

Rethinking Musical Mode Symposium

11-12 November 2021

Hosted by the Institute for Ethnomusicology at KunstUniversität - Graz

Supported by KunstUniversität - Graz and Land Steiermark

Day 1 (Thursday, 11 November)

10:00-10:30 Pre-conference coffee and snacks

10:30-10:45	Opening Ceremony	Gerd Grupe
10:45-11:00	Introducing the Symposium	Sarah Weiss & Babak Nikzat
11-12:00 Chair: SW	Keynote: Reconsidering "Mode" as a Generic Musicological Concept	Hooman Asadi (Tehran University)

12:00-12:15 Coffee and Tea Pause

12:15-13:15	Concert - Persian Classical Music	Sina Shaari
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13:15-14:15 Lunch

Topic 1: Carnatic Raga: Development Through Composition and as Intercultural Pedagogy

14:30-15:00 Chair: SW	Raga in Translation: Intercultural Performance and Mode as Pedagogy	Varshini Narayanan
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15:00-15:30 Coffee and Tea Pause

Topic 2: Focus on Flamenco

15:30-16:00 Chair: Rafael Caro Repetto	The Interaction of Modality, Modal Harmony, and Common-Practice Harmony in Flamenco	Peter Manuel
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16:00-16:30	The “Dorian” mode in flamenco – where music, history, and ideology unite	Rolf Baecker
16:30-17:00	Mode and modulation in Maqām and Cante Jondo music	Amine Beyhom

17:00-17:30 Tea and Coffee Pause

Workshop

17:30-19:00 SW & BN	Challenging Musical-Mode Theories on Persian Dastgah Music in Practice - Part 1	Negar Bouban
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Day 2 (Friday, 12 November)

10:00-10:30 Pre-conference coffee and snacks

Topic 3: Analytical Approaches to Tones and Scales

10:30-11:00 Chair: Negar Bouban	Why do scales have steps? Why is musical pitch perception categorical? A theory of proximal perception and prenatal psychology	Richard Parncutt
11:00-11:30	Tuning the Human Voice: An Empirical Exploration of Tonality in Northern Traditional Singing	Kristin Jonzon
11:30-12:00	Employing Post-Tonal Analytic Techniques to Discern Normative Scalar Constructs: A Case Study of Nova Scotian Traditional Vocal Music	Peter Fielding

12:15-13:15 Lunch

Topic 4: Context and Modal Practice

13:30-14:00 Chair: Alex cannon	Ritual Idioms as Sites of Cultural Confluence and Modal Multiplicity: The cases of Qaderi zehr in Kurdistan and the trans-Gulf mālid	George Murer
14:00-14:30	A reflection on mode from Chinese musical practices	Rafael Caro Repetto

14:30-14:45 Tea and Coffee Pause

14:45-15:45 Chair: SW	Keynote: Discourses on Pathetic of Javanese gamelan in the Period of Socio-cultural Transition.	Sumarsam (Wesleyan University)
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Topic 5: Decentering the West: On the Development of Local Theoretical Traditions

15:45-16:15 Chair: Murer	Between Two Worlds: Jaap Kunst, R.M.A. Kusumadinata, and Theories of the Genesis of Sundanese Scales and Modes	Henry Spiller
16:15-16:45	Speaking to the Raga, Speaking through the Raga: Experiential and Theoretical Conceptualization of Raga in Dagar Gharana Dhrupad Pedagogy	Vivek Virani

16:45-17:00 Tea and Coffee Pause

Summary Discussion

17:00-17:45 Chair: SW	Rethinking or Rejecting Mode?	Alexander Cannon (University of Birmingham) Kaustuv Kanti Ganguli (Zayed University, UAE)
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18:00-19:30	Workshop: Challenging Musical-Mode Theories on Persian Dastgah Music in Practice - Part 2	Negar Bouban
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20:00 Dinner

Abstracts (in presentation order)

Hooman Asadi

Title: Reconsidering “Mode” as a Generic Musicological Concept

Abstract: The term “mode” can be considered, as Harold Powers proposed, a generic musicological concept referring to a “particularized scale” or a “generalized tune,” covering a range of various particular phenomena in different cultures and time periods. The validity and usefulness of having such generic concepts in the musicological toolbox, despite all possible discrepancies, is not limited to the term “mode.” Indeed, similar issues can be raised while discussing other general musicological concepts such as rhythm, meter, form, and many other terms. This paper aims to address three main topics. Firstly, I shall discuss the idea of musical mode in the context of a nominal or rather a philosophical framework, considering the universal/particular dichotomy and the nature of equivalency and synonymity, its necessity and consequences in scholarly communication, and cross-cultural understanding. Secondly, I shall discuss the concept of musical mode in theory and practice. Thirdly, from an epistemological standpoint, I shall discuss the concept of musical mode in the context of the so-called emic/etic or insider/outsider continuum. These concepts will be exemplified through some musical examples from Iranian *dastgāhi* music.

Varshini Narayanan

Title: Raga in Translation: Intercultural Performance and Mode as Pedagogy

Abstract: What are the affordances of understanding raga as mode — and where does this equivalence break down? The word “raga” can only provisionally be translated as “mode” in the Western sense, a translation that effectively reduces a raga to a collection of notes and omits the particularities of gamakka and sancari that differentiate similar ragas as well as the “storehouse of remembered melodic history” (Viswanathan 2004) that informs the creative possibilities for a raga’s deployment in performance. The traditional pedagogical system for Carnatic and Hindustani music focuses on a performer’s internalization of a raga’s aesthetic flavor, in the case of Carnatic music by way of compositions, rather than transmitting a series of rules or a straightforward scale.

And yet: in the context of intercultural performance, such rules and translations can be undeniably useful to performers trained outside of the classical Indian traditions. How is raga glossed, for example, for jazz musicians charged with playing raga music? How do Indian/American composers themselves conceptualize raga when composing in an intercultural or fusion context, and how do their methods differ from a more traditional approach?

In this paper, I analyze the work of a number of contemporary intercultural ensembles whose work might be identified as Indo-Jazz fusion. These ensembles are all characterized by diversity in terms of their members' cultural and musical backgrounds, and perform compositions that either draw directly from the Carnatic repertoire or else emerge from the composer and bandleader's background in the Carnatic tradition. Based on ethnographic observation and interviews as well as analysis of select recordings, I explore the ways different performers conceptualize raga and its relationship to mode, using translation as a lens to analyze the dialogue that necessarily emerges in the intercultural spaces of rehearsal and performance.

Peter Manuel

Title: The Interaction of Modality, Modal Harmony, and Common-Practice Harmony in Flamenco

Abstract: Harold Powers noted that mode can often be seen as involving a continuum, with scale at one end and a specific tune at the other. Musical forms can often be plotted on a different sort of continuum, ranging from pure modality at one antipode, through modal harmony, to common-practice harmony at the other end. In flamenco, different cantes (song-types) can be seen to illustrate this gamut of structures, often in forms that accommodate or even invite alternate ways of hearing. In this presentation I outline some of these diverse forms of modality in flamenco, and the accordingly diverse—and, I would argue, in some cases problematic—ways that flamencologists (most of whom are guitarists) have analyzed them. Siguriyas, for example, is best regarded as purely modal, with the guitar accompaniment—even in its use of chords—playing a fundamentally decorative rather than structural role. More common in flamenco is an altered Phrygian modal harmony, featuring Phrygian-scale melodies with harmonic accompaniment patterns derived from that mode, though with a major rather than minor tonic chord. (This form of modal harmony bears close affinities to that of much Eastern Mediterranean and Eastern European music, from rebetika to klezmer.) Other cantes—such as alegrías, or the verse sections of most fandango forms—are in common-practice tonality. However, some of these latter forms are conspicuously ambiguous in their sense of tonicity and chordal teleology, and indeed they derive much of their richness precisely from this ambiguity. This same quality, meanwhile, has inspired various flamencologists and theoretically inclined performers to advance markedly different analytical interpretations. Such divergences involve fundamental and difficult questions about whether the music is fundamentally tonal, or modal with coloristic chords added, and whether flamencologists' disparate interpretations constitute legitimately different ways of hearing, or instead may in some cases be incompatible and misleading.

Rolf Baecker

Title: The “Dorian” Mode in Flamenco – Where Music, History, and Ideology Unite

Abstract: Amongst the parameters that make flamenco an easily recognizable musical genre, there is, apart from the sound of the guitar and the complex rhythms, the underlying modal system, qualified by almost all Western listeners as “exotic”. Whereas musicians trained in classical or jazz theory would call this mode “Phrygian” or “Phrygian dominant”, since quite some decades ago flamencologists and flamenco performers alike give it the name of “Dorian”. The case gets even stranger when considering that this nomenclature coincides with that of Ancient Greek music theory. Is this a hint towards an actual relationship between flamenco and ancient music, as some flamencologists point out?

The paper will cast some light on this question by analysing the musical structure of the mode and its variants and its presence within flamenco as well as its semantics, transcending thereby the limits between the genre and several other musical cultures that are said to have had some influence in its history and development. These include, of course, Ancient Greek music, but also the musical theory and practices of the Islamic world and Jewish, Indian, and Western classical music. The fact that the very trigger of this paper lies rather in the name of the mode (or its significant, in Saussurian terms) and its relationship with it than in the mode itself, makes it also necessary to ask for the semantic fields touched by the word “Dorian”.

Finally, the review of some central flamencological texts will reveal the motivation behind the use of this nomenclature within the context of ideological struggles around a Spanish national identity in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Amine Beyhom

Title: Mode and Modulation in *Cante Jondo* and *Maqām* Music

Abstract: Mode and modulation are frequent phenomena in Arabian *maqām* music. These are also frequent characteristics of *Cante Jondo* music. The author will explain on video examples of the VIAMAP series (see <https://analyses.foredefico.org/>) some peculiarities of *Cante Jondo* modulation techniques and some similarities with *maqām* music, on the case study of a Koranic recitation by a Malaysian reciter. While in *maqām* music theory and practice do not always correspond (practice being generally more elaborated than the modal skeleton provided by theoreticians), there are no known rules for *Cante Jondo* modulations, except the ones stemming from the analysis of the music. The author will show that, nevertheless, and although performers of *Cante Jondo* usually restrain themselves to the Western semi-diatonic scales, the modulation and vocal techniques used by these performers are very elaborated and can compete with usual modulation techniques used in *maqām* music. Furthermore, the analysis of both *Cante Jondo* and *maqām* practices shows common underlying theoretical bases for the

two musics. Lastly, the somewhat simplistic representation of a “mode” as a scale, a tune, or both, does not suffice to describe both Arabian-Turkish and *Cante Jondo* modalities.

Negar Bouban

Challenging Musical-Mode Theories on Persian Dastgah Music in Practice: A Two-session Workshop

Abstract: Describing Dastgah and its musical features in Persian music, as practiced in the last two centuries, through the lens of the so-called Modal Music and its attributed theories, has been quite common and rather gradually accepted in the last three decades in Iran.

At the same time, letting the lens focus more and having a somewhat clearer picture, more curious questions arise. Questions such as: Do statements from such modal-theory mindset present anything useful and practically helpful, when one wants to actually practice the music? In other words, for the learners of Persian Dastgah Music, could such acclaimed theories prove helpful or relevant? If so, how and in what ways? Do such idea-statements function as mere descriptions, categorisation rules or something closer to structure-revealing concepts?

In a two-session workshop, we shall be looking at examples of how such ideas are applied to the content of Dastgah and then try to challenge their not-so-clear aspects in music making practice. Participating with musical instruments, especially with microtonal capabilities, is encouraged.

Richard Parncutt

Title: Why do Scales Have Steps? Why is Musical Pitch Perception Categorical? A Theory of Proximal Perception and Prenatal Psychology

Abstract: Across cultures, music (but not speech) focuses on a limited set of approximately defined pitches (scale steps). What is the psychological function of categorical pitch perception? It hardly reduces cognitive load; complex expressive variations in intonation are part of performance and oral tradition. Singers are not imitating instruments (e.g., flutes) that play isolated pitches, if singing is the original form of melody and musical instruments imitate singing. Musical scale steps, like rhythmic meters, focus attention on the sonic surface (proximal stimulus) rather than the physical source of sound (distal stimulus). In song, attention is directed not only to the singer (distal) but also to the aesthetic quality of the melody (proximal). Similarly, in painting: attention is directed to colors, patterns, textures, and what they represent – not the paint itself or the canvas or rock under it. The distal stimulus tends to be more holistic; the proximal, more analytic. The oldest art is abstract (Malotki & Dissanayake,

2018). Is aesthetic attention to the proximal stimulus equally old? That would contradict evolutionary theory: we normally attend primarily to environmental objects with which we interact, to promote survival and reproduction. Dissanayake (2009, *Cognitive Semiotics*) explained “artification” and “making special” thus: “infants universally respond to certain affect-laden elements of maternal communication that can be called ‘proto-aesthetic’”. In addition, the human fetus can perceive sound and movement patterns for 20 weeks before birth. These patterns carry important information about maternal state and prepare the fetus for postnatal bonding, upon which its survival depends. Fetal perception is proximal; distal perception begins after birth. A melody that seems to direct attention to scale steps (because phrases are repeated: the speech-to-music illusion of Diana Deutsch) may be perceived as “music” because it activates the prenatal mother schema and attracts attention to the proximal stimulus.

Kristin Jonzon

Title: Tuning the Human Voice: An Empirical Exploration of Tonality in Northern Traditional Singing

Abstract: In this paper, I have chosen to look at traditional music in Northern Europe as an overall generic framework, in which specific performances and musical manifestation are attributed musical and social meaning. The concern of this paper regards the interface between empirical musicology and traditional unaccompanied monophonic solo singing as it is lived and expressed. Through studying song as something emerging from the human body, this work investigates the combination of physical and intangible aspects of traditional singing. The particular area of interest for my analytical attention is timbre and intonation within unaccompanied traditional solo singing, read as nouns and as verbs, thus highlighting an aesthetic playground which much regards gaps between performance practice and theoretical discourse. This has been done through fieldwork, which specifically focussed on embodied aspects of singing in a sample of contemporary traditional singers in Northern Europe, as well as introspection in terms of evaluating my own experiences from singing. Through combining that with software analyses of acoustic information in 75 recorded performances of the Swedish singer, Dansar Edvard Jonsson, this resulted in a model for descriptive analysis of intonation on a phrase level. The model, which could deal with any monophonic melody-based style, was quantitatively evaluated on other samples from the folk music archives. My contribution deviates from prevailing research through the straight descriptive approach, a focus on the becoming of intonation instead of an a posteriori view, and a focus on phrases instead of tones.

Peter Fielding

Title: Employing Post-Tonal Analytic Techniques to Discern Normative Scalar Constructs: A Case Study of Nova Scotian Traditional Vocal Music

Abstract: Much of the traditional vocal repertoire of North America has, as of yet, only been assessed with the most rudimentary of tonal and modal scalar descriptors. While descriptors such as the major scale, the Mixolydian mode, or the $^1-^2-^3-^5-^6$ pentatonic scale are convenient grouping labels, they do not map the variety of pitch-collections traversed by many folk songs. Richard Chrisman's notion of a successive-interval array (SIA) has merits for analyzing this repertoire, as it enables the appraisal of a melody in terms of its intervallic content without having to commit to the implied analytical associations of traditional scalar or modal descriptors. Although many melodies conform to these scalar frames, many do sound all the pitches of an anticipated scale or mode, while others contain chromatic distortions of such preconceived tonal/modal pitch-space. Although folk scholars have wrested to reconcile these issues of collection size and pitch space over the past century (see Gagnon 1865, Sharp 1907, Gilchrist 1911, Barbeau 1944, Bronson 1969, Cadzen 1971), post-tonal analysis offers a robust array of analytical tools to enable a nuanced quantitative assessment of the pitch spaces encoded into conventional music notation. This presentation serves to explore the application of select post-tonal analytical techniques to aid the quantitative exploration of the pitch-spaces through a case study involving English, French, and Gaelic-based traditional vocal music of Nova Scotia, Canada. This work will span 1,946 transcribed melodies spanning the work of Nova Scotian song collectors such as William Roy MacKenzie, John Byers, John Campbell, Helen Creighton, Doreen Senior, and other collectors and transcribers.

George Murer

Title: Ritual Idioms as Sites of Cultural Confluence and Modal Multiplicity: The Cases of Qaderi zekr in Kurdistan and the Trans-Gulf Mālid

Abstract: While, in West Asia, modal constructs and complexes are most explicitly theorized in the context of performance arts historically anchored to elite courtly circles of erudition and patronage, the tonal aesthetics of such repertoires are rooted in diverse and frequently non-elite communal settings and surface vividly in Muslim devotional practices. In this paper, I examine two instances of cultural confluence within specific ritual idioms. The first is the zekr (from Ar. dhikr) of a Qaderi Sufi taqia in Erbil/Hewler in Central Kurdistan, comprising segments variously coded as Kurdish and Arab by virtue of language, vocal technique, and modal structuring. The second is the mālid in Oman as an idiom equally prominent among Peninsular Arab, Swahili East African, and Makran Baloch communities and practitioners, thus revealing a juxtaposition of different aesthetic realms and notions of interplay between rhythm and

melodic tendencies. The two are closely linked owing to the centrality of the figures of Abdelqadir Gilani and Ahmad Rifa'i in both and to an Eastern Arabian approach to cantillation that emerges as a dominant current in the repertoire of respective officiants. Major contrasts, which affect the way the rituals are spatially and sonically enacted, include the institutionalized, canonical nature of Sufi doctrine versus the use of expressions of piety in community settings in the Gulf to access and engage powerful spirit entities whose presences within human households must be tactfully managed. In the mālid, the modal nature of a performance will shift according to whether a spirit/shaykh associated with Baghdad, Hadramawt, or Balochistan and Sindh extemporaneously emerges as the focal point of the ceremony. In the Qaderi zekr in Kurdistan, a balance is struck between Kurdish and Arabic vernaculars.

Rafael Caro Repetto

Title: A Reflection on Mode from Chinese Musical Practices

Abstract: The myriad of musical practices historically developed in China have devised different systems for the organization of pitch material and melodic structures. Describing these systems with the standard musical terminology in English has posed not a few challenges to researchers working in this language. Regarding mode, probably the concept that has found major agreement in being understood as such is the one developed by music theoreticians for court ritual music expressed by the term *diao* (which arrived, together with the corresponding musical practices, to Korea as *jo* and to Japan as *chō*). This system came to consider seven types of heptatonic scales over the twelve chromatic pitches of the *lü* system, resulting in 84 theoretical modes, only few of them actually ever used in musical praxis. Closely related with the court, but engaged in private musical performance, the literati adopted the previous musical terminology for the *qin*, but in this case more related to the tuning of this seven-string zither than to the melodic content of the performed music. But it is in the realm of folk music where the greater challenges for English scholarship arise. The enormous variety of regional musical genres have been developing their own specific systems for the organization of their melodic repertoire, resulting in a corresponding extraordinarily rich diversity in terminology. Even though the term *diao* is still used, in many cases it can be better understood as key or even tune. And at the same time, new terms (with their corresponding conceptualizations of their own music) appear, which English-speaking researchers have identified, but not unequivocally, as mode. In this paper, I offer an overview of how pitch and melodic material is structured in the aforementioned three spheres, namely court music, *qin* music and folk music, focusing here on the theatre music of *jingju*. Considering their employed terminology and the corresponding conceptualizations of music, I reflect then on how they can be related with 'mode,' and how some of these unique systems can contribute to the musicological terminology in English.

Sumarsam

Title: Discourses on Pathet of Javanese Gamelan in the Period of Socio-cultural Transition

Abstract: Like any study of music theory, the study of pathet develops in response to certain conditions of socio-musical life at a particular moment in history and shaped by the interests and background of the individual who studies it. My presentation will be based on the study of pathet in the mid to late 20th century, during which time the intellectual atmosphere in Java had been shaped by Westernized mode of thoughts. Focusing on the studies by two Javanese authors, Poerbatjaraka and Martopangrawit, I will show the ways scholars defined pathet in terms of its tonal constraint (tones hierarchies and relationships) and its association with time (performing a piece at certain time of day or evening) and character or mood of the piece. More importantly, I will show the uniqueness and creativity employed by scholars in defining pathet, exploring ideas ranging from linguistic departures in interpreting the names of pathet to viewing pathet specifically from the performance practice of certain instrument. My study also leads us to the question of insider and outsider perspectives.

Henry Spiller

Title: Between Two Worlds: Jaap Kunst, R.M.A. Kusumadinata, and Theories of the Genesis of Sundanese Scales and Modes

Abstract: Comparative musicologist Erich von Hornbostel's Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv provided crucial support to the Dutch musicologist, Jaap Kunst, in his musicological research in Java in the 1920s and -30s. Kunst repaid the favor by providing putative evidence, in the form of gamelan pitch measurements, for Hornbostel's expansive "theory of blown fifths," which posited a common basis in the overtone series for a variety of Asian tonal systems. In West Java, Kunst collaborated extensively with Raden Machyar Angga Kusumadinata, a Sundanese aristocrat with both a Dutch education and Sundanese musical training, who was also interested in unlocking the mysteries of Sundanese scales and modes. In this paper, I focus on Kusumadinata's engagement with Kunst's and Hornbostel's ideas, with his own aesthetic understanding of Sundanese music, and with Western notions of science and scientism. Kusumadinata rejected the theory of blown fifths in favor of tuning models rooted in equidistant divisions of the octave that were unrelated to acoustical phenomena—an approach that Kunst could not endorse. I argue that Kusumadinata's preference for equidistant models likely had precedents in visual/physical approaches to tuning in Southeast Asia. Hornbostel, Kunst, and Kusumadinata rooted their different approaches in their individual subconscious epistemologies of music. Ironically, none of their theories actually accounted for Javanese musical practices, but their

interlocking, if contradictory, approaches do expose how epistemological biases affect even the most objective scientific work. The power differentials between the various actors—scientist, fieldworker, and native informant—also affected their outcomes. Despite its flaws, Kusumadinata’s formulations became the foundation of Sundanese music theory well into the 21st century, in part because of the prestige that Kunst and the patina of Dutch science lent to Kusumadinata’s work. In turn, Kusumadinata’s “native” authority lent legitimacy to Kunst’s work as well, and even to Hornbostel’s discredited “blown fifths” theory.

Vivek Virani

Title: Speaking to the Raga, Speaking through the Raga: Experiential and Theoretical Conceptualization of Raga in Dagar Gharana Dhrupad Pedagogy

Abstract: Identifying and categorizing ragas has long been a central concern of practitioners and scholars of Hindustani music. During the nineteenth century, Indian institutions attempted to establish systematic definitions and classifications of ragas based on observable musical features. Modern historiographies describe this as an imitation of colonial modes of knowledge (Bakhle 2005) or a shift in the epistemic center of tradition away from hereditary musicians and toward the educated middle-class (Lelyveld 1994; Neuman 2012). Modern ethnomusicologists have been justifiably wary of systematic raga classification models, focusing instead on aspects of raga knowledge that have traditionally evaded textual scholarship. These include the affective metaphors (Leante 2009) or implicit spatial metaphors (Rahaim 2013) through which performers conceptualize and teach raga. These approaches have brought more nuance to academic discussions of raga, but do not always engage with the ways that Hindustani musicians interact with classification systems or develop their own. This paper stems from the acknowledgement that the classificatory impulse is not itself a colonial import, but a feature of Indic thought dating back as far as Samkhya philosophy. Indic classificatory systems, however, are rooted in an epistemology based on the authority of personal experience or a guru lineage. Many Hindustani musicians reject “textbook” raga classification systems, but do employ systems that they have developed intuitively or learned from their gurus. I draw from my experience learning and discussing raga from musicians within the Dagar gharana dhrupad lineage. Despite their shared pedagogical background, these musicians employ different models of conceptualizing raga that differ in their emphasis on specific musical features and the connections drawn between musical phenomena and affective understanding. I describe a few of these models and, drawing from yoga philosophy, describe some of the ways that modern Dhrupad performers draw links between theoretical and experiential understanding of raga.

Alexander Cannon and Kaustuv Kanti Ganguli

Title: Rethinking or Rejecting Mode?

Abstract: A conference on rethinking musical mode offers opportunities to interrogate and define a pivotal concept of music theory and practice around the world. The concept is occasionally elusive, however, and on the slippery slope of musical taxonomy, some may suggest that the concept should be rejected entirely. This panel discussion debates these two positionalities, where Kaustuv Kanti Ganguli advocates for the continued engagement with 'mode' across diverse musical contexts, and Alexander M. Cannon makes the case for rejecting mode. Ganguli conceives the concept of 'mode' as a superstructure that balances the trade-off between the macro versus micro, vis-à-vis, distributional versus structural attributes of a melody. Even though the phenomenon of interpolating to a traditional modal framework seems odd at the outset owing to several trivial constraints, the underlying assumptions are rather cognitively-based. In the realm of music information retrieval (MIR), bottom-up approaches have successfully evidenced modal features to essentially capture the task-driven models for melodic structure via computational methods. Ganguli draws on examples of tonal hierarchy in identification/discrimination of melodies in Hindustani raga and Turkish maqam repertoires. On the one hand this reinforces the relevance of the possible universality of 'mode' in tonal structures adhering to human production-perception mechanism, while on the other hand it warrants rethinking of the concept of 'mode' to adapt culture-awareness and pose it as an aid to rationalise musical structures rather than a framework for top-down understanding of the pedagogy. Cannon instead views the concept of 'mode' as both a hindrance to understanding the distinctiveness of different concepts around the world (including raga, maqam, pathet) and potentially superimposing western conceptualisations on local understandings of these concepts. Cannon takes the case of the Vietnamese concept of *điệu*, which is often translated as 'mode', and the related concept of *hơi*, which is often translated as 'nuance'. Neither concept really align with 'mode', although both have been pigeonholed to fit with the concept. Cannon investigates Vietnamese-language literature on the concepts and draws on the practice of various musics of southern Vietnam to argue that systems of melodic organisation in southern Vietnam should be understood through local concepts rather than an ideology of mode.