Kota and Wakhi are minority languages spoken at opposite ends of South Asia and belonging to different language families. Nevertheless, verbal arts in these two languages share a number of characteristics: in both, poetry and song are conceptualized as a single unit. Both have a core “indigenous” repertoire of melancholic songs of love and separation. These songs are highly allusive, relying on few words to capture a mood or a story and leaving much room for the listener’s imagination. And in both, a lively tradition of new composition draws from the musical and linguistic environments of the local dominant languages—in the case of Kota, Tamil; in the case of Wakhi, Persian and the languages of Hunza in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. In this presentation I will reflect on experiences conducting research on music among speakers of these languages and discuss the possible implications of current musical practices for the survival of these languages.