

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte SoSe 2026:

**Vortrag von Prof. Dr. Lara Pearson
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**“Adjusting to the Other:
Gesture in Karnatak Vocal Performance.”**

Montag, 06.07.2026, Beginn: 18.15 Uhr

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte, Adenauerallee 10, ÜR (EG)

<https://uni-bonn.zoom-x.de/j/62745727246?pwd=xAx8uQASPAXI2bkfoNxJIW8XoV775.1>

Music can be understood as a form of sonic, bodily and social interaction. This is evident in live performance where, in addition to sonic interaction between musicians, we can see performers and audience members responding to each other and to the sounds produced through modalities such as gesture, facial expression, utterance and dance.

In this talk, I explore music performance as interpersonal, embodied interaction through the lens of my research on gesture in the Karnatak music (Karnāṭaka Saṅgīta) tradition of South India, where vocalists tend to spontaneously gesture while they sing. Looking at both lessons and concert settings I examine details of gesture, gaze, facial expression, utterance and sung phrases that constitute interpersonal interaction. In particular, I examine participants' use of addressee gestures and gestural backchannels, which are gestures made by the auditor rather than the speaker/singer. These can be considered audiencing gestures in the sense that they act to audience the other person – providing evidence that they are being attended to and understood. In light of these analyses and based on theoretical work from pragmatist and phenomenological traditions, I discuss how such gestures can contribute to performers' grip over their interactions, both with other people and with the music performed.



Hemmige Prashanth and TKV Ramanujacharyulu in concert. Photo: Prof. Dr. Lara Pearson