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Preface

This collection of essays is an outgrowth of the 8th International Symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Music and Minorities Study Group, which was held at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan, on 19–23 July 2014. Established in 1947 as the International Folk Music Council, the ICTM is the largest and one of the most active academic organisations today for the study of music and dance in culture. Apart from organising biannual world conferences, the ICTM has more than twenty five study groups—each with a specific thematic or geographical emphasis—that hold meetings in the intervening years.

The Music and Minorities Study Group was formally established in 1997, and it has organised an international symposium biannually since 2000 to provide a continuous platform for sharing research findings and theoretical reflections on the performing arts among minorities. The study group was formed primarily by scholars based in Europe, with a strong emphasis on case studies from the region, particularly those pertaining to the music of the Roma and of the Jewish populations. With an increasing desire to widen their geographical and thematic emphases, the study group began searching for partners outside of Europe to include in their biannual symposia. This symposium, which was held for only the second time in Asia (after the first one in Hanoi, Vietnam, in 2010), provided a much-needed bridge between the study group and Asia-based scholars with similar interests. The study group's aim to stimulate research on the music of minorities in Asia appeared fruitful, with many presentations given by local researchers and those from neighbouring countries.

During the symposium, a total of twenty-four papers were presented by scholars from sixteen countries, reflecting its truly international makeup. The participants came from diverse backgrounds in terms of their nationalities, ethnicities, languages, ages, genders, and sexual orientations. In particular, the symposium fulfilled its objective of fostering younger scholars by providing them with a venue for close interaction with senior scholars. Throughout the symposium, the level of enthusiasm was high, and the sense of camaraderie was strong. I sincerely hope that this publication will further encourage greater exchange and interaction among scholars around the world.

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