Nettl and Merriam
Reflections on Two Classic Works on their 50th Anniversary

Introduction, Timothy Rice, UCLA

We celebrated the 50th anniversary of our Society in 2005, and in the future we will have many more opportunities to celebrate important 50th anniversaries. At this meeting in 2014, I thought that the 50th anniversary of the publication of two important books would provide an interesting locus for reflection of the history of ethnomusicology and on its changing nature. Those books, published in 1964, are Bruno Nettl’s Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology and Alan P. Merriam’s The Anthropology of Music. Sadly, we lost one of these authors in 1980, but, thankfully, one of the authors is with us today.

For this panel, I invited people who I thought had probably entered the field as graduate students in the few years or decade after the publication of these books. I asked them to reflect on the impact of these books when they were graduate students. So, if you are young, try to imagine us as you, when we entered the field at your age and were encountering recent scholarly literature in the field for the first time. Let’s begin with our honored guest, Bruno Nettl.

Bruno Nettl, University of Illinois

I want first to express appreciation (and a degree of embarrassment) to find that the publication of my book Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology should be commemorated, and indeed along with Alan Merriam’s The Anthropology of Music, which I think has been far more influential. I have to confess that I feel rather surprised to find that my book is still remembered after fifty years and I want to thank Tim Rice and all of the panelists for considering it worthy of some attention. My feelings of pleasure have to be mitigated as it is also a moment of sadness because my counterpart must be represented by an empty chair.

I appreciate being given a chance to say a few words by way of background of these two books, what it was like to work in this field at that time. Let me make a few distinct points.

Most important, I believe, is to realize that these two books appeared at a time when a lot of other things were also going on in ethnomusicology. Things were clearly stirring, including the idea of training people in considerable numbers to be ethnomusicologists. Let me mention a few milestones of the time. Curt Sachs’s last book, The Wellsprings of Music, in which he changed his mind about a number of his older beliefs, was published in 1961. In 1962, Alan Lomax began his cantometrics project in his association with Columbia University. Also in 1962, a major meeting of SEM, with a program that aimed to present a holistic view of the field, took place in Blooming-ton, many of its papers published in the tenth anniversary issue of Ethnomusicology in 1963. This issue includes significant items—basic position statements by Merriam and Hood; historical accounts by McAllester and Rhodes; a long review of Sachs’s book by Kolinski; a substantial big symposium on dance. SEM seemed to be staking out its territory.

Also in 1963, Alain Daniélou established the International Institute for Comparative Music Studies in Berlin. And the symposium on transcription and analysis, which aimed to solve certain problems once and for all, took place at 1963 meeting at Wesleyan University, the results published in a 1964 issue of Ethnomusicology. And also, 1963 saw publication of the book Musicology by Frank Ll. Harrison, Mantle Hood, and Claude Palisca, containing Hood’s position essay, “Music, the Unknown.” I want to come back to that. 1965 saw the first attempts at textbooks on world music, two volumes (by William Malm and myself) in the Prentice-Hall Music History series.

I think this was a short period in which ethnomusicology matured into a discipline or a field with substantial independence.

Let me say a few words on how my book came about. It was really the result of a conversation in 1962 with Theodore Karp, then the music editor for Free Press, later a distinguished medievalist at Northwestern, about the need for a text. There had been some books about world music and comparative musicology as a field...
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Historic Meeting: The SEM-ICTM Forum

Beverley Diamond, SEM President

“As Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda have recognized, Latin Americans are totally committed to social change... We work under a permanent political tension.” (Samuel Araujo, Brazil)

“By thinking culturally, deeper understandings of local positions become available.” (Angela Impey, U.K. on transitional justice in South Sudan)

“Academic labor is precarious labor... We need to rethink the ‘neoliberal academic subject’ to make change in our institutions.” (Ana Hofman, Slovenia)

“It’s better that it sounds! ‘That’ not ‘than.’ Impact over aesthetics.” (Rebecca Liebman, U.S.A., describing honk fests for social justice)

“Composing aid rather than imposing aid.” (Oliver Shao, U.K. on the visioning of migrant cities in place of refugee camps in Kenya)

“Our view of music is too narrow.” (Kwasi Ampene, U.S.A., on studying regalia in Ghana)

“What is non-human development? ...Music is a humanizing technology.” (Michael Frishkopf, Canada)

“The climate changes we are experiencing can be viewed as a world-wide failure of reciprocity. To quote Daniel Wildcat, humankind has treated the earth like an ATM machine.” (Chad Hamill, U.S.A., on his Spokane First Nation’s relationship and response to extraction industries)

“In Aboriginal Australia, the ‘contact zone’ must be a ‘discomfort zone.” (Sally Trellyn, Australia)

“The possible has already been tried; that’s why we focus on the impossible.” (Wil Faber, U.S.A. on the Englewood area of Chicago)

“Why are we using this word ‘settler’ in recent years. We used to call them ‘colonizers’. Denise Bolduc, Anishnabe/Metis activist producer). “We called them ‘refugees’ in the 1700s.” (Rhoda Roberts, Bundjalung Nation, Australia).

“2013-2113. Our project will take a hundred years. ...Limerick soundscapes is a project designed to enable new ways of listening and reimagining critical citizenship.” (Aileen Dillane and Tony Langlois, Ireland)

“We need to become sincerely outspoken... Where a people is rendered invisible or unintelligible, simply documenting is a political act.” (David McDonald, U.S.A.)

“Modernity and unity are silencing discourses” (speaking of Malaysia where governments first institutionalized racial segregation and then more recently tried to create a monolithic unified cultural identity). (Tan Sooi Beng, Malaysia)

It was a first and I have to reflect on it! Pervading my thoughts are the statements above—and many others—recorded in my fragmentary notes from the joint SEM-ICTM Forum on “Transforming Ethnomusicological Praxis through Activism and Community Engagement” held at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick. Imagine them as sound bytes from the flood of strong words exchanged during that 4-day event. It was the first time that the two largest academic societies for the study of ethnomusicology have collaborated on a project and the first time that SEM ventured beyond North America for a meeting. The stars aligned even further when the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology was able to arrange their annual meeting to overlap with the Forum for one day. Hence, not just two, but for one day, the three organizations met together. Participants have been writing with enthusiasm, describing the significant new directions, stimulating discussions, and great ideas they encountered at this event. Some have ventured that it was “perhaps a moment of consolidation” for the discipline.” Others want action not words and acknowledge this by anticipating future projects across regions. Many are already assuming that this Forum will be the start of a new tradition!

Although the Forum Program Committee began by deliberating a range of topics, the one we settled on acknowledges and builds on the ground swell of activity in “Applied Ethnomusicology” that has occurred in both SEM and ICTM in recent decades. The increase in visibility of work that addresses the urgent human challenges of our time is surely indebted to both the ICTM Study Group and the SEM Section on Applied Ethnomusicology. We chose not to bracket “applied” work, however, but to look at activism and community engagement as fundaments of everything we do in the discipline. Some of the nine invited plenary speakers historicized such work: Anthony Seeger synthesized the divergent directions that anthropologists in the U.S. and Brazil have taken toward applied work (named variously) while Svanibor Pettan contextualized the developments of applied ethnomusicology in regard to the distinctive intellectual histories of ICTM and SEM. These were very helpful and much needed frameworks.

The nature of collaboration was a thematic strand running through the whole event but was galvanized by Luke Eric Lassiter’s masterful overview of American anthropology’s striving for more critical and complex understanding of the processes of working with others. “It’s no longer a choice,” he observed, but he urged us to get beyond “metaphors of agreement” (collaboration as democratization or collaboration as enhanced public access, for instance) to emphasize difficult challenges and to value what we learn by working across differences. “The force of the encounter leads to change,” he noted. While we sometimes view collaboration as a privileging of local over disciplinary allegiances, he sees a collapse of divisions between pure and applied work, both of which involve collaboration. He urged a sustained development of collaborative approaches at the nexus of teaching, learning and action at all levels, a perspective that aligned with Anthony Seeger’s observation that action begins in the classroom and with our music making as well as our words.

Speaking truth to power took many forms. The complexities of violent power struggles were particularly eloquently described in Angela Impey’s opening invited plenary address. As she has written about elsewhere, she explained how the complex differences [continued on page 10]
of research, largely in German. But by 1962, some American institutions had begun to offer courses in which students might need to read about what ethnomusicologists did, what they were about, how their minds worked; and at some meeting, Ted Karp approached me.

I tried to write something that would tell what people in our field had done, and were doing. I confess I was never happy with that book, especially the part on music in culture. My question was, from the beginning, how one could organize a book about a discipline. I had some older models (books by Lach, Sachs, and Bose; by Adler and Hayden), but the most problematic area was how to organize the discussion about music in culture. I’ve fiddled with that ever since, tried several approaches. I’m not sure, now, why in 1964 I couldn’t have done better than to have just two chapters, one looking at music in geographic space, and the other in time.

Let me say a word about the reception of these books. Theory and Method received largely lukewarm reviews; Merriam’s came off considerably but not hugely better. The reception of the two indicates something of the way ethnomusicologists saw themselves divided into representatives of anthropology and music. I tried in my book to hold to what seemed at the time an even ground. But Merriam, in a review, saw it as insufficiently anthropological, while David Morton, in another, criticized it as written too much from an anthropological perspective. Merriam’s book, in Ethnomusicology, was reviewed by two scholars—Robert Spencer wrote appreciatively from the perspective of an anthropologist, and William Malm praised the book, but he did so mainly by expressing the belief that it showed the musicologists among us what, if I can put it that way, they were up against. Bill Malm wrote: “If we can get past our disciplinary paranoias and offer each other constructive criticisms based on the particular knowledges each of us possesses in depth, then the grand synthesis will begin to appear.” But somehow it seems today strange that this major book had to be tackled by two people from two designated perspectives, that SEM sort of made the bifurcation into an official policy.

One gets a somewhat similar feeling from Merriam’s review of Musicology by Frank Lloyd Harrison, Mantle Hood, and Claude Palisca. Merriam’s review of Hood’s chapter, “Music the Unknown,” keeps suggesting that Hood doesn’t really pay attention to the things that Merriam regards as central, the kinds of things he wrote about in The Anthropology of Music. And he suggested, by contrast, that the chapter by Frank Harrison, largely on historical musicology, seemed to him more properly ethnomusicological in attitude and conception than did Hood’s.

In those days, we—well, those guys—spent a lot of energy trying to delimit ethnomusicology, and to write those who didn’t conform to a particular definition out of the field. Today, clearly, we’ve synthesized, as Malm predicted, and we’ve become very definitely inclusive—maybe a bit more than is good for us.

I can’t talk about these books without saying some personal things about Alan Merriam. We first met on December 31, 1952, and we were friends for almost thirty years though we didn’t always agree. I felt that he was a person of strong opinions but great integrity. After he moved to Indiana, and I to Illinois, we had frequent exchanges, visiting each other’s schools, sometimes bringing students. Merriam loved to debate, to argue, and he wanted his students to do this.

We also related personally in various ways, although Alan was not a man who easily revealed himself. Even so, he was a great communicator, frequently writing short letters saying things like, “I haven’t heard from you in some time, what’s happening?” and “I didn’t see much of you at the last meeting.” He probably would have loved Facebook. We had—let me finish with this—a curious and in the end sad kind of relationship involving birthdays. When we held the national meeting of SEM at Illinois in 1973, it happened to be his fiftieth birthday, and we put “Happy Birthday Alan” on the hotel marquee. He loved that and wanted a photo of it—we never got around to that. Six years later, in the fall of 1979, November 1 to be exact, I ran into him at the Indianapolis airport. I was going east, and he to the west coast, and after a short chat he fixed me with his forefinger. “Do you know what day this is?” I had forgotten. “It’s my birthday, I thought you always knew that.” And he went off to his gate. I never saw him again. A few months later, it was on my own next birthday, March 14, 1980—it was my fiftieth, a big celebration—I suddenly got a call saying that Alan’s plane’s had crashed in Poland. You’ll understand that I can never celebrate my birthday now without remembering that moment.

Ellen Koskoff, Eastman School of Music

My response today concentrates on the first question posed to our panel: “How did these books affect my early research as a student?” I begin with a story that I often tell my students. This story is true, although it may sound as though I constructed it as a homily.

In 1973, I was a doctoral student in historical musicology at the University of Pittsburgh. I had completed my coursework and my qualifying exams and had been hunting for a dissertation topic. I was playing the harpsichord at that time and was interested in working with the keyboard music of Bach or maybe the vocal music of the early fifteenth-century composer, Giles Binchois. At the same time, however, I was also being radicalized politically, first by anti-Vietnam war protests, and then by a newly rejuvenated feminism, known then as the “women’s movement.”

I was having a harder and harder time rationalizing my desire to study Bach and Binchois. Sure—they had written exquisitely beautiful music, but they were—after all—really, just dead white European guys. Did I really want to devote my life to this? My advisor was pressuring me to come up with something, but, for reasons I didn’t fully understand, I resisted.

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So, one day, late in the afternoon, I found myself in the Music Department library, walking up and down the aisles, sort of in a zone, not really thinking about anything special when, suddenly, something caught my eye. I looked up to the left and saw a yellow book standing out somewhat from its peers on the shelf. Yellow has never been my favorite color, especially this shade, so I took a swipe at the book, as though it had purposely stuck out to goad me.

As it slid back into line, I saw the title: The Anthropology of Music. “You can do that?” I asked myself. Ethnomusicology had not yet come to the University of Pittsburgh, so I had no idea what this meant. In Buddhism they often say that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. So, I took the book home and began to read. I was riveted. I read it all in one sitting, like a good mystery novel. I knew instantly that this is what I wanted to do.

Luckily, when I came to school the next day, my advisor did not say, “Well—we don’t do ethnomusicology here, so, sorry—you’ll have to go.” Instead, he got up quietly, went to his bookshelf, took out a book, and handed it to me, saying, “I’m not sure what ethnomusicology is—but read this book.” It was Hugo Zemp’s, Music of the Dan, and that began my “formal” ethnomusicological studies. Then, he sent me to the anthropology department.

Within two years, Carolina Robertson, a student of Alan Merriam, came to Pittsburgh and I happily proclaimed myself “Merriam’s ethno-granddaughter.” Discovering The Anthropology of Music saved me. It helped me integrate my musical and political selves. It gave me a way to continue being a musician while also understanding the complexities of musical and social meanings through fieldwork, a most rewarding process for me.

When I tell this story to my students, I often end with this: “I am not a religious person, but I understand religious conversion stories, because one moment, I was a disgruntled historical musicologist, and in an instant, I saw the light and became an ethnomusicologist.” I wanted to do exactly what Merriam had done. The three-pronged model with which we are now so familiar seemed to make such sense and the anthropological models of understanding music as connected to and embedded in other social systems seemed to answer all of my questions at the time.

I did not discover Bruno Nettl’s, Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology until later, some time in the late 1970s. This book felt much more familiar to me, more comfortable, more music-centric—closer to what I had known as a musician trained in a music school environment. There was also a user-friendly aspect to Nettl’s book that seemed to be missing from Merriam’s: Nettl assured his readers, for example, that it was not necessary to go far from home to be an ethnomusicologist—one could also do it in one’s back yard. This fit nicely into my plan to do fieldwork in “exotic Pittsburgh and Brooklyn,” with “my own” community.

These two complementary books, appearing at the same moment provided for me, and perhaps for others of my generation, a space to examine music—any music—within its own social and cultural contexts. Both provided current and historical scholarship, both outlined a theoretical framework, and both privileged fieldwork over document-centered work. At the same time, the authors each provided a different entry into this new and exciting field, reflecting their own disciplinary history and subject position.

Thus, each set a different stage for the play to come, articulating the central challenge, still present today: how, precisely, to integrate the sounds and structures of the musics we hear and learn with the social and cultural patterns of the people and cultures with whom we live and study. Although both of these ur-texts provided a context for our field to develop, neither could have anticipated what was to come—which brings us to the second question of our panel: how did these books influence developments in ethnomusicology subsequent to their publication.

Others on this panel have addressed this question and our final question more fully, so I’ll just say here that I think the tension created by these two entry-points, the so-called “anthropological” and “musicological” portals into the ethnomusicology paradigm created a fertile space for many of us to react, challenge, dismiss, and/or link new theoretical work to these foundational orientations.

Mark Slobin, Wesleyan University

My first semester of graduate school was exactly when these books were available. I want to speak to the similarities of the two books for the time period.

First of all, both of these books generalize a lot, and both are very conscious about generalization. And that has been the grand arc. When these books came out, and I came in, we were breaking down generalizations. Curt Sachs had written all these books that generalized about everything, and we had great fun throwing darts at that. They didn’t have enough data to do that. What’s happened in the past ten years is that we’re looking at ethnomusicology and making generalizations again.

So they operated in that earlier mode, but at the same time were prescient enough, and intelligent enough, to keep qualifying and undercutting their generalizations. There was a tension between wanting to give readers, including myself, something to build on, and the lack of data to base that on. Nettl is given to the grand generalization that we have dropped, based on small samples of data. But he himself says [italics added]: “ethnomusicology has developed a great deal of theory which exists, somewhat unorganized, under a still too small body of documentation.”

Even the most unassailable generalization needed qualification: “Song texts provide the student of human behavior with some of the richest material he [notice the pronoun] has available for analysis, but their full potential remains to be exploited.” Today we have a great deal of documentation, highly organized into subfields, but a very small amount of theory.

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Looking at just a couple other topics, both Nettl and Merriam were involved very much in the question of change. Lots of things were called “tradition and change,” so it was assumed there was tradition and then there was change. Even as a beginning grad student, I wasn’t convinced by this. I see by my marginal remark that I did not agree with “specialized features in music are less easily changed than generalized... [leading to] the hypothesis that generalized features are constantly undergoing change in the direction of becoming specialized.” It remark, “-but more easily dropped.” Still, the impact was strong; you need these statements to bounce off of.

The generalizations were made, then undercut, as in the case of two complementary statements:

“The larger a moving body of music, the greater is its influence on the repertoires through which it passes, and the less it is itself subject to change.” And then: “in most cases, music seems to move from simplicity to greater complexity [but not always]” But, Nettl says, “measurement of the rate of change in music... awaits the discovery of proper methods.” We’re still waiting. I would like to see measurement of the rate of change—it would be amazing.

Merriam was disturbed by change; he wasn’t sure how to deal with it. I have mentioned somewhere in print how impressed I was by a talk he gave in 1977 after he went back to the Congo and said “things have changed so much in my village, I don’t know how to deal with it. Perhaps you people can help me.” Here was this large imposing man, this colossus of the field, and he’s saying, “I don’t know what happened here.” That really stuck with me.

Back in the book, Merriam says “in suggesting that melody may be more susceptible to change than rhythm, we have omitted detailed discussion of why this may be so for the simple fact that no really clear-cut explanations seem available.” You had to think about that—is melody really more susceptible? What does that mean? There’s the value, in 1964, of making the big statement, but still saying we can’t actually get to clear-cut explanations.

Finally, Merriam talks about “function.” That was quite common in those days. He says: “function may not be expressed or understood from the standpoint of folk evaluation,” which is “concepts.” “Function refers to the understanding of what music does for human beings as evaluated by the outside observer.” That is to say, people themselves don’t really understand the function of their music.” That doesn’t hold up any more. I was tutored later by Merriam’s fellow SEM-founder David McAllester who pointed out that people really do understand the function of their music. But Merriam was trying to find a way to give you something, from the outside. For example: “music, then, provides a rallying point around which the members of society gather to engage in activities which require the cooperation and coordination of the group.” It’s an unexceptionable generalization.

In summary, these two seminal works did what they should at the moment when academic ethnomusicology was just being launched. They treat all the music in the world even-handedly, rather than just privileging some kinds of societies and certain types of issues. They offer a platform for further research by suggesting hypotheses that would need testing by emergent data.

Both stress the need for theory and method to go hand in hand, with a bias toward empirical research. And particularly in Merriam’s case, they define a set of core issues, many of which we have yet to follow down systematically.

Ruth M. Stone, Indiana University

Fifty years after the publication of these seminal works, and for some of us, nearly forty years after beginning study in the field of ethnomusicology, a number of points have emerged: First, Bruno Nettl’s work formed for me a kind of field of ethnomusicology reference with encyclopedic coverage of the field... and I still have my copy, which cost $7.55, filled with many margin notes. Alan Merriam’s book cost me $8.07 and was the published embodiment of many of the ideas expressed by Merriam both within the classroom and in papers and articles that he was writing in the early 1970s when I was a student at Indiana University. As he said in the preface, “Ethnomusicology is approachable from two directions: the anthropological and the musicological” (1964: vii). He went on to delineate his goal, “to provide a theoretical framework to music as behavior” (1964: viii). He did not claim that this was a comprehensive approach, and indeed, he was most interested in staking out the territory of the “anthropology of music.” And he often contrasted what he was doing with the work of Mantle Hood, whose work The Ethnomusicologist was published in 1971. While he didn’t always agree with Bruno Nettl’s approach, he saw their work in some ways as complementary.

By the time I was a student of Alan Merriam’s, beginning in 1972, he had revised the term “music in culture,” which suggested a kind of atomistic approach to music and to culture, to be “music as culture.” This was partially, I believe, to respond to some of the critiques that he received from some of the students at the time. Those in classes with me included Steven Feld, Carolina Robertson, and others. However we term it, “music as culture,” or “the anthropology of music,” Merriam worked hard to contrast his approach with others such as Mantle Hood’s and the people working in the field at that time.

This strikes me now as a kind of political stance, an attempt to stake an intellectual kind of territory, and to clearly contrast it with the other territory that he called “music sound.” Remember, this was the era of both academic discipline and empire building within American universities. If you look at his book of Flathead Indian music, you will see plenty of attention to the analysis of music sound. So his practice didn’t exactly follow his proclamation of Indiana “behavior” versus UCLA “sound.” But I believe that a mass communications expert would be appreciative of the clarity of his message.

Merriam also staked out this “anthropology of music” as arising within the US and deriving from the Melville Herskovits’ lineage of Northwestern University. In doing so, he more or less glossed over behavior... [Continued next page]
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by Carl Stumpf and others in the Berlin school. As Fritz Bose in his review of the book in *Current Anthropology* said, “German ethnomusicologists have already recognized before 1930 that formal analyses of music were not sufficient. Eric M. von Hornbostel always pointed out in his lectures that it is indispensable to study the functions of music in the life of the individual and of the community” (1966:219). Walter Graf from Austria did a review in that same journal. He echoed the criticism that had been leveled (1966: 221-222). And Merriam rebutted at the end of those reviews with what seemed like a slightly odd statement that, "one works with what one has at hand" (1966: 229-230).

The academic world at large clearly latched onto this work, and has studied and quoted it for the fifty years since its publication. And to support the point, we were on the plane the other day, and I said to someone sitting next to me, “I wonder if students still read *The Anthropology of Music*,” and another person sitting in the seat in front of us said, “Yes, we do.”

The clarity of the exposition of Merriam’s framework has certainly contributed to the reach of the book. There are also several things that fascinate about it. First, it’s difficult to find a comprehensive body of work that conducts research in the manner that Merriam advocates. A number of scholars have addressed things such as “musical functions”: Richard Waterman, Kwabena Nketia, John Blacking, even Chris Waterman. Indeed Merriam himself in the Flathead Indian book realized the approach only partially.

Both the books written by Bruno Nettl and Alan Merriam, to come back to the two on which we’re focusing, influence our work today. There’s not a single theoretical framework that has appeared as to total solution in the field of ethnomusicology. But Merriam’s work derived from a systems approach to research, something that has been in much work since that time. So even as times change, these books continue to influence, and we continue to search for theoretical windows. Each approach seems to be strong in certain dimensions, weak in others. Marking the occasion of the publication of these two influential books draws our attention to the need for more books that help summarize and delineate the field. They both represent a kind of courage at an early point in the discipline to stick one’s neck out and attempt to write beyond a single case study or two. My thinking has certainly been stimulated and enriched by having these books as steady occupants in my academic library for some forty years. Thanks Alan, thanks Bruno as we mark the fiftieth anniversary of these monuments in ethnomusicology.

References


Stephen Blum, City University of New York

Persian has a nice expression that translates as “Your place was empty.” It’s a way of telling people their absence was felt at some gathering. Alan Merriam’s place has been empty at the last 35 of our annual meetings, no less, and we’ll never know how he’d have continued to work with ideas presented in *The Anthropology of Music* had his life not been cut short. From time to time we may need to remind ourselves that Merriam was not only the author of *The Anthropology of Music*; the development of his thought in the last fifteen years of his life could make a good topic for an M.A. thesis. Bruno Nettl, happily, has been highly productive in the five decades since publication of *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology*, and we’re more likely to discuss ideas advanced in what will soon be three editions of *The Study of Ethnomusicology* than those in *Theory and Method*, which doesn’t have the same dominating position in Bruno’s rich oeuvre. I now read it as a prelude, articulating themes he would develop over the next half-century.

When I began to study ethnomusicology, fifty years ago, the two books whose anniversary we’re commemorating were indispensable to graduate students like me, and they complemented each other in stimulating ways. Both were engaged with the history of scholarship, with issues of cultural history, and with processes of communication. Their last two chapters are strikingly similar: Merriam’s “Music and Cultural History” corresponds to Nettl’s “Music in Culture—Historical and Geographical Approaches,” and Merriam’s “Music and Cultural Dynamics” to Nettl's “Music in Culture—Context and Communication.”

Both tables of contents lay out protocols for conducting research, that of *Theory and Method* proceeding from fieldwork to transcription, then description of style with attention to “the overweening fact of the close interrelationships among the various aspects of music” (138), leading to consideration of the issues addressed in the last three chapters. ¹ If those “close interrelationships among the various aspects of music” were an “overweening fact” to Bruno and many of his students, myself among them, a large proportion of the analytic work published at the time by ethnomusicologists treated the various aspects separately, with little or no attention to interrelationships. That’s true of the music analysis Merriam published, and may be one reason he found it so difficult to coordinate what he saw as the ethnological and musicological mandates confronting ethnomusicologists. Several ethnomusicologists now conduct fieldwork in which their efforts at transcription and analysis are enriched through collaboration with performers.

[Continued next page]

Reflections on Two Classic Works

Like Bruno’s final chapters, Part Three of Merriam’s book treats issues to be taken up after research on the concepts and behavior to which the six chapters of Part Two are devoted. The three-and-a-half pages in Part One where Merriam outlined “a theoretical research model” (32-25) have probably stimulated more discussion than any other passage in either book. Many of us have thought about how we’d like our work to relate to that model. Merriam presented his “three analytic levels—conceptualization about music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound itself”—as a representation of musical production, though I’ve long felt that he treated the levels primarily as concerns to be addressed separately in the course of research, with questions about how to relate the data obtained for each level to be handled at a later stage. He did not explore the different rates, from almost instantaneous to long-term, at which energies are transmitted among the three levels.

We’ve been asked to “assess the current state of the field in comparison to the frameworks and issues laid out in these books.” I’ve already mentioned one such framework—what Merriam (1964: 3) termed “the dual nature of the field”—musicological and ethnological, presenting ethnomusicologists with the challenge of producing work that, in his words, “emphasizes neither but takes into account both.”

Merriam was right that, at the time, much ethnomusicological writing could be easily enough assigned to one or the other of those categories, even if readers could try to imagine ethological implications of the musicological writing and vice versa. To the extent that people still speak today of a “dual nature of the field,” I’d call that a matter of false consciousness, reproducing a conventional representation that’s out of sync with the work ethnomusicologists are currently doing. For one thing, we’re now more likely to recognize the representations of social action that are implicit in any analysis of music, whether or not the analyst foregrounds those representations. While I don’t deny the difficulty of reconciling our experience as musicians with the perspectives we gain through an engagement with the social sciences, I do wish to maintain that any musicology worthy of the name will draw on appropriate work in social sciences, given the fact that music is produced by socialized humans—a zoomusicologist would add, by other socialized mammals, and birds.

To interpret current work in relation to the central terms of Merriam’s model, I would replace concepts with the knowledge and theorizing of performers, behavior with action in performance, and sound with results of performers’ actions, which are the movements as well as the sounds made by participants in response to one another’s movements and sounds. To apply what we learned from these two books to the situations we worked in, we had to ignore the restriction of ethnomusicology’s “basic subject matter” to “the music of non-Western and folk cultures” (Nettl, vii), as it’s defined in Bruno’s Preface—and he quickly did just that himself. But it’s fair to say that musicians and others in the so-called non-West had problematized that notion well before music scholars began to catch up with them.

As a student I was troubled by what struck me as stereotypes of “the West” in Merriam’s chapter on aesthetics and in some of his other writings. Critique of how “the West” has been represented in writing, music, and other media of communication has of course been a major concern of many ethnomusicologists over the past half-century, whether the representations imply relationships of “the West” to “the East” or to “the rest.” A more recent sequence of representations addresses relations of “the global South” to “the North.” I mention this issue in closing, to emphasize the gratitude we owe to the scholars who stimulate us to explore alternatives to the frameworks and issues they have articulated.

Anthony Seeger, UCLA

Arian Merriam’s The Anthropology of Music and Bruno Nettl’s Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology were profoundly influential books. Nettl has lived to present us with several further books on the history and methods of ethnomusicology, but Merriam died before he could produce another. They were never assigned to me in my anthropology courses, but became important when I had to develop my own course on ethnomusicology as a graduate student. Nettl’s book provided a very helpful compendium of what had been done and had a wonderful bibliography. In the days before computerized catalogues and the internet, Nettl’s bibliographies provided a major service to shaping the field by directing the rest of us to sources we might otherwise never have read. Merriam’s book made a clear argument for the incorporation of anthropological methods more systematically into the study of music. It had a major impact on my own subsequent work on music.

But books are not only publications that transmit ideas, though that is how most members of our panel discussed them. They are also artefacts that may reveal how individual readers reacted to books during the years following their publication. This is because many of us can’t resist marking up our books as we read them. I still have copies of books I first marked up as an undergraduate, and marked up again as a graduate student and yet again as a teacher, all reacting to the same ideas. Jackson’s book on marginalia (2001) is a nice argument for considering these marginalia seriously. Here is where Charles Seeger enters the story about one of the 50-year-old books whose publication we are celebrating.

In 1979, when my grandfather Charles Seeger died, I inherited his library. He was not a frequent marginalia writer. The Anthropology of Music had the most, with 30 marks of interest, three question marks, 4 “X-s” (indicating disagreement), and 23 comments in the margins. The number of marks indicates something about Charles’ interest in the subject matter. But in this case they also reveal something of his thinking on a number of ethnomusicological issues. I have discussed this at some length elsewhere (Seeger 2015),

1. In a similar vein, Nettl writes that ethnomusicologists should be “equally interested in music as a part of culture and in the structure of music” (269).
but it is worth noting his reactions on page 276. Merriam has just stated that ethnomusicologists are in a superb position to contribute to the understanding of African musical aesthetics. In light pencil Seeger wrote, under the final paragraph of the chapter:

**BUT:**

1. He’s got to know the music of his own culture better than APM [Alan P. Merriam] does;
2. He must talk the language of the people he is investigating, WELL;
3. He must be able to make the music he is making speech about; 4) He must be fully aware of the extent he is talking about talking about music;
4. He must cite more first-hand data from a more varied collection of cultures;
5. He must STOP dichotomizing in terms of either-or-ness

These remarks applied not only to the statement at the end of the chapter, but to many other places in the book where Merriam had discussed European concert music and aesthetics—two areas about which Seeger had considerable knowledge and strong opinions.

Charles Seeger’s marginalia may date to 1968, when Alan Merriam visited UCLA. They are but a single example of why books should be considered to be more than simply historic publications, but also to be artifacts that can inform us of more individual histories of encounter with those texts. Marking up our books may not simply be part of the process of doing research, but one more product (like our fieldnotes and recordings) of research that others may use long after our research is over (or, in the case of social media, as we are doing it).

**References Cited:**


between Dinka, Nuer, and Shillik people in the South Sudan, a region besieged by three civil wars since 1955, have not been effectively resolved by state-led transitional justice initiatives. More promising, she suggested, is traditional conflict resolution, where song which is at the heart of such traditional processes is a vehicle for frank disclosure, a way to give voice to multiple positions and agencies and to carry moral authority. In the lively discussion of her paper, we raised the global problem of “culture” being dismissed as “soft” (“too abstruse to feed policy” was how Impey phrased it) as well as the neoliberal twisting of “arts and development” toward certain kinds of arts. Her presentation evoked questions about gender, transdisciplinarity, and archive as public memory—all themes that resonated throughout the whole Forum.

The panel on “Power and Real World Intervention” was a powerful moment for many of us. Critiquing neoliberalism from three perspectives, Tan, Araujo, and Hofman both problematized and reported on action to challenge institutional processes. Tan Sooi Beng discussed her extensive work to promote interethnic interaction in Malaysia, particularly in the cosmopolitan George Town area. She taught us the importance of being a facilitator, with a view to extending the right to research to communities and sharing power (while simultaneously recognizing unequal power). She did not minimize the difficulties of the process of co-creating new narratives but described tactics such as games and theatre to enable those who are not trained to speak up to have input. Samuel Araujo spoke about the grassroots commitment to social change in Brazil and Colombia in particular, the dangers of entertaining dialogue but preserving a power imbalance between interpreter and interpreted, the significance of an organically emergent pedagogy of autonomy, a reintegration of practice and theory (i.e., praxis), and a valuing of debate. “Are we really looking to end wars or is it surface intention?”, he asked. Hofman extended the discussion to the academy itself, observing the formalized and institutionalized systems of “precarity” that defines academic labor today, the ambivalent politics of academic freedom and the university as a site that amplified capitalism and dispossession.

On the other hand, I was surprised by the utopianism of many presentations. I’m not implying rose-colored glasses. Far from it. Rather many presenters posited that imagining social change may be more effective than critiquing the problems of current regimes. Oliver Shao was particularly eloquent on this point as he described how asking “what could be” was an important dimension of activist scholarship. Working in a Kenyan refugee camp, he collaboratively campaigned to reverse bans on cultural dancing activities, to garner greater labor rights for musicians, and to end police exploitation. He continues to pressure for a new model of “migrant cities” to replace the “stunted city” model of the camps. Australian Aboriginal writer, actor, festival producer, and cultural advisor/advocate Rhoda Roberts described the “hard work of delivering hope.” A focus of many of her initiatives is revitalisation through intergenerational transmission, protecting the ceremonies for the children. When “Country is archive, trade route, clan, and cosmos,” she explained, the goal is to find a way “to re-establish song lines for the young.” At the same time, her work in the “creative industries” (a phrase she finds persuasive at institutional levels) also provides new cultural experiences for cosmopolitan audiences in a country where 97% of tourists want an Aboriginal experience but only a small percentage are able to access an Aboriginal event. First Nations producer and artist Denise Bolduc discussed opportunities and challenges of bringing Indigenous artists into mainstream events. Andrea Emberley and Mudzunga Junniah Davhula (Venda) described Venda initiatives to reteach the age-graded instruction of domba (the initiation ritual part of which was documented by John Blacking). Mudzunga explained the importance of mobilizing the women to stand firm and claim knowledge that has been written thus far by men. She also identified the challenges that government schools pose for their project. “It works better outside in the community,” she affirms, while acknowledging the complication of the two educational systems.

Candor was one thing that set this event apart from the large-scale conferences of both societies. I think of Samuel Araujo’s wise counsel that activist projects fail most of the time (but occasionally succeed). His words were echoed by Rebecca Dirksen whose documentary film on trash in Haiti—intended to pressure for more civic action to clean up the streets,
President’s Report: Historic Meeting [continued from previous page]

especially after the 2010 earthquake, remains incomplete because of a host of problems not least of which is the ethical dilemma of showing a country looking bad. The obstacles are critical to the learning process, she wisely counselled. Equally candid was her fellow panelist Andrew McGraw who raised the “white saviour complex” as a problematic but honest motivating factor for some activist work. David McDonald was among those who queried the vulnerability of pre-tenure scholars who want to do activist work. Paralleling Ana Hofman’s analysis of the neoliberal academic subject, he taught us much about the “experience of precarity” that he has faced in supporting Palestinian defendants in U.S. courts. Among the highlights for me were exciting new visions by some of SEM’s best thinkers who aimed at bringing a revolution in consciousness that leads to a revolution in action. Among them were Jeff Titon whose theorizing of post-humanism and “sound ecology” expands the purview of our field and our relationality. Similarly, Deborah Wong’s presentation on “witnessing” as a methodology shakes our long commitment to ethnography as the central method of our field and invites us to consider other “rogue methodologies.” The final invited plenary by Anthropology Professor José Jorge de Carvalho from the University of Brasilia was another particularly compelling moment. Teaching in a country where the majority Afro-Brazilian population and substantial Indigenous population were not represented in the Eurocentred curricula of his university, Carvalho managed a feat of enormous scale, reach and social con-

sequence. He successfully proposed to recognize both literate and oral knowledge through the “mestre/mestra” program that draws on community “masters” as university teachers. The program is beyond disciplines since science, medicine arts, and ritual combine in the courses on reforestation and permaculture, popular theater, ritual music traditions, Indigenous architecture and medicinal plants. He has succeeded in convincing the state to recognize 50 “Masters” and pay them a salary for life and is working to introduce the pedagogical model to other Brazilian universities. As one person commented after this presentation, “After this, no one can say it can’t be done.”

Our University of Limerick hosts were gracious and generous in running this event flawlessly. They enabled us to hear some great music on the last day of the conference as well. After we said our good byes at the end of the SEM-ICTM Forum, several colleagues posted pictures of the lovely bridge over the Shannon River in the middle of the UL campus. We walked this every day to get to and from the Irish World Academy and, in my mind, it became something of a metaphor for the conference. It was not just the bridging of societies or the bridges we attempt to make with collaborators. The bridge was engineered to sway a little, to absorb and respond to the energy of walkers and bikers, and water. Responding to the energy around us is all important.

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SEM: Ethnomusicology Today

SEM announces the release of its first episode of Ethnomusicology Today, a podcast series and the Society’s newest publication project. Ethnomusicology Today represents a growing diversity of publications that embrace digital media formats in an effort to increase accessibility and public engagement both within and beyond the field of ethnomusicology. Episodes will feature stories and interviews with ethnomusicologists—often discussing recent articles published in the journal Ethnomusicology—and is aimed at engaging a broad audience of educators, scholars, musicians, and a listening public interested in contemporary issues in global music studies. The first episode was released on September 24. Ethnomusicology Today will be available as a free download through the iTunes Store and can be found on the SEM website. To submit feedback or suggestions for future episodes, please email Trevor Harvey.

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Come to Austin, Texas for the Society for Ethnomusicology's 60th annual meeting! It's our first December conference since 1966 and, based on current registration figures, will be our largest yet. From Wednesday's Pre-conference through to the last session on Sunday, you will find a fantastic, rich and varied experience that puts the remarkable spectrum of our field on display. At any given moment during the day, more than a dozen options may vie for your attention; and that’s when you’re not meeting new colleagues and reconnecting with old ones. Between the concerts and the film screenings, performances and lecture-demonstrations, SIG and Section meetings, receptions and media exhibits, this year’s gathering promises to rejuvenate you at the end of a long semester, and recharge you as you enter the winter months.

Our plenary events will bring the Society together around key issues of our discipline. This year’s President’s Round Table, convened by SEM president Beverley Diamond, will address Indigenous Theory, and feature Dylan Robinson (Queen’s University, Canada), Dawn Ieriho:kwats Avery (Montgomery College), David Samuels (New York University), Holly Wissler (Peru) and Jessica Bissett Perea (University of California, Davis). In addition, a stimulating Public Policy session will speak to contemporary concerns among ethnomusicologists. Our Seeger Lecturer this year, Philip J. Deloria (University of Michigan), will deliver an address entitled “Life on the Musical Edges” that promises to stimulate deep and interesting conversations well afterward.

As a field, ethnomusicology has grown considerably since its first meeting at the American Anthropological Association’s Boston meeting in 1955. (Yes, our society began as a SIG.) This year’s record-breaking submission pool showed it, with nearly a thousand STRONG abstracts submitted for consideration. Among the many themes emerging in our field: papers addressing music and religion have increased tremendously in the past few years, as have studies of historical ethnomusicology, wellness and medical discourse, sound studies, music and sports, affect theory, intellectual property, pedagogy, ecomusicology, and papers that explore music and the arts as an integrated whole. Special Interest Groups and Sections proliferate, each tracking a worthy path forward: look for new ones such as Economic Ethnomusicology, which link into important new areas in our field. Our resulting program is the largest it’s ever been, with high quality offerings from its first moments to its last ones. Please arrange your travel to ensure your presence from early Thursday morning through 12:15 on Sunday afternoon, so as to have the fullest experience you can.

Taking a cue from my able predecessor, J. Martin Daughtry, I include here a word cloud based on this year’s abstract submissions. “Music,” “Musical,” and “Musicians” continue to hold prime real estate, as do the terms “Cultural” and “Social.” Other terms, such as “Paper,” “Argue,” “Such,” and [tiny] “Show,” reflect the conventions of abstract writing process (though the term “Intervention,” popular in some areas of the humanities, has yet to, um, intervene here). The cloud has its whimsical moments as well: “Hip” and “Hop,” unsurprisingly, are the same size; and the outsized “New” required help from “York” to achieve its prominence. Surely, there are as many ways to parse this image as there are SEM members. Which words are getting larger, which smaller, and which serve as tentpoles for the discipline? But beyond its status as a possible Rorschach test for our membership, this image also presents us with the interesting conundrum of whether these words represent a kind of common (if conventional) language, and whether the missing words—the unique subjects, terms, and ideas we’ve generated in our work—say just as much about the dynamics of our diverse, multi-vocal, and often joyously indefinable field.

I am grateful to the members of this year’s Program Committee for keeping the evaluation and programming process so efficient and effective: Elyse Carter Vosen (College of St. Scholastica), Jonathan Dueck (American University), Thomas Hilder (University of Bergen), Damascus Kafumbe (Middlebury College), Kathryn Metz (Rock’n’Roll Hall of Fame Museum), and Christine Yano (University of Hawai‘i at Manoa). Please make sure to recognize them for their months of hard work, and the multi-layered program that has emerged from their labors.

See you in December!
SEM is coming back to Austin – to a more vibrant city, a healthier University of Texas, and a stronger ethnomusicology program. After hosting our 44th Annual Meeting in 1999, we are proud to welcome members and friends of SEM to what promises to be another exciting mix of cutting-edge scholarship, discussions, concerts and other special events.

The meeting will take place from December 3-5, 2015 at the Hilton Austin, situated at the heart of the city’s vibrant music and restaurant scene. The nearest major airport to the Hilton is Austin Bergstrom International Airport. It is approximately 8 miles from the airport to the hotel. There are numerous companies that offer ground transportation services from the airport to the Hilton. Taxi service between the airport and the hotel is approximately $14.00 one-way. Taxi service is available at the curb on the lower level of the terminal just outside Baggage Claim. Bus service from the airport to downtown is available with the MetroAirport bus. A $1.50 premium fare takes you between the airport and downtown every 30 minutes on the hour and half hour. From the downtown bus stop it is only a few blocks to the Hilton Austin.

Austin in early December has excellent weather, with daytime highs in the mid 70s, and cool but temperate nights. The Hilton is located on 4th Street, only steps away from the famous 6th Street with numerous bars and music venues, the Warehouse District with countless eateries both affordable and more upscale. Other popular neighborhoods within easy reach are Rainey St. with countless bars and restaurants and South Congress Avenue, a haven for lovers of food trucks, boots, margaritas and everything in between. Lady Bird Lake is a short walk away, offering 10 miles of hike and bike trails. Bike and boat rentals are also available. Situated on the northern shore of the lake is the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center featuring the works of local, regional and national Latino/a artists as well as educational events. Another sight not to be missed are the 1.5 million Mexican Free-Tailed Bats that emerge from underneath the Congress Bridge every day at dusk, devouring some 20,000 pounds of insects and pests during their flight. A little further afield but still in walking distance lies Zilker Park with Barton Springs Pool, a wonderful fresh-water swimming pool featuring year-round temperatures of 70°F.

The UT campus is situated to the north of the Hilton and can be reached by bus or a short cab ride. The campus boasts a vast array of resources open to the public such as the Blanton Museum of Art, the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the LBJ Presidential Library, and the Harry Ransom Center.

Prior to the Annual Meeting there will be a pre-conference symposium on December 2 on “Music, Property and Law.” The symposium is made possible with the generous support from the University of Texas at Austin Humanities Center, the Endowment of Music History, the UT Law School and the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies. The location of the symposium is the beautiful Julius Glickman Conference Center on the UT campus. The keynote speaker will be Olufumilayo B. Arewa of the School of Law at the University of California, Irvine. The title of Dr. Arewa’s talk is “Slavery, African American Music, and the Boundaries of Property.”

In addition to the preconference symposium the Local Arrangements Committee is sponsoring a number of special events to accompany the scholarly program. These include a concert by Austin-based conjunto Los Pinkys, co-sponsored by our friends from Texas Folklife; a performance by the UT gamelan under the direction of Rasito Purwopangrawit on December 4, and a concert by famed brass and accordion combo Mexrrissey and charismatic Malaysian singer-songwriter Yuna, presented by UT Texas Performing Arts in partnership with the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies, the Center for Mexican American Studies, and KUTX. The latter two events take place on the UT campus. Bus service to and from the UT campus (for the pre-conference symposium, the gamelan performance and the Mexrrissey/Yuna concert) can be booked at the SEM website. There will also be an exhibit of selected materials from the John A. Lomax Family Papers of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History. Additional activities include Sounding Board, a collective sound exhibit showcasing the creative work of scholars attentive to the spatial, acoustemological, and ethnographic potential of sound. The exhibit is being co-sponsored by SIG for Sound Studies and Texas A&M University and is open every day from 3-8 PM.

The UT Butler School of Music and my colleagues in the LAC, Cathy Brigham, Kim Kattari, Robin Moore, Sonia Seeman, and Stephen Slawek, look forward to seeing you soon.

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Conference Report: Feminist Theory and Music 13

Tes Slominski, Beloit College

Feminist Theory and Music 13 met at the University of Wisconsin in Madison from August 5-9, 2015, and featured a variety of excellent and inspiring papers, lecture-recitals, and performances on the theme of Feminism and Black Critical Praxis in an Age of Scarcity. The Center for Black Music Research (Columbia College, Chicago) and the UW-Madison School of Music co-sponsored the conference, and the organizing/program committee, led by Susan Cook, Monica Hairston O’Connell, and Julia Chybowski, put together an event that welcomed a diverse and fabulously collegial set of academic and public sector presenters and performers engaged with ethnomusicology, musicology, popular music studies, music theory, and dance.

Although the intellectual approaches of presenters are often delightfully blended at interdisciplinary conferences like FTM, the SEM membership was well represented with papers from Sonia Seeman, Nicol Hammond, and Sidra Lawrence. Eileen Hayes, Maureen Mahon, Alisha Lola Jones, and Tes Slominski chaired panels. Other conference highlights included Maya Gibson’s paper on Billie Holiday, a stunning performance by Chicago’s Honey Pot Collective, an incisive and moving lecture-recital by Kathryn Briner on Comanche hymns, Gayle Murchison’s energetic exposé of the failure of institutions (including institutionalized mainstream feminism) to understand “diversity” and “inclusion,” and a poem by Sherrie Tucker that has already become the stuff of legend.

Two plenary sessions, “The Research Needs of All of Us: Bridging Scarcity with Collaborative Praxis” (about the work of the Melba Liston Collective), and “The Limits and Potential of Our Work in Times and Spaces of Scarcity,” challenged us all to think outside the social and professional strictures of institutionalized racism/sexiism/homophobia/transphobia, non-collaboration, and resource allocation—and offered a supportive space for discussing the effects of these restrictions and sharing strategies to overcome them. We continued these conversations during the traditional Sunday morning debriefing, and there was considerable enthusiasm for holding Feminist Theory and Music 14 on the West Coast in 2017.

Conference Report: Joint meeting of the Société Française d’Ethnomusicologie and the British Forum for Ethnomusicology

Byron Dueck, Open University

From July 2–5 at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, the Société Française d’Ethnomusicologie (SFE) hosted its very first joint meeting with the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE). The special gathering was held in lieu of the SFE’s annual study days (journées d’études) and the BFE’s spring conference. Around sixty delegates presented papers in English and French in two parallel sessions held in rooms at the foot of the impressive silo of musical instruments that ascends upward through the floors of the museum.

Two special events were held in conjunction with the gathering. The first was a screening of Simha, a compelling documentary about the life and research of Simha Arom. Arom was in attendance, as were the director of the film, Jérôme Blumberg, and its producer, Gabriel Chabanier, and they answered questions at the end of the film. There was also a concert and cocktail dinner held at the British Council’s Paris Invalides learning center. Aïcha Redouane, Habib Yammine, and Sofiane Negra presented a remarkable performance of Arab music to delighted applause from attendees.

The conference was entitled Border Crossings/Boundary Maintenance (Traversées et/ou maintien des frontières) in recognition of the international character of the gathering. Papers addressed four subthemes: “music crossing boundaries,” “the bounds of tradition in music,” “crossing categories,” and “intellectual territories,” exploring these ideas in a wide range of geographical contexts and musical styles. The presentations offered a welcome opportunity to reflect on similarities and differences between French and British (and francophone and anglophone) traditions of ethnomusicology. I left the conference energized by an encounter with some of the fascinating new work being done by members of the SFE.

In order to allow as many delegates as possible to present, there was no keynote lecture, but the conference did end with reflections by representatives of the host organization (SFE President Susanne Fürniss and Secretary Stéphanie Khoury) and the BFE (me, in my role as BFE committee member) as well as by Anne Rasmussen, in her role as President-Elect of the Society for Ethnomusicology. These closing remarks acknowledged the success of the joint conference and identified a number of common themes that emerged across panels and among scholars. From my own perspective, the happy outcome owed much to the willingness of both societies (and especially the SFE) to move away from accustomed conference formats and toward something mutually unfamiliar, but mutually illuminating.
Conference Report: The ICTM 43rd World Conference

Anne K. Rasmussen, College of William and Mary

The International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) held its 43rd World Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan July 16-22, 2015. For those who have not yet attended an ICTM conference I offer a few comments on the structure of the ICTM and its conference because it differs in many ways from SEM. Part of the thrill of attending ICTM is traveling to the location of its conferences. Convened every two years, the past few meetings have been held in Beijing, China (2013); St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada (’11); Durban, South Africa (’09); Vienna, Austria (’07); Sheffield, UK (’05); and Fuzhou and Quanzhou, China (’04): the ICTM is a truly international organization. The conference transpires over a full week with concerts programmed every evening except for one full day in the middle of the week that is reserved for excursions in the region. The field trip and multiple performances and the multi-lingual camaraderie that emerges through these collective experiences make ICTM conferences extraordinary in many ways.

The governance of ICTM is fully international and has always involved many SEM colleagues. For example, Kati Szego, current editor of the Yearbook for Traditional Music, and Bev Diamond, current SEM President, co-hosted the ICTM world conference in St. John’s, Newfoundland in 2011. Salwa El Shawan Castelo Branco and Svanibor Pettan, both of them active in the governance of SEM through their past service on the board and council respectively, currently serve as ICTM President and Secretary General. Tony Seeger has served as both President and Secretary General of the organization. This year’s program in Astana was rich and varied. Chaired by Tim Rice and Razia Sultanova, 10-13 concurrent sessions, including workshops and films, finished every day with a concert organized by the Kazakh National University of Arts (KAZNUA) and Türksoy, an international organization for studying, preserving, and promoting the culture of the Turkic-speaking world.

Several aspects of this conference’s organization unified its participants. For example the plenary session, held every day in the central concert hall just before lunch, convened three papers organized loosely around a theme. Rather than being invited, plenary speakers at ICTM are chosen from the entire pool of submissions by the program committee, a practice that seems to ensure a healthy and international mix of junior and senior scholars. Our host, Professor Aiman Mussakhajayeva, rector of KAZNUA, and herself a professional violinist who performed on one of the evening programs, relocated all of the classes and rehearsals of KAZNUA’s students and professors so that we had the full run of all classrooms and performance halls in KAZNUA’s main, modern building for our sessions and workshops. As with other ICTM conferences I’ve experienced, the coffee breaks and cafeteria lunches occur on site, providing more time to mingle with an international cadre of colleagues. Moving the conference around the world not only facilitates new experiences for the conference participants (ICTM calls us delegates) it also brings ethnomusicology and its allied disciplines, folklore, ethnochoreology, and anthropology into the national spotlight of the host country, sometimes for the first time, as was surely the case in the Central Asian nation of Kazakhstan.

Carlos Yoder, the Executive Assistant for ICTM, confirmed for me the following numbers: of 478 delegates to the Astana conference 69 were from the US, 67 from Kazakhstan, 39 from China, 22 from the UK, 21 from Japan, 15 from Russia, and 245 from other countries. I was particularly impressed with the various sources of support for delegates to travel to the conference. Travel stipends made available by a number of funds—including those established by Barbara Barnard Smith, RILM, UNESCO, the ICTM Young Scholars Fund, and the recently named Maud Karpeles fund established by the Board posthumously in her honor—contributed to the participation in the conference of some 36 delegates.

ICTM has always offered a disciplinary stretch for me. It is challenging and refreshing to meet and make friends with a colleagues that I wouldn’t meet or would be too busy to meet at SEM, and to learn about their work. With a more pronounced focus on dance, folklore, and anthropology, the gist of various presentations and research projects is expansive. Panels on multi-year research projects involving teams of researchers seem more common at ICTM due in part to the way research is structured and funded in Europe and beyond. Rather than having national chapters, twenty thematically-oriented ICTM Study Groups, most of which meet internationally in the “even” years when the big conference is at rest, all convene and conspire toward their next projects while they invite the participation of curious newcomers.

Finally, it is exciting to see the way that leadership, scholarship and collegiality are performed in the course of rather formal ceremonies and meetings, the paper sessions and workshops, the plenary sessions, the evening’s performances, and the daylong excursions by bus. In Astana, the dancing at the Uyghur restaurant near our hotels on the last night was a lot of fun as well. The governing bodies of SEM and ICTM have worked to fund and convene, in September 2015, the first SEM/ICTM Forum: “Transforming Ethnomusicalogical Praxis through Activism and Community Engagement,” a collaboration between our societies that we hope can be sustained. To be involved in ICTM, investigate the ongoing and upcoming activities of ICTM Study Groups and put the Summer 2017 meeting on your calendar; it’s in Limerick, Ireland.
2015 Charles Seeger Lecture: Philip J. Deloria

Chad Stephen Hamill, Northern Arizona University

At our upcoming SEM meeting this December, the Charles Seeger Lecture will be delivered by Philip J. Deloria, Carol Smith-Rosenberg Collegiate Professor in History, American Culture, and Native American Studies at the University of Michigan. The title of Deloria’s talk will be “Life on the Musical Edges.”

Although he received his PhD from Yale University in American Studies, it is worth noting here that Deloria began his collegiate career in music, earning a B.M.E. from the University of Colorado, Boulder. In addition to being an academic, Deloria is a musician and, like the many ethnomusicologists who have embodied music through years of praxis, he understands music’s ontological dimensions and its power and utility as an expression of culture. In his two impactful single-authored books, Deloria highlights the ways in which music has been integral to the ongoing colonial project in North America. *Playing Indian* (1998) begins by examining the appropriation of perceived Indianness by colonists in the years leading up to the American Revolution. By wearing faux Indian clothing and singing pseudo Native American songs, Deloria convincingly argues that colonists were simultaneously performing a new American identity while “imagining themselves as a legitimate part of the continent’s ancient history,” both of which were enacted to displace, and to the extent possible, erase the continent’s original inhabitants.

In his landmark monograph, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004), Deloria dedicates the final chapter to the “sound of Indian,” exploring music as the primary tool to tweak settler colonial expectations of Native Americans. “Music,” Deloria observes, “has been a primary way of evoking, not simply sounds, or even images, but complete worlds of expectation concerning Indian people, rich with narratives and symbolic meanings. Indian sounds signify those expectations—primitivism and social evolution, violent conflict, indigenous nationalism, Indian disappearance, the romance of the forbidden exotic, the haunted American landscape, and a host of other anxieties, fears, and expectations.” As Deloria points out, this sonic imprinting of Native Americans began with the notational renderings of Alice Fletcher, John Comfort Fillmore, and Francis La Flesche, who despite efforts to capture the essence of their Indianess, stripped Native songs of their cultural nuance. Such notated collections, assembled by them and other ethnomusicalological forebears (Theodore Baker, Natalie Curtis, and Frances Densmore) provided “grist” for Indianist composers and the “nationalist music mill,” establishing the “sound of Indian that would call up imagery and expectation for most of the twentieth century.” Deloria shows how these sounds continue to reside within the recesses of our collective cultural memory, resurfacing every time one encounters a John Wayne Indian-killing classic or the implied violence of the “tomahawk chop” on ESPN.

It is his examination of these and other cultural mediums that sets Deloria’s work apart from the multitude of other American Indian histories, which tendentiously privilege the relationship between tribes and the federal government. He turns over the stone of appropriation, revealing the complex history of negotiation and adaptive agency on the part of Native communities who quickly adopted and absorbed what the dominant (and dominating) settler society had to offer in the realms of art, education, religion and sports. Deloria’s insights as a cultural historian will be tremendously valuable to our members, who occupy the “musical edges” to create comprehensive ethnography that leaves no musical, cultural, or historical stone unturned.

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**Member News**

**Rebecca Bodenheimer** (University of California, Berkeley) is the author of *Geographies of Cubanidad: Place, Race, and Musical Performance in Contemporary Cuba* (University Press of Mississippi, 2015).

**Panayotis (Paddy) League**, PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology, Harvard University, was awarded the 2015 Papacosma Graduate Student Essay Prize by the Modern Greek Studies Association for his paper “The Poetics of Meráki: Dialogue and Speech Genre in Kalymnian Song.”

**Cliff Murphy** has been named the new Director of Folk and Traditional Arts at the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Daniel Sheehy** (Smithsonian Institution) has been named The Bess Lomax Hawes National Heritage Fellow in recognition of his role as a “cultural heritage advocate, dedicated to making the art of diverse artists more recognized and accessible.”

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In Memoriam
Ramón Pelinski (1932-2015)
The distinguished ethnomusicologist Ramón Pelinski passed away on July 6, 2015, in Madrid, Spain. Born in Corpus (Misiones), Argentina in 1932, Professor Pelinski studied music and philosophy in Argentina, France, Poland, and Germany, where he obtained a Ph.D. in musicology. His important contributions to musicology and ethnomusicology at the international level included working at or collaborating with universities and research centers in Argentina, Canada, the USA, Poland, and Spain. In addition, he was cofounder and first president of SIBE-Sociedad Ibérica de Etnomusicología in Spain, where he founded the online ethnomusicological journal TRANS-Revista Transcultural de Música. Professor Pelinski’s main publications deal with Spanish early and traditional music, the music of the Inuit of the Arctic regions of Canada, and Argentinian tango.

New Posts in Sound Matters
Jennifer Kyker. “From Scholarship to Activism in Zimbabwe.”
Ana Hofman. “SINGing, SOCIALizing, SELForganizing: An Insight into an Engaged Viennese Music Collective.”
Elizabeth L. Wollman. “Nudie Musicals in 1970s New York City.”
Rasika Ranaweera, Michael Frishkopf, and Michael Cohen. “Folkways in Wonderland.”
Catherine Grant. “‘They Don’t Die, They’re Killed’: The Thorny Rhetoric around Music Endangerment and Music Sustainability.”
Matthew Harp Allen. “Interview with David Park McAllester.”
Conference Calendar, 2015-16

• The Music of Endangered Languages. Foundation for Endangered Languages, Tulane University, New Orleans, 7-10 October 2015.

• North Atlantic Fiddle Convention, Cape Breton Island & Cape Breton University, “Celtic Colours International Festival, Transatlantic Transactions,” Sydney and Baddeck, Nova Scotia, 13-17 October 2015.

• Affect Theory Conference, Millersville University’s Ware Center, Lancaster PA, 14-17 October 2015.


• British Forum for Ethnomusicology. “Ethnomusicology and Policy,” the International Centre for Music Studies (ICMuS), Newcastle University, UK, 31 October 2015.

• The Elphinstone Institute, in association with the British Forum for Ethnomusicology, “Mouth Blown and Bellows Blown: Free Reed Instruments in their Social Contexts,” Aberdeen, 6 November 2015.

• Association for the Study of the Art of Record Production. The 10th Art of Record Production Conference: Cultural Intersections, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, USA, 6-8 November 2015.

• American Musicological Society, Popular Music Study Group, Popular Music and Social Mobility, Louisville, KY, 9-12 November 2015.


• Teaching and Learning Popular Music. School of Music, Theatre, & Dance, University of Michigan, 18-21 November 2015.

• Tyranny and Music, Middle Tennessee State University, 21-22 November 2015.


• “Atrocity Exhibition”: A Two-day Symposium on Joy Division, University of Limerick, Ireland, 25-26 November 2015.


• Society for Ethnomusicology, 2015 Annual Meeting (60th): Austin, Texas, 3-6 December 2015.

• Seventh Annual Jazz Education Network Conference, Louisville, KY, 6-9 January 2016.

• The Hidden Musicians Revisited, the Music Department, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK. 11–12 January 2016. Abstract deadline: 14 September 2015.


• Society for Ethnomusicology, Southwest Chapter (in conjunction with Rocky Mountain Chapters of the AMS and the SMT), is hosting its regional conference at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 22-23 April 2016. Paper submission deadline is February 1st, 2016.

• Conference on the Music of South, Central and West Asia, Harvard University, 4-6 March 2016.


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In response to a nationally recognized need, NEDCC now offers audio preservation services. IRENE uses digital imaging to safely retrieve sound from rare recordings on grooved media without the risks of stylus contact.

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- Media too delicate to play with a stylus
- Broken or damaged media

To hear sound clips from NEDCC’s pilot projects, including recordings from Carnegie Hall and the Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection at Middlebury College, visit www.nedcc.org/audio-preservation/about.

The IRENE technology was developed by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in collaboration with the Library of Congress. IRENE is the acronym for “Image, Reconstruct, Erase Noise, Etc.” and was so named because the first sound retrieved with the system during its development at Berkeley Lab was a recording of “Goodnight Irene” by the Weavers.

For complete information, visit www.nedcc.org/audio-preservation

Or contact:
Bill Veillette, Executive Director
bveillette@nedcc.org • (978) 470.1010
The Society for Ethnomusicology

Sixtieth Annual Meeting

Austin, Texas

3-6 December 2015

The Society for Ethnomusicology will hold its 60th Annual Meeting at the Hilton Austin, 500 East Fourth Street, Austin, Texas 78701. Hosted by the University of Texas at Austin.

Ethnomusicology Internet Resources

The SEM Website

SEM-L and SEMNotices-L Electronic Mailing Lists. Moderated by Hope Munro Smith, Assistant Professor, Department of Music, CSU Chico, 400 West First Street, Chico, CA 95929-0805, Phone: 530-898-6128, Email: hmsmith@csuchico.edu

Ethnomusicology Websites

American Folklife Center
Association for Chinese Music Research
British Forum for Ethnomusicology
British Library, World and Traditional Music
Canadian Society for Traditional Music / Société canadienne pour les traditions musicales
Comparative Musicology
Ethnomusicology OnLine (EOL), (home site)
Ethnomusicology Review
International Council for Traditional Music
Iranian Musicology Group
Smithsonian Institution: Folkways, Festivals, & Folklife
Society for American Music
Society for Asian Music
UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive
University of Washington, Ethnomusicology Archives
Fondazione Casa di Oriani, Ravenna

SEM Chapter Websites

Mid-Atlantic Chapter
Midwest Chapter
Niagara Chapter
Northeast Chapter
Northern California Chapter
Northwest Chapter
Southeast-Caribbean Chapter
Southern California & Hawai`i Chapter
Southern Plains Chapter
Southwest Chapter

SEM Section Websites

Applied Ethnomusicology Section
Education Section
Gender and Sexualities Taskforce
Popular Music Section
South Asia Performing Arts Section

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