

urbanophobes) dealing with the city, with the main focus on Rousseau. Rousseau was probably the most famous critic of the city, describing it as a place of moral decadence. Marcelli pointed out some paradoxes of this approach and talked about an open city and even about the “urban” universal fluid which is neither the city nor the countryside, but the countryside within the city and the main channel of communication processes. Marcelli’s presentation was followed by blocs of lectures given by architects and art historians (T. Vích, M. Topolčanská and M. Horáček); and human geographers, environmentalists and sociologists (J. Novák, A. Burjanek, O. Muliček, P. Pospěch, B. Vacková and L. Šolcová). Urban space, locality and society were the key words linking most of the presentations of the Saturday program.

The City – a Changeable (Un)Certainty conference brought fresh air to the debates about the city, mainly because it made various disciplines talk to each other. It is obvious that interdisciplinary dialogue is a challenge. We often tend to see “our” disciplinary view or methodology as a better one or more appropriate, but only by listening to other disciplines can we learn, broaden our understanding of the topic and overcome our “discipline-centrism.” The conference was organized by young scientists and it was very encouraging to see many young researchers in the audience, too. The future of urban research is in good hands.

Alexandra Bitušíková

5TH MEETING OF THE “MUSIC AND MINORITIES” STUDY GROUP.

Prague, Czech Republic,
May 24 – July 1, 2008.

Organizers: Faculty of Humanities of Charles University, Prague, Ethnological Institute of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic, Slovo 21.

The *International Council for Traditional Music* (ICTM, originally the *International Folk Music Council*) was founded in 1947 as the first major international ethnomusicological organization. In contrast to the *Society for Ethnomusicology*, which was founded eight years later and combines mainly American ethnomusicology with relatively closely-related scientific paradigms, ICTM is extremely diversified not only regarding scientific paradigms, but also in other directions. Its biennial world conferences are comprised of hundreds of participants who present in many parallel sessions (e.g., last year in Vienna there were usually six). They represent an exemplary fair of field resources rather than what the word itself refers to, i.e., discussions or exchange of knowledge of scholars in the same field.

The real bases for scientific cooperation in ICTM are the so-called Study Groups. One of the newest (and today the second most numerous) – “Music and Minorities” – held its fifth meeting in May in Prague. Sixty scholars from 23 lands actively participated.

The conference topics, which had been chosen at last year’s world conference, were *Music and Dance of the Roma;*

Cultural Policy, Representation of Minority Music. The first of these, which had been requested by the local organizers (the conference took place in the context of the Khamoro World Festival of Romani Music) was represented by the greatest number of participants. In this group, the strong tradition of Romani music research was clear from the beginning: among its founders were three scholars in the field (Petan, Hemetek, and Jurková). During its ten-year existence, there has clearly been a thematic shift of papers from traditional “ethnographic” and historical research of European Romani groups, in part toward less known Romani groups (Ankica Petrović: *Music Practices of Machwaya Gypsies in America*) and in part toward new topics (Katalin Kovalcsik: *A Hungarian Romani Star Singer as “Antimusician”*) or new points of view (Adriane Helbig: *Sonic Aesthetic of Poverty Among Romani Musicians in Transcarpathia, Ukraine*).

The two other themes of the conference are closely related and thus it was not always easy for the program committee to place them in appropriate groups. Both themes shared a broad methodological, theoretical and paradigmatic spectrum.

Besides a few “ethnographic reports,” usually concerning little known minorities (Olya Kolomyets: *Little Armenia in Western Ukraine*, Piotr Dahlig: *The Czech Brothers in Poland – The Community of Zelov and its Contemporary Musical Image*, Nona Lomidze: *The Georgian Jewish Community – Their Life and Integration in Vienna*) the papers were usually concerned with the self-representation of majorities (Essica Marks: *Representation*

of Arab Music in Israel’s Popular Culture Arena), and with how this representation is influenced by (majority) cultural politics (Dorit Klebe: *From “Gastarbeiter-sendung” to “Radiomultikulti” – Music of Minorities in Radio Programs under Public Law in Germany*, Gerda Lechleitner: *The Phonogrammarchiv, cultural policy, and the safeguarding of the audiovisual heritage: past and present case studies*).

As for minority problematics, the involvement of researchers’ empathy or sympathy is not at all surprising (characteristically, many members of this group are also active in the newest study group – “Applied Ethnomusicology,” and that application entails great involvement). Expression of these emotions that is too strong and without solid theoretical anchorage (and clarity of this anchorage) tends to weaken the scientific character of the work.

Alongside classical format, some contributions were presented as panels, which are usually recommended for world conferences. From my own experience, I know that preparation for a panel is demanding – and useful for the participants. With the growing number of participants, however, there is a growing risk of chaos, which is of little use to the audience. The Prague panelists succeeded in avoiding that risk. Each of the panels made brilliant use of some of the possibilities for this sort of presentation, from the “Southeast Asia” panel, *Listening to the Unheard: Music, Minorities and the State in Southeast Asia* (Org. Jan Mrázek), which presented three case studies in a theoretical-philosophical framework, to an open-dialogue form *National Heritage and the Norwegian*

Romanies, to the enlightening and colorful *Cultural Policies and Minority Musics in Kosovo and Sri Lanka: What Can We Learn from a Comparative Study?*

Compared to the previous meeting, the Prague conference was atypical in several ways. For the first time speakers were chosen on the basis of anonymous evaluations of the program committee. (The same process will also be followed for publication of the papers.). For the first time, a keynote speaker (Prague-born Bruno Nettl, one of the world's leading ethnomusicologists) was invited. Although he had to cancel his participation at the last minute because of ill health, he sent not only his provocative keynote speech *Minorities in the History of Ethnomusicology: A Meditation on a Half-Century of Experience*, but also a short confession in Czech.

Not only from the program of the Prague conference, but also from the composition of the whole "Music and Minorities" group (some hundred scholars from four continents) it is clear that the subject of minorities is, in ethnomusicology as in other social sciences, very topical not only because, as Nettl said, *everybody is in one or several minorities... there are only minorities*. At the same time a running paradigmatic schism was confirmed in Prague: while many participants from the East and mainly from Southeast Europe spoke about "music itself," to anthropologically orientated ethnomusicologists, such terminology (of course, along with related concepts and methods) was quite incomprehensible and/or some sort of antedeluvian echo. The question is to what degree we should accept such multiparadigmaticism and

resign ourselves to the advantages of a wide view and greater possibilities of generalizations. Conferences are, at the least, opportunities to reflect on this paradigmatic fractionalism. In the best case, it is possible to take advantage of (not only) paradigmatic convergence. At the next "Music and Minorities" meeting, a round table about methodologies is planned and, on this occasion, basic concepts will undoubtedly be discussed.

Zuzana Jurková

PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY LEGEND.

International Society for Contemporary Legend Research, 26th International Conference, Dublin, Ireland, July 7 – 9, 2008.

Contemporary legends, rumors, gossip and other ephemeral forms of folk narratives typical for postmodern society represent one of the most interesting issues of contemporary social sciences. Since the 1980s, when these fictional narratives told as true were "discovered" by U.S. folklorists, their study attracted not only specialists in folk narratives, but also cultural anthropologists, sociologists, literary historians, media researchers and scholars from other disciplines. The vanguard of the study of these narratives has always been represented by the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research (ISCLR). This scientific society, founded in 1988 in Sheffield, UK, originated from (now almost legendary) Sheffield theoretical and terminological seminars organized by British folklorist

Gillian Bennett and Canadian folklorist Paul Smith. It was the ISCLR that coined the now standard term for these narratives "contemporary legend" (instead of *urban legend* and *urban myth* preferred by media and popular culture) and it was the ISCLR publications – the journal *Contemporary Legend* and the newsletter *FOAFTale News* – which are now regarded as standard research tools for anyone interested in contemporary oral tradition. The most important part of the ISCLR activity is its annual international conferences, held in North America and Europe. The last, 26th ISCLR conference, titled *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend*, was held in Dublin, Ireland, July 7-9, 2008, with more than twenty active participants from the fields of folkloristics, cultural anthropology, psychology, literary history and media and cultural studies. The majority of the presentations were devoted to well-documented case studies of actual legend traditions; the most interesting ones were *Contemporary Legends Are Ephemeral: What Was Really Told About the Hatchet-Lady At Red Rocks, Colorado* by Michael J. Preston (University of Colorado, USA), *The Search for Winnie the Puma. Wild Animals in Civilized Environment* by Theo Meder (Meertens Institute, The Netherlands), *Japanese Ghost Lore* by Gunella Thorgeirsdottir (University of Sheffield, UK) and *Collecting Student Lore in Göttingen: Expectations and Results* by Christine Shojaei Kawan (Enzyklopädie des Märchens, Germany). Two special sections were devoted to historical narratives; these included papers on various local guises of traditional folkloric character: Spring-heeled Jack – *Unmask-*

ing Spring-heeled Jack: A Case Study of a 19th Century Ghost Panic by David Clarke (Sheffield Halam University, UK) and *Urban Maniac Or Resistance Fighter? Rumours And Legends About the Spring Man* by Petr Janeček (National Museum, Czech Republic), and interesting socio-cultural interpretation of Soviet post-WWII cannibalism narratives in *The Legend of the Sausage Factory: Post-War Images of Violence and Evil* by Eda Kalmre (Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia). One interesting section touched on economical exploitation of folk beliefs by mercantile corporations – e.g., the so-called *Spikeys* and *date-rape drug test strips* utilizing the false belief in drink spiking in clubs and discotheques (*Crime Legends in Different Media* by Peter Burger, Leiden University, The Netherlands) or *sleeping gas alarms* inspired by false public scare of gas attacks directed against tourist in caravans, trucks and trains (*Gassed and Robbed* by Sandy Hobbs and Seonaid Anderson, University of the West of Scotland, UK). The issue of deliberate utilization of folk beliefs was also touched on in other papers, the most interesting ones being *Contemporary Legend: A Fundamentally Political Act* by Bill Ellis (Pennsylvania State University, USA), interpreting political use of rumors in official U.S. propaganda during the Gulf and Iraq Wars, and *Man Disposes, God Discloses: Legend of the Levees* by Carl Lindahl (University of Houston, USA), interpreting African-American rumors about deliberate flooding of low-income neighborhoods of New Orleans during the hurricane Katrina disaster in order to save rich "white" neighborhoods. Mechanisms of planting false