

Editorial

THEORY AND METHOD IN URBAN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

Most of us live in cities. Surrounded by an urban environment, more and more ethnomusicologists are investigating urban phenomena. Despite that, when we started with more systematic research of Prague musics, we couldn't find a theory in which "urbanness" would be conceived as a substantial feature.

In the realm of concepts, two directions have appeared most important: "actor-specific," combining sound primarily with a social aspect, and "environment-specific," combining sound with a spatial one. The former, usually more or less convergent with anthropology or sociology, is thus focused on questions of how different urban groups connected with a certain type of music behave in the broadest sense, (e.g., what is the cultural orientation of the performers?; what are the social and economic motivations for their acts?). The latter, most often referring to the sound-ecological school of Murray Schafer, is concerned with local ties of sound phenomena (that is what makes Toronto, Tokyo etc. sound-specific, what creates their "soundscapes") and/or how they are locally perceived, etc. For "urbanness," however, we consider the connection of both concepts to be fundamental. Secondly, we were convinced about the key importance of grasping the dynamics and complexity of different phenomena (including the musical ones) because this is actually what is characteristic of the urban environment.

In an attempt to come more deeply to the problematics of the theory of ethnomusicology, we organized a round table "Theory and Method in Urban Ethnomusicology" in June 2011 in Prague. We invited those who we knew were involved in urban problematics in ethnomusicology. The contributions of the round table are the main contents of this issue. The theoretical approaches and topics are very diverse. I see the emphasis of the first three articles on theory (I read the text of Kay Kaufman Shelemay as an exemplum *par excellence* of the above-mentioned sociologically oriented direction) or on methodology (McMurray).

In the following block there are examples of research in Wroclaw (following up on and reconsidering that spatial direction), Vienna, Prague and Singapore, differing in material through which the urbanness is investigated (to a great

extent, they confirm the words of Adelaide Reyes: “the strong tendency to focus on parts...”). The Nestor of applied ethnomusicology, Kjell Skyllstad, describes in his theoretically rather unorthodox article a monumental Norwegian multicultural project, *Resonant Community*.

The article by Zita Skořepová Honzlová in the Students Work section originated in her thesis and is not only thematically connected to this issue, but is even more concretely related to the Viennese research presented here by Ursula Hemetek.

I hope you will find the individual articles as well as all of them as a whole as interesting and stimulating as I do.

Zuzana Jurková