

## The International Council on Traditional Music Conference [ICTM - Istanbul]

In August, 1998, the Twentieth Symposium of the ICTM Study Group<sup>1</sup> on Ethnochoreology was held in Istanbul. Encouraged by the organizer, Dr. Arzu Ozturkmen (an acquaintance from my Indiana University graduate school days), I attended the symposium, thus meeting many scholars interested in the study of dancing. I write this short report for *JASHM* for the purposes of informing readers of the Istanbul event, encouraging participation in ICTM publications in the hope that sufficient interest exists. Meetings of this group are held biennially in even numbered years, usually in European locations, as the membership of the study group is overwhelmingly European and, more specifically, East European. The next symposium is scheduled for 2000 on the Croatian Island of Korcula, in the Adriatic Sea. The *Call for Papers* for that meeting is attached to the end of the report.

At the 1998 meetings there were several Americans and Canadians present, as well as one representative from Australia, and Malaysia. The rest of the attendees were Europeans from Turkey, England, Greece, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Armenia, Ireland, Switzerland, and Italy. Two abstracts were presented from Lithuania and the Ukraine, but their authors could not attend. The geographical range of dances studied include the areas of the scholars themselves, and a few others, including West Africa, Spain, Afghanistan, Oceania, Korea, and Southeast Asia. The list of members of the study group also included scholars from the following countries which were not, I believe, represented at the Twentieth Symposium: Argentina, Jamaica, The Netherlands, Slovakia, Austria, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Spain, Russia, the Ukraine, Holland, and Lithuania.

The conference offered six days of paper presentations by thirty-eight of the (roughly) fifty participants, as well as a roundtable discussion and several meetings by sub-study groups on topics such as structural analysis, ritual, revival, fieldwork, and iconography. The seventh day was given over to reports by the sub-study groups and a business meeting of the Study Group.

Papers for the symposium were organized under two themes: 1) traditional dance and its historical sources, and 2) creative processes in dance, improvisation and composition. The roundtable discussion was about the relation of local dance traditions to the larger world, 'From Local to Global and Back'.

The symposium is a working group in that there were normally six papers of 30 minutes' length presented each morning in two sessions, and then another three papers or a sub-study group meeting in the afternoons. The attendance at all presentations was nearly the whole group. Questions and

discussion followed each paper or each session of three papers. Discussions continued quite naturally over lunch and dinner, and sporadically during sightseeing adventures. The papers are published as 'Proceedings', approximately two years later.

For *JASHM* readers who may not know, the word 'ethnochoreology' seems to be a European neologism meant to describe the folkloristic study of dancing by scholars coming from the nation or ethnic group under investigation.<sup>2</sup> The majority of attending scholars did in fact conduct their research, writing, and scholarship in their home countries, often on their own traditions, as dancers/performers themselves. However, there were also a number of participants who come from the more standard Malinowskian anthropological approach of investigating forms and traditions from an 'outside' viewpoint. In more than a few cases, scholars were performers of traditional dances in which they had *not* grown up, which usually means they had a built-in comparative perspective.

In some ways the word, 'ethnochoreology' parallels the word 'ethnomusicology', however, its specific history in relation to this group informs it with a more specific meaning, and it may be that the history of this group will continue to shape the meaning of ethnochoreology in future, for it is a changing group. That is, initially, it was affiliated with the International Folk Music Council as the Study Group for Folk Dance Terminology. I was told that from 1962 to 1981 it was made up entirely of East Europeans. The *lingua franca* of the group was German, and their focus was to find a method "to give the scientist the possibility of studying from a unified point of view dances of various national origins and from different historical or social contexts" (*IFMC Study Group for Folk Dance Terminology*, 1974: 119, cited in Giurchescu and Torp 1991: 9 - Note 11).

The Study Group were specifically interested in a kind of structural analysis of dancing, oriented toward delineating relationships between danced forms in geographical and historical frameworks. Some of this type of work is tied to nationalist motivations for cultural legitimacy and distinction. Indeed, the break-up of the Soviet Union makes these sorts of topic relevant once again in a newly emerging political and cultural order, especially in Eastern Europe. In 1981 the Study Group decided to include non-East Europeans and since that time the *lingua franca* of the group has been English, although papers and abstracts may still be presented in German or French.

The interests of ICTM members are varied, although I will attempt to group them into loose categories. There are a fair number who carry on the East European interest in both structural description and geographical-historical relations between forms. Some are interested in simply documenting the traditions of a given nation, country or area. Others are interested in specific historical developments and changes in dance forms, and their social functions. One major theme, which appeared in many papers,

is the change that occurs in dance form, function and social relations as a type of dancing moves from village to stage. More than a few scholars are interested in ethnographic description of dance events, and the social relations organized around and through dancing, as well as contemporary relations between form, function and meaning. Within these major categories interests are differently nuanced and, of course, applied to different dance forms or geographical areas.

My impression of discussions at the symposium was that they were uneven. Being monolingual, I had to rely on English, which (luckily) was the main linguistic currency for papers, meetings and official discussions. Non-English speakers had to rely on translation throughout. Not surprisingly, there was a wide range in participants' facility with English. This was a problem because communication between "competent" speakers is often frustrated by different understandings of words, phrases, and concepts – even more true when cultural differences are added to differences in linguistic facility. What impressed me most about the meetings was the genuine desire on the part of participants to communicate, learn, explore, confer about, explain and understand (if not always question) ideas related to the study of dancing. In spite of serious language differences, the desire to communicate held throughout. There were a few, however, who did not really engage in discussion, and seemed only to be interested in presenting their own work, but the majority were true 'conferees'. This made the symposium singularly interesting and motivating.

Papers ranged in content from pure description with no acknowledgment of theoretical issues to specific arguments regarding theoretical and methodological questions. Papers dealt with such things as a) linguistic tags associated with Korean dance forms; b) significance of the type of dancing and the social relations between dancers at a Greek wedding; c) continuities and changes in past and contemporary foreign accounts of West African dancing; d) historical sources on dancing in Poland; e) problems in discussing improvisation in the Tango as a couple dance; f) the social and cultural context of an Armenian dance on a rope (a 'high wire'); g) critical issues relating to various media as sources for historical information on English ceremonial dances.

I cannot do justice here either to the variety of topics, or the approaches to movement-study represented in Istanbul, but I do want to say that the experience was rewarding for me. I will certainly attend Korcula for the Twenty-first Symposium, if unforeseen circumstances do not prevent.

Frank Hall

## Sample Call for Papers for ICTM

21st Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology  
 July 3-9, 2000  
 Korcula, Island of Korcula – CROATIA

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Sword dances and related calendrical dance events  
 Revival: reconstruction, revitalization

Deadline for submissions: September 30, 1999

Dear Colleagues,

We are very glad to announce that the 21st Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology will be held in Korcula on the island of Korcula - Croatia by invitation of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research and the Korcula Tourist Organization.

The forthcoming Symposium addresses two themes: the first proposed by the Sub-study Group on Ritual Complexes in Comparative Perspectives was selected because of a strong tradition of sword dancing on the island of Korcula; the second theme was proposed by the members of the Sub-study Group on Revival and collective membership of the Study Group at the 1998 Symposium, who felt the need to discuss this topic in a more intensive way.

1. Sword dances and related calendrical dance events
  - \* Historical examples
  - \* Living dance traditions
  - \* Comparative studies
2. Revival: reconstruction, revitalization
  - \* Reference to the past or to authenticity
  - \* Stage performance
  - \* Appropriation of tradition

The above mentioned aspects are only few of the possible approaches and the Symposium Committee welcomes other proposals, proving that they focus on either one or both of the above themes.

### Guidelines for Proposals

The Symposium Committee welcomes proposals in the categories listed below:

1. Research papers
  2. Video sessions
1. Research papers should be based on original research which addresses one of the symposium themes and should not have been presented previously. They should be designed to take no more than 20 minutes to present, including any audio-visual materials. Proposals may be submitted in the form of:
- An abstract of no more than one page in length. The first paragraph should state the topic, research method or framework of analysis, and conclusion.
  - Subsequent paragraphs should outline how the ideas will be developed and describe type and amount of illustrative material, if used.
  - Bibliography should be included.
- Research papers may be submitted either individually or as part of a panel with a unifying topic.

2. Video sessions should be based on the topic of original research and should not take more than 20 minutes in the form of:

An abstract of no more than one page in length. The first paragraph should state the topic, research method or framework of analysis, and conclusion.

Subsequent paragraphs should outline how the presentation is developed.

Bibliography should be included.

All submissions should include a statement of audio-visual needs (audio cassette player, overhead projector, slide projector, video: VHS-PAL, SECAM, or NTSC). Presenters must time their presentation in advance.

Symposium Committee: Elsie Ivancich Dunin (Croatia, local organization), Marianne Bricker (Germany), Maria Koutsouba (Greece).

Please send your proposal only to one address. We thank Iva Niemcic, who will receive all the abstracts and distribute them to the members of the Symposium Committee.

Send your response by September 30, 1999 by mail, by fax or by e-mail.

If you do not have an abstract at this time, please send a response if you plan to attend the Symposium. The local organizers need to have an estimate of the number of attendees.

Thank you in advance.

Please send your response, abstract (or title of abstract) to:

ETHNOCHOREOLGY SYMPOSIUM

c/o Iva Niemcic

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I hope to hear from you and wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely,

Marianne Bricker

Additional information about Korcula, see website: <http://www.korcula.net/>

All presenters must be current members of ICTM. For additional information on ICTM, see website: <http://www.music.columbia.edu/~ictm/>

For information about the Ethnochoreology Newsletter, email: [reynolds.stg.ec@post.tele.dk](mailto:reynolds.stg.ec@post.tele.dk)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ICTM is an organization affiliated with UNESCO. The ICTM holds its meetings biennially in odd-numbered years. The 1999 meetings were in Hiroshima, Japan.

<sup>2</sup> Two articles appearing in the 1991 *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, published by ICTM, compare and contrast European and American approaches to the study of dance. These essays are written by the Study Group on Ethnochoreology members Lisbet Torp and Anca Giurchescu for the European, and Adrienne Kaeppler for the American approach.