narrative ethnography, Three Women of Herat (1988), numerous articles and encyclopedia entries on Afghanistan, and also I Cried on the Mountain Top (2010), a volume of archive photographs accompanied by traditional Persian-language lyrics.
Another academic focus has been musical instruments and gender, both cross-culturally and specifically on frame drums in the Middle East.

Jean DURING, LESC (Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative) CREM (Centre de recherche en Ethnomusicologie) of CNRS

Spiritual resonances in musical cultures of Central Asia: myths, dreams and ethics

In Inner Asian cultures, spiritual knowledge, which is designated by the term 'erfân, comes in two modes: intellectual and practical, 'erfân nazari and 'erfân 'amali. Spirituality, mysticism is a high science encompassing self-knowledge which is only possible through practice ('amal), not only through contemplation, meditation or study. Similarly, ancient scholars clearly distinguished between music as a science or knowledge and as a practice. Structured on this complementarity this lecture is conceived as a journey in the field of music, as I have discovered it over the years in Middle Asia in the writings of the Ancients and through the saying of the musicians of our time whom I had the chance to meet. It is therefore structured in two parts: the great ideas, the symbolic, the imaginary, and their actualization in reality and practice. Between the two unfolds the vast field of dreams.

Jean During is emeritus senior fellow at the French National Center for Scientific Research (LESC-CREM). His fieldwork covers many musical traditions of Inner Asia as well as Sufi and Shamanic rituals. He spent 11 years in Iran and 5 years in Uzbekistan. He has written thirteen books on the musical traditions and cultures of Inner Asia, and released 50 CD with scientific notes. Three of his books and many articles have been translated into Persian.

Hakim ELNAZAROV, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

Kindling the Light: Spiritual Dimensions of the Ismaili Traditions in Badakhshan

The Ismailis of Central Asia represent one of the richest and most culturally diverse Ismaili communities globally. They have preserved some of the ancient and distinguished religious practices of the Central Asian Muslims, which attest to the richness of the traditions of the mountain communities of Central Asia. A seminal religious practice of the Ismailis residing in the mountainous terrains of Tajikistan and surrounding regions is known as the ceremony of the Chiragh-i Rawshan (Luminous Lamp). The ceremony, which is part of a funeral ceremony, has evolved over centuries, turning into a sophisticated ritual which entails a number of interconnected rites and practices. The recitation of Quranic verses and chanting of religious poetry are accompanied by the visual presentation of the making and kindling of light (chiragh). The whole ceremony is infused with the profound meaning and purpose of human existence, humankind’s relationship with God and his apostles and contemplation about life after death. The ceremony is preceded by the performance of devotional poetry, known as ‘maddoh’, which is enacted to provide spiritual elevation and to prepare the ground and atmosphere for the observance of the ceremony.

This paper will illustrate a) the various meanings which are attached to the performance of the Chiragh-i Rawshan ceremony and to its constitutive parts, b) the contemplation, emotions and the psychological relations which they create among the participants of the ceremony, c) the healing power and the consolation which the performance of the Chiragh-i Rawshan and maddoh provide to the bereaved family and d) the communal bond which is forged as a result. These dimensions are closely intertwined and enhance the spiritual and aesthetic experiences derived from the performance and observance of the traditions.

Hakim Elnazarov is a Coordinator of the Central Asian Studies Unit at the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS), London, UK. He completed his graduate studies at the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the Tajik State University in Dushanbe, Tajikistan with specialization in Arabic and Islamic Studies. Hakim then obtained his M. Ed from the Institute for Educational Development (IED) of the Aga Khan University (AKU), Karachi, Pakistan, and worked in various capacities in the field of higher education in Tajikistan and East Africa. In 2003 he joined the IIS as a Research Fellow, and since 2006 he has been coordinating the activities of the Central Asian Studies Unit. He has edited a number of books and has published articles and book reviews on topics related to Central Asia, such as history, religious education, languages and gender issues. He is a co-author of the chapter ‘Nizari Ismailis of Central Asia’ in Daftary, Farhad (ed). A Modern History of the Ismailis: Continuity and Change in Muslim Community, Ismaili Heritage Series, 13. He is also co-editor of ‘Endangered Languages and History’ and ‘Russian Scholars on Ismailism’, which are the proceedings of the international conferences sponsored by the IIS in Tajikistan and Russia in 2009 and 2013 respectively.
Janis ESOTS, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

Wine, Tavern, and Sama’ or How to Provoke Mystical Experience by Means of Audition

I shall build my talk on three key concepts – 
may (’wine’), maykhāna (’tavern’) and sama’ (’audition’) – attempting to show, how the latter can be used as means to provoke the state of intoxication (sukr/masti), which, depending on the degree of its intensity, is described by Ṣūfī authors as maykhāna or kharābāt (’ruins’). After introducing and explaining these concepts (using examples from such authors as Aḥmad-i Jām, Maḥmūd Shabistari and Shāh Ni’matullāh Wālī), I will examine a few passages from Sa’īd al-Dīn al-Shirāzī’s Mashāriq al-darārī (which represents a collection of notes of Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī’s lectures on Ibn al-Fārīd’s Naẓm al-sulūk, given during his trip to Egypt ca.1246). I will argue that the concepts of tawājud (’inviting ecstasy’), wujūd (’ecstasy’ proper) and wujūd (a habituated of ’finding the Real in ecstasy’) as they are interpreted by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, refer to three stages of the Ṣūfī’s spiritual journey. Qūnawī explains the cathartic effect of audition as the result of the overwhelming (ghalabat) of the property of oneness of existence (wahdat-i wujūd) and its predominance over the property of manyness. Through this overwhelming and predominance, the individual existence of the Ṣūfī comes in touch with the world of Unboundedness (tiḥāq) and, for an instant, experiences itself as the Unbound (which experience is usually referred to as the “essential self-disclosure” (tajallī-yi dhātī) and the “ruins”). The Ṣūfī wishes the experience to last, but, because in his this-worldly configuration (i.e., in the natural mode of existence) the influence of the property of manyness and binding is extremely strong, it cannot continue longer than for an instant. The tension between the properties of oneness and unboundedness and those of manyness and binding causes great suffering which, according to both Ibn al-Fārīd and Qūnawī, is not different from the suffering and agony of death.

Janis Esots is a Research Associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies (London, UK) and an Associate Professor of Persian and Arabic at the Department of Asian Studies of the University of Latvia (Riga, Latvia) He received his Ph.D. in Near East Languages and Cultures from Tallinn University, Estonia. His doctoral dissertation is devoted to the Iranian philosopher Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (Mulla Sadra, ca. 1570-ca. 1635). He has published about fifty articles and chapters on Islamic philosophy, Sufism and Persian literature and translated into Russian several works of Mulla Sadra, Suhrawardī, Mir Damād, Sadr al-Dīn Qunawi and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. He is the editor of the Islamic Philosophy Yearbook “Ishraq”, published jointly by the Institute of Philosophy of Russian Academy of Sciences and Iranian Academy of Philosophy (http://eng.iph.ras.ru/ishraq.htm ). He has contributed articles to several encyclopaedias, including “The Qur’an: An Encyclopedia” (Routledge) and “The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought” (Princeton University Press), “Encyclopedia Islamica” (Brill) and “Springer Encyclopedia of Indian Religions” (forthcoming 2016). Currently his working on a monograph on the Isfahan philosophical school (17th – 18th centuries).

Amelia GALLAGHER, Niagara University

The Sufi Poetry of Shah Ismail: Characteristics of a Genre

This paper will explore the role of Shah Ismail Safevi (1487-1524) within a form of musical poetry that is an integral part of the spiritual practice of several Ṣūfī-based Islamic sects including the Kızılıbash, the Shabak and the Ahl-i Hakk. Shah Ismail is well known as the founder of the Safavid dynasty, which established Twelver Shiʿism as the religion of state and ushered Iran into modern times as an integral entity. Less is known, however, about his spiritual-poetic legacy, based on a corpus of literary attributions, composed mainly in simple folk meters and set to music. Originally written in his mother dialect of Azeri Turkish, Orientalist historians evaluated Shah Ismail’s poetry only in terms of its role in regional politics and dynastic propaganda. However, Azeri literary historians of the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan insisted that Shah Ismail’s poetry was a major factor in the literary development of Azeri poetics. This paper continues this avenue of inquiry by seeing Shah Ismail’s poetry in its literary context which is also central to the spirituality of several sectarian groups indigenous to the region.

Through generations of his disciples, Shah Ismail’s poetry became a tradition in its own right, a characteristic voice of ethical didacticism, ritual procedure and spiritual meaning. The poetic sources that will be the focus of this paper are located in various collections of folk poetry, chief among them entitled “The Buyruk” (“The Command”)—a manual of ethics and ritual, of which several versions are known. I intend to show how the presence of Shah Ismail within these ritual manuals is evidence of the ritual context that shaped his poetic identity. The communal ritual was the scene where this poetry developed, as the insistent reference within the poetry itself to the ritual demonstrates.
Amelia Gallagher is a Professor of Religious Studies at Niagara University, with a Ph.D. from the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University. Her articles have appeared in Iran Studies and the Journal of Folklore Research. She has recently conducted research on shrine visitation and Ali-based sects in Ephesus and Antioch, Turkey.

Rachel HARRIS, SOAS, University of London

Sufi Shrines and Maqām Traditions in Central Asia: the Uyghur On Ikki Muqam and the Kashmiri Sūfyāna Musīqī

This paper considers the links between Sufi devotional practices and Central Asian maqām with reference to two distinct traditions: the Kashmiri Sūfyāna Musīqī and the Uyghur On Ikki (Twelve) Muqam. Both of these traditions pay homage to the Systematist school of music theory as it was transmitted to Central Asia, but they have also evolved over time, absorbing new layers of theorisation and new kinds of repertoire, and adapting to new contexts of performance. I speculate that the imposition of different forms of musical theory in the different locations may serve to mask deeper, unmarked, similarities in performance and aesthetics. I argue that the common features shared by these traditions are in part the heritage of a shared Central Asian theoretical tradition, but also a deeply sedimented set of shared musical practices and aesthetic preferences. Maqām traditions in this region are closely tied to Sufi traditions of vocal practice. Both the Sūfyāna Musīqī and the On Ikki Muqam are (or were until recently) performed at Sufi shrines, and we know that itinerant Sufis of various orders travelled between Kashmir and Kashgar throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, spreading their religious teaching. I suggest that these spiritual links are more significant than the elite heritage of music theory in explaining the close musical relations between these two regional maqām traditions.

Rachel Harris is Reader in the Music of China and Central Asia at SOAS, University of London. In addition to journal articles and book chapters, she is the author of Singing the Village: memories, music and ritual amongst the Sibe of Xinjiang (2004) and The Making of a Musical Canon in Chinese Central Asia (2008). She is co-editor of Situating the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia (2007), Gender in Chinese Music (2013) and the ethnomusicology textbook Pieces of the Musical World (2015). Her research interests include global musical flows, identity politics and Islamic soundscapes, and she currently leads the Leverhulme research project Sounding Islam in China. She is actively engaged with outreach projects relating to Central Asian and Chinese music, including recordings, musical performance and consultancy.

Katherine HUGHES, SOAS, University of London

The ‘tree of life’ motif in stucco mihrabs of the Zerafshan Valley

The ‘tree of life’ motif is well known from Central Asian textiles and wooden artifacts, such as the Metropolitan Museum’s door panel from Samarqand (23.67.7), however few analogous Central Asian stucco mihrabs have been published. This paper investigates how trees are depicted on or near probable mihrabs in the Zerafshan Valley, in the area of modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, both in the early Islamic period and today. These poorly published artifacts include a stucco mihrab from the Afrasiab excavations in Samarqand, thought to date to the early 9th century and a stucco mihrab from the later Samanid ‘Palace of Afrasiab’ (9th-10th century). The mihrab is no longer extant and known only from photographs. The paper will aim to tease out any formal links to the mihrab of Jami al-Khasaki, Iraq (c. 762 CE), with its band of acanthus leaves. Afrasiab/ Samarqand, on the lower Zerafshan has been one of Central Asia’s most important urban cultural centres for over a millennium. Also in the frame is a modern stucco panel placed above a mihrab in the main village mosque in Obburdon in the rural and mountainous Upper Zerafshan Valley, showing a flowering tree between two vases. The latter are thought to symbolise the sacred waters, watering the tree. This panel was partially covered with a picture, so perhaps the image is not quite acceptable. From a purely formal perspective, it seems that the tree has been moved out of the mihrab’s sacred space, to just above it. The faithful are still facing the tree during prayer. The location of the tree motif suggests its continued importance as symbolising the numinous. The paper aims to situate these aesthetic and religious choices within Central Asian political and cultural contexts, translated from a medieval urban to a modern rural environment. The iconography also suggests a long standing interaction between Islam and other religious traditions found in Central Asia, such as Zoroastrianism. Trees continue to be seen as sacred by many Uzbeks and Tajiks, and are important components of mazars or sacred spaces. The paper situates this research within the rich methodology surrounding the power and agency of objects, and the reciprocal and dynamic processes between objects and societies or social groups. Objects are thus able to construct their own narratives linking past to present and generators of their own historicity, thereby reflecting changes and continuities in meaning and signification through time and place.
Katherine Hughes submitted her PhD thesis, entitled *Samanid material culture and identity formation in post-Soviet Tajikistan*, in September 2014. During her research she was supported by scholarships from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, The Aida Sulayman Arif Fund and the Gerda Henkel Foundation. She completed her MA in Museum Studies at University College London (UCL), and BA also at UCL in Archaeology of Western Asia. She also studied for one year of her BA at the Freie Universität Berlin (FU). She spent three months prior to that on an archaeological excavation in Syria at Dur Kaltimmu, with the FU.

After graduating, she worked in museums and galleries in London, including the Royal Academy of Arts, London Transport Museum and Museum of London, as a digital curator. She then managed the website of the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS), London. There she had a rich learning experience, discovering more about the Ismaili community and the work of the IIS. Prior to her PhD she undertook some fascinating solo travel in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Turkey.

Interested in identity and material culture as well as the interplay between past and present, she spent nine months on PhD fieldwork in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This was spent looking at Samanid architecture and museum displays. She also looked at post-independent monumental architecture in Tajikistan and how the new state is symbolised in visual culture.

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Saeid KORDMAFI, SOAS, University of London

*A Musicological Study on Talqin as a Metric Cycle Shared by Spiritual and Secular-Classical Music Repertoires in Central Asia*

Relations between *Shashmaqom* (the classical repertory of Central Asia) and *Zikr Maqom* (the musical materials applied in the ritual practice of Zikr) can be investigated from various perspectives. One of the most interesting is the rhythm-metric features of pieces. Metric pieces are crucial parts of Sufi ceremonies, and *Zikr Maqoms* employ specific *Usuls* (metric cycles). Among these, *Talqin* plays a critical role in both spiritual and classical repertoires. The limping (*Lang*) rhythm of *Talqin*, according to Central Asian musicians, is frequently used in the various regional traditions of Sufi chanting that accompany the ceremony of *Zikr*. *Talqin* and its rhythm variants can be found in the Turkic spiritual songs of Tashkent-Fergana repertory (especially of the *Yassawi* order) as well as Persian-Tajik repertories of Sufis in Samarqand and Bukhara. It is also found in some spiritual pieces which are not performed in Zikr ceremonies. In both Tajik and Uzbek *Shashmaqom*, *Talqin* as a metro-rhythmic formula (*Usul*) is performed in the pieces which have taken their title from the name of the *Usul*. These pieces are located in the first branch (*Shu‘ba*) of the *Nasr* (the vocal part). Some other pieces like *Taronahs*, *Mustazads*, *Qalandari* seem to be based on *Talqin Usul* and its close variants (*Talqinchas* and *Chapandoz*) or inspired by these cycles.

This paper will analyze the rhythmic features of *Talqin* and its variants in the spiritual and classical repertoires, and discuss the relation between *Talqin* and *Zikr-e Tawhid*. I will discuss the creative techniques by which *Talqinchas* and *Chapandoz* are derived from *Talqin*, and analyse rhythmic-metric features of both repertoires, looking at the relations between *Usul*, melodic line and lyric setting. I will argue that changing *Talqin* to its variants (*Talqinchas* and *Chapandoz*) lead to new melodic form and the need to apply new prosodic meters in the poetry.

Saeid Kordmafi is a PhD student in the Department of Music at SOAS, University of London. He is a member of the editorial board of Mahoor Music Quarterly, and research assistant of the Music Department at the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia (CGIE).

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Inessa KOUTEINIKOVA, Amsterdam-St Petersburg-Tashkent

*Russianization and Colonial Knowledge of Traditional Musical Education in Turkestan (1865-1920)*

In 1886, in the middle of the Russia’s rapid political campaign in Central Asia, one of Tashkent’s local judges extolled Russian rule for “tolerating Islam, leaving in peace our Sharia courts and medrese, granting municipal self-government, and bringing peace and well-being for the people practicing all arts”. Such reassuring words were pleasing to the Uzbek ears. Already in 1892, on the twenty-seventh anniversary of the conquest, the Turkestan governor-general’s speech celebrated the “significant well-being and sound rule” that the quarter-century had brought to the new Central Asia. Neither he, nor any other Turkestan governor, mentioned the state, or even existence, of the traditional Uzbek music, although some spoken about the musical reforms. Traditional practices dominated the daily lives of the rural and urban population of Central Asia, while a small group of Turkestan elite had, for reasons dictated by self-interest, corruption or, commitment, begun to collaborate with the colonial administration and advised on the ways the musical education should be carried, even though the Russian authorities themselves were not agreed on what those ways were. Music played a much larger part in the Russian conquest of Central Asia than the Tsarist cultural policy and popular criticism of the campaign would suggest. With a founding of the Uzbek Musical society
in 1882 and the arrival of the first musicologists from Russia and Austro-Hungarian Empire in Tashkent, many saw it less in sentiments than in detail, in the actual “livingness” of performance. Understanding the mysteries of that musical world suddenly became a matter of great importance in matter of colonial rule. It is somehow fitting that the major photographic document of the colonial Turkestan, Turkestan Album (1872-73), should pay so much attention to the traditional musical culture. The Album’s structure counterpoised visions of Central Asia’s past, present and future, dividing it into four principle sections with a special interest in ethnographic musical history, displayed in the last volume. This paper aims to explain the Russian attitude toward Central Asian musical tradition between 1865-1920.

**Inessa Kouteinikova** is an Amsterdam-based researcher and independent scholar whose focus is nineteenth century Russian and International Orientalism. Born in Moscow and trained as an art and architecture historian in New York (Columbia and Cornell Universities), she spent three years lecturing in Australia and working at the Australian National Gallery. Since 2000 she divides her time between Amsterdam, Moscow and Central Asia. From 2008 she was curator and the author of the first exhibition on Russia's Unknown Orient in the Netherlands that brought together twenty-four museum collections from Russia, Central Asia, Caucasus, Crimea and Europe. She initiated and developed research foundation ARTIKA whose aim to conduct research and non-for-profit projects in the public realm, exhibitions, publications, conferences and seminars as well as workshops and resources for individual artists and small arts organizations in Uzbekistan and Armenia. Next to being an art historian, researcher and curator, Dr Kouteinikova is a professional singer and creates musical programs for the museums and cultural institutions inside and outside Holland where she explores and interprets the artworks through musical repertoire and narration.

**Firuza MELVILLE, University of Cambridge**

_Soviet Ballet and Opera: National Identity Building in Central Asia and the Caucasus_ The paper will deal with the materials of Persian medieval literature as reflected in various artistic genres originating in Europe: 3D visual arts, cinema, theatre, focusing on opera and ballet. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, during the Soviet period, these developed as a means of cultural Sovietisation and Russification. The aim of the presentation is to show how this was successfully achieved due to the academically identified cultural icons of national heritage, as reflected in traditional arts and their ‘recycling’ for the new ideology.

**Firuza Melville** is a graduate (BA hons, MA.) of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, St Petersburg University, where she received her PhD in Persian Art and literature and was teaching until 2005. She joined Cambridge British Academy Shahnama Project as Senior Research Associate in 2002. She left St Petersburg as an Associate Professor for Oxford, where she was offered a post of University lecturer in Persian literature at the Oriental Institute and Tutorial Fellow as well as Keeper of the Firdausi Library at Wadham College. In 2010 she returned to Cambridge as the Iran Heritage Foundation Research Fellow at Pembroke College, Cambridge. Since 2013 she is Director of Research of the Pembroke Centre for Persian Studies, University of Cambridge.

**Alexandre PAPAS, CNRS, Paris**

_Theory and Practice of Music under the Timurids_ Although the cultural history of the Timurid Empire (1370-1507) is now well-documented, especially miniature, architecture and poetry, the situation of music remains relatively obscure. It remains that musicians and musical sessions were ubiquitous in the cultural landscape of Samarkand or Herat, and this, not only at the level of aristocratic assemblies (majlis) but also among the lower strata of society. The aim of the paper is primarily to explore some primary sources, written either in Persian or in Turki, to understand the practice and the theory of music under the Timurids. Chronicles such as Wâsîfî's _Badâyi' al-waqâyi'_ , biographical dictionaries like Nawâ'î's _Majâlis al-nafâ'is_ , the social description of Herat by the same author entitled _Mahbûb al-qulûb_ , in addition to Turki lexical compendiums, allow us to put names on people and to document musical instruments and techniques, whether sophisticated or more popular. The _Treatise on music_ composed by Jâmî – a quite detailed essay that shows the remarkable expertise of the polymath in this area – sheds some light on the theory of _muṣīqî_ , which was correlated with actual practices. This also suggests that Sufis were particularly interested in concerts and performances but constantly discussed their spiritual benefits. Having painted this basic picture of musical culture in Timurid Central Asia, I will examine the relationships between poetry, music and Sufism, relationships that were then particularly close, so much so that singing or playing an instrument appeared as a specific experience of language. My hypothesis is that music under the Timurids was perceived as a sort of third, ambivalent way between poetical rhetoric and mystical liturgy, giving access to the invisible forces of sounds.
The legacy of the Central-Asian mystic Suleyman Baqirghani in the culture of the Volga Tatars: the phenomenon of the Baqirghan kitabi

Suleyman Baqirghani (early 13th century) is one of the most significant representatives of the Yasawiyah order, in Central Asia mostly known as Hakim-ata /Suleyman Hakim-ata/. In spite of huge distance which separates the territories where he lived from the Volga-Ural region, he was well known among Tatars and Bashkirs (the “Northern Turks”; Koprulu), thanks to the spread of the Yasawiyah teaching here. Baqirghani was venerated both as the disciple and the closest follower of Ahmad Yasawi, as a saint, and also, as an author of hikmets and poems which enjoyed special popularity in the Tatar milieu. His poems Akhirzaman...
kitabi ('Book of the End of the World'), Maryam ana kitabi ('Book of Mother Maria'), Ismaghil qissasi ('Story of Ismail') were read and chanted by Tatars till the second half of the 20th century, notwithstanding unfavourable conditions for development of any religious traditions in that period. In course of time, the recitation of these texts became a part of such Tatar folk tradition as the ‘book chanting’ (kitap köyläp uqu). An important place in the repertoire of “chanted books” was always taken by the Başırğhan kitabi ('Book of Başırğhan') first published in Kazan in 1847. Despite the fact that it is a collection of texts written by different Turkic Sufi authors of the 12 – 18th centuries (including Ahmad Yasawi), and only a small portion of poems here belongs to Suleyman Hakim-ata himself, this book, is named after Başırğhani. Being different by their structure, the poems of the collection were traditionally recited with tunes (the “book melodies”), united in folk tradition under the common title Başırğhan köe (“the Başırğhan melodies”).

In my paper I will discuss the following questions: the repertoire of texts attributed to Suleyman Başırğhani; the reasons of their popularity in the Tatar milieu; the specificity of their interpretation in Tatar culture of the past and present; their forms of transmission both written and oral; the distinguishing features of the melodies called Başırğhan köe and of their performance. Video and audio excerpts recorded in the Republic of Tatarstan, 1990-2000’s, will exemplify my paper.

Guzel Sayfullina is a musicologist, and independent scholar, working in The Netherlands and Russia. Graduated from the Kazan State conservatory, holds a PhD. from the Russian Institute of Arts (Moscow). Main areas of interest: traditional musical culture of Tatar Muslims; all aspects of the problem “Islam and music”, Sufism. Authored six books (in Russian. Among others: “Music of Holy Word. Recital of the Koran in the traditional Tatar Muslim culture” (1999); “Baghishlau/dedications in the folk culture of Tatar Muslims” (2005); “The Categories of Traditional Tatar Music. An Annotated Glossary” (2009); “Islam and music. Views of Tatar theologians” (2013). In the past she was affiliated to the Kazan state conservatory, the Academy of sciences of Tatarstan, the Utrecht and the Amsterdam universities.

Razia SULTANOVA, Cambridge University
Meaningful Music, Unmediated Sound: Afghanistan revisited

20 years ago I began researching music in Northern Afghanistan using a collection of audio recordings from the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv, covering its history from 1959 to the late 1970s. Analysis of this research spurred me on to visit the locality of Northern Afghanistan for myself, in order to meet the most prominent musicians and groups. Finally, in 2006, I had the rare chance to travel there to begin my personal collection of audio and video recordings of the most famous local musicians (Usto Kamoliddin, Tadj Muhammad, and Sabzygul, amongst others), in Mazar-e-Sharif, Andhoy, Shoberghan, and Akcha. Afghanistan nowadays is a cultural hotspot, where the on-going war for the last thirty years has thrown the country into a deep economic, social and cultural crisis. Since the 1970s the country has lived through a number of invasions and conflicts with various opponents - the Soviets, Mujahedin, Taliban and the Western Alliance, all of which have brought chaos and disorder into the daily life of its people. The paper is concerned with the spiritual dimension of various genres of Afghan music, offering a contemporary re-imagining of the old historical context.

Razia Sultanova is a musicologist and cultural anthropologist. Having grown up in Uzbekistan, she studied and consequently worked at both the Uzbek and Moscow State Conservatories where she was granted a PhD. After moving to the UK - specifically to the University of London, Goldsmiths College and SOAS - she has since moved to Cambridge University and worked there since 2008. Her primary areas of research are Central Asian and Middle Eastern culture, which includes studies on ‘Islam and music’, and ‘Gender and music’. She has written four books and edited several volumes. Typically her work has centered on ethnomusicology and anthropology, however recently she has taken interest in producing an ethnographic account of Northern Afghanistan and Central Asia. The new monograph entitled 'Popular culture in Afghanistan', commissioned by IBTauris has been submitted to the publisher and currently is in the process of publication. Another book (edited together with Megan Rancier) reflects on cultural traditions of the Turkic world and beyond is in its final preparatory stages with Ashgate SOAS. Recently Razia Sultanova contributed to the 43d ICTM world Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan (16-22 July 2015) as the Programme Co-Chair bringing participants from 70 countries. In 2015 Razia Sultanova was elected Vice President of the International Council for Traditional Music and Guest Editor for Yearbook for Traditional Music - 2016.
Farrokh VAHABZADEH, MNHN/Sorbonne Universités, Paris
The divine and the birds in the music of dotâr in Khorâssân (Iran)

Generally speaking when talking about Iranian and Central Asian music the myths and also the terminology related to the world of animals often appear. This relation concern a very vast domain in music, from the terms related to the organology of instruments, to the musical rhythms, and at last but not at least, to the symbolic and spiritual universe. This paper attempts to approach, through a study on the music of dotâr (long necked luth of Central Asia and Iran), some aspects concerning the relationship between man, his environment and his spirituality through the music. From the mythology of music, I will move to rhythmics and melodic turns in search of a connection between birdsong and music data. In organological study of Iranian and Central Asian dotârs too we are confronted with images of birds and ornithological forms. It can be in the decorations and carvings on the instrument or the physical form of some parts of the instrument. Finally, I will arrive to the theme of the Symbolic and spiritual universe: analyzing the different aspects of music in Khorâssân (organology, rhythmics, mythology, mysticism) this paper shows how music is a key to understand the relation between human, the environment and the spiritual universe.

Farrokh Vahabzadeh is junior chair in Gesture-Acoustic-Music (GeAcMus), MNHN (Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle), Sorbonne Universités. He is also assistant professor in Musée de l’Homme in Paris. His main research areas are the Iranian and Central Asian traditions. He’s interested in musical instruments and their symbolism, the gestural and performance studies and in various anthropological themes. At the GeAcMus he is continuing his researches working on the following themes: comparative musical gesture studies, ergonomic, aesthetic, performance and identity. Among his publications, the articles: ‘Se démarquer de l’Autre: du geste instrumental à la corporalité musicale’, in Quand la musique prend corps, (Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 2014); ‘Étude comparative des gestes instrumentaux: Le jeu du dotâr en Iran et en Asie centrale’, in Musicultures, (Société Canadienne de la Musique Traditionnelle, 2012).

Sławomira ŻERAŃSKA-KOMINEK, University of Warsaw
Love, Music, Immortality. The Figure of a Turkmen Epic Singer

Epic narratives, created and transmitted from one generation to another by bards-poets-bakshy (Turkm. bagşy), are at the core of Turkmen spiritual culture. Those tales of ‘heroes’, ‘saints’ and ‘legendary rulers’ lives are derived from mythological tradition and are known in the Turkmen language as dessan (Persian dastan). Dessan performances are verbal-musical spectacles, and their performers combine literary imagination with excellent vocal and instrumental skills. Music also played a key role in the construction of the dessan, as it enhanced the poetic-narrative imagery and conveyed the emotions of the heroes, who usually boasted great poetic talents and beautiful voices. This was because the Turkmen bakshy created their heroes in their own image, representing their own lives and legend through the lives of their characters. And conversely: the dessan image of an epic singer as a hero who wields the magic powers of music and poetry shaped the role models, determined the attitudes and ambitions of the Turkmen bakshy, who saw themselves as sages and educators of their nation. Despite all the differences between the contemporary bakshy and their epic prototypes, both share the much cherished and deeply concealed conviction about the divine gift of art that they possess as initiates.

Sławomira Żerańska-Kominek took her Ph.D. in musicology from the University of Warsaw (1976), before assuming a teaching position in ethnomusicology there. She received Independent Researcher Degree in ethnomusicology in 1986, and full professor degree in 1996. She now serves as the director of Institute of Musicology (University of Warsaw), and as the head of the Systematic Musicology Department in the Institute of Musicology (University of Warsaw). Professor Żerańska-Kominek’s interests include theory of analysis of traditional music; mythology, history of ideas in relation to music and music iconography. Her current research explores Le livre des échez amoureux moralisé by Évrart de Conty (XIV century).

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