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# 1. Welcome Messages

## **Rebecca Thomas Colaco**

*Host and Conference Chair*



We are delighted to host the **5th ISME South Asia Regional Conference** and to contribute to the vital conversations this space fosters among stakeholders across the region. The Bangalore School of Music & Fine Arts (BSM) looks forward to welcoming colleagues to Bengaluru as we engage meaningfully with ideas that strengthen music education and affirm the role of the arts in building vibrant, connected communities.

Our association with ISME dates back to its first foray into the South Asia region in 2014, when our Founder Director, the late **Mrs. Aruna Sunderlal**, delivered one of the keynote addresses, and our students performed at the evening concerts. This year, we look forward to welcoming you once again as we continue to engage in meaningful musical dialogue.

### **Rebecca Thomas Colaco**

*Conference Organizing Co-Chair | Academic Director  
The Bangalore School of Music & Fine Arts*

### **Sandra Oberoi**

*Conference Co-Chair*



Welcome to the 5th ISME South Asia Regional Conference. It is a joy to welcome you to Bangalore, the city where this journey began in 2017!

From an initial meeting in Bangalore that culminated in a policy seminar in New Delhi in 2015, to five conferences spanning India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, this community has grown into something remarkable. South Asia holds a quarter of the world's population, and within that population exists a vast and vibrant community of music educators who daily sustain living pedagogies in the face of profound structural challenges. Yet for too long, our voices have been absent from international scholarly conversation. These South Asia Regional Conference events have been set up to change that narrative.

This year's theme, *Music Education and Sustainability*, asks us to consider not just how music education survives, but how it truly flourishes – for every student, in every community across this region. Over these three days, may these questions underpin our discussions, deepen our connections, and inspire us to carry the work forward with renewed purpose and collective courage.

**Sandra Oberoi**

*Conference Co-Chair and ISME South Asia Region Advisor | Founder & Director, Harmony–The Music School & Harmony International*

## **Patricia Gonzalez-Moreno**

*President, International Society for Music Education*



Greetings from ISME! It is my distinct pleasure to invite you to the 5th ISME South Asia Regional Conference, taking place in Bangalore in May 2026. Bangalore, nestled in a region with a profound and vibrant musical heritage stretching back millennia, offers an inspiring backdrop for this significant gathering. This conference provides a vital platform for music educators and researchers to connect, exchange expertise, and cultivate growth, not only to safeguard invaluable traditions but also to forge exciting new collaborations with musicians, educators, and researchers worldwide. Crucially, we will explore the unique musical needs of communities within the region, all while focusing on the conference's central theme: "Music Education and Sustainability." We are honored to partner with the Bangalore School of Music and AmplifyHer in presenting this important event and eagerly anticipate welcoming you to Bangalore.

**Prof. Patricia González Moreno**

*ISME President (2024 – 2026)*

## 2. About the Conference

### 2.1. Background

#### **The International Society for Music Education's Journey in South Asia**

**By Sandra Oberoi**

**The Beginnings of ISME:** Founded in 1953 in Brussels, Belgium, following a UNESCO-led conference, the International Society for Music Education was built on the conviction that music education is essential to general education and to rebuilding peace, connection, and intercultural understanding. ISME has since championed music education as a human right, centred in cultural diversity, democracy, and dialogue. Today, as a professional organisation situated across over 90 countries, ISME's mission is to build a worldwide network of music educators, to advocate for music education globally and across the lifespan, and to foster intercultural understanding and cooperation.

In its early decades, ISME's biennial World Conference brought together a large gathering of individuals and organisations committed to supporting research, practice, policy, and performance. The leadership then encouraged meetings of music educators in the Asian and Pacific regions, culminating in an international conference in Tokyo in 1963. By the early 1970s, the Society's influence had spread to Latin America, and after several years of outreach across the African continent, its long-term goal of holding a conference in sub-Saharan Africa was realised in Pretoria in 1998. ISME continued to expand, developing a connection with all of the European region through its collaboration with the European Association for Music in Schools (EAS). Growth meant not merely adding members, but listening to voices that had never yet been heard at the international table through ISME Regional Conferences, at these four diverse regions.

**ISME's South Asian Region - The New Delhi Statement:** The South Asian chapter of this story did not begin with a conference but with relationships, scholarship, and a recognition of long-standing absence besides a curiosity that was sparked following the meaningful research work of Gerry Farrell. For over a decade, the Society for Education, Music, and Psychology Research (SEMPRE) played a formative role in building the conditions for ISME's engagement with South Asia, through the involvement of Professor Graham Welch (UCL, past ISME President, and SEMPRE Chair), Professor Adam Ockelford (Roehampton), Professor Ian Cross (Cambridge), Professor Margaret Barrett (ISME), and Professor Richard Widdess (SOAS, London). SEMPRE provided financial and scholarly support seeking to bridge the gap between global best practices and local pedagogical traditions. Then, in December 2015, following seminars in both Bangalore and New Delhi, the New Delhi Statement on Music Education and Engagement was developed. This policy document identified pressing issues for the promotion,

development, and sustainability of music education in India for all people, and whose recommendations were placed directly before leading national politicians. It was, in effect, the founding charter of ISME's South Asian presence.

**ISME's 1st South Asia Regional Conference:** Almost two years later, the first ISME South Asia Regional Conference was held in Bangalore in November 2017 at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, with the theme "Learning to Live Together in and through Music." With more than 35 speakers including then ISME President Lee Higgins, the conference also welcomed musicians, academics, educators, and policymakers. The impact was immediate showcasing a quiet yet profound measure of ISME's work: not only papers published or policies influenced, but individual lives redirected towards deeper engagement with music education as a scholarly and professional calling.

**Growth in the region:** The 2nd ISME South Asia Regional Conference took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, from November 4th to 6th, 2019, with the theme "Music Teacher Learning and Life in the 21st Century," and was attended by a few ISME members from various countries including Professor Graham Welch, ISME Past President. It included presentations from more than 15 Nepali participants, with more than 30 additional Nepali participants in attendance and over 15 international attendees from the South Asian region and beyond. For some of these local participants, this conference was their first opportunity to attend an international music education conference. That ISME could come to Kathmandu and offer that experience—an international scholarly gathering accessible without the cost of intercontinental travel—speaks directly to the original UNESCO vision of 1953: that music education belongs to all people, everywhere.

The 3rd iteration in 2021 was completely virtual and held in partnership with the University of Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the conference theme, "Promoting Intercultural Understanding through Music Transmission in South Asia," helped in sustaining momentum even through the disruptions of a global pandemic. ISME President Emily Akuno's proposed ISME theme, "A Visible Voice," and her keynote at this conference particularly resonated with South Asia, where centuries of rich musical tradition have too often sat at the margins of internationally recognised music education discourse.

The 4th conference, held at KM Music Conservatory in Chennai in November 2023, was titled "Music as Education: Multiculturalism, Learning and Cognitive Enhancement, and Advocacy," attracting over 60 presenters from more than 11 countries. ISME President Elect Professor Patricia Gonzalez-Moreno was in attendance and sat at a music policy roundtable discussion hosted by The British Council, focusing on professional development, music production for employment, and global bilateral pathways.

What a joy that we are now able to gather together for the 5th ISME South Asia Regional Conference here in Bangalore, India at the Bangalore School of Music. Similar to the 4th conference, we are able to welcome speakers and attendees to join us virtually as

well. Originally announced for Kathmandu, Nepal, the conference was relocated to Bangalore, bringing the event back to the city that first welcomed ISME to this region in 2017. Bangalore was where the idea of ISME South Asia was born, where ISME's policymakers were first engaged, and individual educators first encountered a global community that reflected and amplified their own commitment.

This 2026 conference engages with the idea of sustainability building upon the theme proposed by then ISME President, Prof Bo-Wah Leung, and featured at the 2024 Helsinki World Conference. It places particular emphasis on equality and inclusion in music education in South Asia and beyond, with a focus on educators, researchers and musicians as transformative change-makers across South Asia's musical landscapes.

What ISME has achieved in South Asia in less than a decade is, by any measure, remarkable! From initial curiosity sparked by the research (or lack thereof) in the region, the creation of a single policy document in 2015 to five regional conferences, this transformation reflects both the vision of ISME's leadership and the hunger of a region whose music educators had long been ready to be part of this conversation. ISME's journey, from Brussels in 1953 to Bangalore in 2025, is ultimately a story about what becomes possible when the belief that music belongs to everyone is taken seriously, patiently, and over the long term.

### **About Sandra Oberoi**



International voice teacher, singer, music educator and researcher at UCL's Institute of Education, Sandra Oberoi is the Conference Co-Chair of the 5th ISME South Asian Regional Conference. Her association with ISME goes back over 15 years ago as the first Indian to join the society after learning about its activities during her graduate studies in the USA. She has since chaired three regional conferences, remains an advisor for the region's activities, and most recently co-edited a Routledge Publication with Prof André de Quadros, "Music Education in South Asia: Context and Practice." Co-Chair of ISME Advocacy Standing Committee, she has served on the ISME Executive Board ('22-'24) and Board Member at Large ('20-'22), and as Scientific Committee member for both regional and ISME's World Conferences.

Sandra founded Harmony – The Music School in Bangalore, India in 2008, and Harmony International in the UK in 2022. Artistic director of the award-winning youth

choir, The Harmony Chorus, she has led her students nationally and internationally on performances and events as cultural ambassadors. Recognised as a National Association of Teachers of Singing's Master Teacher, and honoured as one of 150 women leaders, catalysts and trailblazers in their fields by her alma mater Northwestern University, she champions purposeful music programs for young people and actively facilitates professional development opportunities for music teachers worldwide.

## 2.2. Theme

The theme of the 2026 ISME South Asia Regional Conference is “**Music Education and Sustainability**”. It engages with the idea of sustainability, an issue of utmost urgency around the world in all fields, as upheavals of change permeate communities, societies, and our natural environment. With this theme, the conference builds upon the theme of the 2024 World Conference in Helsinki, Advocacy for Sustainability in Music Education, recognising the world's failure to deliver on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the call for a transition towards a new social contract and a radical renewal of the collective understanding of professional responsibilities in all educational sectors (UNESCO, 2021). We emphasise that ISME's strategic goals aim to align with the goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Indeed, gender equality, reduced inequalities, peace-building and justice, climate action, and quality education, which are all among the Sustainable Development Goals, are highly relevant in music education and music culture. As global policies highlight the intertwined nature of problems of sustainability, matters of sustainability in music education are also not simply about livelihoods and the longevity of music and music education itself, but about how music educators are able to transform their practices and understandings to support collective strivings towards a more sustainable society.

While not excluding any of the interconnected aspects of sustainable development, the 2026 ISME South Asia Regional Conference emphasises the importance of gender equality and inclusion in music education in South Asia and beyond. We lean on UNICEF's statement, according to which tackling “the root causes of gender inequality” is required for “bold transformative change” (see UNICEF, Gender Action Plan, 2022–2025). We encourage insightful presentations dealing with any music education context, including communities, schools, and cultural institutions in South Asia, while also welcoming other regions or global perspectives.

The following themes were offered to guide conference presenters.

- Interventions and activism in music education towards sustainability
- Climate action, peace-building, and social inclusion intertwining music education and professional musicians' work
- Leadership, entrepreneurship, and networking towards sustainable development
- Gender politics and issues of sustainability in professional education in music

- Sustainability and gender equality in musical heritage contexts and Indigenous communities
- Girls and women as transformative change-makers in South Asian musical landscapes and music education
- Gender and public music performance, gender-inclusive role models in music
- Economic sustainability of music and music education programs in South Asia

### 3. Keynote Speakers

21 May, 2026: Mrs. Vidya Subramanian



**Vidya Subramanian** is founder of [Vidya Subramanian Academy](#), a social enterprise imparting online training in Carnatic music and other traditional Indian arts to students from all over the world for nearly 2 decades. An accomplished Carnatic vocalist and disciple of maestro Padmabhushan Lalgudi Jayaraman, Vidya is a Chartered Accountant (All India Rank 2) with an MBA from Boston College, USA. Her exemplary work in online music education has been featured on BBC World News, Zee TV's Naya Bharat Series, and DD India's Changemakers Program. She was conferred the Women Transforming India (WTI) 2021 award by NITI Aayog and the United Nations. Honors include the Kalaimamani Award (Government of Tamil Nadu), Outstanding Woman Entrepreneur Award from SAFA (an apex body of SAARC), CA Entrepreneur Award from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Devi Award by The New Indian Express Group, Champion of Chennai Award, Homepreneur Award, and Vocational Excellence Award from Rotary Club of Chennai Spotlight.

A Vital Voices Global Partnership Visionary Fellow, she was among 20 global women leaders invited to the Visionaries Summit in Washington, DC (2025). She is also an Aspen Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellow 2024, part of the Aspen Global Leadership Network, and has served on the jury of the Ruby Holland Foundation international music competition. Her work is featured in The Bloom book (brought out during UNGA 2025) and The Nightingales 2.0 book.

Vidya Subramanian Academy (VSA) is a women-led, impact-driven initiative where Vidya and her team of 150+ teachers train students worldwide in Carnatic and Hindustani music, Bharatanatyam, slokas, languages, Vedic Maths, Yoga, and Konnakol. She has innovatively adapted traditional pedagogy for a global, online audience. Through a social enterprise model, she empowers artists, especially women, while expanding access to Indian classical arts via customized online lessons, VSA Certification Exams, VSA Sabha chamber concerts and workshops. Vidya's concerts have been featured in leading forums in India and abroad. Keynote title: Sustaining Tradition, Expanding Access: Reimagining Music Education for an Inclusive Future

22 May, 2026: Prof. Bo Wah Leung



Professor Bo-Wah Leung is Professor at the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts at The Education University of Hong Kong and serves as the Executive Director of the Xiqu and Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre. He is internationally recognized as an authority in music education and traditional performing arts research. He previously served as the President of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) and is currently an Executive Council Member and Treasurer of the International Music Council (IMC), as well as the Chair of the Asia-Pacific Symposium for Music Education Research (APSMER). His work has had a profound impact on the global arts and cultural education fields.

Over the years, Professor Leung has dedicated himself to promoting the inheritance of

Cantonese opera, which is listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, within primary and secondary education. He led the “Chinese Opera—Primary and Secondary School Cantonese Opera Teaching Program,” which was awarded the “Music Rights Award” by the International Music Council in 2011. He also led a team to develop the unique “Cantonese Opera Pinyin” iPad application, which holds a patent from the Intellectual Property Department of Hong Kong, promoting the integration of arts and technology.

In academic research, Professor Leung has published over 150 international refereed journal articles, edited volumes, monographs and book chapters and has served as editor for several international refereed journals. His research spans music education, creative teaching, cultural identity, arts technology, and the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. According to Stanford University’s 2025 Global Scientist Rankings, he is listed among the top 1% of scientists worldwide, demonstrating his outstanding international academic standing.

Professor Leung has also supervised numerous doctoral students whose research areas include piano education, cultural identity, the combination of technology and intangible cultural heritage, parental involvement, cultural tourism, and traditional arts. Additionally, he serves as an advisor to various important academic and social organizations, continuously making significant contributions to arts education and cultural preservation.

23 May, 2026: Dr. Vilma Timonen and Team Kutumba



**Dr Vilma Timonen** is a Lecturer and the Head of the Folk Music Department at the Sibelius Academy, Uniarts Helsinki. Her musical expertise lies in the traditional music of the Finno-Baltic-Nordic regions, and she is a pioneer in integrating the Finnish kantele into new musical contexts. With over 20 years of experience in higher education as both a scholar and educator, she has made contributions to traditional music education, the revitalisation of traditional music practices, and music teacher education. Her scholarly work examines educational development at the individual, institutional, and global levels, with a particular emphasis on the intersections of tradition and innovation, as well as the potential of music education for promoting cultural and social justice.



**Team Kutumba**

**Kutumba** is a pioneering Nepalese instrumental ensemble dedicated to preserving and reimagining traditional music of Nepal. Formed in 2004, the group blends indigenous traditional folk Nepalese instruments such as madal, sarangi, flute, tungna etc to create contemporary arrangements rooted in folk heritage. Kutumba has performed extensively across Nepal and internationally, collaborating with diverse artists and institutions to promote cultural exchange through music. Kutumba's work spans concerts, festivals, educational outreach and cross-cultural projects.

A significant milestone in Kutumba's journey was being officially selected to perform at WOMEX 2020 (World Music Expo), one of the most prestigious global platforms for world music, highlighting Kutumba's contribution to bringing Nepalese folk traditions to an international audience.

The ensemble continues to innovate while staying deeply connected to Nepal's rich musical roots. Some of the Music Festival & Shows Kutumba has been to:

- Dhaka Folk Festival (Bangladesh)
- Commonwealth Games (India)
- Madison Folk Festival & Chicago Navy Pier (USA)
- Iowa Folk Festival (USA)
- Edinburgh Mela (Scotland)
- Nautic Festival and Bonifacio (France)
- Planet Nepal (Nepal)
- Momo Festival (Melbourne, Australia)
- MAD Festival (Coimbatore, India)
- ECHOES IN THE VALLEY (Nepal)

# 4. Conference Program

## 4.1. [Detailed Daily Schedule](#)

Thu, May 21, 2026					
Auditorium			4th Floor Rehearsal Hall		
From	To		From	To	
9:00 AM	9:45 AM	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> - ISME and BSM <b>Performance Groups:</b> The BSM Chorale & Friends Nritya School of Art	9:00 AM	9:45 AM	
9:45 AM	10:45 AM	<b>Keynote Address: Sustaining Tradition, Expanding Access: Reimagining Music Education for an Inclusive Future</b> Vidya Subramanian Vidya Subramanian Academy, India	9:45 AM	10:45 AM	x
10:45 AM	11:00 AM	Break	10:45 AM	11:00 AM	Break
11:00 AM	11:30 AM	<b>Addressing Climate change through interventions by music practitioners</b> Ranjani Ramachandran Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, India	11:00 AM	11:30 AM	<b>Online: Reimagining Sustainability in Music Education: Exploring Rabindranath Tagore's Holistic Pedagogy</b> Jannatul Ferdous University of Chittagong, Bangladesh
11:30 AM	12:00 PM	<b>Ensuring a Sustainable Future for Musical Expression and Education: A Pilot Study</b> Kamani Samarasinghe University of the Visual & Performing Arts, Sri Lanka	11:30 AM	12:15 PM	<b>Workshop: Learning Carnatic Violin in the Internet Age: Challenges, Opportunities, and Innovations</b> Vasudevan Durba V K University of Hyderabad, India
12:00 PM	12:30 PM	<b>Echoes and Systems: Developing Contemporary Music Education in Nepal</b> Nishant Shakya Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Nepal	12:15 PM	12:30 PM	<b>Folk music and authenticity through a sustainable lens</b> Abhinava S. Suddaram & Jhalak Vasavada RM College of Music and Technology, Chennai, India
12:30 PM	1:30 PM	Lunch	12:30 PM	1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM	2:00 PM	<b>Musicality of the Body</b> Anna Luisa Spagna Christ University, Central Campus Bangalore, India	1:30 PM	2:00 PM	<b>Online: Building Circles. An experiential, inclusive and transcultural approach to musical learning</b> Federica Marchi "S. Pedrolli" Institute, Trento, Italy
2:00 PM	2:30 PM	<b>Perception, Practice, and Progress: Rethinking Music Education on Academically-Driven Private Schools</b> Vishwadeep Moktan Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, GEIMS school, Nepal	2:00 PM	2:15 PM	<b>Personalized Progressive Pedagogical Approaches in Western Music Theory Education in India</b> Aadva Gokhale Whispering Woods International, Mumbai, India
2:30 PM	3:00 PM	<b>Redefining Early Childhood Music Education in India</b> Shree Lakshmi Vaidyanathan International Society for Music Education, India	2:15 PM	2:30 PM	<b>Experimental Kathakali: Baroque-inspired intercultural Sacred theatre proposal</b> Sobhanan San Boaz Sacred Heart International School, Marthandam, India
3:00 PM	3:15 PM	Break	2:30 PM	2:45 PM	<b>Beyond the Song: Choir Participation as Social Infrastructure in Music Education among Marginalised Urban Youth</b> Parvathi Krishnan University of Madras, Chennai, India
3:15 PM	3:45 PM	<b>The Impact of University Students' Participation in Reality Television Shows on Shaping Desired Singing Skills Taught in Sri Lankan Universities</b> Geethika Abeysekera Abeysekera University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka	2:45 PM	3:00 PM	<b>The Influence of Singing on Indian Adolescents' Wellbeing</b> Aashya Rishi Bhardwaj & Anagha Gupta Harmony - The Music School, Bangalore, India
3:45 PM	4:15 PM	<b>Youva Music Festival: Transforming Lives with Music Since 2014</b> Surendranath Majumdar Musicea Arts and Culture Council, India	3:00 PM	3:15 PM	Break
4:15 PM	4:45 PM	<b>Symbiosis of Odishi and the cult of Shree Jagannath: A cultural continuum</b> Shatarupa Shatarupa & Sarbeswar Baltharu India	3:15 PM	3:30 PM	<b>How can neuroscientific frameworks transform vocal resonance pedagogy at Bangalore's music conservatoires?</b> Neelk Krishna & Neil Thomas Abraham Harmony - The Music School, Bangalore, India
			3:30 PM	3:45 PM	<b>The Human Translations of Sound: Embodied Learning Through Percussion, Drawing, and Movement</b> Anusab Smaha Perin Mangal Academy of Higher Education, Bengaluru, Bangalore, India
			3:45 PM	4:15 PM	<b>Western Music Education in Sri Lanka: A Study of its Historical Development and Current State of Teaching at the Secondary Level</b> Pavithra M. Madapatha University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka
			4:15 PM	4:45 PM	x
Thu, 21 May, 2026 7:00 PM Conference Dinner Offsite					

Fri, May 22, 2026					
Auditorium			4th Floor Rehearsal Hall		
From	To		From	To	
9:00 AM	9:15 AM	<b>Introductions and Welcome</b> Sandra Oberoi International Society for Music Education, India Harmony - The Music School, Bangalore, India	9:00 AM	9:15 AM	

9:15 AM	10:00 AM	<b>Keynote Address: Sustainability of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Hong Kong Cantonese Opera as an Example</b> Bo-Wah Leung <i>The Education University of Hong Kong International Society for Music Education, Hong Kong</i>	9:15 AM	10:00 AM	x
10:00 AM	10:45 AM	<b>Sustainability in Harmony: ABRSM x ISME South Asia</b> Sonia Khan <i>ABRSM, India</i>	10:00 AM	10:45 AM	
10:45 AM	11:00 AM	Break	3:00 PM	3:15 PM	Break
11:00 AM	11:30 AM	<b>Exploring the dynamics of transgender communities in performing arts across diverse culture</b> Manoj Sanjeeva <i>University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka</i>	11:00 AM	11:45 AM	<b>Workshop: Pedagogical Tools for Developing a Flexible, Inclusive, and Dynamic Music Teaching Practice using Asset-Based Pedagogies</b> Tanvi Rao <i>Malya Aditi International School, India</i>
11:30 AM	12:00 PM	<b>Reimagining Music Education from the Ground Up: A Sustainable and Gender-Inclusive Approach through Community, Curriculum, and Creative Leadership</b> Pranesh S <i>Octave rockers school of music, India</i>	11:45 AM	12:15 PM	<b>Re-imagining music education and its sustainability through Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis</b> Jay Rajendra Raythatha <i>Christ University, Bangalore, India, India</i>
12:00 PM	12:30 PM	<b>Rethinking gender inclusion in and through music education</b> Prem Gurung <i>University of the arts of the Helsinki, Nepal</i>	12:15 PM	12:30 PM	<b>What happens to Indian traditional music within a Western Examining Board in Urban spaces</b> Roshan Noah Malik <i>Ram Premji University, Bangalore, India</i>
12:30 PM	1:30 PM	Lunch	12:30 PM	1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM	2:00 PM		1:30 PM	2:00 PM	Eddy Chong <i>National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore</i>
2:00 PM	2:30 PM	x	2:00 PM	2:30 PM	<b>Shifting folk music Education spaces in contemporary India: A Gendered Perspective</b> Aditi Krishna <i>O.P. Jindal Global University, India</i>
2:30 PM	3:00 PM		2:30 PM	2:45 PM	<b>Gender inclusive ecological transitions in music education: Repoliticising the production of public spaces for musical heritage</b>
3:00 PM	3:30 PM		2:45 PM	3:00 PM	Pushpa Palanchoke <i>Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland / Nepal</i>
3:30 PM	4:30 PM	Networking over Coffee	3:00 PM	3:30 PM	<b>Music Education in Indian Schools</b> Ritesh Khokhar <i>Bridge Music Private Limited, India</i>
4:30 PM	6:00 PM	<b>Special Musical Evening</b> 1. Laya Ranjani Percussion Ensemble 2. BSM Jazz Orchestra 3. The Harmony Chorus	3:30 PM	4:30 PM	Networking over Coffee
			4:30 PM	6:00 PM	x

## Sat, May 23, 2026

Auditorium			4th Floor Rehearsal Hall		
From	To		From	To	
9:00 AM	9:15 AM	<b>Introductions and Welcome</b> Sandra Oberoi <i>Harmony - The Music School, Bangalore, India International Society for Music Education, India</i>	9:00 AM	9:15 AM	x
9:15 AM	10:30 AM	<b>Keynote Address and Performance: Heritage activism as pathway to sustainable development: The story of Kutumba</b> Vilma Timonen, Sibelius Academy, Uniarts Helsinki, Finland Kutumba, Nepal	9:15 AM	10:30 AM	
10:30 AM	10:45 AM	Break	10:30 AM	10:45 AM	Break
10:45 AM	11:15 AM	<b>Traditions and university in dialogue. A practice-based fellowship open to bearers of a tradition at Christ University</b> Paolo Pacciolla & Robert Ashton Bell <i>Christ University Central Campus Bangalore, India</i>	10:45 AM	11:15 AM	<b>Online: The Importance of Systematically Including Western Music Concepts in the Eastern Music Syllabi of Sri Lankan Secondary Education for Sustainability</b> Manoj Alawathukotuwa <i>Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka</i>
11:15 AM	11:45 AM	<b>Cultivating Children's Musical Voices in India</b> Rajashree Srinivasan <i>Azim Premji University, India</i>	11:15 AM	11:30 AM	<b>Does Music Education in India Prepare Students for Financial Sustainability in the Modern Music Industry?</b> Neetik Krishna <i>Harmony - The Music School, Bangalore, India</i>
11:45 AM	12:30 PM	<b>Many Voices, One Vision: Strategic Goals for ISME South Asia</b> Bo-Wah Leung, Sandra Oberoi & Shree Lakshmi Vaidyanathan <i>International Society for Music Education</i> Chaired by Rebecca Thomas Colaco <i>The Bangalore School of Music &amp; Fine Arts</i>	11:30 AM	11:45 AM	<b>Can Silence Be a Sustainable Tool in Compositional Pedagogy?</b> Neetik Krishna & Manomay Athmaram <i>Harmony - The Music School, Bangalore, India</i>
			11:45 AM	12:30 PM	x
End of Conference					

## Performances

### ■ BSM Chorale



BSM Chorale is a budding choir spanning a large age range who recently had their debut last month at Alliance Francaise. They perform a mix of classical and modern pop/rock arrangements. Led by the vision to create a community for not just the students of BSM, but for anyone looking for a fun place to perform and strengthen their singing; they are looking forward to having a great first year with many performances lined up. They are led by Ketki Herlekar, HoD Vocals, who has sung with various choirs and bands, and wants to bring her experience with classical vocals, music theatre and pop/rock and jazz to the choir with a strong foundation of vocal technique.

### ■ Nrutya School of Art



A multifaceted personality — distinguished Bharatanatyam artiste and Guru, life coach, healer, Tarot reader, and author — Gayathri has captivated audiences across India and around the world with her artistry and passion for dance.

As the founder of the Nrutya School of Art, she upholds the traditional Guru–Shishya parampara while nurturing discipline, creativity, and cultural values through the rich heritage of classical dance.

As she beautifully says, “Rhythm is my heartbeat, and dance is my oxygen.”

## ■ Laya Ranjani Percussion Ensemble



[Laya Ranjani](#) is a Bengaluru-based Carnatic percussion ensemble and training institution founded and led by Shri. G S Nagaraj. Laya Ranjani trains students in instruments including mridangam, khanjira, ghatam, morsing, and konnakol, with students performing widely at concerts and cultural events. The six performers presenting at the conference are students of Shri. G.S. Nagaraj, representing Laya Ranjani’s vibrant percussion tradition.

## ■ The Harmony Chorus directed by Sandra Oberoi

Directed by international voice teacher, singer, educator, and researcher, Sandra Oberoi, [The Harmony Chorus](#) has performed across India and internationally including in Finland at the ISME World Conference in 2024, at the Indian High Commission in London, St. Giles Cathedral in Scotland, Royal Opera House Mumbai, Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the Indian Embassy in Moscow.

The choir reached India’s Top 8 on the national reality show Rising Star 2 on Colors TV in 2018. Winners of the UK Choir Festival’s Choral Excellence Award and Rotary’s Young Achievers’ Award as cultural ambassadors, the choir performs with purpose while championing mental health awareness, climate action, and fundraising for orphanages, old age homes, and

underprivileged children. Their work has been featured at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 25, 2019).

Members train at Harmony – The Music School and perform a variety of repertoire that spans Western Classical, jazz, gospel, pop, a cappella, world music, Indian folk, and Bollywood.



## ■ BSM Jazz Ensemble



BSM Jazz Students ensemble is a young group, formed a year ago, and have been steadily learning and performing jazz, developing their skills in improvisation, understanding harmonies and the rhythmic aspects and most important learning to function as a team. The ensemble has performed in concerts at the International Jazz Day held at BSM, Fete De La Musique, Indian Express and Cafe Jazz Sessions at Goethe-Institut. BSM Jazz Students ensemble successfully passed the first ever jazz ensemble performance exams to be held in India at BSM by ABRSM in November 2025.

## 5. Author Bios

### **Dr. Aditi Krishna**

O.P. Jindal Global University  
India

Dr. Aditi Krishna is currently an Assistant Professor in Social Anthropology at Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University. She has been teaching varied core and cross-elective courses during her time here, which includes Gender & Society; Foundations of Social Sciences; Anthropology of Music and the World; and Music, Culture and Society in South Asia. Having discussed and presented her work in renowned national and international conferences, Aditi's research interests include Cultural Anthropology, Gender, Sounds of South Asia, Cultural regionalism, and Identity-politics.

### **Mrs. Anna Luisa Spagna**

Christ University - Central Campus, Bangalore  
India

Anna Luisa Spagna is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Music at Christ University, Bengaluru – Central Campus, where she teaches Musicality of the Body. A professional Dance Movement Therapist, she holds a three year postgraduate degree from the International School of Relational Expressive Dance Movement Therapy (Dmt ER®) in Rome, along with a Master's degree in Pedagogy from the University of Lecce, Italy.

She is a member of ISME, ARTE – Professional Art Therapy Association (Italy), and Danzare le Origini – Social Promotion Association (Italy). Her interest in dance is deeply informed by research on women's issues, ritual dance forms, and divinatory traditions, as well as her engagement with the visual arts.

Spagna is the creator and illustrator of the Yogini of Hirapur Oracle, a set of sixty six round oracle cards inspired by the sacred feminine. She is also the author of several books and scholarly articles on dance

### **Associate Professor Eddy Chong**

National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University  
Singapore

Dr Eddy K. M. Chong is an Associate Professor in the Visual & Performing Arts Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. For more than two decades, he has contributed to music teacher education through teaching,

curriculum design, and programme leadership. Trained as a music theorist, his scholarship and teaching focus on multicultural and intercultural music theory in the Singapore context, with a broader interest in culturally responsive and culturally sustaining approaches to music education. He also integrates educational technologies in his work, supporting pre-service and in-service teachers in connecting classroom learning with a rapidly evolving digital musical landscape and a new generation of students.

**Ms. Federica Marchi**

Independent researcher

Italy

Federica Marchi is a music educator and researcher working at the intersection of inclusive pedagogy, embodied learning, and community music practices. With advanced degrees in Music Education and ongoing studies in Pedagogical Sciences, her work explores self-regulated learning and participatory, circle-based approaches to music-making. She has presented her work internationally at ISME and European conferences, engaging diverse audiences through experiential and collaborative formats. Her practice integrates intercultural dialogue, collective creativity, and sociocratic principles in educational settings. Alongside her research, she has extensive experience in teaching and project leadership, including the coordination of public music initiatives and the founding of an experimental primary school. Her work is driven by a commitment to fostering inclusive, relational, and transformative learning environments through music.

**Ms. G. G. G. L. Abeysekara**

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Sri Lanka

Geethika Abeysekara is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Music at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. She obtained her Master of Performing Arts degree with a specialization in Vocal Music from Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India, from 2016 to 2018. Prior to that, she completed her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music from the same institution from 2013 to 2016. Geethika achieved the distinction of receiving the highest marks in practical music and holds the title of Sangeeth Nipun from Bhatkhande Music College in Lucknow.

**Ms. Jannatul Ferdous**

Assistant Professor, Department of Music, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Bangladesh

Jannatul Ferdous is an assistant professor of music and a researcher in ethnomusicology, performance, and cultural studies based in Bangladesh. Her work explores music, environment, and pedagogy in South Asia, with particular attention to the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and its contemporary relevance. She examines how Tagore's nature-centered and holistic approach to music education can inform current discussions on sustainability, inclusion, and culturally rooted learning. Alongside this, her broader research engages with Indigenous musical traditions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, focusing on issues of identity, ritual, and environmental change. She has presented at international conferences and is committed to bridging theory and practice through community-based music initiatives. Her research contributes to rethinking music education as an ecological and culturally responsive practice.

**Prof. Jay Rajendra Raythatha**

Department of Music, CHRIST University, Bangalore  
India

Classical Pianist and a Music Educator, Jay Rajendra Raythatha specialises in classical and romantic era's piano repertoire. An Assistant Professor and the Head of Piano at the Department of Music - CHRIST University, Bangalore, he graduated from Goldsmiths, University of London, UK with a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance, Music Education and Research.

With a degree in Engineering and a musician by passion, Jay has given various performances across London & India, which includes solo piano recitals, performances with the Indian National Youth Orchestra, to name a few. He has also presented at various National and International level conferences.

Committed to promoting awareness about the significance, relevance and impact of Western Music in India, he is passionate about the symbiotic connection between the performance space, industry and academia. As a practice driven educator, he perceives these intersections as research rich spaces for exploration.

**Mr. K.M Manoj Sanjeewa**

University of the Visual and Performing Arts  
Sri Lanka

K. M. Manoj Sanjeewa is a Senior Lecturer (Grade II) and Head of the Department of Western Music at the Faculty of Music, University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka. He holds postgraduate qualifications in music and has extensive experience in higher education, specializing in music education, performance studies, and interdisciplinary arts. His scholarly work engages with themes of cultural diversity, identity, and inclusivity in music education, with

particular emphasis on South Asian contexts. He has presented his research at national and international conferences and contributes to academic discourse on the role of music within socially and culturally complex environments. In addition to his academic responsibilities, he is actively involved in curriculum development, student mentorship, and community-oriented music initiatives.

**Dr. Kamani Samarasinghe**

University of the Visual & Performing Arts  
Sri Lanka

Dr. Kamani Samarasinghe is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Visual & Performing Arts and a researcher specializing in intangible cultural heritage, music education, and archival studies. Her academic and professional work is dedicated to the safeguarding, documentation, transmission, and promotion of Sri Lanka's living heritage, particularly traditional music, performing arts, oral traditions, and community-based cultural expressions.

**Dr. Manoj Alawathukotuwa**

Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka  
Sri Lanka

Manoj Alawathukotuwa received his BA and MPhil degrees from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, and a PhD from the University of Delhi, India. As a trained musician, he has composed several musical works for renowned Sri Lankan musicians. He has published several research papers on Sri Lankan music and has presented papers at both local and international conferences. His research interests include North Indian music, ethnomusicology, and the musical influences on Sri Lankan music. He is currently working as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

**Mr. Nishant Shakya**

Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory  
India

Nishant Shakya is the Academic Co-ordinator at the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory (KJC), where he oversees the Foundation in Music Department. A Piano Instructor at KJC since 2019, he has taught a wide age range and has experience instructing differently-abled students in the past. As a performer, Nishant is an active member of Grasstunes, Satish Sthapit Blues Explosion, and What the Funk, appearing at festivals such as Katjazz, Kathmandu Blues n Roots, Echoes in the Valley, and Jazzmandu. His work fuses Nepali folk and contemporary

melodies with jazz and rock influences, earning his former band, Nanashi, the 2022 Kaleidoscope Emerging Artist Fellowship. Recognized for his arrangements in the 2025 Gyan Residency, Nishant also serves as a producer and session artist for acts like Cobweb and Kutumba. He has collaborated with international artists including Natasha Humera Ejaz and Ultraromance, balancing his creative practice with academic leadership.

**Dr. Paolo Pacciolla**

Christ University, Central Campus, Bangalore  
India

Paolo Pacciolla, ethnomusicologist (PhD Durham University UK) and musician (Diploma of Pianoforte) is an Associate Professor at the Department of Music, Christ University, Bengaluru. He has been Tagore National Fellow affiliated with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi and Kerala (2019 – 2021) and ICCR Senior Fellow affiliated with the International Centre for Kerala Studies (University of Kerala- Trivandrum) (2017-2018).

He has published several articles in internationally reputed peer-reviewed journals. Among his recent writings are the monographs 'The Indian Drum of the King-God and the Pakhavaj of Nathdwara', Series Studies in Music, SOAS – Routledge (2020), and 'Enlivening Rhythms. Drumming in Ritual Performances of Contemporary Kerala', Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi (2024).

Member of the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM), the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE), and the International Society for Music Education (ISME)

**Mrs. Pavithra M. Madapatha**

University of the Visual and Performing Arts  
Sri Lanka

Pavithra Madapatha is an accomplished musician and educator currently serving at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts. She is actively engaged in research, with a focus on piano pedagogy in music education and the biomechanics of piano performance. In recognition of her excellence in teaching, she was awarded the Vice Chancellor's Award for Best Scholar in Teaching. As a dedicated lecturer, she teaches Western music theory, harmony, and pianoforte, sharing both her academic knowledge and practical expertise with students. Her work is driven by a strong commitment to advancing the teaching and learning of Western music within both formal and non-formal education systems in Sri Lanka.

**Mr. Pranesh S**

Octave Rockers School of Music  
India

I am Pranesh S, a contemporary keyboardist, pianist, music educator, curriculum designer, and music curator from Coimbatore with over 15 years of training in Western classical, contemporary music, improvisation, and composition. Over the past 8 years, I have worked extensively in music education, specialising in teaching, teacher training, curriculum development, and academic planning for music schools and leading ed-tech platforms across India. I focus on creating structured yet flexible learning experiences that balance technical foundations, creativity, improvisation, performance skills, and contemporary music practices.

As an educator, I run Octave Rockers School of Music, where I mentor students across various age groups and learning levels, guiding them through graded examinations while encouraging practical musicianship and artistic expression. I have contributed to curriculum design, assessment frameworks, and learner-centred teaching methodologies for several leading music schools and ed-tech platforms. I also serve as an academic consultant at Trinity College London.

Alongside education, I am the founder and curator of a music community initiative that brings together independent musicians through open mics, workshops, collaborations, and artist development platforms, helping nurture aspiring artists and create meaningful opportunities within the independent music ecosystem.

**Mr. Prem Gurung**

Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki  
Nepal

Prem Gurung is a musician, music educator and doctoral researcher at the University of the Arts Helsinki in the Research Study Programme. His current doctoral research project is titled Pathways toward gender-inclusive music education in Nepal, which is part of a larger project, Transition pathways towards gender inclusion in the changing musical landscapes of Nepal, 'amplifyHer' (2023-2026). His research focuses on music education and music teacher education.

**Prof. Prof Shobana P Mathews**

CHRIST University  
India

With over 22 years in academia, my journey is defined by a passion for Sound and Spatiality. I hold a PhD from Christ University, where my thesis applied Lefebvre's spatial notions to Mark Knopfler's albums, integrating sound studies into English literature. This followed my 1996 MPhil on Bob Dylan's protest songs—penned two decades before his Nobel Prize.

Educated at WCC and MCC Chennai, and a proud alumna of Bishop Cotton Girls' High School, I am rooted in a rich academic and artistic family heritage. Though I initially dreamt of a career in painting or dance—and even briefly explored advertising—I found my calling in the world of words. As a former Department Head, researcher, and writer, I bridge the gap between scholarly inquiry and artistic expression, constantly exploring how music and visual arts inform our understanding of narrative and space.

### **Mrs. Pushpa Palanchoke**

Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki  
Nepal

Pushpa Palanchoke is a performer, composer, Applied Ethnomusicologist and a Music Educator from Nepal. She is currently a doctoral researcher at Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, and a researcher for project amplifyHer. She is a recipient of Nepal Chatra Vidya Padak and Nepal Vidhya Bhusan (Ga) & (Kha), three highly prestigious national awards in the field of education. She is an academican with interests in gender-inclusive placemaking, music heritages, and sustainability of and through them. As an artist, Pushpa is a vocalist and spoken word poet whose stage performance is a blend of melodies she has learned from different indigenous masters, and poetry that tells stories of nature, human desires and struggles. She is the mind and heart behind the program Folk Lok. Folk Lok is a community-based arts program focused on the revitalization of indigenous music practices.

### **Prof. Rajashree Srinivasan**

School of Education, Azim Premji University, India  
India

Rajashree Srinivasan is Professor at the School of Education at Azim Premji University, India. She teaches in the Master's in Education programme. Her areas of interest are child development, professional development of teacher educators and music education. She currently teaches a course on 'The Musical Lives of Young Children'. She received the 2024 Helsinki World Conference presenter award. She has written a chapter titled 'Recovering the neglected: Nurturing an agenda of music for all children in India' for the forthcoming edited book- 'Music Education in South Asia: Context and Practice' by Andrea De Quadros & Sandra Oberoi. Rajashree hosts 'Sarang'- a musical instrument exploration space- in Bengaluru, which provides free access to musical instruments to young children.

**Dr. Ranjani Ramachandran**

Department of Hindustani Classical Music, Sangit Bhavana, Vjsva Bharati, Santiniketan, India  
India

Dr. Ranjani Ramachandran is a leading vocalist of Khayal, a prominent vocal genre of North Indian classical music. Trained under master musicians, she has performed in major music festivals in India and abroad, including Serendipity Arts Festival (Goa), and MUSICON (Durham, UK), to name a few. She has been recognized with several distinguished awards, including the Charles Wallace Research Grant from the UK. She is an empanelled artist of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, and an accredited artist of National Radio (All India Radio) and Television (Doordarshan). Ranjani has collaborated with ethnomusicologists, and has participated in several interdisciplinary projects with visual artists. She recently curated a multimedia exhibition on Hindustani musicians, finding new ways of activating a music archive. She considers the multiple roles of a performer, pedagogue, and researcher as mutually reinforcing. She has a Ph.D. in music and teaches at Sangit Bhavana, Visva Bharati, in Santiniketan, India.

**Mr. Ritesh Khokhar**

Bridge Music Academy  
India

Ritesh Khokhar is a musician, music educator based in New Delhi, India, with over three decades of performance and 25 years in music teaching experience. He completed Grade 8 in Theory of Music and a Performance Diploma from Trinity College London. As a pianist and keyboard player, Ritesh has performed extensively across classical, jazz, rock, and contemporary music settings.

Over the years, he has worked with leading international music examination bodies such as ABRSM, Trinity College London, and RSL Awards in various capacities between 2009 and 2024.

Ritesh is the founder of Bridge Music Academy and currently serves as the Head of Music Education & Pedagogy at Spardha School of Music. One of his current pursuits is Bridge to Music – Powered by Charanga, an initiative focused on expanding access to high-quality general music education across Indian schools in collaboration with Charanga, a leading general music education provider in over 12,500 schools in 64 countries.

**Dr. R.L. Tavis Ashton-Bell**

CHRIST University  
India

Associate Professor Dr R.L. Tavis Ashton-Bell (ORCID: 0009-0000-2544-6138) has been the Head of the Department of Music at CHRIST University since 2019. He received his doctorate in Higher Education Music Teacher Education at Monash University, Australia. He is a member of CHRIST University's core strategic planning committee and Teaching and Learning Enhancement Cell (TLEC). His research specialisations are in higher education music teacher education, music pedagogy and assessment approaches, ethical AI integration, and hermeneutic phenomenology of musical phenomena.

Recent accomplishments:

Convenor: Aesthetica 2026: Art in Action. Conference on the intersection of creative practice, pedagogy and the UNSDG, CHRIST University, 5-7th February, 2026.

Investigating Educators' Behavioural Intentions Towards Smart Tools in Education. In Smart Business and Education in the Age of VUCA and BANI (pp. 107-124), 2026.

Responsible AI-Readiness in Higher Education: Validating a Dual-Model Framework for Faculty Development, Journal of Information Technology Education: Research, 2025.

### **Mr. Sarbeswar Baitharu**

Odisha Adarsh Vidyalaya  
India

Sarbeswar Baitharu is a researcher and practitioner of Odishi vocal music with strong academic and performance credentials. He has recently completed his pre-PhD submission and is on the path to earning his doctorate in music. A gold medalist in his postgraduate studies, he completed both his PG and M.Phil in Odishi Vocal from Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar. He has authored numerous research papers exploring the theoretical, cultural, and performance dimensions of Odishi music and has received scholarships and several accolades for his contributions to the field. He has presented Odishi music at national and international forums, enhancing its wider recognition. He is also the co-founder of Nadashree, a cultural foundation dedicated to Jagannath culture. His work reflects a sustained commitment to the preservation, research, and promotion of Odishi vocal heritage.

### **Ms. Shatarupa**

Independent Researcher  
India

Shatarupa is an independent researcher in Odishi vocal music with a keen interest in the intersection of traditional performance practice and cultural scholarship. With a strong academic background in management and ongoing doctoral research, she adopts an interdisciplinary approach to studying the cultural, philosophical and socio-aesthetic dimensions of Odishi traditions. Her work focuses on the preservation, interpretation and contemporary relevance of

Odisha's musical heritage across folk and classical forms. She has presented her research at the 5th ISME South Asia Regional Conference, contributing to global dialogue on indigenous music systems. She is also the founder of Nadashree, a cultural foundation dedicated exclusively to Jagannath culture, reflecting her commitment to cultural preservation and dissemination. Alongside her research, she actively promotes awareness and documentation of regional art forms and aspires to pursue formal doctoral studies in music.

**Ms. Shree Lakshmi Vaidyanathan**

International Society for Music Education  
India

Shree Lakshmi serves as Operations & Systems Officer at the International Society for Music Education, where she plays a key role in organizing the ISME World Conference and its Pre-Conference seminars, and supports its online professional development sessions. Previously, she worked as a music educator in Bangalore, India, with nearly two decades of experience across private and government schools, including at The Bangalore School of Music. Her teaching focused on early childhood music education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and social-emotional learning. She taught in diverse and neurodiverse classrooms and developed student-centred curricula with a strong emphasis on ear training and inclusive practice. She has published in peer-reviewed international journals and books. She holds a Master of Music Education from Boston University, where she received the Music Education Departmental Award. She also holds an ATCL (Piano) and Grade 8 (Singing) from Trinity College London, Grade 8 (Theory) from ABRSM and B.Tech (IT) from Pondicherry University. She is committed to advancing music education research and practice in South Asia.

**Mr. Surendranath Majumdar**

Musicea Arts and Culture Council  
India

Maestro Surendranath Majumdar, Director of Musicea Arts and Culture Council, is a visionary pedagogue dedicated to transforming music education in India. He actively promotes awareness of the lifelong benefits of music, from early childhood through advanced age, emphasizing its role in holistic development. Notably, he is the first Indian author to create a sequential series of 43 music books covering music theory, instruments, and vocal training, providing a structured and comprehensive learning pathway. Committed to reform, he works toward standardizing music education across the country and developing indigenous qualification frameworks that reduce reliance on colonial-era boards. His mission extends globally through collaborations with international music universities, fostering academic and cultural exchange. He also strives to build international platforms to showcase talented Indian artists. With a forward-looking vision, Majumdar aims to position India as a global hub for music

**Ms. Tanvi Rao**

Mallya Aditi International School  
India

Tanvi Rao is a musician and educator from Bangalore, India. With nearly 15 years of experience teaching music (elementary through high school), she is passionate about inclusivity and culturally responsive teaching practices in music education. She holds a Master's degree in Music Education from the Longy School of Music of Bard College, USA. Her musical background spans Hindustani classical music, piano, choral music, and singer-songwriter traditions, shaping her interdisciplinary approach. As a teaching artist she bridges performance and education, bringing creativity into the classroom and beyond. She recently collaborated with her colleagues and students to form a jazz fusion band called Haiku and released an EP titled 'Surfacing'. Alongside her teaching and performance work, she regularly conducts teacher training workshops in Bangalore, supporting educators in building inclusive, engaging, and dynamic music education practices.

**Mr. Vishwadeep Moktan**

Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory  
Nepal

Vishwadeep Moktan is a musician, singer, composer, educator, and dedicated student of music, actively engaged in both performance and pedagogy. His work focuses on jazz and contemporary music, emphasizing creative expression, ensemble interaction, and a deeper understanding of musical language. As a composer, he writes his own music, exploring original ideas while drawing from diverse musical influences. He is part of the administrative team at Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, where he contributes to designing and managing educational programs that create meaningful opportunities for aspiring musicians.

He teaches at Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory and GEMS School, working with students across levels and guiding them through structured yet engaging musical experiences. His teaching approach balances discipline with exploration, encouraging individuality and artistic growth.

Vishwadeep is also an active member of Toastmasters, continually refining his public speaking and communication skills, enhancing his effectiveness as an educator and presenter.

## 5.1. Student Author Bios

### **Ms. Aadya Gokhale**

Music Educator and Student  
Independent researcher  
India

Aadya is a Mumbai-based western music educator, pianist, student, and independent researcher. Her work focuses on making western music theory education engaging, accessible, and relevant for diverse learners. She is particularly interested in developmental and progressive approaches in music pedagogy, inclusive and sustainable practices in education, the study of sound as a medium and its connections to various cultures in the world, and religious thought, amongst a wide range of other topics.

### **Mx. Abenayaa S**

Student  
KM Music Conservatory  
India

Abenayaa S is a final year Diploma in Music student at KM Music Conservatory, Chennai. She has had Indian classical music training (Carnatic) since the age of 6. She has been learning to play the Veena for a decade as well and started her journey with Western music 5 years ago. She has been part of a multitude of performances happening in KM. Some of them include a full production of School of Rock (2025), multiple student ensembles (Musical Theatre, Chamber Choir and Cleftomaniacs) and Guuranda X (2026) which narrated stories of the Nharrunga tribe. Other than the performances she has been a part of, Abenayaa's interests lie in music education with 2 years of teaching experience with students of all groups from toddlers to senior citizens.

### **Mr. Agastya Rishi Bhardwaj**

Student  
Harmony - The Music School  
India

Agastya Rishi Bhardwaj is a 17-year-old IBDP1 student based in New Delhi, India, with a strong interdisciplinary interest in music, psychology, and biology. A classical and musical theatre vocalist, he has been recognised as Top in India for IGCSE Music by Cambridge International Education in the May/June 2025 examinations and placed first in Classical Singing at the NATS National Student Auditions, International Region Round. His research interests focus on the relationship between music, identity, mental health, and adolescent wellbeing. He has presented

student-led research at international academic and music education forums, including conferences connected to voice and humanities research.

**Ms. Anarghya Gupta**

Student

Harmony - The Music School

India

Anarghya Gupta is a student researcher with interests in both music and psychology, exploring how creative expression and human behaviour intersect. Her work often focuses on the emotional and social impact of music, drawing connections between artistic performance, cognition, identity, and communication. Alongside her research interests, she is an active musician and vocalist with experience in solo and collaborative performances across a range of genres.

She is particularly interested in how music can shape mood, memory, and interpersonal connection, and enjoys combining analytical research with creative practice. Through psychology, she aims to better understand the ways people think, feel, and respond to the world around them, while her engagement with music allows her to explore these ideas through performance and composition.

**Mr. Anugrah Smitha Reghu**

Student

Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Bengaluru

India

Anugrah Smitha Reghu's pedagogical background is defined by a commitment to fostering collaborative learning environments and inclusive participation through music and arts-based activities. He is currently a Research Associate at the Indian Sonic Research Organisation and is pursuing a Master of Arts in English Language and Literature at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Bengaluru. His professional expertise includes working as a Teaching Artist and intern for Broadway for Arts Education, where he designed arts-integrated lesson plans and delivered instrumental instruction in guitar, drums, and keyboard. Building on a Bachelor of Arts from Azim Premji University with a minor in Arts Education, he has experience leading general music education classes and directing various instrumental and vocal sessions. Furthermore, he has applied his mentorship skills as a Tutor at the Academic Resource Centre of the university, where he monitored student progress and implemented strategies to support learning development and academic adjustment.

**Master Inbayadhon Sen Boaz**

Student

Thrayambika Vidya Mandir CBSE Primary & Secondary School  
India

Inbayadhon Sen Boaz is a Class 8 student at Thrayambika Vidya Mandir CBSE Primary & Secondary School and has a growing passion for music and the arts. Alongside formal education, he is home-schooled in music and has completed Grade 5 in Piano from the Music Teachers' Board. He has also explored the flute, expanding his musical versatility. His musical journey is deeply influenced by his parents—his father, Sen Harris Boaz, is an accomplished classical guitarist, vocal trainer, community orchestra conductor, and also works on developing statistical tools for investment banking, while his mother, Mahiba Sen, is a dedicated piano teacher. Under their guidance, he has built a strong foundation in music. He is particularly drawn to Baroque music and is keen on studying and interpreting the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. Beyond Western classical traditions, he is curious about Indian folk music and dance, exploring connections between diverse art forms. This inspires his interest in hybrid artistic expressions, alongside his fascination with celestial bodies and his aspiration to pursue astrophysics.

### **Ms. Jhalak Vasavada**

Student

KM College of Music and Technology  
India

Jhalak Vasavada is a full time music student at KM Music Conservatory, Chennai. Based in Bengaluru, she began her journey with Hindustani vocals at the age of 10, training under different teachers. A Bachelor of Philosophy, she earned her degree from Azim Premji University. During college, she took part in the choir, as well as a couple of informal bands, exploring her interest across different genres. She began her training in western vocals at KMMC in 2025.

She took part in many performances happening in KM, including student ensembles (Musical Theatre and Cleftomaniacs; the campus acapella choir) and Guuranda X (2026) which was a cultural exchange between Indian students and members of the Nharrunga Tribe from Australia. Her interest in music education stems from a desire to share and receive knowledge, and in seeing music as an art form which transcends boundaries, and brings people together.

### **Mr. Manomay Athmaram**

Student

International School of Hyderabad  
India

Manomay Athmaram is a 15 year student from the International School of Hyderabad. He grew up in New Jersey and moved to Hyderabad for his schooling. He has been playing the piano for 8 years, and learning music theory and composition for 5. He has participated in programs across the world, for example, a music festival in Narni, Italy, a summer piano intensive at the University of North Carolina School of Arts, and a day sessions program at Berklee. This summer, he is interning as a member of the leadership team of a program in Hyderabad, named The Art of Composition, and will also be attending a screen scoring program in Belluno, Italy. At his high school, he has directed numerous musicals. He is passionate about films, and wants to pursue composition for media in the future. Some of his hobbies include running, studying psychology, and swimming.

**Mr. Neetik Krishna**

Student

Harmony - The Music School

India

Neetik Krishna started his musical journey at the age of 4 at the Bangalore School of Music. From there on he went on to learn the Recorder, Carnatic vocals and Tabla. Currently he plays the Piano, Guitar and is a music producer & composer. Additionally, he plays the keyboard for his school band and has released music publicly under the moniker Silk Bored. In 2023, he was a Youth Advisory Board member at India's only music museum The Indian Music Experience. As a board member he led and executed events as well as handled the financials for events. Recently, Neetik presented at the National Association of Teachers of Singing International Region Conference on, The Neuroscience of Vocal Resonance: Bridging fMRI Brain Imaging and Voice Pedagogy. Neetik is a grade 12 student who intends to continue his music education at the undergraduate level and compose music for movies and video games.

**Mr. Neil Thomas Abraham**

Student

Independent

India

Neil Thomas Abraham is a 12th grade science student and lifelong music lover who is incredibly passionate about the positive effect music can have on people, indiscriminate of genre, preference, or knowledge. As an aspiring researcher, he hopes to combine his love for biology with his enthusiasm for music. As a person, he is simply looking for a way to talk about the human brain.

**Ms. Parvathi Krishnan**

Postgraduate Student

University of Madras  
India

Parvathi Krishnan is a researcher, vocalist, and music educator, currently pursuing her postgraduate degree in Sociology at the University of Madras, Chennai, India. Her work engages the intersection of community music, critical music education, and the sociology of culture, with a commitment to music as a social force that shapes identity, belonging, and opportunity among marginalised youth.

Her study of sociology deepened her understanding of music not only as an art form, but as a practice shaped by cultural, political, and institutional contexts, a synergy that informs both her research and teaching. As a music educator at Bach to Basics, she approaches pedagogy as a relational process, creating spaces where discipline and self-expression coexist. She has co-facilitated arts-based sessions with children from marginalised communities through her work with the NalandaWay Foundation, presented at national and international forums, and published in the Doing Sociology blog. She intends to pursue doctoral research at the intersection of community music, culture, education, and social equity.

**Mr. Roshan Noah Mark**

Student  
Independent musician  
India

Roshan Noah Mark is a Mathematics graduate from Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, with a passion for mathematics, finance, and music. Holding a Grade 8 Piano qualification from Trinity College London, he performs professionally as a pianist and guitarist and shares his music on Instagram at @\_noahmark\_. Through courses in curriculum design, human development, language in education, and classroom instruction, he has developed a deep interest in pedagogy and the ways people learn.

## 6. Committees

### 6.1. Organizing Committee



Sandra Oberoi, Harmony - The Music School, International Society for Music Education



Rebecca Thomas Colaco, The Bangalore School of Music and Fine Arts



Heidi Westerlund, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki



Shree Lakshmi Vaidyanathan, International Society for Music Education

## 6.2. Scientific Committee



Danielle Treacy, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki



Sandra Oberoi, Harmony - The Music School, International Society for Music Education



Pushpa Palanchoke, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki



Prem Gurung, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki



Vilma Timonen, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki



Iman Shah, Nepal Music Center



Rajashree Srinivasan, School of Education, Azim Premji University

## 6.3. Local Conference Committee

The Bangalore School of Music & Fine Arts Team

- Gargi Dey, Admin
- Avin Chemmannor, Digital Media
- Shivakumar, Finance
- Sujith M, Logistics

## 7. About the Host Institution: The Bangalore School of Music and Fine Arts



Founded in 1987 by renowned musician and educator, **Mrs. Aruna Sunderlal**, the Bangalore School of Music & Fine Arts (BSM) has, over the past 39 years, established itself as a leading centre for Western classical music education in Bengaluru. As a non-profit institution, the BSM combines rigorous musical training with community outreach, international collaborations, and diverse performance opportunities that have opened new artistic pathways across the region. We honour the enduring legacy of our Founder Director, the late Mrs. Aruna Sunderlal, whose vision and commitment to excellence in music education continue to guide the institution's ethos.

With its unique “360-degree” approach, the BSM integrates education, outreach, audience development, and cross-cultural dialogue to bring music into the everyday lives of communities. The BSM trains hundreds of students annually in orchestral instruments, piano, classical guitar, voice, and keyboard, while also providing free music education to children from economically weaker backgrounds.

Over the decades, the BSM has hosted acclaimed artists and scholars from around the world, fostering enduring international cultural partnerships. Guided by its core purpose — “To Unite the World through Music and Art” — the BSM continues to nurture generations of musicians, educators, and cultural ambassadors.

Today, the BSM is led by **Mr. Vikram Sunderlal**, who continues to guide the school's vision of excellence in music education and cultural engagement.

## 8. Sponsors & Partners

- 8.1. **Harmony–The Music School:** Founded in Bangalore in 2008 by international music educator, voice teacher, singer, and researcher Sandra Oberoi, Harmony – The Music School is driven by a vision that music education should be purposeful, research-informed, and transformative for every learner. For nearly two decades, Harmony has cultivated lifelong musicians and change-makers who bring creativity, skill, and service to communities across India and beyond.

Students have performed at Carnegie Hall, Musikverein Vienna, Gnessin Russian Academy of Music, the Indian High Commission in London, Helsinki's Musiikkitalo, and St Giles Cathedral, Scotland. Harmony alumni hold scholarships, study at or have passed out from prestigious institutions including the Royal College of Music, University of Oxford, Berklee, National University Singapore, Westminster Choir College, Trinity Laban, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and Royal Northern College of Music. Harmony International UK, established in 2022, extends the core vision globally through bespoke music workshops, curated teacher training sessions, student mentoring, and music educational tours.

Harmony is a proud institutional partner of ISME along with partnerships and collaborations with New York University, Royal Northern College of Music, and Wheaton College Conservatoire.

Find out more about Harmony at [www.harmony-themusichol.com](http://www.harmony-themusichol.com) & [www.harmonyinternational.uk](http://www.harmonyinternational.uk)



- 8.2. **ABRSM, India:** Founded in 1889, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) is a globally recognised examination board and registered charity, with over 600,000 candidates taking its exams each year across more than 90 countries.

In India, ABRSM offers graded music exams from Kochi to Kohima, Lucknow to Chennai and numerous other cities across the states of India, steadily expanding its reach and its commitment to music educators, learners, and emerging composers. ABRSM's activities align closely with the theme of *Music Education*

*and Sustainability*, spearheaded by ABRSM's Representative, Sonia Khan through. The work on ground champions holistic music education and the building of strong and sustainable musical communities especially in cities where access to music examinations and lessons is a challenge.



**Sonia Khan** is an arts administrator with over two decades of experience coordinating international cultural initiatives. She serves as the India Representative for Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), overseeing music examinations and exchange programmes across India, and has also led major youth orchestra initiatives and Commonwealth cultural collaborations.

# ABRSM

- 8.3. **Furtados:** Established in 1865, Furtados Music is India's largest retailer of musical instruments, with a legacy spanning over 160 years of nurturing music culture across India. From instruments and accessories to print music and digital equipment, Furtados offers a complete spectrum of Western and Indian musical instruments, serving musicians, educators, and students nationwide.

Furtados School of Music, launched in 2011, currently teaches over 25,000 students across more than 85 locations, reflecting a deep commitment to accessible, quality music education. Furtados actively invests in developing musical knowledge through teacher-training workshops, masterclasses, clinics, and the support of local talent and artists.

Find out more at <https://www.furtadosonline.com/>



#### 8.4. Other Partners



*sempre:*

Society for Education, Music  
and Psychology Research



## 9. Acknowledgements

- 9.1. AV Tech Team
  - John Sterrett, Sterrett CreaTech Private Limited
  - Audio Visual Academy
- 9.2. Raman Sood, Hotel Shangri-La, Bengaluru
- 9.3. Hotel CoralTree
- 9.4. Abhayam Trust, Caterers
- 9.5. Piece of Cake
- 9.6. IT Support: [Ravenan Technologies](#)