

# Bokmelding

**Gerda Lechleitner, Susana Sardo, Susanne Ziegler og Ingrid Åkesson (red.): *Historical Sources of Ethnomusicology in Contemporary Debate*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2017. 280 s.**

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In this review, I discuss a book that was recently published by members of the Study Group on Historical Sources of Traditional Music, affiliated with the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM). The book, edited by Susanne Ziegler, Ingrid Åkesson, Gerda Lechleitner, and Susana Sardo, is entitled *Historical Sources of Ethnomusicology in Contemporary Debate* (Ziegler, Åkesson, Lechleitner & Sardo, 2017). It is a unique volume that adds to the growing body of recent publications that seek to develop the field of historical ethnomusicology. As Michael Iyanaga recently wrote in the journal *Ethnomusicology*, «synchronic studies focused on the present have tended to dominate the field at least since the mid-twentieth-century, when fieldwork became the favored methodology for ethnomusicologists» (Iyanaga, 2015, p.195); however, across recent years there is evidence that ethnomusicology is increasingly embracing historical studies. Martha Ellen Davis has argued for a «reinstatement of the historical dimension in ethnomusicology, such that largely nonliterate musical traditions, creations, and practices are documented and examined in historical as well as social context» (Davis, 2015, p. 255). Such approaches fit well with such essential concerns as the «repatriation» of heritage collections (Thram, 2014) and the objective of developing «postcolonial music history» (Solomon, 2012), and as Matsunobu (2018) compellingly demonstrates, such historical discussion can inform the direction of cultural policy reform. Moreover, in a previous volume, Susanne Ziegler argued that «it is time now to concentrate on methodological aspects rather than just on the

presentation of historical sources» (Ziegler, 2010, p. 25), a concern to which the volume under review here seeks to offer some answers.

The structure of *Historical Sources of Ethnomusicology in Contemporary Debate* consists of a brief Introduction followed by 18 chapters which are divided into the following three parts: Part One: Rethinking Archives and Collections: From Fieldwork to Digital Humanities; Part Two: Written Documents and Musical Instruments as Sources; and Part Three: Individual Memory, Musical Practice and Heritage. The source of musical traditions discussed across this book ranges from Argentina to Portugal, Slovenia, Latvia, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Cameroon, Gabon, Israel, Turkey, United States, and Syria. There is especially extensive discussion of notable sound archives and music collections in both Germany and France, which are addressed across several chapters.

There are two chapters in the book that, to this reviewer, seem particularly notable and likely to become widely used for their general theoretical insights. These are what the editors appropriately selected for use as the introductory and concluding chapters for this collection, since the editorial Introduction merely summarizes the book's chapters in a few pages and no editorial Conclusion is included. The first of these aforementioned chapters is Chapter 1: «Sound Archives Under Suspicion», by Miguel Garcia, from University of Buenos Aires. Garcia's stimulating chapter encourages ethnomusicologists to think more critically about the role of archives in knowledge production. In a discussion framed by reference to the case of archival recordings from Tierra del Fuego, Garcia expounds on five themes: (1) Archives are discursive knowledge, (2) Archives emerge from particular scientific paradigms, (3) Archives are aesthetically oriented knowledge, (4) Archives are ideologically oriented knowledge, and (5) Archives are shaped by multi-sources, fragmentary and unfinished discourses. Garcia implores readers to recognize that «some anxiety is always a good starting point» from which to consider the impact of archival work and how it is presented to audiences. In a similar vein, chapter 18 concludes this book by offering especially potent theoretical insights: Tala Jarjour's «Safeguarding Tradition and the Authority of Representation». Through discussion of recent examples from Syria, Jarjour's chapter vividly depicts how efforts to safeguard endangered heritage can become so abstract and distanced as to be distracting

from the horrific reality of war. Specifically, Jarjour demonstrates how cultural representation can become painfully inappropriate in such contexts, particularly when entrepreneurs seize opportunities to become a «trader of crisis» who profits from the pain of others, including even musicians who may have been unjustly killed or denied their basic human right to asylum. It is telling that Jarjour's powerful narrative is framed within such headings as «Collecting the Music of Suffering Others» and «Pain and Representation». In a related discussion of chant traditions among Aramaic Christians, Jarjour describes methodological issues in greater depth than was possible in the context of this book (Jarjour, 2015), but the strength of this chapter lies in the evocative message of its examples, which prompt readers to reconsider their priorities to ensure that archiving actually benefits the culture bearers that produce invaluable heritage.

*Part One: Rethinking Archives and Collections: From Fieldwork to Digital Humanities* begins with the aforementioned Chapter 1 by Miguel Garcia. Then, Chapters 2 to 4 describe specific ways that sound archives have been used in ethnomusicology, and include Susana Sardo's discussion of the *Fado* collection of Bruce Bastin in Portugal, as well as Drago Kunej on the enduring value of 78rpm records in Slovenia, and finally, Anda Beitane on Martin Boiko's pioneering studies and notable paradigm shifts since the 1990s in the study of Latvian folk music. It is interesting to note that, although not mentioned in the Introduction, the second half of Part 1 consists of five chapters that are all by authors affiliated with universities in France. Specifically, this includes Chapter 5: «Recordings of the Mabi People, Different Places Same Time: Cameroon 1908 and Berlin 1909» by Susanne Furniss, Chapter 6: «'Fieldwork in Archives': A Methodological Approach of the Fang's Xylophone Music through Sound Archives (1908–2000)» by Claire Lacombe, Chapter 7: «When Past and Present Hold a Dialogue through Music: The Diachronic Comparison of Bwété Ceremonies (Gabon)» by Emeline Lechaux, Chapter 8: «The CNRS-*Musée de l'Homme* Sound Archives from 1900 to the Present: A Long Way between Heritage, Knowledge, and Technologies» by Joséphine Simonnot, and Chapter 9: «Automatic Indexation and Analysis of Ethnomusicological Archives: Issues and New Challenges», by Marie-France Mifune. This section could very

well have been compiled as its own Part in the book, since no other nation is represented in such a way (with five chapters, all in a row), and although not explicitly acknowledged, this section of the book really helps to bring readers up to date on how researchers in France have been contributing to the field of historical ethnomusicology. Taken as a whole, these chapters also demonstrate important ways that French universities and cultural institutions – such as CNRS-*Musée de l'Homme* – are supporting innovative approaches to digital humanities. The authors do not mention Cité de la Musique, but this prominent institution arguably merits some consideration here as well, since it has enormous music digitization projects and musical instrument collections.

Incidentally, by the time readers reach chapter 5, they may also be tempted to jest that a theory is needed to explain why in Europe so many prominent historical ethnomusicologists are named Susanna (a name traceable to the ancient Hebrew word for lily). Indeed, chapter 5 is by Susanne Furniss (of CNRS), who appears after a chapter by Susana Sardo (University of Aveiro, Portugal), following the book's Introduction authored by Susanne Ziegler (Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv) and colleagues. Perhaps the prevalence of Susannas has something to do with Stephen Foster's «Oh, Susanna,» published in 1848, which became one of the most popular American songs of all time? That too may be unlikely, we must admit, but what should be clear is that all three of the Susannas in this book are prolific researchers who have done much to develop the field of historical ethnomusicology in France (Furniss), Portugal (Sardo), and Germany (Ziegler).

*Part Two: Written Documents and Musical Instruments as Sources* begins with two chapters on the use of personal songbooks as historical sources, with Shai Burstyn's study in Israel followed by Gunnar Ternhag's study in Sweden. Both of these authors provide fascinating examples of how such texts that were originally intended for personal use can ultimately become an invaluable part of the historical record. The next two chapters are on musical instruments: Chapter 12: «Evaluating Different Sources for the Reconstruction of an Extinct Instrument: The Turkish *kopuz*» by M. Emin Soydas, and Chapter 13: «Cultural Memory and the Exhibition of Musical

Instruments: A Textual Approach» by Andreas Meyer. While Soydas explores ways that historical images can inform interpretations, Meyer offers an insightful critique of how musical instrument collections are displayed for visitors.

*Part Three: Individual Memory, Musical Practice and Heritage* consists of five chapters. These include Chapter 14: «From Archival Recording to Aesthetic Ideal – How Individual Performers Have Influenced Style» by Ingrid Åkesson, Chapter 15: «Textual Strategies for Collecting and Publishing Finnish Folk Melodies in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century» by Olli Heikkinen, Chapter 16: «‘We Sing Our History’: Songs and the Politics of Identity and Remembrance among Russian-German Immigrants in the United States» by Ingrid Bertleff, Chapter 17: «The Russian *Gusli* Singer Aleksandr Kotomkin: Three Dimensions of Memory» by Christiane Gesierich, and Chapter 18: «Safeguarding Tradition and the Authority of Representation» by Tala Jarjour. The chapter by Åkesson (which describes such notable Swedish musicians as Lena Larsson, Dansar Edvard Jonsson, Elin Lisslass, Karin Edvardsson Johansson, and Martin Martinsson), and the chapter by Heikkinen (addressing nationalism and *Bildung* in 19<sup>th</sup> century Finnish folk music), both demonstrate how the unique contributions of individual musicians to the development of folk music styles can be traced across time. Helpful discussion relevant to these kinds of processes can also be found in Chris Goertzen’s studies of the development of fiddle traditions in the United States (Goertzen, 2017), and may benefit from a consideration of Moraczewski’s notion of «post orality» and «five characteristics of oral musical cultures» (Moraczewski, 2018). Finally, chapters 16 and 17, by Bertleff and Kotomkin respectively, offer new insights into under-researched musical traditions traceable to Russian cultural heritage. As mentioned earlier, the book concludes with a powerful discussion of endangered Syrian Christian chant traditions by Tala Jarjour. It is difficult to identify any substantial criticisms of this book, for it offers unique new knowledge to a growing field in which its diverse contributions will surely be welcomed. Still, it seems the editors could have done more to effectively frame the book with a substantive Introduction and Conclusion (beyond their 7-page summary), and inclusion of an Index might also have been

helpful for those who might read a printed version rather than on a digital device.

Taken as a whole, this book potentially offers much to an array of readers across the fields of musicology, history, museology, and heritage studies. Certain individual chapters will be of value to those with interest in a specific genre, for instance Portuguese *Fado*, or folk music from Sweden or Latvia. For those with a specialized interest in the musical expressions of a specific ethnic group, such as Russian-German immigrants to the US, or the Mabi (of Cameroon), the Fang (of Gabon, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea), or the *Bwété* (of Gabon), the book also contains valuable new historical insights. For those interested in music archives, this volume also contains many relevant chapters that describe innovative methods in detail, as well as how the use of sound archives for research has changed across time. There are also several chapters that demonstrate how analyses of musical instruments, personal songbooks, and comparative analyses of sound recordings can demonstrate how music changes across historical time. There is very much to be learned from this book, and it will be a worthy addition to most research libraries.

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