

VIENNA AND THE BALKANS

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Sona, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2008. 140 pp.

This slim but important volume presents papers concerning music and dance research in Southeastern Europe that were selected from panel sessions held in early July, 2007, at the World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music in Vienna. Its significance lies in good part in its historical place: for the first time since the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the end of the Cold War, an attempt is made to assess the development and current state of folk music and dance research in the Slavic-language countries of Southeastern Europe. These fields of study had been affected by shifting political and ideological winds throughout the 20th Century, and in particular, under socialist regimes in which the concept “folk” held a privileged position. This began to change in the 1990s which brought reduced ideological constraints, but also new manifestations of nationalism as well as, eventually, opportunities for regional and global cooperation. This volume does not provide a comprehensive analysis of these developments, but it goes far in assessing the situation in individual countries.

In addition to the ten selected essays, there is the customary editor’s preface, there is also an *Introduction* by Ursula Hemetek (Vienna) on behalf of the hosts, an insightful *Afterword* by Timothy Rice (Los Angeles) which presents suggestions for future directions; abstracts of the papers in Bulgarian; brief biographies of the authors; and the announcement of a new ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe, no doubt one of the consequences of the Vienna meetings.

In her *Introduction*, Ursula Hemetek examines relationships between Vienna and “the Balkans” – with a focus on Vienna and viewing the Balkans as a source of immigrants. “The Balkans”, of course, is a problematic concept that lacks a generally accepted definition, be it geographical or political, while invoking both positive and negative connotations. The latter may account for the conspicuous absence of contributions from Croatia or Slovenia, member countries of the former Yugoslavia with strong traditions in folk music and dance research that, while distinct, are intellectually and historically inseparable from those of Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia that are well represented in this volume.

Seven of the ten essays come from a two-session panel *The history and perspectives of national ethnomusicologies and ethnochoreologies in the Balkans* that was organized by Selena Rakočević (Beograd). The concepts *national ethnomusicologies and ethnochoreologies* are under-

stood quite literally and narrowly: with few exceptions, the essays deal with research and teaching within the respective country, mostly to the exclusion of contributions by other nationals. It should also be understood that the terms ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology in all cases stand for the *fields* of respective national folk music and folk dance studies, for the subject matter, not for academic *disciplines* informed by scientific theories and methodologies that are in essence transnational, as understood in Western Europe and elsewhere.

In their succinctly formulated essay, *Mapping the past and the future of Serbian ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology*, Dimitrije Golemović and Selena Rakočević describe the Serbian approach as “a triad consisting of field research-transcription-analyses of rural practice” that is in use “until this very day” (p. 88).

After reviewing institutional and personnel developments which are concentrated in Beograd and Novi Sad, the authors discuss aspects of intellectual and methodological interest, leading from conventional folkloristic-ethnographic objectives – documentation and preservation, structural analysis and classification of rural music and dances – to problem-oriented inquiries such as the role of women, generational changes, semiotics, and to an expansion of the field into the urban domain. It is taken for granted that all studies are based on fieldwork “at home” – that is, within the researcher’s own linguistic and social environment. The essay closes with a view toward a future that should bring “wider methodological openness ... as well as a more serious application of the Western anthropological approach.”(p. 93).

Olivera Vasić and Dragica Panić-Kasanski review *From the past towards the future: Six decades of Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology*, beginning with the 1947 foundation of the Institute of Folklore Studies in Sarajevo by the comparative musicologist Cvjetko Rihtman. They focus on dance research, institutional developments and studies of domestic scholars and ignore the contributions of foreigners such as Béla Bartók and Albert Lord (1951), or literature written in foreign languages even when the author is a well-known Bosnian ethnomusicologist such as Ankica Petrović (now at UCLA). Pointing to the disruptions of research in the 1990s, they propose the following procedure to make up for lost time: “It is necessary to bring together all interested aficionados of the *kolo* dance from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to compile and archive the existing dance repertoire with the help of scholars and researchers. The staff trained for that work should then notate, analyze and digitalize the collected material ... [then] we can proceed to write countless works dealing with diverse subject matter: structural analysis, basic dance motives, the relationship between dance and music” (p. 20–21).

Macedonia is covered in coordinated papers by Velika Stojkova Serafimovska (*Macedonian ethnomusicology – a problem of continuity*) and Ivona Opetčeska-Tatarčevska (*Macedonian ethnochoreology – a problem of continuity*). Velika Stojkova provides a critical review of musicological activities in Macedonia, beginning with 16th Century folksong collecting and proceeding through impulses from abroad in the 19th Century to the considerable research done by foreign scholars – among them Béla Bartók, Ludvík Kuba and the Janković sisters in the first half of the 20th Century. In discussing the institutionalization of folk music research in Macedonia from 1950 on, Stojkova emphasizes the need for trained ethnomusicologists to deal with the evolving broader questions, and urges the use of “anthropological and social approaches” (p. 26) to assure the continuity and the further development of ethnomusicological research in Macedonia.

In her companion paper devoted to ethnochoreology, Ivona Opetčeska echoes the demand for support and consistent academic-level educational policies, characterized as a problem of continuity in Macedonia. She traces the beginning of institutionalized academic folk dance studies to 1951 when a Department of Musicology and Choreography was established within the Marko Cepenkov Institute of Folklore in Skopje. The work which concentrated on documentation and classification of folk dances was discontinued in 1979. However, practical folk dance instruction was introduced to highschool curricula already in the 1930s, and the eventual emergence of amateur folkdance ensembles had and has, as she notes, “an important impact on the authenticity of traditional dances (p. 34). Both Macedonian authors recognize the contributions of scholars from within and outside the former Yugoslavia as an integral part of Macedonian music and dance studies, and call for strengthening those ties.

From Greece comes Athena Katsanevaki’s lengthy essay, *Music and dance: Greek archives, institutions and initiatives. Aspects of research related to regional styles and the importance of the community*. It is informative and raises some noteworthy questions about identity, marginality, Modern Hellenism and nationalism. But in the context of this book it stands apart: its subject does not share the relative isolation from global research that the Slavic-speaking countries experienced for political reasons.

Of the five papers by Bulgarian scholars, the most general is *Future in the past: The Stoins as paradigms in Bulgarian ethnomusicology* by Lozanka Peycheva and Ventsislav Dimov. It begins as an enthusiastic eulogy of Vassil Stoin and his daughter Elena Stoin, internationally recognized folklorists and collectors, and leads to a call to “break out of the shells of our own locality and establish a global scientific exchange of ideas and achievements” (p. 47).

Ivanka Vlaeva, in *The Bulgarian ideas and the meter-and-rhythm theory*, addresses the phenomenon of the so-called *Bulgarian rhythm* (Bartók) and its terminology in Bulgarian folklore studies and musicology, curiously without mentioning its Turkish relation, the *aksak* (lit. “limping”).

With her paper selected from the panel *Gendering music thinking*, Rosemary Statelova of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences deals with a controversial phenomenon in her article, *Chalga-girls and guys: Poor music – rich bodies*. This topic transcends the boundaries of conventional folk music and dance research and neo-nationalistic thinking which frame the scope of most other essays – *chalga* is an urban performance domain with Turkish roots that prominently employs Roma musicians and the tools of contemporary show business.

Statelova crosses such boundaries again in a second essay, *The “unbearable lightness” of fieldwork in Lusatia*, where she discovers the challenges and delights of working in a foreign, East-German Slavonic cultural environment and ruminates about the purposes of ethnomusicological research and fieldwork abroad. This paper was included as her contribution to the panel, *‘Field research’ - a matter of course?*

Finally, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, who have devoted themselves to the study of Gypsy culture in general, relate their experiences with *Recording of Gypsy songs in the field* also beyond Bulgaria, in Eastern Europe. Their paper comes from a panel, *European Roma music research and its future assignment*.

Altogether, the book documents emerging trends toward trans-national institutionalized ethnomusicological and ethnochoreological research in Southeastern Europe. The ICTM, created as International Folk Music Council to help overcome political and ideological rifts in post-World War II Europe, has once more lived up to its original charge. The organizers of the panel sessions, the authors, editors and the publisher deserve praise for their efforts. Two regional meetings held in Struga (Republic of Macedonia) in 2007 and 2008, and the formation of an ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe give rise to the expectation that the spirit of global scholarship will overcome provincialism and narrow nationalistic obstacles.

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UDC 061.3:78.072](100:436 Wien)
781.7(497.1)