

*12TH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR ETHNOLOGY AND FOLKLORE*
Zagreb, 21—25 June 2015

The International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (Société internationale d'ethnologie et de folklore — SIEF) is a professional organisation that assembles ethnologists, anthropologists, folklorists, ethnomusicologists, linguists, sociologists and others. The Society held its 12th Congress in Croatia in June 2015 with the theme *Utopias, Realities, Heritages: Ethnographies for the 21st Century*, assisted by local organizers, the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences of the University of Zagreb, and the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. Although one of the largest humanities conferences in the region, it attracted many scholars from other parts of the world, who offered contributions on various topics related to the conference theme: archives, body/embodiment, digital/virtual, disciplinary discussions, food, gender and sexuality, heritage, home, migration/borders, museums, narrative, politics and social movements, religion, rural, socialist, post-socialist and urban studies, including music. Thus, it is understandable that throughout the conference there were continuous sessions showing ethnographic films, since they, as a medium, potentially encompass all humanities and social sciences.

Keynote lectures by distinguished ethnologists offered stimulating responses to the topic of the Congress. O. Löfgren discussed the synchronization of past and present in everyday life, while J. Čapo analyzed and illustrated the migration processes of Croatian communities, i.e. return, relocation and remigration. The presentation of D. Kapchan “Slow ethnography, slow activism: listening, witnessing and *longue durée*” was very interesting, analyzing sound knowledge as a non-discursive form of affective transmission resulting from acts of listening. Her methodology rose from field research of Sufi music in contemporary France, relying on the concept *sema*’ (“deep listening”).

The symposium was organized in thirty-eight equal parallel sessions.¹ Unfortunately, the only two sessions most closely relating to ethnomusicology were organized at the same time. The first was dedicated to the role of academically trained ethnomusicologists in the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage program in which

¹ In this text I pay attention mainly to the segments of the Congress dedicated to subjects related to ethnomusicology.

they participate. I. Opetcheska Tatarchevska explained the current state of safeguarding folk dance elements in Macedonia, D. Lajić Mihajlović elaborated her professional and ethical experiences in the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH with regard to Serbian *gusle* playing, while N. Ceribašić advocated collaborative academic ethnomusicology as a solution for the current condition of the discipline. Other sessions presented practices from other countries: M. Coskun talked about Kyrgyz oral poetry improvisation; Y. Qiu about revitalized dance in China; L. Peng about epic *gesar*, on behalf of A. Polymerou Kamilaki; Z. Margeri presented the production of an inventory of ICH in Greece; and P. Heiniger Casteret discussed problems of living heritage in France. Participants also presented experiences that had not been quite so successful: L. Lowthorp gave a good analysis of the process of heritage commodification, using the example of *kutiyattam*, the Kerala theatre, which was the first India entry on the ICH list. Similarly, N. Graeff, questioned aspects of institutionalization and inventory making regarding *samba de roda*, a Brazilian ICH element.

The second session related to ethnomusicology issues was devoted to popular music in former Yugoslavia, a contribution to socialist and post-socialist studies (A. Hofman and R. Muršič). M. Kozorog and A. Bartulović presented views of the genre of *Bosniac* (Bosnian) *sevdalinka* in ideological contexts after the Yugoslav break-up. A. Petrov discussed memory, together with private and collective *feelings of love*, in the public context of concerts in post-Yugoslav spaces, using the example of the well-known band Bijelo dugme. J. Primorac presented a documented analysis of the use of sources in the reconstruction of *klapa* singing in Croatia, claiming that the theory of its autochthonous origin is utopian and pointing to its Mediterranean parallels, raising at the same time the methodological question of the use of YouTube, which was the source for this particular research.

The sound workshop *Utopic Dystopias: Dystopic Utopias* was a very interesting part of the program, authors of different professional profiles presenting sound works with discussion. It was noticeable that the presented works were compositions of recorded and edited ethnographically collected sounds, and that the main point of interest was soundscape. C. Cubero and M. Ermel introduced the panel discussion, emphasizing sonic experience as something empirical and unconditioned by society, paying special attention to sound as part of landscape. *The Sonic Melting: Sound Art and Ethnographic Field Recording in an Andean Glacier* (G. Valdivia) was dedicated to climate change in Peru, the author explaining that he was inspired by the beautiful sound of ice. *Schizophonic Anthropology* (H. Schoer) consisted of two differently recorded pieces; the author afterwards

emphasizing their different contexts, which could not actually be heard. With an easily followed structure, recording the author's day, there was *The Closing Ceremony: Field Recording as Auto-Ethnography of Solitude* (I. Findlay-Walsh). For this topic, it was interesting that there were no sounds in his intimate world, but rather self-recorded (and edited) sounds of the author himself in relation to his everyday urban environment, the field itself. *Political Entertainment: the Communicative but Remove Yourself Show* (P. Herrera Veitia) was a presentation of a project focused on interactive playback devices for sonic or visual material. This seemed a rather artificial sound piece for a documentary, because of layering, editing, and mixing field sounds with interviews, but its aim was to highlight the problem of homelessness in Edinburgh. The installation *Digital Church: The Speculative Fieldwork* (P. Cichokcki, K. Król) engaged "binaural tunes" in the *digital church ritual*. The composition *Heterotopic Sound at Work and Rest: Documenting Daily Soundscapes of Precarious Market Workers in Moscow* (A. Nikolotov) comprised field recordings of a particular soundscape, containing sounds of migrant traders, sellers and beggars in a Muscovite market. The project *School's out* (H. Ramsden, H. Summers) explores the rural soundscape of a closed village school, also containing field sound interventions made by the authors. *The Intangible Form* (J. Sova) deals with the problem of urban design through sound, having its realization in a synesthetic soundwalk. Thematically close to this set of topics, there was also a paper dedicated to soundscape in Belgrade (S. Atanasovski), which problematized sound ethics in the case of two public "parades", although actually presented within another session during the Congress.

With regard to the musical program, the Congress opened in Vatroslav Lisinski concert hall with a performance by the Folklore ensemble of the Ivan Goran Kovačić student cultural-artistic society and the ensemble Ethnotine, both from Zagreb. The first represented Croatian "choreographed folklore", performing two dance suites very skillfully, while the second illustrated contemporary tendencies in making folklore appeal to a wider audience, with modern music arrangements and very stylized choreographed dance. As an element of Croatia on the representative list of UNESCO Intangible cultural heritage of humanity, they performed *bećarac* with lyrics especially written in English for this occasion (by G. Knežević and N. Ceribašić).

Congresses like this bring various scholars together, providing the opportunity for very fruitful interdisciplinary discussions. It would be interesting to see a greater impact by ethnomusicologists on this ethnological and anthropological scene. In a time when boundaries between humanistic disciplines are blurred, there are

numerous approaches to every aspect of culture. Nevertheless, there is a need for expert knowledge to enable other scholars to learn how to approach material lying on the periphery of their primary scientific discourse.

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