Mission Statement

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• by embracing the study of music in all its diversity
• and advancing musicological research across the globe
• in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration.

global open collaborative
Editorial: Musicology from East to West

In our first volume of *IMS Musicological Brainfood* (2017) we went exo-musicological and visited outer space; in the second issue we will stay firmly on planet earth and consider the question of a global musicology—past, present, and future—with an eminent scholar from the East, Yosihiko Tokumaru, and one from the West, Reinhard Strohm.

Contemplating Musicology from Japanese Perspectives

Yosihiko Tokumaru

The task of musicology (*Musikwissenschaft* in German, *musicologie* in French, and *ongakugaku* in Japanese) in its proper sense is to study music of the past, present, and future regardless of region. For this purpose, various methods have been proposed and practiced. Subclassifications of musicology such as “historical” and “systematic” achieved the role of making researchers conscious of their methodologies. The fixed association of a particular subclassification or method of musicology with the treatment of a certain region should, however, be reconsidered. An example of such a fixation is to consider only western musics to be objects of historical subdivisions and to regard non-western musics as objects of systematic subdivisions.

It is understandable that research on non-western music was included in the systematic area of musicology, namely in comparative musicology, as historical research on non-western musics was not widely shared at the early stage of musicology.

Let me take Japan as an example. In 1933 Japanese scholar Daigoro Arima submitted his dissertation “Japanische Musikgeschichte auf Grund der Quellenkunde” (History of Japanese music based upon source research) to the University of Vienna. Although this dissertation belongs to historical research as its title suggests, it was treated as one belonging to comparative musicology.

This fixation continued in the latter half of the twentieth century—even after the term *comparative musicology* had been replaced by the new term *ethnomusicology*. The correspondence between Japanese musics (as an example of non-western musics) and comparative musicology has changed to that between Japanese musics and ethnomusicology.

Certainly, Japanese musics are objects of ethnomusicology. They should, however, equally qualify as objects of historical musicology. The following historical facts would be sufficient to qualify Japanese musics as objects of historical research: (1) written music theory was known since the eighth century; (2) the oldest extant music notation in Japan was written down prior to 747 AD; (3) the oldest printed musical notations in Japan are the ones for *sōmyō* (Buddhist vocal music), from 1472, making them the oldest in the world; and (4) the first printed notation for the *syamisen* (shamisen) was published in 1664.

Although this is a case involving Japan, the same holds true for many other cultures. Considering that ethnomusicology is an important division of musicology and has contributed to understanding the relationship between human beings and music, ethnomusicology can and
should treat western musics as its objects. Speaking more strictly, every culture can and should be studied from every division of musicology. The illogical fixation mentioned above simply derives from an ignorance of relevant facts.

Indeed, musicologists have the right to carry out research on any musics that belong to their own groups or the groups they study. At the same time, musicologists should remain keenly aware that other human groups also possess musics and those musics are objects of all of the subdivisions of musicology. In short, musicologists must possess an acumen on the musics of others. In this connection, it should be strictly criticized that some American musicologists are abusing the term *musicology* as only for historical musics of western music, by excluding musics of other cultures from historical musicology.1

Research on Musics of the Present

Historical musicology has long contributed to understanding musics of the past in terms of sounds, means of transmission (orality and literacy), notations, performance practice, musicians, concepts, etc. Its contribution is expected to become more significant than ever. In contrast, the musics of present-day societies have been studied by the behavioristic division of musicology (the term proposed by myself as *behavioristische Musikwissenschaft*) which consists of ethnomusicology, the sociology of music, the psychology of music, and the research in music education. This division of musicology is also expected to contribute more greatly to the understanding of musics of the present.

The most important steps for studying the musics of the present, especially living traditions, is (1) to presume that any human group has musics, and (2) to engage with those musics. We must always be aware that there are many musics which have not been described, nor documented in terms of notations, sound and visual recordings, even in the present time in which the term *world music* is frequently used.

If researchers from Japan can make a contribution to the musicology of the world, it would be in terms of their strong awareness of the musics of others. Since they live in a society where the coexistence of different musics has been significant since the seventh century, they tend to be conscious of the fact that there are many musics which differ from each other in terms of tonal system, music scale, instrumentation, ideal sonority (vocal and instrumental), and concepts. Consequently, they tend to remain tolerant of musics that they do not practice and are convinced that others also possess musics.

“Fieldback”: Returning the Research Result to the Field

In order to assimilate the belief that others also possess musics, we have to make contact with their musics. In the 1970s and to some extent still in the 1980s, however, Asian peoples had few chances to contact the performing arts of other Asian peoples.

To change that situation, in 1974, with sponsorship from the Japan Foundation, Fumio Koizumi (1927–1983), Osamu Yamaguti (b. 1939), and I, started the long-term project “Asian Traditional Performing Arts” (ATPA). Its purpose was to construct a denser network of performing arts and their studies among Asian peoples. All of us were brought up in Japan and shared the same belief that Asian peoples could understand musics of other peoples. Considering the situation in the 1970s, we strategically used the motto “Asians observing and being observed by Asians.”

ATPA was held five times over fifteen years.3 Every invited group of Asian musicians and musicologists mutually performed and explained their musics to other Asian groups. In the process, each group, with awareness of the similarities and differences with musics of other groups, became willing to maintain their musics as living traditions.

On the occasion of the first ATPA project in 1976, I coined the English word *fieldback* (not *feedback* as in cybernetics). By fieldback I meant the process of returning the research result back to the field.4 In the 1970s, we had observed traditional musicians in Japan remaining uninformed on the results of research on which they had collaborated with foreign scholars, and we decided to use fieldback as a principle of our project. Consequently, each participating group received a book including research on their music, together with LP records and 16 mm films of their performance. Later, I learned that these materials had helped their subsequent activities.
“Fieldback” Extended

In the period of ATPA, however, my concept of fieldback was rather restricted to the ethical relationship between researchers and performers. After ATPA, motivated by the potential extinction of certain musics, I felt the necessity to extend and transform this concept. Through my experience in Vietnam, I came to think that the process of keeping a tradition as a living one should be included in the mechanism of fieldback. In 1994, UNESCO and the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture asked Yamaguti and myself to inaugurate two projects for safeguarding the court music and minorities’ music of Vietnam that were seen to be in danger of extinction. In 2000, after finishing the first project for revitalizing court music, we launched the second project on the minorities: “Research and Video Documentation of Minorities’ Intangible Cultural Heritage of Vietnam” (RVMV). To our surprise, all recordings and videos taken in the course of this project were their first documentation. Considering that the number of ethnic minorities visited by RVMV was only a seventh of all, I must emphasize the fact that there are still many music cultures about which nothing is known to the outside world.

Many musics are disappearing and will disappear in the near future. Although their tradition-bearers have the latent capability and a strong will to sustain their traditions, the ubiquitous inequality of powers within a state and in the world makes it difficult.

As a task for musicology, we could describe and document the status quo of musics of a certain group. For this purpose, we could treat their musics as being in a stable state and transcribe and analyze them in detail. The results would be valuable as data demonstrating musics in a certain period. If the tradition-bearers of this group lose their musics, they can never realize their capability to develop and transform their music. In my opinion, it is also a responsibility of musicologists to help such tradition-bearers as a process of fieldback.

The Japanese used to shout “mottainai” (what a waste), when they witnessed something important be wasted. Wangari Maathai (1940–2011) of Kenya is using this Japanese word as a motto for environmental protection. It should also be applied to music. The Japanese mindset to tolerate the musics of others can be understood to have derived from mottainai, as this mentality kept many musics from extinction.

I would like to ask the members of the International Musicological Society to inherit and develop this mentality to secure the musical resources of human beings.

References

1. As far as I remember, since the 1980s American ethnomusicologists have seemingly admitted the abuse of musicology by western historical musicologists into their discourse. Consequently, ethnomusicologists have tended to use the juxtaposition ethnomusicology and musicology. A more recent example is Timothy Rice’s declaration that ethnomusicology is not a part of musicology: Timothy Rice, Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 16–17. This is understandable as his use of the term musicology simply refers to historical musicology about western music. However, for the future of our studies in music, I have to express my dissatisfaction at such a usage, as we have to save the word musicology for musicology as a generic term.


5. Osamu Yamaguti and Yoshihiko Tokumaru, “A Pair of International Cooperative Endeavours

6 These videos are included in Sadao Nakajima, ed., Shape from Sound: Research and Documentation of Minorities’ Performing Arts in Vietnam (Kyoto: Daigoshobô, 2006).

**Tradition, Heritage, History: A View on Language**

Reinhard Strohm

**Implied History**

I remember the time (1981) when the IFMC—the International Folk Music Council—renamed itself ICTM (International Council of Traditional Music). I was relieved to hear this, because, as a German brought up in the 1950s, I had learned to suspect the notion of Volk (or Folk, whichever). Tradition felt like a good thing. It sounded less patronizing and more inclusive; it seemed to include the music of the middle classes, urban music, African music—and it seemed to imply musical history. But so did folklore. William John Thoms (1846) invented the term Folk-Lore as a replacement of the terms popular antiquities or popular literature. He considered it as belonging to the uneducated classes, and keenly explored its history, back to the antiquities of the Saxon era. The kinds of folklore studied by Thoms were not only literary (popular fairy-tales), but also material (built structures) and performative (rituals, songs). There is a striking similarity between his research interests and UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (ICH).

The 1981 name-change of our admirable musical council replaced an essential reference to social structures (folk) with another to continuities in time (tradition). It is not certain whether that was meant to imply an increased interest in the study of past developments, but let us assume so for the moment. Tradition denotes, after all, something that has been established over a longer time span—and, how would we know that something is a tradition if we did not know anything about its past?

Today the ICTM describes itself as a scholarly organization which aims to further “the study, practice, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of traditional music and dance, including folk, popular, classical, urban, and other genres, of all countries.”

This is a rich and stimulating formula, which busily enumerates the genres for which the organization feels responsible, and almost as busily explains what it wishes to do with them. To “study, practice, document, preserve, and disseminate traditional music and dance” implies, I believe, the acceptance of a responsibility for the history of these genres. Past, present, and future are all wrapped up in this agenda when we consider it closely. To “study” and to “document” surely imply researching not only the present, but also the past or ancestry of something. To “document” and to “preserve” are what histori-
ans do with the past. To “practice” is a present action, and to “preserve” is a present action which also looks backward to a past and forward to a future. To “disseminate” is an action directed to the future: it seeks to create a new generation of practitioners and audiences. All these verbs capture aspects of what historians do. There is also a commitment to change: “to disseminate” traditional music implies preparing the future by introducing non-traditional forms of transmission. Traditional music that is disseminated (online, for example), will no longer be the same, as comparisons with its past will reveal: it will be known to and practiced by new people. Between the past, present, and future statuses of a tradition, there are transmissions and disseminations: changes.

I believe that change is a primary subject matter of history—although the two terms do of course not mean quite the same. I defer to the authority of Bruno Nettl, who recently declared his interest in the study of change without even using the word history in its description. Such implicitness is quite common. The increasingly authoritative term heritage implies history. Researches on cultural fusion, hybridity, globalization, transculturalism, mobility, and similar processes are typically predicated on historical comparisons—for example, in describing a postmodern world that is oh-so-different from what we were used to—but the admission that historical methodologies are used and historical panoramas unfolded, is quite rare in those studies. Nettl, in his essay, states his continuing belief that “in important ways ethnomusicology has always been a field of study in which history, in the broadest sense of the word, has played a major, if gradually changing, role.” Good to hear it said.

Excluded History?
I worry just a little, however, about what Nettl may mean by “history, in the broadest sense of the word.” Is he saying that history plays a major role in ethnomusicology only in the broadest sense of the word, not in the narrower sense of the nitty-gritty of historical practice, such as looking up archives and transcribing old music? I do not think he would want to exclude that practice. Rather, his meaning of the “broadest sense” may be that it is the worldwide history of music which plays a major (if gradually changing) role in ethnomusicology—whereas the study of Western music alone represents a narrower sense of history. This interpretation would be one I agree with. It is a main argument for my Balzan research project “Towards a Global History of Music” (2013–17), which criticizes the Western scholarly neglect of the musical history of other cultures. Not only Guido Adler’s “Umfang, Methode und Ziel der Musikwissenschaft” (1885), but also a long tradition of minor writings seem to deny non-Western music the status of being historical. In the words of Martin Stokes, “’People without history’ have been made so by others who gain from having it.” This colonial principle has influenced Western musicology for various reasons, for example, because it seemed more convenient to research history only at home, cultural anthropology only abroad.

Explicit denials of historical methodology have also been known. Years ago, I participated in a conference where I had to say something on musical patronage in the Renaissance. A noted American ethnomusicologist objected in the discussion: “How can you say that about the sixteenth century? You weren’t there!” I humbly replied that I was a historian, and making statements about the past was what historians do.

A comparable, although entirely friendly, exchange happened at the 20th Quinquennial IMS Congress in Tokyo in 2017. In the discussion of the roundtable “Towards a Global History of Music,” somebody asked me “What is history?” I was delighted with the question and replied, in the same style as at the earlier event, “History is the study of the past.” But this apparently did not cut any ice, and although I later had an opportunity to add something like “History reaches the parts memory cannot reach;” the brief discussion then revolved around the unreliability of history. It was said to be biased, always only written and therefore suspect from the start; it was suggested that memory, recovered by fieldwork, might be a more truthful witness of culture.

Presumably, ethnomusicological fieldworkers develop mutual understanding and trust between themselves and their interviewees to a degree that they can rely on their oral statements.
more than on written records or sound archives. Afterward, however, they are right to transmit their knowledge not only orally. Written records, databases, and sound archives, biased as they may be, should not generically be suspected: they usually reflect honest (if biased) intentions to transmit knowledge. And, the archive is not the only tool of historians. They interview witnesses, use iconographic or archeological materials, compare different types of evidence, and so forth. As regards the reliability of interviewees, what do people living today actually know about their past? We must assume that in 2018, a researcher visiting certain areas of Germany with the interview question “What is your heritage?” might get many honest answers to the effect that their heritage is what the refugees are threatening to destroy. (Equivalents of this can be seen and heard in German TV documentaries.)

The 2017 Abu Dhabi Conference of the IMS, ICTM, and IAML, entitled “Music as Cultural Heritage,” featured many encouraging demonstrations of the links between records of the past and the preservation of cultures. This seems the way to go with the concept of heritage—but the use of the word in public debate is often different. In fact I heard regrets from researchers how much the notion of heritage has become a political football. It is publicly defined, against the wishes of many researchers, as a national property. Although the close identification of nation with folk culture and heritage is a political falsification of Herder’s ideas, in governmental and media language heritage has joined the spin collection of folk, nation, identity, and community. The heritage industry does not aim at reproducing historical legacies; David Lowenthal wrote about a “heritage crusade” which was in effect replacing history. Admittedly, these processes may all be covered by the benign blankets of hybridity and glocalization.

Official policy statements of UNESCO’s initiative, ICH, a campaign we all applaud, have gradually relegated historical research from their purview. Whereas earlier formulas (for example, of 1989) on the “safeguarding of traditional culture and folklore” had “supported scholars and institutions to document and preserve a record of disappearing traditions,” the UNESCO General Conference of 2001 issued a Report on the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore, which proposed to support only the practitioners of these traditions of today, rather than their investigation or documentation (including that of their past). “The continuity of intangible heritage would require attention not just to artifacts, but above all to persons, as well as to their entire habitus and habitat, understood as their life space and social world.” Such policies ought to be supported by all music researchers, too, although their own work is now largely taken out of the equation. What happened to the research of traditions, of the past? By a sleight of hands, the universally shared wish to protect not only material artifacts (tangible heritage), but also practices (intangible heritage), has become distorted to a presumption that “people and practices” are only those living now, not those of the past—and to a presumption that written transmission and archival documentation are not alive and therefore irrelevant to the preservation of cultures. It may seem attractive to us in the performing arts that UNESCO has switched its cultural protection from the past to the future, from the dead to the living. But shouldn’t we also remember that humanity started its culture by respecting the dead?

**Restored History**

I almost feel the need to apologize to those of my colleagues in the field of ethnomusicology who have maintained and practiced historical research. Of course their work is the most precious in our context altogether: they have demonstrated often enough how cultural history is not only about written artifacts—as its detractors suggest—but mainly about people and practices. (Sometime in the future, however, written artifacts will be re-admitted to a respected place in the global cultures, even the written artifacts of non-Western origin which the heritage lobby is now marginalizing.)

If the historical study of past traditions (people and practices) can no longer be supported under the initiative of ICH, other organizations are committed to doing so. Relevant societies whose mission statements emphasize history include the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM), which describes itself online as follows: “Founded in 1955, the Society for Ethnomusicology is a global,
interdisciplinary network of individuals and institutions engaged in the study of music across cultural contexts and historical periods.”

The British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE), as a former UK chapter of the ICTM, has adopted the precise mission statement of the ICTM itself (as given above), which emphasizes tradition rather than history but of course means both. As regards the IMS, I still believe it is committed to the cultivation of historical studies, although its latest mission statement found in the IMS Newsletter does not contain the term history. The 2017 Quinquennial IMS Congress documented the commitment to musical history and the study of traditions in forty-eight countries. Former IMS Vice President Ryuichi Higuchi wrote to me in his invitation: “As can be seen from the provisional time-table, the entire congress reflects the world history of music.”

On the website of the Brook Center of CUNY we read that in “1979 [Barry S.] Brook initiated, under the auspices of the International Music Council of UNESCO, a global project called ‘The Universe of Music: A History’ intended to provide a comprehensive history of the musical cultures of the world.” Some of the material, edited by Malena Kuss, has been published. The project could have inaugurated a re-evaluation of the sisterhood of historical and ethnological studies, had it been continued on the envisaged scale.

An impressive multi-author and one-designer book of 2013 is called The Cambridge History of World Music. I quote from the blurb:

Scholars have long known that world music was not merely the globalized product of modern media, but rather that it connected religions, cultures, languages, and nations throughout world history. . . . The contributors critically examine music in cultural encounter and conflict, and as the critical core of scientific theories from the Arabic Middle Ages through the Enlightenment to postmodernism. Overall, the book contains the histories of the music of diverse cultures, which increasingly become the folk, popular and classical music of our own era.

What is announced here is not only a panorama of worldwide historical processes in the field of music, but also a theory of how these hang together “throughout history,” for example, “increasingly.” History—the study of the past in remembering and forgetting—means not only taking snapshots of present moments while tolerating the attached bags of dead traditions (equivalent to heritage); history is the knowledge of how things have become. Such knowledge may be said to be fundamental to cultural respect. Each culture has a historical depth which we should respect; its past may reveal more about it than its present practitioners can say.

But what about traditions that are no longer with us? Humans should not flatter themselves that they matter only while they are alive. It is a public consensus today that we must think for our children and do something for the future, but by the same token, our identities are co-determined by what our ancestors have done. This mutual consideration between present and past people is something that most of the people whose cultures we study, take for granted.

In announcing his first workshop session of the Balzan musicology project (dedicated to the “medieval” era), Jason Stoessel summarized:

Fundamentally different concepts and practises mark precolonial encounters between the cultures of Africa, Asia and Europe, and these differences continue to resonate in subsequent intercultural relations. To move beyond an account of these differences towards transcultural understanding is but one of the challenges for a global history of music in the millennium before the rise of European [powers] as colonial world powers.

The “resonance” of past practices and differences in our time is one justification for historical research, but it is not the only one. We need to know about those things, because we must interrogate tradition and heritage. That tradition and heritage are not automatically “ours,” can be seen, for example, when modern national administrations lay claim to cultures that had been created by completely different people in the past who just happened to live in a similar region. Conversely, we have to respect the agency of people today who continue traditions that they have not created, but made their own through practice. It is important to know about historical agencies, changes, and appropriations, and where necessary, criticize them. This also applies to historiography. The conference The Future of Music History of the Serbian Academy of Science (September 2017) was a multi-voiced dialogue of mostly challenging and critical interpretations of the musicological traditions of Western Eu-
rope. Thus music history was being restored to its proper purpose. I would say that we need to restore even more history, and to say explicitly that we are doing it.

References
3 Ibid., 63.
8 Ibid., 53–54.
9 For a case study of the workings of ethnomusicology in historical perspectives, see Stokes, “The Middle East in Music History.”
11 “Wie es aus dem angehängten provisorischen Programme hervorgeht, der ganze Tokio-Kongress spiegelt eben die Weltgeschichte der Musik.” Personal letter to the author, August 7, 2016. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity given to me by the IMS to hold a roundtable on the Balzan project “Towards a Global History of Music” at the Tokyo Conference.

**Reinhard Strohm** studied musicology, violin, as well as Latin and Romance languages in Munich, Pisa, Milan, and Berlin. He received his PhD from the TU Berlin in 1971 (with Carl Dahlhaus). From 1970 to 1982 he was an editorial assistant of the critical edition Richard Wagner. Strohm held teaching positions at King’s College London, Yale University, and Oxford University, as well as visiting professorships at Chicago, Rome, Vienna, Budapest, Zurich, and Hamburg. His research focuses on European music from ca. 1400 to 1800, the history of opera, historiography, and postmodern criticism of musicology. Strohm’s Balzan research project “Towards a Global History of Music” was completed in 2017.
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*Musicological Brainfood* is a fresh intermittent IMS dish—an “amuse-bouche”—that may delight or possibly perturb you. These pithy, informal paragraphs are cooked up by leading musicologists to advance, refresh, or reinvigorate different aspects of our field; and they are anything but bland. Remember, these are “provocations” with flavors designed to prod, needle, and pinch your brain. They are not meant to be representative, and they are surely not official or definitive.

Enjoy!