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Significance of Presentation

At the 2015 Society for Ethnomusicology annual conference in Austin, Texas (December 3-6), I presented a paper entitled “Where Melody Meets Mystical Poetry: The *Sur* Repertoire of Sindh's Shāh Abdul Latīf Bhitāī,” as part of a roundtable panel entitled “Adorning the Bride: Lyric and Melodic Confluence in Islamicated Musics.” This paper is significant to the field of Pakistan studies for a number of reasons. The primary reason is that it addresses the musical legacy of Shāh Abdul Latīf, who is an extremely important figure in the ethnolinguistic region of Sindh, and thus Pakistan more generally. Despite the enormous importance of Shāh Latīf, his music has been understudied outside of Pakistan, even though his poetry has received attention from a number of Western scholars (such as Annemarie Schimmel). Shāh Latīf's *sur* (“melody”) repertoire has thus remained poorly understood; the aim of my paper was to present my own findings on, and thoughts about, the *sur* repertoire. In the presentation, I introduced the repertoire to an audience of ethnomusicologists, especially those working on South Asian music.

This paper was also significant because it highlighted cultural and musical commonalities between Sindh and Kachchh, Gujarat, an adjacent region across the border in western India. In highlighting these commonalities, this paper is intended to increase understanding about cross-border musical ties, both historical and contemporary. Finally, in presenting as part of a roundtable with other ethnomusicologists working on Islamicate musics, I developed relationships with scholars working on the music of Pakistan, and South Asian music more broadly. It is my hope that these relationships will insure that we continue to follow each other's work on musical life in Pakistan.